

Celebrating Columbia Waterfront District

The Red Hook Star-Revue

Serving the Brooklyn Communities of Red Hook, Carroll Gardens and Cobble Hill

June 2010



Introducing a New Community Voice



Thank you for taking the time to pick up this, your new monthly community newspaper. One of our goals is to serve as a vehicle to bind together the many disparate voices that make up our cherished Brooklyn neighborhoods. With an eye to the future grounded in the rich history of our past, we are open to contributions from those who make up our reading audience. If there is a neighborhood concern you wish us to explore, or if you are interested in making a direct contribution as a writer or photographer, please feel free to contact co-publisher George Fiala at 101 Union Street, or better yet email george@selectmail.com.

Our other goal is to provide an inexpensive way for our local merchants to spread the word about their offerings to the interested public. Co-publisher Frank Galeano will help plan an effective campaign and can be reached at 917-365-8295, or in-person at 104 Union Street.



First Block of Union Street Host to Music & Fun



Last month saw two events that unexpectedly brought the sounds of music to Union Street between Van Brunt and Columbia. First, the corner gallery WORK hosted an opening replete with the requisite white wine as well as a young rock and roll band who set up on the corner and filled the air with raucous, enjoyable sounds. A few weeks later, their neighbor Scooter Bottega held an end-of-block party for their neighbors and scooter friends. Refreshments, including delicious pork sandwiches were served and two bands performed.

If there is but one good byproduct of the unfortunate closing of the Union Street bus stops, it is that a larger block festival may be possible in the future, perhaps joined by new neighbor Select Mail, who at 101 Union is resurrecting the old Star puppet theater in a modest way with a performing arts area planned as part of it's ground floor.



The following is a description of the gallery space at the end of Union Street taken from their web site: *WORK is a former mechanic's garage turned gallery and project space on the Red Hook waterfront specializing in the exhibition of emerging artists working across all mediums.*

Since January 2007, WORK and our artists have exchanged and imparted ideas democratically, seeking to utilize the space in the dissolution of barriers. In a time and place where many are searching for more, bigger and more expansive, WORK is committed to bringing important matters of culture into close circles, for critical discussion and reflection.

Work is at 65 Union Street, Scooter Bottega is right next door.

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Revue Photographer Captures the Beauty of Springtime on Union and Columbia Street

Before the warm spring weather brings us the green leaves on the trees lining Columbia Street, we are greeted by a glorious sight of snowy white flowers that remind us of those still recent days of winter but instead are a premonition of the beautiful warm sunny days ahead. We were lucky to catch these trees in their full pom-pom splendor earlier this year. The picture below is the same block just last week.



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Grinding Crankshafts on Van Brunt Street

If you think that factory work and big machines have completely left the United States, you could take a walk down past the back of the Battery Tunnel and look inside the doors of Golten Marine, where you will see a scene that will make you think that perhaps you are back in

the 1930's, except for the fact that these machines no longer need hundreds of men to operate them. Golten is a worldwide shipbuilding and repair company with a branch at 160 Van Brunt Street. The Norwegian company is famous for patenting a way to grind a crankshaft.



It's you talking....

by Aimlow Joe, www.aimlow.com

Dear British Petroleum, I am addressing this letter to your whole company and not just one man because just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes an entire company to wreak as much damage to the Gulf of Mexico as you are currently inflicting.

I really have to hand it to you. You don't do anything on a small scale. You drilled the deepest off shore well in history with the Deep Water Horizon rig and you immediately parlayed that good fortune into the mother of all environmental disasters, Chernobyl not withstanding of course. No one counts Chernobyl outside of the dead zone.

Along with countless other oil guzzling Americans I watched with disbelief at the live video feed of the oil gushing from the broken wellhead. I couldn't believe the pictures were so clear. Just a few weeks before I saw video of the Times Square Bomber that looked like it was filmed with a security camera purchased from Crazy Eddie's circa 1986. The quality was so grainy I was annoyed at being asked to try to identify the suspect. Luckily in the end they didn't need my help. You have to hand it to the NYPD, they are very good at what they do.

Your pictures are so clear and emotionally moving. The broken wellhead is over a mile under the ocean after all. Whatever you are lacking in know how in the area of capping a broken well a mile deep, you sure make up for in transmitting mesmerizing images to the surface. I love the way the oil is flowing up, not down, defying gravity. It's like a waterfall in a negative world.

I am happy that you are willing to try just about anything to stop the gusher. If I were cynical, I mean more cynical that I already am, I would accuse you of sitting back and waiting for the well to run dry. But I know that is not what you are doing. I know you are in a tough spot. You are improvising, troubleshooting and problem solving on the fly. It is a tough job. I liken you to the Apollo 13 astronauts. They too had to improvise under adverse conditions. They too were under intense pressure and media attention. I am sure you have seen the movie so I don't have to tell you how it turns out. I just know your troubles will turn out just as well.

I saved all of my old golf balls and hair for you. Please let me know where you need me to send them. Is C.O.D OK? It's not like any of us have any extra cash lying around these days. I really want to help in anyway I can.

But I don't want to let you off the hook so easily. That would be rewarding incompetence and that is just plain wrong. So I have decided to stop buying BP gasoline. I know this is a small gesture and won't hurt you in any way, but it is truly the least that I can do. Sure all gasoline eventually winds up in the same pipelines and even though I am not buying gas from you, I'll have to buy if from someone else. And of course I am not prepared to just stop buying gasoline altogether. I have to drive after all. I am not planning on walking to work. If I had a job I mean.

The Star-Revue gladly accepts letters and articles from local residents. You may mail in your comments to Editor, Red Hook Star-Revue, 101 Union Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231 or email us at gbrook@pipeline.com



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Hospitality at Ferdinandos Foccaceria



Frank Buffa, owner of the legendary Ferdinando's Foccaceria, 151 Union Street, hosted Ivette Velez on her birthday recently. Ivette, Evelyn and Christina work down the street at Select Mail, and are newcomers to the neighborhood, although Evelyn was born on Columbia Street. The shop had been up on Court Street for 10 years, on the block next to St. Mary's Star of the Sea Church. George Fiala, owner, has been quoted as saying that while in the old days it didn't seem that way, the other side of the BQE is now definitely a breath of fresh air, and he is very happy to be a part of his new neighborhood. His move was made easy through of efforts of Greg D'Avoca, real estate specialist at Galeano Real Estate. Select Mail specializes in bulk mailings for businesses, while Ferdinandos, as we all know, specializes in the much more important matter of creating wonderful Sicilian rice balls.



Robert Lombardi
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Some of the highlights of the June schedule include Sasha Dobson, who is currently touring with Norah Jones, on the 1st; Milton, who has wowed them in the city and on national tour with his gritty city music, on the 4th, Tony Scherr, the Bill Laswell collaborator on the 8th, Andy Statman, an unbelievable bluegrass fiddler who has played with David Bromberg, but since those days has become an unbelievable clarinetist

playing jazzy and bluegrassy klezmer-style music and on the 17th, the Wicked Messengers and the Susquehanna Industrial Tool & Die Co.

But don't forget, if you need your guitar set up, or are looking to learn a new instrument, Jalopy is not only convenient, but a great place to go for lessons and musical instrument repair and maintenance, plus they have a nice selection of vintage guitars for sale.

The Jalopy Theater and School of Music is located at 315 Columbia Street and is open every day but Tuesday and have a very snazzy website at www.jalopy.biz



Above is the Jalopy stage where exceptional music is presented nightly. Below is a sampling of the vintage instruments for sale.



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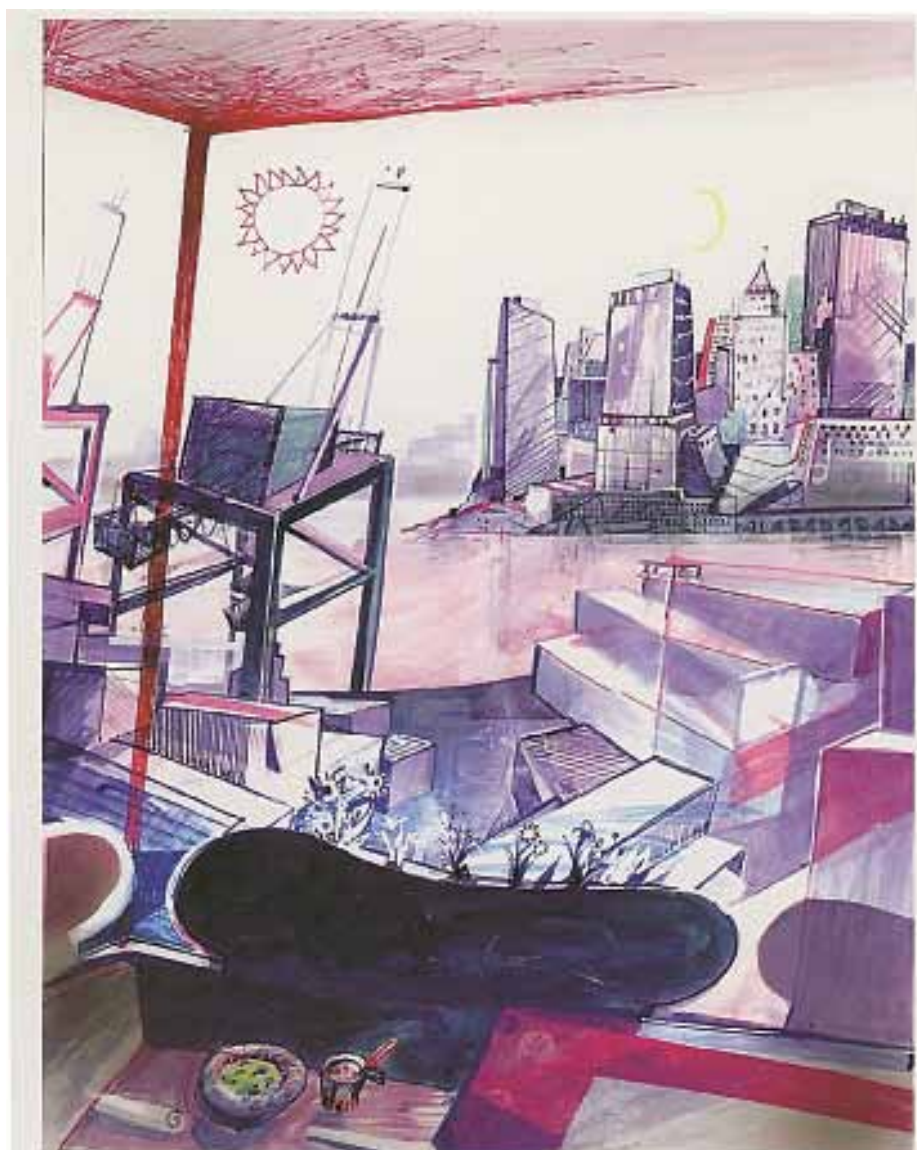
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Red Hook History

A Monthly Feature of the Red Hook Star-Revue: Knowing our past is vital to knowing our future

“Columbia Street Nostalgia: ‘Meet Me at the the Clock’”

by Brooks of Sheffield of Lost City, <http://lostnewyorkcity.blogspot.com>



Old South Brooklynites don't forget easy. To some, Columbia Street may seem like a fairly bleak thoroughfare with a few nice businesses and a lot of charmless, recent-vintage, red-brick architecture (right). But to them, it's where they spent the Saturday nights of their youth.

From 1900 to 1960 or so, Columbia Street was what Court and Smith Streets are today—the place you bought your goods, ate out, saw

movies, met friends, had fun. Push-carts lined Union Street between Hicks and Columbia. There were shoe stores, movie houses, luncheonettes. Absolutely nothing of it is left today. The death of the docks, neglect and a big dig which caused many buildings to collapse utterly erased the street as a life force. But it didn't erase memories.

Go in Two Fifteen, the newish Italian chowhouse with the oldish

customers, or Sonny and Nancy's corner shop on Union, and you'll see old black-and-whites of the bustling strip in its heyday. (The same pictures, actually.) One notable feature of the street back then was a huge, standing street clock. It was on the east side of Columbia between President and Union. It was well-known enough that people would use it as a meeting place, they way they do the information booth in Grand Central.

The photos to the left and just below are generously contributed by President Street author Nino Pantano. They depict two Columbia Street shops owned by his father, Santo Pantano. His first shop is on the left and it borders a movie theater where if you look closely you will see that the Phantom is the featured film. The street clock described above was located right in front of the Florsheim Shoe store pictured below. The photo at the lower right depicts one of two rival photo studios on the same block.

It was removed sometime in the '70s. It may not have disappeared altogether, however. As one old-timer said to me, "Somebody's got that clock somewhere."



Red Hook History Begins and Ends With Water



Opposite South Brooklyn is Governor's island, between which and the shore is Buttermilk channel, about a quarter of a mile wide, in early times fordable by cattle, but now navigable for the largest vessels. The portion of land between Buttermilk channel and Gowanus bay is known as Red Hook point. Brooklyn is for the most part considerably elevated above tide water. The S. and E. borders are occupied by a broad range of low hills; a large portion of the S. part of the city is low and level. Along the East river S. of Fulton street is an irregular bluff, 70 ft. above the level of the sea, known as Brooklyn Heights. It is thickly built upon, and affords a magnificent view of the city and bay of New York. The city embraces several districts still locally known by the names which they bore when they were distinct municipalities. Brooklyn proper includes the older portion of the city S. of Wallabout bay, and the part of this lying S. of Atlantic avenue is known as South Brooklyn. Williamsburgh includes the thickly settled portions N. of Wallabout bay.



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