



MANOR MATTERS

DOUGLAS MANOR
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

EDITOR: Linda DeRose
Dec./Jan. 2007-2008

Remembering Bernard Helfat by Bob Coddington

Bernie Helfat passed away peacefully in his home on October 20, 2007. He was a graduate of Harvard University and Harvard Law School. During World War II he served in the army on the War Department's General Staff and attained the rank of Captain. During the Korean War he was recalled to serve in the National Security Agency and was the recipient of the Bronze Star. After returning to civilian life, Bernie and his wife Lucille settled in Douglaston, first on Hanford Street, on the Hill, and in 1970, on West Drive in the Manor. Bernie was a founding member of Temple Emanuel in Great Neck, President of the Douglaston Civic Association and Chairman of the NYC School Board for Northeast Queens. In 1960 he ran for Congress.

It is what he did for Douglas Manor for which we are most grateful:

For many years there had been debate about whether the DMA had a clear right to collect dues from its membership. Bernie took the issue to court, pro bono. As a result of his efforts the courts decided that the Douglas Manor Association had in fact such a right and that the membership was obligated to pay such dues for the promotion of our common good.

When members asked if there was any way to make a gift to the community they loved that could be regarded as a tax deductible charitable contribution by the Federal Government, Bernie Helfat and Gordon Paulsen set up the Douglas Manor Environmental Association to allow members a tax deduction for contributions..

Lucille and Bernie were at the forefront in the debate over the necessity of obtaining landmark status for the Manor. They spent endless hours in convincing New York City Landmarks Commission that the Manor was worth preserving, and probably just as much time in the community convincing their fellow residents.

Bernie was a member of the Douglaston Yacht Squadron Board of Governors, and a member of the legal committees of both the Douglaston Club and the Manor Association.

He is fondly remembered by all who knew him, and we are grateful for all he accomplished on our behalf. Bernie Helfat left his mark on the Manor much to the benefit of all.

Arrests Made in Manor Burglaries

Starting in mid September four properties in the Manor were burglarized. These burglaries all took place along or close to Douglas Road or Marinette Street during daylight hours through the month of October. At that time Security was not present. Each house was empty at the time of the break in and the thieves took only cash and jewelry. Although the police were focused on these crimes there were no fingerprints or clues left at any of the scenes and none of the neighbors saw anything.

It looked like these crimes would enter the annals of the "Great Unsolved" when the criminals moved their activity across Northern Blvd. into Douglaston. Two burglaries occurred. The first house the criminals were able to burglarize successfully. The second house was broken into several days later and the criminals once again got away.

However, a neighbor happened to notice a black Navigator parked on the block during the day. As the car was unknown, this neighbor was astute enough to notate the license number of this truck and later in the day when the police began canvassing the neighbors this person was able to give the license plate number to the police.

The police caught the three men they think were responsible for these crimes and some jewelry has been recovered from a pawn shop in Corona. Two of the three men arrested, one from Corona and one from East Elmhurst, are predicate felons, one of whom had gotten out of jail only two weeks before the first burglary. If these two people are convicted of these crimes they will face up to 25 years in jail. The 3rd man was from Nassau County and does not have a criminal record as extensive as the other two.

This report underlines the importance of keeping our eyes open and to the importance of our noticing what is going on around our streets. Our lives have become more complicated than they were in the past and many of our houses do not have anyone home during the day, meanwhile, there is so much work going on in the neighborhood we never know who is watching the schedule in any one house.

The simple act of noticing can be of great importance, if this neighbor had not been aware and smart enough to notate a license number, it is probable that other homeowners would have been victimized. Please pay attention, the things you notice may be of help to the police.

Memorial Field — Redux

The Board, over the last several months, has received an increase in the numbers of complaints regarding the use of Memorial Field. This issue has been escalating for years and the Board has started to assess what is actually going on at the Field. Memorial Field is a very attractive venue offering a meeting place for a variety of activities, some of which are probably not legal. Further, it seems that anyone who has passed through the Manor assumes that this is a public park, and returns to use it as such. Our insurance company disagrees.

The blocks surrounding the Field become impassable during certain times of the year and certainly on lovely spring and summers weekends. Most of us have contended with the soccer moms on Douglas Road and the large gatherings of adult soccer players, the picnics, barbeques and prayer services, etc.

Trying to regain control of this situation and keep the peace, the DMA has installed cameras which will record any activities taking place in and around the Field. It is hoped that this will eliminate the nightly teenage gathering along with what is perceived to be drug dealing. These cameras will help us identify the specific individuals who are responsible for the continuous graffiti problem along with the adolescents who are coming in from out of the area.

However, our problems do not all come from the outside, the Board has been made aware of several events that have been created by members. Please be noticed that no member is entitled to use Memorial Field for any personal gathering without a permit from the Board of Directors. Applications for these permits are available at the DMA Office and can be mailed or faxed upon request. This became an issue when the Board became

The DMA Board and Film

At the last DMA Board Meeting a policy was implemented which should clarify the Board's position as to any filming done on DMA Common Property. A motion was carried that will require a majority vote of the Board before any filming is allowed on DMA property.

This action was taken after filming was allowed at the field for a public service announcement regarding the dangers of pedophiles at playgrounds. As it was generally felt that since this was a one day shoot supporting a very good cause an informal poll of the Board was sufficient to allow the shoot to occur.

As was subsequently pointed out to the Board, Manor Matters has been vociferous in denouncing the film shoots in the Manor and in underlining the inconvenience and disruption these shoots cause the neighborhood, because of the nature of the shoot, in question, the Board felt that its action was justified.

The DMA Board, at the behest of the membership, has worked to pressure the Mayor's office into control-

ling aware that several members were allowing non-members to use the field for large parties and gatherings and had been doing so for years. Our insurance does not cover this usage. The DMA is required to notify our insurance carriers of all gatherings. In order to protect our coverage this Permit Requirement is now in place. The DMA does not wish to embarrass any member but any gathering which does not have a permit may be disbursed.

The next Field issue is a perennial favorite, the dogs. Years ago at an annual meeting it was voted that no dogs would be allowed to use our Field. Many dog owners take this as a personal affront as they are fastidious about cleaning up after their pets, and of course there are the geese. The membership made this decision and we shall abide by it. This means that you don't let your dog loose to terrorize the geese or dig in the mud or run free. This means you don't walk your dog at the field even if you clean up after it. As to the geese, along with the raccoons, opossums and water rodents, they add a modicum of charm and they were here first anyway.

The Board is looking into several things that will help control the use of the Field, including more effective fencing within Landmark parameters, improved signage and more security. Most likely some combination of the above will be constructed.

In an effort to control the use this property the Board has made security arrangements with an experienced individual. Anytime you perceive what you think is a misuse of the field a call to the DMA Office will arrange to have security look into and resolve the situation if necessary. All of these efforts are being taken to protect the membership.

ling the permit process and for allowing the Manor some presence within the permitting process where the Manor is concerned.

The Board has also instituted procedures to control shoots that are brought into the area by homeowners all in the interest of protecting the membership from intrusion and inconvenience.

There have been demands made by the Board for sufficient prior notice of all shoots. The Board insures that a board representative is present during all filming to insure that the permit is followed. The Board has also requested that the local police be available to insure permit compliance.

The DMA Board along with several committed members has work diligently and effectively to alleviate the pressures brought to bear on the Manor by these filming events. The end result of these efforts is that we are slowly gaining input into the use made of our neighborhood.

The Impact of a Single Man

Every time you stop to appreciate the beauty of this neighborhood or notice an lovely leafy view, chances are that you owe this bit of pleasure to Leo Kellerman. This man has made it part of his life's contribution to insure that the Manor continues in the tradition of Douglas, Parsons and Betty Smith of remaining an oasis of natural beauty. Dr. Kellerman has done this by planting and caring for our trees. Over the course of 30 years Dr. Kellerman has supervised the planting and care of hundreds of trees in the Manor and the results of his efforts are visible to all.

Raised in Queens, Dr. Kellerman has spent the better part of his life in helping others and his contributions reach far beyond the boundaries of the Manor. He received his medical degree from Yale University Medical School in 1942, and he spent his residencies specializing in ophthalmology at Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat and Mount Sinai Hospitals. He became a private practitioner of ophthalmology in Fresh Meadows while on the staff on both North Shore and Long Island Jewish Hospitals. In 1970 and 1971 Dr. Kellerman and his wife, Elizabeth spent months as volunteers setting up an eye clinic and surgical unit in Kenya, East Africa. In an ongoing effort to alleviate the misery suffered in so much of the world the Kellermans, along with others, also set up similar units on two islands in the Caribbean. Dr. Kellerman remain active in the Caribbean project for years after his professional retirement from private practice.

Growing up in Flushing, Leo Kellerman was an active athlete playing both soccer and tennis. He became engaged in fencing while a student at Flushing High School leading the team to winning the New York City Championship. While at Columbia College and afterwards he continued competitive fencing, achieving national rankings of #3 and #6 and was the first alternate on the 1952 USA Olympic Team.

In 1954 Leo and Elizabeth also moved into the Manor and they remain among that lofty group of residents who were around to attend both the 50th and 100th Anniversary Celebrations of the Manor. That accomplishment in itself is charming but of very little value unless one

considers what Leo Kellerman accomplished in those 53 years of Manor residency. His gifts to the Manor will live a very long time, and will color our town and shade our children and their children for generations. Can anyone think of a better way to leave your mark upon this world?

As of this year Dr. Kellerman will have overseen the planting of over 750 trees within the Manor of 30 different species. His care in choosing location, growth patterns, soil quality, foliage color and environmental compatibility while giving the homeowner choices has led to success not only in sustainability but also in beauty. You only have to take a stroll down Grosvenor Street in the Spring when all of the Callery Pear Trees are in bloom to see how beautifully they enhance the overall ambience of the neighborhood. In the Fall his consideration and planning shows us the Kinkos awash in yellow and the Maples in deep reds all reminding us of the artistry of nature.

The developers of the Manor planted hundreds of Silver Maples to frame Manor Streets. The Silver Maple is a fast grower, however, they have aggressive root systems which break up sidewalks and clog drains. They are now dying off and have been replaced mainly by oaks, lindens and zelkovas, Dawn redwoods, California redbuds other species planted to provide variety.

Dr. Kellerman recently turned 90. He is grateful to the n=many volunteers who provided the muscle and sweat to make planting sessions companionable and satisfying. Dr. Kellerman is retiring from the Tree Committee at the end of this year but Ron Saar of Warwick Avenue has been working with him and is entirely capable of continuing the tradition. As a group we can never thank Leo Kellerman sufficiently for what he has done for us and our neighborhood.

If you are interested in joining in the continuation of Dr. Kellerman's work, please contact the DMA office where you will get appropriate direction.

Alley Pond Environmental Center...is hosting a free event on climate change January 31, 2008 from 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM This event is part of a national teach-in called *Focus the Nation* ([www:FocusTheNation.org](http://www.FocusTheNation.org)).

APEC will be one of over 1,100 sites nationwide and one of four in Queens that will participate in this national event on climate change. This event will feature experts in various areas such as energy efficiency, recycling, composting and transportation.

Please join us, we look forward to seeing lots of you there.

Good News From the Hill

I am delighted to report that the New York City Planning Commission voted unanimously on December 11, 2007 to approve the park mapping and acquisition of four more parcels in the Udalls Cove Ravine. The matter now goes to the New York City Council. Once it arrives there, the Council has 20 days to decide whether to weigh in and vote. I am very optimistic that we will have final approval for the acquisition within another month or two. Once these lots are acquired, along with several others that are already in the acquisition process and/or have recently been acquired, over 75% of the Ravine will be parkland owned by the City. Of course, we won't rest until 100% of the acquisition is complete; but this is a wonderful milestone, and our deep thanks are owed to the government officials — both elected and appointed — who have worked diligently to make this happen. All the best to you and your families for a lovely holiday.

Walter Mugdan, President, Udalls Cove Preservation Committee

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This and That

- * A "Thank You" to all members who shared the lights of Christmas with all and may every one enjoy a warm and peaceful holiday.
- * Applications for use of Memorial Field are available at the DMA office. Once an application is received the Board will have a timely response. Keep in mind that you use of the field impacts the neighbors.
- * Need a good gift idea? Copies of This Salubrious Spot , the 100th Year History of Douglas Manor are available at the DMA office for \$15.00. This brilliantly critiqued publication makes a fine addition to any well constructed library and is entertaining reading.
- * The DMA has received the reimbursement of \$49,300.00 from the Empire State Development Corp. for the repair of the seawall. This is yet another instance where the membership owes a debt of gratitude to Senator Frank Padavan, as it was through his efforts that we were reimbursed through this special program. This repair was essential to the maintenance of the seawall. Once again, thank you Senator Padavan.
- * The Board would like to thank Hope Wright for her beautiful design and Denise Ortell and Jamie Sutherland for their work in creating a garden in the space behind the DMA Office. These members rallied the neighbors and with volunteers and contributions created a lovely garden which much improves the space. Keil Brothers donation of plant material and Vytis Travel's helping hand. The end result is truly a reflection of successful volunteerism. Thank you all for your efforts. The end result is lovely. [View the photos >>](#)