

32 GRAMERCY PARK SOUTH HIGHLIGHTS

August 2011

- The Directors unanimously ratified the rejection of the City's property tax settlement offer and intend to continue to negotiate for a more significant reduction of our tax liability.
- We are working with the building's architect and principals of the two potential elevator cab vendors to identify opportunities to reduce costs...without compromising the quality of the elevator cabs or their aesthetics.
- The managing agent will be identifying a contractor to remove the two stumps in the side-yard, so that a mini-garden can be planted along the west side. We've also contacted the Manhattan Forestry Department to see if they will prune the dead branches on the city-owned tree in front of our building.
- The problem of keeping cool in the summer months is a longstanding one. While the building is not responsible for installing, fixing or maintaining air conditioners, we thought it might be helpful to share "best practices." Consequently, our resident manager will be talking to his colleagues in other buildings of approximately the same age as 32GPS, which also have through-the-wall air conditioning units. We'll also share with you some of the creative solutions that other residents of 32GPS have employed to reduce the temperature—and their electric bills.
- Motions were made, seconded and unanimously approved 1) to amend the building's sublet policy to affirm that, for the purpose of the sublet policy, two adjacent uncombined apartments owned by the same or related owners will be treated as one unit and 2) to require all shareholders planning major renovations to replace all plumbing to the building's traps, risers and/or stacks.
- After discussions, the Directors determined that the *Highlights* newsletter will continue to be distributed only to shareholders.
- The 2011 Shareholder Survey was reviewed and approved. It will be distributed in a future issue of *Highlights*.
- If you're interested in upgrading, the following apartments are currently on the market: 3D, 3J, 5C, 11B, 11M, 12F, 12J, 13F and 18C&E. (If your apartment is on the market and it is not listed here, we apologize. Please leave a note with the doorman or contact the editor at 32GPSboard@gmail.com.)

FYI

- **Check It Out.** Ronnie Ebenstein's (11G) insightful interview with Deputy Inspector Ted Berntsen, the "top cop" of the 13th Precinct, is featured on pages 3-4 of this month's issue of *Highlights*.
- **Did You Know?** The introduction of automobiles to New York in the 1890s was originally hailed as an environmental advance since, at the time, several thousand tons of horse manure had to be removed daily from the streets of Manhattan.

- **Job Well Done!** Special thanks to our neighbor Pat Snyderman (11J) for planting the tree well at the front of the building. Gone is the garbage and poo, replaced by lovely white flowers. Kudos also to Miguel for cleaning and helping to put new soil down and to the staff who are thoughtfully keeping the flowers watered and healthy.
- **What Is It?** Ever notice the weird digital display on the 14th Street side of Best Buy? The meaning of those mysterious numbers has confounded many visitors to Union Square...but the mystery has been solved. It is a clock—and an art installation depicting time coming and going. The first six digits represent the time in hours, minutes and seconds. The last six digits show the time left in the day. The middle three numbers are a blur of moving numbers from both sides.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

| WHEN | WHAT | WHERE |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Tue, Aug 2, 5:00pm to 8:00pm | National Night Out Against Crime | Playground at MS 104 20th Street & Second Avenue |
| Wed, August 10, at 7:00pm | Jane Fonda Author Event | Barnes & Noble Union Square 33 East 17th Street |
| Wed, Aug 10, 7:00pm to 8:30pm | Oval Lawn Series: Davell Crawford—Tribute to Ray Charles | Madison Square Park |
| Thur, Aug 18, 2:00pm to 4:30pm | Art in the Park: Clean out the Closet Day! It's a Creative Mystery! | Madison Square Park |
| Tues, Aug 30, 2:00pm to 4:30pm | Art in the Park: Build an Aquarium of Paper | Madison Square Park |
| Tues thru Sat, from 7am to dusk | Mad. Sq. Kids: Explore! | Madison Square Park Playground |
| Every Thur at 10:00am | Kids in the Square: "Mommy & Me Yoga" | Union Square Park Playground |
| Every Thur at noon | Kids in the Square: "Voca People & ImaginOcean" | Union Square Park South Plaza |
| Every Sat, from 2:00pm to 3:30pm | "Union Square: Crossroads of New York" Walking Tour | Union Square Park (by the statue of Abraham Lincoln) |

Q&A CORNER

Q. Have you considered raising the maintenance fees for shareholders who own dogs, to cover the additional wear and tear on the building? Also, should we be spraying the lobby and hallways for fleas and ticks?

A. The directors have discussed and rejected the idea of assessing a special “tax” on dog owners. No, we’ve not sprayed the building for fleas and ticks. To date, there’s been no evidence of fleas or ticks anywhere in the building; and we don’t want to risk the health of the children who live here—and people who may be elderly or infirm—by introducing pesticides without a good reason.



A CHAT WITH TED BERNTSEN: THE 13TH'S TOP COP

By Ronnie Ebenstein

On July 6th I sat down with Deputy Inspector Ted W. Berntsen, Commanding Officer of the 13th Precinct, to discuss how the police deal with issues of interest to all of us at 32 GPS. Berntsen, whose father and uncle were both police officers, joined the force in 1989. A married father of two, he has led the 13th for one year. For the record, he's one of the heroes who helped close Truffle.



How did the shuttering of Truffle come about?

The owners had stipulated to the Business Affairs and Street Activities Committee (BASA) that they would stop serving alcohol at midnight during the week. I went in at 1:30 am, was served, and Sergeant Jose Piedra, our Cabaret Officer who works from 9:30 pm – 6 am, followed up with an inspection, found them in violation, and we notified the State Liquor Authority (SLA). The owners wound up surrendering their license for that location. And it all started with citizens' complaints.

What are the most frequent problems you have to deal with?

Noise and nuisance crimes related to the number of bars are a major issue. There are some 300 licensed bars in the precinct, which extends from 14th Street to 30th Streets, the FDR to Seventh Avenue, and we work hard to make sure they are good neighbors. If you have a complaint, call 311 with the name and address of the bar.

I call 311 but nothing seems to happen. What should I do next?

Ask the operator for the complaint number; that's your record that you want something done. And we receive notice of every 311 complaint, so your calls definitely do count!

What happens if you get a stream of complaints about a bad bar?

We can schedule a 'MARCH' order, a multi-agency surprise inspection that includes representatives from the police and fire departments, the SLA, and the Departments of Health, Buildings, and Environmental Protection.

How can we keep bad bars out of the neighborhood?

I suggest you attend the BASA meetings; that's where prospective bar owners appear (often with their lawyers) to let the community know what they are planning to open in your neighborhood.

Are crimes of opportunity like purse snatching, or theft of laptops and purses in coffee shops and bars, a big deal?

As the neighborhood becomes more popular, with more bars, restaurants and residential development, these kinds of incidents are becoming more prevalent. In fact, 72% of the crimes in the 13th involve non-forcible stealing of property, so don't leave anything unattended anywhere. Take your stuff with you, even if you're just getting up for a minute, and protect yourself from identity theft: you don't want anyone to get their hands on your credit cards.

Bike lanes: Good or bad?

As the number of bike lanes and bicyclists increases, so do the number of near misses, not to mention collisions, with pedestrians and cars. We have been in touch with restaurants who send out bike messengers, giving them warnings and tickets for violations, but the problem has grown as more civilians take to the bike lanes.

With all that's going on, how do you set priorities?

Every Tuesday we have a crime strategy meeting, where, in addition to our ongoing investigations, we decide what specifically to attack for the week.

How can we help you and the officers at the 13th Pct?

Be our 'eyes and ears.' For example, homelessness is an issue in the precinct, as elsewhere. If you notice a street person who seems mentally ill or in need of help, call 311. We can get him/her off the street and get them help. Or, if they are doing something illegal, we make an arrest.

How is the fight to keep Gramercy great and safe going?

There are certainly challenges, but I am proud to report that on June 21st our precinct was one of only five in the city to be awarded a Unit Citation: The 13th ranked second in the five boroughs for crime reduction in the city for 2010, and we were recognized by Commissioner Ray Kelly and Mayor Bloomberg for excellence in policing. We couldn't do it without the help of the residents.

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Thanks to Inspector Berntsen and — on a personal note — why not attend the 13th Pct. Community Council meetings, held in the station (230 East 21st Street, 212: 477-7411). You'll learn first-hand what the cops are dealing with, and the meetings are lively, interesting and informative. We honor the Cop of the Month, have visitors from the DA's office and other crime-fighting agencies, and detectives are there to answer your questions. The Council meets at 6:30 pm on the third Tuesday of every month (except August and December).