



Downtown News & Events

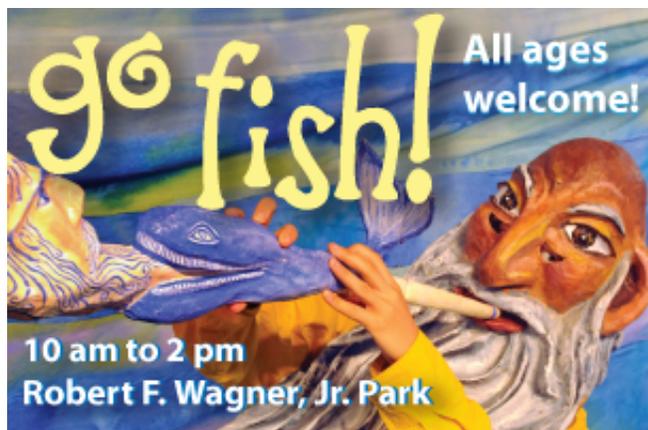
Friday, September 20, 2013

Jersey City skyline

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Experience the thrill of **catch-and-release fishing**. **Birdwatching** and a visit with live **Birds of Prey** including falcons, owls and hawks. (Rods, bait and binoculars provided.)

Fishing, 10-2pm **Art Projects, 11-2pm**
Birdwatching, 11-1:30pm **Performances, 12:30pm**

Sept 21 **Arm-of-the-Sea Theater** presents *The Rejuvenary River Circus* with giant puppets.

Oct 5 **Moona Luna** plays fun, lively Latin beats.

Oct 19 **The Suzi Shelton Band** rocks with original, spirited tunes.

Battery Park City Parks Conservancy | www.bpcparks.org

Remembering the Bard of Broad Street

New York Preservationists' Patron Saint to Be Honored Monday



25 Broad Street

If you live Downtown, you owe a debt of gratitude to a man you've probably never heard of. Albert Bard was a lawyer who devoted himself to public causes as diverse as preventing election fraud and limiting roadside advertising. But his legacy to Lower Manhattan is Battery Park, the historic greensward directly south of Battery Park City. No, Mr. Bard didn't build Battery Park. But he stopped it from being unbuilt. In the 1930s, master builder Robert Moses planned to erect a giant suspension bridge between Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan. The design called for a massive anchorage on the Manhattan side that would have largely obliterated Battery Park, and completely demolished Castle Clinton, the historic fort at the park's center.

Mr. Bard was the chief organizer of the opposition to this plan. From his law office at 25 Broad Street, he schemed, cajoled and politicked, patiently assembling a coalition of reformers, preservationists, and civic leaders. But the last person he recruited to this confederacy was the only one who really mattered. As president, Franklin Roosevelt had the ultimate say over what could be done on (or above) navigable water anywhere in the United States. And Mr. Roosevelt was an old and bitter personal rival of Mr. Moses. In 1939, he ruled that a bridge at that location



Castle Clinton in Battery Park

would be a hazard to national defense, because it was located seaward of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. (Of course, there were already two giant spans between the Navy Yard and the ocean -- the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges -- but Mr. Roosevelt was apparently guided by Ralph Waldo Emerson's dictum that "foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." The bridge plan was cancelled, and Mr. Moses was forced to build the crossing as the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, instead.

On Monday, a plaque will be installed in Mr. Bard's honor at 25 Broad Street, where he practiced law for 60 years. The unveiling of this "Cultural Medallion" will be the first in a series of celebrations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the New York City Landmarks Law. The ceremony will take place at 3:45 pm and all are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Among Mr. Bard's other achievements was the "Bard Act," an enabling law passed by the New York State legislature that made it possible for local municipalities (such as New York City) to enact their own landmarks preservation laws. Bard had drafted a version of this measure earlier, but it was not until a Supreme Court decision upheld the government's right to acquire property in order to restore a deteriorating neighborhood that the political climate favored passing the Bard Act in 1956. For the last seven years of his life Albert Bard fought to ensure that the law was put into action.

A man known for his wit and vitality, Bard was a lifelong champion of civic beauty. His many accomplishments ranged from political reform to historic preservation. Starting with the Citizen's Union which he helped found in 1897, he then co-authored a revised consolidated election law for New York City in 1909 and helped found the Honest Ballot Association in 1912. Always a strong supporter of the arts, Bard became an officer of the Fine Arts Federation and accepted the position as President of the Municipal Art Society in 1917. This led to his engagement in several preservation-related campaigns. He died in 1963.

In 1965, the New York City Landmarks Law was enacted and continues to be the most significant tool used by preservationists in the fight to protect cherished landmarks. As of March 27, 2012, the Landmarks Preservation Commission has granted landmark status to over 27,000 buildings including 107 historic districts, 1,304 individual landmarks, 114 interior landmarks, and 10 scenic landmarks in all five boroughs.

Caroline Press
photos by Robert Simko

2013  **RUN FOR KNOWLEDGE**

Fun Run & Festival to benefit PS89, IS289 & PS/IS276 Sat., Sept. 21st, 10:30 - 2:30

Join us for Rides, Games, Food, Crafts, Face Painting, and more!

Tickets are 10 for \$10.

Location: PS 89, 201 Warren St.

between North End Ave. and West St.

For more information or to make a donation, visit www.bpcschoo.org or email R4K@bpcschoo.org.