

# THE MANHATTAN MIDTOWN

The Official Newsletter of Community Board Five  
Vikki Barbero, Chair

February 2011

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## COMMUNITY BOARD FIVE

Dear Friends –

The remarkable thing about Community Board Five is how much of the story of America is located right here, in the names of our streets and sub-districts. From 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Broadway to Union Square to the Garment Center - just saying any of these names evokes memories not merely of a street or a part of town, but an entire world, an entire history, an entire tradition.

This month we will be commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of an event that changed history – the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. Over the next month, there will be many events that in different ways will address what happened on that day (see below for a few of them; what is extraordinary is **how many events are planned** in other parts of the country, including such far-flung towns as Lexington, Kentucky!).

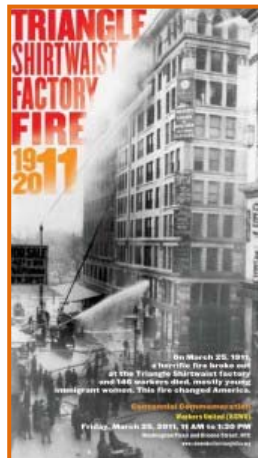
As the home of the Garment Center, we wish to do our part as well, but, in typical CB5 fashion, we will be looking to the future. On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, we will be holding a Town Hall on the future of the Garment Center and why it matters to NYC and to America. The Town Hall will be held in the auditorium at Parsons, at 560 Seventh Ave, at 40<sup>th</sup> Street at 6pm. We'll be sending out an official announcement as soon as a few more exciting details are firmed up. In the meantime, SAVE THE DATE! We hope you will join us.

Sincerely,  
Wally Rubin  
District Manager

## News and Events

**What Really Happened On March 25, 1911–** The following eye-witness account of the **Triangle Factory Fire** was provided by Louis Walldman, NY State Assemblyman, 1912.

- “One Saturday afternoon in March of that year — March 25, to be precise — I was sitting at one of the reading tables in the old Astor Library... It was a raw, unpleasant day... A few blocks away, the Asch Building at the corner of Washington Place and Greene Street was ablaze. The eighth, ninth, and tenth stories of the building were now an enormous roaring cornice of flames. Word had spread through the East Side, by some magic of terror, that the plant of the Triangle Waist Company was on fire and that several hundred workers were trapped. Horrified and helpless, the crowds — I among them — looked up at the burning building, saw girl after girl appear at the reddened windows, pause for a terrified moment, and then leap to the pavement below, to land as mangled, bloody pulp. This went on for what seemed a ghastly eternity. Occasionally a girl who had hesitated too long was licked by pursuing flames and, screaming with clothing and hair ablaze, plunged like a living torch to the street. Life nets held by the firemen were torn by the impact of the falling bodies. The emotions of the crowd were indescribable. Women were hysterical, scores fainted; men wept as, in paroxysms of frenzy, they hurled themselves against the police lines.”



**Learning From The Past -** The 1911 **Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire** was a devastation that highlighted the general disinterest of employers in the safety of those that work for them – exit doors that could have saved lives were locked to keep the workers inside. Especially pulled into focus was the plight of young, immigrant women, at the mercy of employers for their livelihoods. From the embers of the fire a movement was launched to provide safer working environments and increased awareness of immigrant rights. In commemoration of the centennial of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, the **League of Women Voters** invites you to hear leading scholars and activists discuss the implications of the tragedy and worker rights, then

and now. Welcoming remarks will be given by Professor Rupal Oza, Director of the Women and Gender Studies Program at Hunter, and Miriam Adelman, LWVNYC president. The event will be held at Hunter College, West Building, 1st floor Lobby (southwest corner of Lexington Avenue & 68th Street) Tuesday, March 8th 5:30-7:30 PM [Click here to RSVP](#) or call 212-725-3541

**Images Of A Tragedy - The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire: One Hundred Years After** is an exhibit that draws on historical photos, artifacts and film clips to tell the story of **The Triangle Factory Fire** and its contemporary lessons. The exhibit will be on display at **NYU Open House** (528 LaGuardia, between Bleecker and W. 3rd Streets) through May 2011.



**In Memorium** – Much has been written about the **Triangle Factory Fire** over the years, but perhaps images and eye-witness accounts are the only way to truly bring home the enormity of the tragedy. PBS will be broadcasting **Triangle Fire**, a documentary film on **American Experience** on

Monday, February 28th at 9pm. For more information and a preview [click here](#).

**Fashion Pays A Debt** –

The **Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT)** certainly has a spiritual connection to the **Triangle Factory Fire**. During the month of March, **FIT** will be host to several events that mark the 100<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary of the tragedy. From a discussion on worker's unions and sweatshops to songs and stories based on the fire, all events are free and open to the public. For more information on events at **FIT**, [visit their website](#).



**The Fabric of History** - The history of New York's garment industry is as much a history of the geographical environment as it is a history of labor, regulation, and fashion. From the piecework of the Lower East Side tenements, to early purpose-built lofts such as the Asch Building downtown,

home of the Triangle Waist Company, to the first garment district on the streets flanking Broadway, north and south of 23rd street, and finally to CB5's own **Garment District**, the garment industry has produced and been a product of its unique and changing built environment.

Spectacular events like the Triangle factory fire played an important role in this industrial geography. How did this and other factors lead to the creation of the Garment District? Why were garment lofts built where they were? How did this affect workers, manufacturers, and consumers? What is the legacy of the garment district today? **Andrew Dolkart**, historian of the Garment District, discusses the changing history and geography of the garment industry 100 years after the tragic fire. The event, co-sponsored by the Municipal Arts Society, takes place on March

16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm at the **Museum of the City of New York**, 1220 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., at 103<sup>rd</sup> Street. There is a minimal cost and reservations are required, so please call 917.492.3395 or visit the [Museum of the City of New York](#).



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## Precinct Community Council Meetings

Each month local Police Precincts hold **Community Council Meetings** where community members can voice their concerns on local issues affecting their quality of life. Council meetings are open to all residents of the precinct. The four precincts located in **Community Board Five**, and their respective Council meeting times are:



- **10th Precinct** - Last Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm, 119 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Hudson Guild Senior Center.  
Contact: Det. Mike Petrillo at 212-741-8226
- **13th Precinct** - Every 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm, 230 East 21<sup>st</sup> St.  
Contact: P.O. Mike Hnatko at 212-477-7427
- **Midtown North Precinct** - Every 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm, 427 West 47<sup>th</sup> St.  
Contact: Det. Stephen Giaco at 212-767-8447
- **Midtown South Precinct** - Every 3rd Thursday at 7pm at the Hotel New Yorker, 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 34<sup>th</sup> St.  
Contact: Det. Adam D'Amico; Det. Joe Bunster at 212-239-9846

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## Liquor License Applicants

[Click here](#) to be taken to the CB5 website for information on Liquor License applicants.

If you have any questions regarding this list, please call the office or email [office@cb5.org](mailto:office@cb5.org).

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## Contact Community Board Five

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**We're on the Web!**  
**[www.cb5.org](http://www.cb5.org)**

If your organization would like to publicize an event in **The Manhattan Midtown**, email your request to: [office@cb5.org](mailto:office@cb5.org). To be considered for publication events must be free and open to the public.

