

Harrison Park TRIBUNE

December 2019



Sheila Moses
President



Vera McCants
Treasurer



Don Greenfield
Secretary

A Message from the Board

Dear Residents,

With the holidays upon us I would like to take this opportunity to share my insights and thoughts of how we celebrate at HPT.

Please know that we are an inclusive vertical community and respect the various and interesting ways you celebrate with your families. Whether hanging a star or lighting a candle, we celebrate with you.

Our annual holiday party is a way for us to come together as a community and celebrate the holidays. This neighborly tradition allows us to extend holiday well wishes to new and old residents of HPT. We hope to see you on December 14 in the rear lobby.

The board will recognize our staff with a holiday lunch. It's our way of showing our appreciation for all the work they do for our residents. Please consider donating to the holiday staff fund.

As we look ahead to 2020, please know that the board is working very hard behind the scenes to ensure the quality of life you expect at HPT. There are many projects on the horizon for 2020 and we are focused on the day to day business of improving the building. You will continue to get updates at the shareholders meetings.

On behalf of the HPT board and myself, we wish you and your families a season of thanksgiving, peace and joy.

Sheila Moses
HPT Board President



Nikki Amos
Vice President



Helena Branch
Director



Marsha Wilkerson
Director



Barbara Heisler
Director

Holiday Entertaining Made Super Easy

Want to invite folks over for holiday cheer and some vitals? Too busy to cook or out of practice? It can be done. Here are a few of the local sources:

Your Daily Baguette, 466 Central Ave, East Orange, 973-677-2576. A Haitian bakery with the flakiest patties you'll ever devour. Desserts as well.

Ambassador Fish & Chicken, 74 Dodd St, East Orange, 973-673-3400. Some say this is the best wings, fish, and shrimp in town. Go to Doordash for delivery.

Master Pizza, 41 Freeman St, West Orange, 973-669-6777. A complete Italian menu including serving platters for parties. Their delivery is super-fast and prices are reasonable.

Star Tavern, 400 High Street, Orange, 973-675-3336. Though tops on many people's pizza preferences, pizza is best eaten on premises. Their thin crust gets mushy en transit.

Town Hall Delicatessen, 74 First Street, South Orange,

973-762-4900. This is the home of the NJ Sloppy Joe (usually two meats, cheese, cole slaw, dressing between three super thin slices of rye bread). Delivery.

Ashley Marketplace, 1 South Orange Ave, South Orange, 973-762-5200. One of the best catering menus around. They offer everything from cheese platters to specialty cakes and everything in between. Lots of food for the money and well presented. Delivery.

—Ellen Greenfield

The Shoppe for Holiday Shopping


T'is the season for SHOPPING!!! There are neighborhood stores and shopping malls. BUT—why brave the traffic and weather? Online shopping has its perks—no need to get dressed, you can shop in the middle of the night. BUT—why not walk out your door, step into the elevator and visit The Shoppe on the basement level of our building for your holiday shopping? Lots to choose from and you'll get the experience of meeting and visiting with your neighbors. And you will be supporting our HPT Secret Garden.

Margarita, Helen and Gloria have agreed to offer additional shopping opportunities on December 14 and December 21, 11 AM-2 PM. You just might find the perfect gift and some holiday refreshments. If you want a personal and private shopping experience, give Margarita a call at 862-444-3703 any time after 1 PM and leave a message. Thank you for shopping close to home and helping to support our garden!



Photos by Irene Pomianowski

Happy Holly-Days at Harrison Park Towers

 It's that time of year again when the smell of "chestnuts burning," the sight of Salvation Army santas ringing their jingle bells, and brightly lighted menorahs of silver and blue announce the holiday season.

Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa decorations deck the halls of homes, offices and store windows, but none more gloriously and grand than the stunning display at 377 S. Harrison Street. All it takes is a quick spin in the revolving doors to the sleek lobby where a duo of golden reindeer dazzle, from hoof to horn, in twinkling white lights. The glowing reindeer are perfectly placed in the tall, front windows like guards protecting their kingdom. A few more steps in, on the floor and scattered along the wall, are radiant red poinsettias peeking up at passersby as they make their way to the piece de resistance at the end of the hall.

Ta-da! There, in all of its sartorial splendor, stands the exquisitely decorated tree flanked by more reindeer, poinsettias and boxes covered in shiny



foil gift wrap, finished off with crimson ribbon. The theme of a white Christmas glistens with silver and white bows, large and small balls, angels and snowflakes as they hang gingerly onto the dark green boughs. Woven around the tree are delicate, blinking, bright, white lights that dance to their own beat bouncing and boldly sparkling in the reflection of the black marble walls and floors in the hallway. And, at the very top sits a large, shimmering, silver star. It is, indeed, a beautiful sight to behold!



This year, the creative elf team of Angela, Nikki, Cheryl (McCall), Ellen, Sandy (Kwanzaa elf) and their busy helpers gathered to create holiday magic. To them and all who

participate we owe our thanks for making our spirits bright, reminding us of community, giving, caring and the essence of this time of year in all belief... PEACE, LOVE, & GOOD WILL TO ALL!
MERRY HOLLY DAYS!

—Debbie Wood

Photos by Irene Pomianowski



It's a Wrap

Our 4th Annual Holiday Bazaar fundraiser, sponsored by the HPT Events Committee, was held this past November in support of two popular events: The Winter Holiday Party and Spring Garden Party. Each year more varied and creative vendors participate in the bazaar, this year being the best year ever with 25 vendors. One vendor was overheard to say that in addition to sales, they enjoy spending the time with the people of Harrison Park Towers. While raising funds the Events Committee also spreads the word about the good vibes at HPT. Thanks to the Events Committee!

Please come, one and all, to join in the celebrations at the Annual Holiday Party held on December 14 at HPT.

—Irene Pomianowski



Photos by Irene Pomianowski

In Memoriam

On Wednesday, November 27, Louie Crew Clay left this earth but behind him, a wealth of thoughtful prose, sharing his observations on life.

Wonderous Silence

Words can't say more, not even a \$10-word like ineffable.

We expect cold to be forbidding, but it's not.

We see our frozen garden from upstairs, snug and warm.

Spring transmogrified.

Every bug, bird, and flower out of sight to survive.

The garden grays and chills.

Isolation protects us on the brink of wondrous beauty.



Louie would have celebrated his 83rd birthday on December 9 and on February 2, he and Ernest would have celebrated their 45th Anniversary. He will be missed in this community.

A Taste of East Orange

I had the pleasure of attending A TASTE OF EAST ORANGE, November 9, 2019 on the rooftop of The Essence located on 144 South Harrison Street, East Orange. Ten restaurants were featured, along with the Khalil Kwame Bell Jazz Band, which resulted in an evening of international flavors and music. Works by local artists Sterling Brown and Gwendolyn Jackson were on display.

Featured restaurants were:

Spice N Thing

Dominy's

Soul Food Factory

Urban Taste

South Beach Bar & Grill

International Fusion Restaurant

Limin's Cafe Caribe

Strictly Bagels & Things

Jersey Boys Halal

Mrs. G's

Two restaurants I visited recently were Soul Food Factory, 431 Main Street, which features a fried catfish, fried chicken, fried turkey wings, calabash (a mix of collard greens and cabbage), BBQ'd spareribs and lastly, fried chicken and waffles. Blue Island Iced Tea is a special holiday drink being offered. Additionally, each Friday night highlights Karaoke singing. It was a pleasure chatting with owner/chef Mark Longchamp.

My second eatery was Stage 5 Restaurant & Grill, 441 Main Street, a New Orleans-themed restaurant featuring seafood. Manager Sharron Murry offered a sample of her Salmon-Shrimp Cajun Macaroni and Cheese featured for this holiday season

Do visit any of these restaurants to support our local businesses.

—Fran McClain

This Newsletter is Brought to You by...

Nikki Amos

Vicki Carter

Ellen Greenfield

Fran McClain

Sheryl O'Connell

Irene Pomianowski

Betty Simmons

Debbie Wood

This team will be working together in order to publish a newsletter for the HPT Community. Plans for 2020 include a Winter issue, Spring/Summer issue and Fall issue. Would you like to join us as a writer, researcher, editor, or photographer? Or, you just may have some ideas about what sort of information you would like to see included in any of these proposed issues. Contact Vicki Carter, vcarter31@aol.com. We would love to have you join our team.

What is Tradition?

Perhaps it is best described in a song from the Broadway musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*. The lyrics describe the craziness of a fiddler on the roof trying to scratch out a pleasant, simple tune without breaking his neck. Every one of us is a fiddler on the roof. Why do we stay? How do we keep our balance? Tradition! How did this tradition start? Don't know. But it's a tradition. Tradition is the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation.

Holiday traditions are much easier to keep and pass on when family units continue to live in the same geographical area, but today, because of a myriad of reasons, those traditions require a certain amount of fluidity.

Sharon O'Neill, HPT Property Manager recalls Christmas Eve in her family. An Italian Seven Fishes Dinner was followed by attending a Midnight Mass service. On Christmas Day the extended family numbering 18-20 aunts, uncles, and cousins would assemble at her Grandmother's house. Each person would have purchased a "grab bag" gift to bring and family names would be placed in a hat for drawing to receive a gift. Of course, Grandmother received a gift from each family. After a wonderful dinner that included many special desserts, the entire group would raise their voices in singing Christmas Carols. Before too many years passed, cousins got married, children were born and soon there were just too many people to gather at Grandmother's house.

When families move and begin new traditions, a community is formed including an incredible array of cultures and traditions such as we have in our HPT community.

In Trinidad, around 9 PM, on Christmas Eve, family and friends gather in someone's home for participating in a style of Caribbean folk music called parang. After an hour or so, the entire group moves to another home for more food and music. Parang continues to be heard until January 6th,

which is Epiphany and the end of the holiday season. Angela Benjamin remembers participating in this tradition and then on Christmas morning gathering with her family for a breakfast that included coconut bread, ham and coffee.

Some families purchase for Christmas morning matching sleepwear with holiday designs. Cheryl McCall's family gathers for a big breakfast in their 'house pajamas'.

Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, is an eight-day festival with the tradition of lighting a nine-branched menorah. On each of the holiday's eight nights, another candle is added to the menorah after sundown; the ninth candle, called the Shamash is used to light the other candles. A blessing is recited when lighting the candles. The menorah is usually displayed in a window as a reminder to others of the miracle that inspired this Jewish holiday.

Michele Davis recalls her family gathering each evening to light the menorah. On the first night, gifts were given. As the years passed and after a move to Princeton, Michele established a new tradition of hosting what she describes as a 'wonderful' Chanukah dinner. Filling her home with friends and family, this dinner always included latkes. While Chanukah today seems to be celebrated as a 'Jewish Christmas' there are still families who celebrate it as it's intended to be celebrated.

Growing up Jewish, but feeling funny about loving Christmas, Sandra Charlap, as a young mother with two little ones, created her own personal holiday that takes place mid-December. After finding the perfect tree, Pink Feather Funday was born! Wear Pink! Eat Pink! Make Pink!... A traditional meal might include pink and white striped pasta with a pink sauce and a pink beverage. Baking and decorating cookies, continuing with the pink motif is a major part of this holiday. There might be an additional

craft project involved continuing the pink theme. Sandra says her original tree is showing its age, so if you run across a pink feathered tree, she would love to have a new one!

Lillian Gibson's delightful great-granddaughters, Imani Smith (age 8) and Za'nyiah Brooks (age 10) told me with great energy about their Christmas traditions. While visiting at the recent Holiday Bazaar, they reported "Christmas Eve is very busy at Grandma's!" The tree gets decorated, presents get wrapped, and cookies get baked. Finally, it's time for pajamas and going to sleep. On Christmas morning one present is opened before a breakfast of mini bagels with cream cheese, butter and jam. Grandpa arrives with more presents to open. Before too long playtime begins and there are always new clothes for trying on. Lots of cousins arrive with MORE PRESENTS! Christmas Day Brunch always includes a most favorite dish of scrambled eggs and if the Christmas Eve cookie stash has been diminished, more cookies get baked and of course, eaten. Before too long, Imani and Za'nyiah head for home, get in their pajamas and fall asleep with wonderful memories of Christmas traditions to carry forward in their lives...

I grew up with lots of aunts, uncles, and cousins, so it was easy to carry on the same traditions. After marrying, moving to North Carolina, followed by living in New York City, and finally arriving in New Jersey, some old traditions had survived, and new ones had formed for my small family of three. New traditions included serving breakfast in lower Manhattan at a shelter then returning home, getting back into pajamas, and watching movies. Some holidays were spent with friends who didn't have extended family in the area. We hosted Christmas Day Open Houses which seemed to be a good way for friends to share the bounty of excess cookies, candies and assorted food gifts collected during the season. But the tradition that lasted for more than twenty years was the annual making of chocolate covered peanut butter balls. When Logan was just a toddler, I found a recipe easy enough for her to help make. Afterwards, I discarded the recipe knowing

I could find a more age-appropriate recipe for the next year. Some months later, I overheard a conversation she was having with a friend. "Well, the tradition in our family is making hundreds of peanut butter balls dipped in chocolate. We ALWAYS do that!" I went searching for the original recipe, found it and a tradition was born. Yes, there were several hundred made for holiday parties and delivered on Christmas Day to neighbors and friends. There was even a song composed with details about this tradition!

HPT is filled with people celebrating Christmas, Kwanza, Hanukah, Boxing Day, and maybe more. As we hold onto old traditions while creating new ones as families grow, change, move, mix, marry/unmarry, and merge together, remember this is mostly sharing a special season of togetherness.

—Vicki Carter

Holiday Trash Update

It's okay to recycle soft drink and water bottles, milk cartons, laundry and cleaning product containers, glass containers, metal cans...but please make sure they are *clean*.

Tied garbage bags go in the chute but (clean) recyclables go in the compactor room cans or in the trash room on the basement level across from the HPT Shoppe. Holiday gift wrapping paper and gift boxes should be brought down to the compactor room on the basement level.

Best to feed family and friends BUT not pests!

Please note...

The office of HPT will be closed December 24-25.

Miguel "Lito" Peraza, Super, Front desk:
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Kimma Walker, Assistant Property Manager

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The View From 15C

By Debbie Wood

Looking out of my bedroom window in the morning, as my day begins, is a moment of reflective thought, anticipation and wonderment. My one-bedroom apartment, snuggled in the “C” corner line of our lofty building, offers a scene of the unparalleled “greatest city in the world.” NYC, Manhattan, Big Apple, Gotham, the City take your pick for it certainly is an amazing, heart stopping sight to see every day. “Good morning,” I ritualistically announce to her as I take in the view du jour.

I grew up in East Orange and Orange for most of my early life, although there were detours for military interludes that took my family to live in Massachusetts and Germany, home base remained East Orange. Whenever we returned, settled back in and re-established our old routine I’d plead and pester my parents to take us to Rockefeller Center at Christmas to see the tree... please, please, pretty please. The four of us would pack into the heavy, husky, tangerine and beige ‘56 Mercury to briskly drive through the highways, under the river and into the Lincoln Tunnel for a holiday adventure.

For me, my excitement gradually swelled with each mile and would erupt into ecstasy as we crossed the line of demarcation that neatly marked leaving New Jersey and entering New York in the Hudson River. How they picked that spot is beyond me, but I accept it as maritime truth. And, when we exited the tunnel into the city light I witnessed magic happen. We were surrounded by buildings too high to see the top, more people walking than in all of East Orange and a stampede of loud, bellowing yellow cabs whisking by every which way. New York welcomed its numerous guests with festively decorated store windows, lighted reindeer, and a giant tree with too many colored lights to count, topped by a gilded star.

Now that I’ve again returned to my home base, after living in Washington, D.C. for forty-two years, my

proximity to Manhattan and perspective has evolved from fantasy to reality. When making the difficult decision to relocate from D.C. to E.O. the pros were strong. My association with Harrison Park Towers reached back to 1984 when my mother, Bernie Sims, moved to the building after my father’s death. A few years later my sister, Cheryl McCampbell, purchased the apartment across the hall on the fifteenth floor, both front facing apartments with sweeping New York vistas. I still had family and very good friends in the area, plus it was my old turf. As they say, it was a “no brainer,” especially since 15C was available. As much as I enjoyed the life that I was leaving, and it meant saying good-bye to the home I created with my late husband and our son it was clear that it was time to move forward. Now, I have my own view in my charming, one bedroom, corner apartment.



I’ve learned that getting to New York during the Christmas rush now is much more difficult, hectic, crowded, congested and daunting

whether by car, train or ferry. The masses come from everywhere, they mingle, push, and navigate the rush of humanity each day. New, taller buildings that almost touch the sky loom, and yellow cabs compete with Uber and Lyft inching along Fifth Avenue. And, the daily morning news constantly reminds me of the grim stories of murder, mayhem, misdeeds, mistakes and mischief in this city of 19.49 million moving bodies.

But, from my stunning, panoramic view in 15C I still see the fantasy in the reality of this rhythmic, mythical behemoth that somehow functions resolutely in constructive chaos. I remind myself about the positive stories of cooperation, community, compassion and creativity. I see the blue lights on the Empire State Building tower to celebrate Hanukah and Christmas lights of red and green. As the Holiday’s and New Year approach let us view this season with hope, promise, dreams and belief in eternal goodness and grace of mankind. I can’t wait to get back to take a bite of the Big Apple.

Photo by Sheryl O’Connell