

***THE BRONX CLUB OF
VEGAS VALLEY
NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2011***



The American Female Guardian Society and Home for the Friendless.

See the story on page 4.

If you require any information concerning the Club, know of anyone interested in joining, or have ideas for upcoming events you would like to host, please contact me Leslie Schoenberg ls1166@aol.com, 838-3560 or Sue Braun suefromtustin@yahoo.com, cell 510-7788. In addition, I am also the Newsletter Editor. If you have, any articles about The Bronx that you would like to have put in the Newsletter, please forward them to me at the above email address.

Upcoming Events:

April 17, 2011 –David and Doris Bluth (dorisbluth@yahoo.com), and Harvey and Idele Kaplan (bassett4@cox.net) , will host this month's event. Last day to respond is April 11. The event will begin at 5:30 pm, in the Clubhouse of La Mancha, on Cielo Vista, which is off Buffalo between Vegas and Lake Mead. When you respond, you can get more specific directions from Doris or Idele. This month we will have a BBQ tentatively featuring pork ribs, chicken, yams, veggie cocktail (suitable for vegetarians or vegans), bread, garden/Caesar salad and peach cobbler. Your hosts will provide cake, coffee and soft drinks. The cost per person is \$14.00. We are fortunate to once again have Peggy Thompson entertain us. She was such a big hit at our event last August.

May 15, 2011. Please note the May event has certain requirements not common to most events. "Showtime 2011" at The Starbright Theatre, 2215 Thomas Ryan Blvd, in Sun City, will go on sale April 5, at the price of \$11. each. To order tickets contact Judy Auerbach at 242-0727 or jeadancer@cox.net before April 20. Doors open at 1:30 pm. Once the tickets go on sale, they go fast, especially for the afternoon performance. The show will be preceded by brunch at the Vista Grille, in The Palm Valley Clubhouse, at Del Webb Blvd and Echo Mesa Street in Sun City. Food is ordered at the counter and picked up when your number is called. If you can make only the show or the brunch, please let Judy know when you call her to respond. Also, please ask Judy for directions when you call for your tickets. Note the final day to respond and get your payment to Judy is April 20, 2011.

Additional information to follow in future newsletters for the events mentioned below:

June 19, hosted by Norm and Margie Karp. There will be a speaker on Identity Theft. NY Pizza and Pasta, Sahara and Jones.

July 17, hosted by Ron and Sandy Scher. Mimi's Café, Ft. Apache and Charleston. Our guest speaker will be Leon Goldberg, former member of The Hagganah and Israeli hero.

August 21, hosted by Les and Sue Braun, Speaker is a first responder.

September 18, hosted by the Braun's and the Schoenberg's, Citizens Review Board

As you can see, members are stepping up to keep the Club going. Please think about doing your share to help.

THE BRONX CLUB OF VEGAS VALLEY LADIES CLUB

INVITATION TO OUR APRIL LUNCHEON

***WHERE: Three Angry Wives Pub,
8820 W. Charleston, #105***

WHEN: April 7, 2011

TIME: 12:30 PM

RSVP: Yes or no to Susan Blonder, 395-6878

NOTE: If you find you are unable to make the luncheon that day, please call Leslie at 513-2553 so we can have an exact count for the restaurant.

The History and my Memories of WOODYCREST
By David A. Henry

It is hoped that within this History, and within the pages contained on this Website, those who may have a connection with Woodycrest, as well as any Auspice under which it was operated, may find semblance of happiness and peace, and a feeling of togetherness as we share our thoughts and strengthen a bond that ties us together. Whether emotions are good, bad or indifferent, we share a common element, in that we are the children of Woodycrest, as were those who have gone before us, and we have made it to points in our lives that reflection upon the past is inevitable. Those reflections should not be held in neither grudge nor shame, but held as a stepping-stone in our lives which enabled us to move forward, as so many have done, to lead productive, fruitful lives. Read, enjoy, and reflect.

The origin of Woodycrest, as it pertains to the building located at 936 Woodycrest Avenue, Bronx NY, 10452, and its Founders, goes much further back than when it was designed in 1900, by architect William B. Tuthill, who was a prominent designer of public and residential buildings, including Carnegie Hall. This building took two years to construct, on a bluff overlooking the Harlem River Valley. It was completed in 1902.

The predecessor of what we know to be Woodycrest was "American Female Guardian Society". The Society was founded in 1834 to aid impoverished women and children and was run entirely by women except for a small board of male counselors. Apparently, through a series of mergers of the different Charitable Organizations, including that of "Home for Friendless Children" (organized in 1849) who had an association with "Five Points House of Industry", it was necessary to locate a Home in the Bronx, due to the high cost of Manhattan Real Estate. During the early 1800's, in an area known as the Five Points District, which is located at the intersection of BAXTER, WORTH and PARK Streets in Manhattan, there stood an old Brewery. Long abandoned, the building became home to vagrants and people of no means.

Charles Dickens, in a visit to this place in 1842, described the place as thus: "This is the place: these narrow ways diverging to the right and left and reeking everywhere with dirt and filth. Such lives as are led here bear the same fruit here as elsewhere. The coarse and bloated faces at the doors have counterparts at home and the entire wide world over. Debauchery has made the very houses prematurely old. See how the rotten beams are tumbling down, and how the patched and broken windows seem to scowl dimly, like eyes that have been hurt in drunken frays. Many of these pigs live here. Do they ever wonder why their masters walk upright in lieu of going on all fours? And why they talk instead of grunting?"

Due to the decrepit conditions, and the in the pursuance of the Missions goals, the Ladies Mission Society went in and turned the Old Brewery into "the New Mission House at Five Points". This would be the ancestor to our "Woodycrest-Five Points" as we may recall the name being at one point in time.

At the turn of the Century, much epidemic scoured the City, and in search of a healthier place for the children to grow up in, the Five Points House of Industry had received a very generous donation of land in Rockland County, NY, and became what we known as Happy Valley in Pomona. At this time, the Mansion home in the Bronx was also erected.

How the name WOODYCREST was acquired, can only be surmised at this point, since the building faced Woodycrest Avenue, one would be led to believe that it was named for the Street on which it was located. No doubt, the Street itself was so called, as most of us remember; the building sat on top of a hill, and below stood much vegetation and trees. It was in fact, a "woody crest" upon which this building stood.

In 1920, the Home was known as "Home for Friendless Children". There were 199 residents, and 34 Staff members. Viola L. Parks (1879 - 1966) was Director. Residents were referred to as "Inmates". By 1930, 235 children lived at the Bronx location. At this time, it was called "Home for Friendless and American Female Guardian Society". Entire families of children, coming from all over the Country called this place home, however most of the residents were from New York City. These children were often of foreign parentage, ranging from Italian, to Polish. Only a handful was born in another Country. There were also 42 staff members who resided in the building at that time. With one exception, that of "Matron", we are able to see that the occupations and staff count are almost identical to what we will remember when we were there. Viola Parks was still Head Director, which position was taken by Douglas Merrill (1912-1985?) and wife. Do you remember when they would PERSONALLY sign Christmas Cards for each child in Woodycrest? Malcomb Davidson, a young man of 28 from NY, held Mr. Enderlys (1916-1991) position.

Helen Higgins was in Josephine Mundys (1891-1974) position as Nurse. Taking charge of Recreation at the time, was 22 year old Miss Muriel Lee, of course we are familiar with Willy Worsley in that capacity, famed Basketball Player for the **. There were countless other Staff members, whose names have been long forgotten or unobtainable. Omission of any certain person here, is not intentional, it is merely a reflection of this writers own recollection of the Staff at the time he was resident at Woodycrest. Naturally, as we age, memory tends to fade, and it is with much amazement that I am able to recall the names I am able to place here.***

Also in 1930, Susan Grafta was the head Cook, a position we fondly recall Willie sweating over, and Mary Diehl (1899-1983) was Assistant Cook....our beloved (and belated) friend Andy's dedicated vocation. I will bet Miss Diehl did not have a Blue Charger as Andy did! Recall Andy always catching a snooze between meal preparations... Kate Curran, and Sylvia Lynch have both passed on, however Rhoda Cousley is still with us, having recently celebrated her 94th birthday. She has not changed very much in all these years!

At that time, 1930, there were no teachers on Staff. I have learned that the children attended outside school and this was a source of consternation with the general population and School Officials, which prompted some Classes to be held within the Building. If a child was unruly in the Public School, he or she was quickly labeled "from the HOME". We recall Sopia K. Rosner (1894-1983), and her husband Harry. Mrs. Rosner was a very dedicated Teacher who was on loan to us from P.S. ** up on Anderson Avenue. Another Teacher was furnished to Woodycrest for the tutoring of the older men.**

While the names of the "Dormitories" have not been preserved in the older records, it would probably not be out of context to assume that they have always been named as we remember them. In such Organizations based on charitable roots, people were honored or Memorialized by way of dedication of entire, or portions of Buildings, Parks, Airports and Streets. Not unlike the way, we honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, our past Presidents as well as other notable Americans; the Dormitories of Woodycrest bear the names of early, wealthier New York Families.

PECK, for the youngest children, under the care at one time of Mr. James Carter; DURYEA, COLGATE, KL (Kirkland and Lathrop); GT (Gould and Tuthill) and finally, Robert Hall. With the exception of Robert Hall, the aforementioned names are synonymous with wealthy and prominent families, all known for their philanthropic nature. It could be safely assumed that the Mansion that stands at 936 Woodycrest Avenue was built mostly, if not entirely, of funds raised from these leading families.

Robert Hall was a much later addition from the original plans of Home for Friendless Children. Robert Hall was quite a building to behold in that neighborhood. It consisted of Dorm Rooms in the upper level for the older residents, a Game Room, which looked down onto the Gymnasium, which also had a Stage for performances. Many a weekend was spent on the Stage watching the Basketball, softball and football games on a small black and white TV. A grand swimming pool with a diving board was there on the lower level, below the Gym. There were boys and girls locker rooms!

Stoopball on the lower Courtyard was a favorite pastime, as was stickball. Rock Park, across the street, was a favorite place to go and climb the rocks and play in the park. Now, who could ever forget the free games at Yankee Stadium in those days? We went to Bat Day, Ball Day, and most of the major events. When Yankee Stadium Parking lot was empty, we were allowed to play Softball there, which we did quite frequently.

Church was something that was left up to the residents in later years. As there was a Chapel in the building, there was no need for the residents to go elsewhere, and the religious leanings at the time were Protestant. As time passed, residents were allowed to go to the neighboring Churches of our choice. Some of the residents went to several Churches across Macomb's Dam Bridge, and attended Sunday school there. There were still services held in the Chapel in the Building though. We were given Tithes to place in the baskets if we were going to the outside Church.

While it is not known whether the so-called "inmates" of 1920 or 1930 were confined to the building except for school hours, we do know that with the passing of time, freedom to go where we desired (as long as permission was obtained) on the outside was afforded us. In this way, residents were not subjected to what one might consider "incarceration"; instead, we were given the freedom that any member of any private family might enjoy.

This is not to say that Discipline was absent in this atmosphere, as we all remember those words that would put us in shock....."No allowance". On the other hand, when the group that you were with had the enjoyment of swimming and playing, you would not be allowed to join in. The most harsh and extreme punishment, was when you were made to sit in Mr. Enderly's outer office, on a Sunday or Saturday while the other children played. That was sure to make one think twice about future infractions of the rules.

A fact not to be overlooked is that Woodycrest was home to both male and female children upon its Founding. It was not until 1968 (or thereabouts) that the female population had been eliminated. Reasons for this change remain unclear, however rumors abound, and to repeat them here as supposition would not be fair to that portion of the population that had been relocated. Suffice it to say, the Dormitories that the female population occupied, remained vacant from the last day they resided in that building, up to and including the day we left for our new home in Pomona.

Here I digress, for as stated in an earlier portion of this Narrative, Woodycrest had origins associated with Five Points Mission. The Mission acquired Land, and children were sent from the streets of Five Points, as well as the Mission House in New York City, to a more serene and healthier atmosphere of Rockland County. The Cottages were named FORD, WHEELOCK, JAMES, PERKINS, RUSSELL, CAMP, CAMP COTTAGE Jr., EGLESTON. There was also the FARM HOUSE as well as the Arlo Pardee Clark Infirmary, which was the Hospital that was used. Four COTTAGES were for Female, and the rest Male. Ages ranged usually within 4 to 17 years of age, with more 11-15 year olds in attendance. The children were referred to as Pupils, and the facility was known as Five Points Mission School. Later, it was referred to as "Happy Valley" and was situated at what is now 110 Pomona Road. The Conklin Family owned this property at one time and their family Cemetery is still being taken care of by the current owners, Minisceongo Country Club and Golf Course.

This is not the full and complete history of WOODYCREST, nor its association with happy Valley.... More information will be posted as it is discovered ... and please, FEEL FREE to share your memories with us ... Perhaps a favorite place you went, a favorite Counselor, a funny situation or incident ... or just an overall idea of what you remember. We would all love to share in those memories with you.

***David A Henry,
New Port Richey, Florida***

The article below is from The New York Times, November 3, 1902, announcing the opening of Home for the Friendless.

HOME FOR THE FRIENDLESS.

The New Building in the Bronx to be
Dedicated and Opened for
Inspection.

The new Home for the Friendless at Woody Crest Avenue and One Hundred and Sixty-first Street is to be opened this week, and the dedication is to be on Saturday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock. Judge H. W. Bookstaver will preside at the exercises, Mayor Low will be a guest of honor, and addresses are to be delivered by Dr. Josiah Strong, Dr. John Bancroft Devins of The New York York Observer, and others. A Reception Committee will take visitors through the apartments.

A part of the building was completed on Oct. 16, and the 120 children who had spent the past fourteen months, while the construction work was going on, at the society's Summer home at Oceanport, N. J., were brought to their permanent quarters. All of the rooms, with the exception of the children's dining room and the resident teacher's room, have been furnished by gifts.

The rooms that are ready for occupancy are the chapel, the five dormitories, the caretaker's rooms, the solarium and hospital wards, the kindergarten, gymnasium, playrooms, and most of the offices. It is announced that it will cost \$1,023 to furnish the dining room and \$300 for the resident teacher's room. Mrs. S. J. Hallock, 936 Woody Crest Avenue, is Treasurer.

The American Female Guardian Society and Home for the Friendless has carried on this work—a work by women for women and children—in the old home on Twenty-ninth Street and in its industrial schools in the tenement districts of the city for sixty-eight years, 35,000 children having been kept in the home for terms varying from two months to two or three years, and between 6,000 and 7,000 being taught in its schools each year. Hundreds of the home children are occupying places of honor and trust. Now, in its sixty-ninth year, the society in its new home enters on a larger and more thorough work

April Birthdays

Sheldon Gottlieb ***April 14***

Dave Einhorn ***April 17***

Dave Bluth ***April 24***

Shirley Seidman ***April 30***

April Anniversaries

Philip and Shirley Seidman ***April 4, their 63rd.***

Tom and Robin Johnson ***April 27, their 23rd.***

Paul and Amanda Stuart Heaney ***April 27.***

Following are some pictures from our February event.



Lydia Lebovic, Speaker



Left to right – Rob and Harriet Stein standing back Norm Karp, sitting Margie Karp, center front Allen and Susan Blonder, Bette Schifrin, Rita Ort.



Front Ron and Sandy Scher, the rear Michele and Ken Stern.

Our March event was held at N.Y. Pizza and Pasta. We had Michel Martel entertain us. Following are some pictures from the event.



Members shown left to right: Greg Abbott, Steve and Denise Needleman, Edith and hidden Dave Einhorn, Larry and Rona Schwartz.



This picture shows members left to right: Gene and Doris Berns, right in the back, Margie and Norm Karp, Bernadine Zaben, Harriet and Rob Stein, Allen and Susan Blonder.



In this picture, we have front across the table Sandy and Ron Scher, Leslie Schoenberg, Elaine and Marty Robinson and Rochelle and Ken Goodman. The back table is in the previous picture.



Michel Martel
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