



## Bedford • Barrow • Commerce

Block Association  
46 Barrow Street • New York, NY 10014

Annual Membership is still (only) \$25;

For information,

BEDFORDBARROWCOMMERCE@GMAIL.COM

BBCBLOCKASSOCIATION.ORG

### BBC NEWS AND VIEWS OCTOBER 2023



The next BBC Meeting is Wednesday, November 1 at the Greenwich House Music School for our very own Literary Soiree! This will be our eighth BBC Soiree! Featuring the talents of our very own BBC poets, novelists, playwrights and nonfiction writers. ...Wine and cookies at 6:30pm. Be there for a great evening.

### NABE NOTES

Save the Date: Fall Planting, November 4. Details to follow. Urban Arborist has treated 10 elms systemically against elm leaf beetle. Also, reduced the crown of the honey locust tree at 59 Commerce, the pagoda tree at 45 Commerce and the linden tree at 91 Bedford. They will plant a new tree at 40 Barrow in November.

From our Friends at A24

"I will be the gladdest thing under the sun! I will touch a hundred flowers and not pick one." **Edna St. Vincent Millay.**

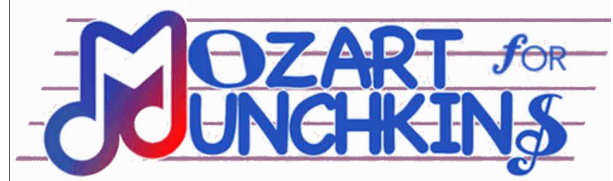
Commerce Street has been blooming. Cherry Lane Theatre, the newest member of the A24 family, has graciously committed to sprucing up and maintaining the flowers in the neighborhood this season. As one of the most charm-



ing blocks in New York City, the flowers of Commerce, Bedford & Barrow Street make an impression. Neighbors may have noticed the usual CLT team has been cultivating the flower beds. The theatre has donated a variety of flowers (emphasizing red, of course) to maintain our delightful pocket of the West Village. We have evergreen ivy and bonfire azaleas that will bloom in Autumn along the street. As longtime friends of the Bedford Block Association, CLT is happy to support the on-going effort to beautify the street and give all neighbors something beautiful to enjoy! In addition to this hands on approach of beautification, Cherry Lane has also made a donation to our fabulous block to keep our neighborhood thriving!

### Greenwich House Music School

*Mozart for Munchkins: Spooktacular*, October 28, 10:30 - 11:30am. Little jazz cats, come dress up and play! This jazz program will sure give you and your little one swingin' shivers from head to toe! This con-





cert is for lovers of jazzy brass, dancing, and bubbles. Come dressed up to join in our costume parade! Children 12 and under are always free. Register: [www.greenwichhouse.org](http://www.greenwichhouse.org).

### 33 Annual Children's Halloween Parade, 3:00-6:00pm.

The annual Manhattan Community Board 2 and NYU Children's Halloween Parade has been called "the cutest Halloween event in the city," but the event's legacy proves that it is much more than that: it is part of the cultural fabric of the community. On October 31 this year, CB2 and NYU will welcome more than 3,000 local children and families to attend a festive afternoon of parading, live entertainment, carnival rides, and trick-or-treat giveaways – all free for community members thanks to the generosity of our sponsors. The BBC is proud to be a



sponsor of this event and has been for many years.

#### Gotham Center for New York History

*Times Square: 125 Years of Change*, Thursday, October 19, 6:30-8:00pm., What is it about Times Square that has inspired so much attention, despite its many profound changes, for more than a century? In *Times Square Remade*, **Lynne B. Sagalyn** masterfully recounts the story of this symbolic space's hold on the public imagination, twenty years after her widely acclaimed *Times Square Roulette*. The book chronicles its history, from its early days as the nexus of speculation and competitive theater building to its darkest period as vice central, and the years of aggressive



public-private intervention that followed, cleansing West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and nearby areas like Hell's Kitchen of



pornography and crime. Accompanied by nearly 160 images, *Times Square Remade* is a deftly woven narrative of urban transformation that will appeal as much to the general reader as to urbanists, city planners, architects, urban designers, and policymakers. **Kenneth T. Jackson**, Editor-in-Chief of *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, writes, "no other intersection on Earth has been as iconic, famous, and frequented as the crossroads of the world in New York. And no other person has written with such authority and knowledge about the place as Lynne Sagalyn." **John Mollenkopf**, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at The Graduate Center, City University of New York, joins in conversation. Free Online-register [www.gothamcenter.org](http://www.gothamcenter.org)

#### Municipal Arts Society

*Fort Greene Revisited*, October 14, 2:00 - 4:00pm. [In-person tour] On the edge of rapidly developing downtown Brooklyn, Fort Greene has seen more ma-



jor construction in the last twenty years than most neighborhoods have experienced in the last 60 years. It seems as if every time one looks down the street, a new residential tower is rising over the brownstone blocks, and we've forgotten what they replaced. Our first Fort Greene tour primarily featured buildings in the two Historic Districts and Fort Greene Park. This new tour mixes the protected old with some of the avant-garde



new, spanning two centuries. Residential, civic, cultural and commercial buildings, houses of worship and green spaces - all are part of Fort Greene's storied history and its future. Tickets: \$20 members, \$30 non-members [www.mas.org](http://www.mas.org).

**Skyscraper National Park: Origins in Lower Manhattan**, October 21, 11:00 am-1:00pm, [In-person tour] Chicago and New York both lay claim to the invention of the skyscraper. This walk focuses on local evidence, visiting the site of the original Equitable Building, as well as early examples executed in a range of styles and materials between 1869 and the First World War. Well-known and lesser-known structures, many with remarkable ornamentation, will be discussed, including the Potter Building, the Wallace Building, and the Woolworth Building. Tickets: \$20 members, \$30 non-



*Lower Manhattan, 1934*

## Old News

**Alexander Turney Stewart** opened his first dry goods store in 1823, selling Irish lace and linens. His success would skyrocket. By 1848 he was known as the "Merchant Prince of America" and ran the largest emporium in the world, with branches in 12 countries. He was among the richest men in America.

Stewart also invested in real estate, much in Greenwich Village and Tribeca. In 1844 he erected two brick houses on Commerce Street on land leased from Trinity Church. His choice



of plots - sitting within the elbow of the street's sharp turn -- is somewhat surprising, since it necessitated 46 and 48 Commerce Street to be built at right angles to one another.

The three stories tall, the brick Greek Revival style homes sat on brownstone-faced English basements. They were intended for financially comfortable, although not wealthy, tenants. In 1876 Stewart made a significant change to 46 when he hired builders James C. Hoe & Co. to add a fourth story at a cost of \$300. It would be, perhaps, the last noticeable transaction in the millionaire's illustrious career. A week later, around April 1, Stewart contracted a cold. He died in his marble mansion on Fifth Avenue on April 10.

Stewart's wife, the former **Cornelia Clinch Stewart**, inherited his vast real estate holdings. Following her death in 1886, her nephew **Prescott Hall Butler** filed suit to have the will dismissed. A well-heeled attorney and partner in the "white shoe" law firm of Everts, Choate & Beaman, he received a large portion of the Stewart real estate, including the newly-remodeled 46 Commerce Street.

In the 42 years since the house was erected Greenwich Village had changed demographically. It was filling with immigrant families like that of **Gottfried Mieling** who lived at 46 when Hall took title. Mieling was involved in the brewing or saloon business. In the spring of 1900 Hall began selling much of his real estate holdings. On March 9 he sold 53,55 Morton Street, and 46, 48 Commerce Street. He died in his Park Avenue mansion the December of the following year.

**John Blesch, Jr.** purchased 46 (his brother, **Charles D. Blesch** bought 48). As always, the new owners were landlords, not residents. John Moriarty and his wife lived here in 1922 when they received devastating news. Their son, also named John, was a detective in the Safe and Loft Squad (the team tasked with investigating commercial burglaries). On Saturday night, June 24 Detective Moriarty was among the team of seven who had been staking out 306 and 308 Fifth Avenue. When two burglars were seen entering the building they jumped into action. The crooks fled onto the rooftops, followed closely by Moriarty and his partner, Detective Charles Schauss. In the chaos Moriarty was struck by a bullet--fired not by the crooks, but tragi-





cally by Schauss. *The New York Times* reported “One of the bullets struck a galvanized iron skylight...and, deflecting it, struck Moriarty...in the neck.”

Both of the perpetrators, **Joseph Morris and John Behrmann**, were caught; but Moriarty’s condition was grave. He was removed to Bellevue Hospital. Moriarty died a week later on July 2.

John Moriarty and his wife may have shared 46 with another family. But certainly in 1926 there was more than one family living in the building. A restriction by the Department of Buildings that year read “not more than 2 families cooking, independently, on premises.” Among those renting were actress **Elsie Rizer** and her husband, maritime insurance broker, **Aage Woldlike**. The couple was secretly married in Grace Church on November 21, 1925; however (unknownst to the minister, Rev. Eliot White), they had built an escape clause in case things did not work out. On December 21, 1926 *The New York Times* explained “They agreed that for a year they would consider the marriage ‘temporary.’” They had had wedding announcements printed, which they stashed away until the year had elapsed and they knew whether the marriage was a success or a failure. It was a success. And so in December 1926 the cards were mailed to their surprised friends:

The experiment having proved successful thus far, Miss Elsie Rizer and Mr. Aage Woldlike desire to announce their marriage Saturday, the twenty-first of November, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-five. Grace Church, New York.

In 1928 **Carlton A. Shively** purchased what was described as “a five-story remodeled house.” The building had been sold three times within the past few months. The stoop had been removed by now and the building contained four apartments and a studio. The artist studio had been installed in the top floor which Alexander Stewart added in 1876. In 1950 *The World-Telegram* acquired *The Sun* and Shively became an analyst writer for the merged newspapers.



**Carlton Shively (left) 1946**

Shively lived quietly here until his death on July 8, 1952. *The New York Times* reported that he “died here Tuesday night, apparently of a heart attack. His age was 61.” Three months later his estate sold 46 to the Truckee Holding Company.

Tenants in the apartments came and went through the subsequent decades, drawing little or no atten-

tion to themselves. But then in 2004 a gut renovation of the third and fourth floors created an upscale, 1,200-square-foot duplex apartment for **Carly Simon**.



The famous singer-songwriter lived most of the time in Martha’s Vineyard. Four years later she put the property on the market for \$3.8 million. In November 2013 Carly Simon sold it for a reduced price of \$2.32 million. *Curbed New York* commented “at long last, the apartment has found someone to appreciate its wide-plank flooring, two fireplaces, and bathtub in a non-bathroom (always a highlight).” That “non-bathroom” was, in fact, Ms. Simon’s living room.

It was one more page in the ever-changing history of the 1844 house squeezed into the hidden corner of Commerce Street, and of Greenwich Village in general

*Extracted from Daytonian in Manhattan.*



**HAPPY MAGICAL HALLOWEEN FROM THE BBC**