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THE SOHO OBSERVER

"Integrity
Is
Priceless"

An independent publication for the community south of Houston Street.

Vol. I, No. 2

75 Spring Street, New York, N. Y. 10012

October 21, 1974

Yes, there is a community in SoHo

The prophets of doom who predict that New York City will soon become a replica of that urban metropolis depicted in *Little Murders* were refuted by several community actions taken in the south Village last week. A concern about the rising crime rate underscored the meetings held in the SoHo and Italian-American communities.

Italian-American community meeting

About 200 people attended the meeting at St. Alphonsus church on Tuesday evening, October 8th. They listened as Captain Mannino of the First Precinct told them that "within the past six weeks, we (the police) have uncovered a serious residential burglary problem which is concentrated in the Thompson, Spring, Prince and Grand Streets area". He urged the residents to be particularly alert to unusual sounds in their buildings as the method of entry "is very noisy and requires at least 3 to 10 minutes of work on the part of the burglar". If such noise is heard a call should be made to 911, and the caller should give her name and the exact location of "the burglarly in progress". The action taken by the Italian-American community is described in the "A Community Point of View" column, presented by three members of the new block association being formed to combat crime.

SoHo Artists Association community meeting

The meeting called by the SAA proposed a much broader agenda than that of the earlier St. Alphonsus church meeting. It soon became evident, however, that the majority of the about 300 people who attended are as concerned about the rise in crime as are the members of the Italian-American community. The meeting of October 9th never reached the important issues of leases and co-ops and was adjourned until Tuesday, October 22nd, when another meeting will cover unfinished business. The meeting, also attended by Tony Dapolito, Chairperson of Community Board Two, and Dom Masullo, a representative of the Italian-American

EDITORIAL

Free Forever

The SoHo Observer is and will continue to be given free to all interested residents of the SoHo/south Village community which it is pledged to serve. Copies will be available in local stores. (We are looking for additional storekeepers willing to distribute, particularly west of West Broadway and in Tribeca. A list of the stores offering the Observer so far appears on page 9.)

Producing the Observer, however, costs money, especially as this and future issues will be larger and set in a larger, more readable (some will say merely "readable") type face. We have subsidized publication of Volume I, Number 1; for future numbers we ask the community to underwrite publication, in at least these two ways:

1) SUBSCRIPTIONS: Subscribing will enable those who can afford to contribute to do so — we in return will guarantee subscribers a copy of each issue. Copies will always be available to all, however, whether they subscribe or not, through the listed stores.

2) CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING: This is the most advantageous advertising method — there is no clutter throughout the text pages, and there is no danger of being 'bought' by an advertiser because each will be limited to two classified-ad units in any one issue. Prices will be modest but should offset the major portion of production costs.

The Observer has been established to fill an information void in the SoHo/south Village area. This community must have news of such basic elements as legislation (and non-legisla-

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South Village gets it together

In an atmosphere of rising community tension, 200-odd South Village residents poured into the Hall of St. Alphonsus' Church on Tuesday, October 8, to discuss the unprecedented crime wave now sweeping through the area from Houston to Canal Streets, from West Broadway to the Hudson River. John Pepe, Captain of the First Pct. Auxiliary Police, invited Senior Captain Paul Mannino of the First Pct., and distributed flyers in the preponderantly Italian community a fruitful and exceedingly robust exchange centered on the influx of burglars, hold-up men, junkies, rapists, and street prowlers. It was quickly ascertained that the three drug programs south of Houston, the many large commercial enterprises employing workers from outside the neighborhood, and the several outrageous bars catering to people from outside the vicinity are funneling criminals into our streets.

Two major concerns were the plethora of junkies hanging out at Thompson St. Park (at Canal), thanks to the methadone maintenance program on Canal at Washington St., and the spate of burglaries over the past few weeks concentrated just north of the park. Captain Mannino made the cogent point that these burglars are not escaping over rooftops, but walking out the front door carrying television sets past the unobservant eyes of residents. He urged all citizens to be "the eyes and ears of the police", and never to hesitate to call 911, or the First Precinct—766-1811—at the first sign of suspicious undertakings.

THE SOHO OBSERVER

431-4647 / 966-3388

KERRIE BRYAN JACKS

PEGGY SMITH LYONS

KATHLEEN CRONIN TINKEL

Editors and Publishers

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The Observer invites readers to suggest topics and to submit articles or letters to the editors on issues relevant to the communities south of Houston Street. We plan to publish 24 times a year, on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline is 5 p.m. on the Friday one week prior to publication date — that is, for example, the deadline for the issue dated November 4th is Friday, October 25th. Each issue will be distributed within the community during the weekend just before the issue date.

All submissions should be typed or printed double space with ample margins top and sides on one side only of 8½ x 11-inch paper. The Observer reserves the right to cut or edit to fit or for relevance, and to accept or reject any submission.

After an hour of concentrated discussion, Captain Mannino left amid warm applause; the audience stayed on to supervise the formation of a block association and join in a brief and pertinent prayer offered by the Most Reverend John Buono, CSSR, who had kindly lent the use of the Hall.

When the 120 families constituting the new association set out for home, they were met by the sight of a major offending bar, one that reputedly held staged performances of fornication, being hastily evacuated and padlocked. The following noon, a squadron of police cars wheeled up to the corner in the company of the State Liquor Authority and the State Department of Taxation, to effect a memorable bust. (The bar has since re-opened, minus floor show and under rigorous local surveillance.)

The establishment of a police-associated neighborhood patrol composed of half a dozen responsible young men, as well as increased visibility of patrol cars and uniformed police, have to some degree alleviated tension. The primary outcome of the meeting, however, seems to be a sudden community coalescence, a sharp awareness of the urgent need for united action, not only in the once-staid precincts of "Little Italy West", but among all residents south of Houston Street.

If the fledgling but determined South Village group joins with the SoHo Artists' Association, a mammoth and successful fight can be launched to stop both the criminals and those do-nothing politicians who make deals with City Hall for their own benefit over that of the community.

Dominick Masullo
Lee Mason
Rena Stedati

Moot points

SoHo street and traffic lights — *If you are one of the many residents concerned with inefficient street lighting (such as that on Broome Street) and the lack of traffic lights (such as exists at the corner of Wooster and Houston streets), you will be interested to know that Michael Levine, head of Community Board Two's Traffic & Transportation Committee, did a walking tour of SoHo last winter to investigate these problems. He sent his recommendations for improved lighting to the City, which has so far taken little action. For those who feel strongly about this problem, the next recourse is to revive regular requests for improved lighting at the public sessions of the Board's regular monthly meetings.*

On meetings and schedules — *For years Community Board Two has scheduled its regular meetings for the third Thursday of each month (except July and August). Most interested residents and organizations in the district know this schedule and, in fact, many attend the meetings. Why, then, were the Downtown Independent Democrats and the St. Anthony's community meetings both scheduled for this past third Thursday, October 17th? And why were the COMBO meeting — held by the Traffic & Transportation committee of all west side Community Boards to make recommendations on the West Side Highway Project — and a meeting called by Community Board Two to save the Jefferson Market library both scheduled for last Wednesday? We think many people find these scheduling conflicts a problem. If civic leaders constantly complain about public apathy, but if they at the same time schedule meetings so that one must choose between one important subject and another, what are we to think?*

Of dogs and leashes — *Sometimes our 'best friend' looks like 'public enemy no. 1' to the rest of the world. Half-thought-out theories centering on 'freedom' and 'spirit' to the contrary notwithstanding, most SoHo residents seem to approve the dog leashing law and enthusiastically support its enforcement. (In the past week we have received suggestions for articles on many different subjects, but four of these concerned unleashed dogs.) For small children, the infirm, the elderly, or for people who fear even very small dogs, an unleashed dog threatens their safety, and sometimes forces them off the public sidewalk. Besides the basic irresponsibility to other people, such behavior is poor public relations for the canine anti-defamation movement. Furthermore, walking a dog without benefit of leash is dangerous:*

even well-trained dogs have off-moments when the temptation of another dog, a cat, a rat or a bird is irresistible. By running out into traffic a dog may cause a pile-up or be hit by a car. Unleashed dogs make neighbors angry when they are walking a dog which is easily provoked to fight, a bitch in heat or a puppy which hasn't yet had all its shots. Passersby become, we think reasonably, very upset when an unleashed dog commits the cardinal crime of relieving itself on

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A weekly public events calendar

Beginning next Friday, October 25th, the Observer will print and distribute a weekly broadsheet listing public non-commercial events of interest to residents of the SoHo/south Village communities.

We will include meetings of City agencies when they are open or of interest to the public — such as monthly meetings of Community Board Two and its public hearings, meetings of the Board of Estimate, the City Council and the City Planning Commission, including excerpts from their agendas, when they are relevant to this district, meetings of inter-agency or inter-community civic organizations, such as COMBO, and meetings of local block associations and other citizen groups, First Precinct Council, SoHo Artists Association, etc. In addition to these public service listings, we will include non-commercial entertainments featuring local residents or using local spaces.

If you have information about an item suitable for this weekly broadsheet, please deliver it in writing (or phone 431-4647), to The SoHo Observer, 75 Spring Street, 6th floor. Include details: name, description, location, dates, times, whether or not a donation is requested, whether TDF vouchers are accepted, and a phone number to be called for additional information. Deadline for each week's listing is Thursday, 12 noon.

Washington Market takes on the Interstate

By Jim Stratton

It took the threat of a concrete juggernaut to shake them loose from their lofts below Canal Street, but within the last few weeks a whole neighborhood has carved itself out of the factory buildings of the old Washington Market area.

It was the disturbing reality that the West Side Highway was planning to run a ramp right through the doorstep of a new cooperative and two adjacent tenement buildings that provided the initial adrenalin for the community movement. The likelihood was that 18 square blocks of warehouse buildings, many of them tenanted by artists, would be encircled by giant cloverleaves, walling off dozens of artist-occupied loft buildings.

"This Property Condemned" was the sign on the door that grabbed local attention for the first meeting of the Washington Market Community Association (The WMCA "good guys") and it drew between 100 and 150 persons. Several days later more than 30 people marched in for a three-hour encounter session with West Side Highway planners and representatives of the City Planning Commission. These city re-designers were non-plussed by the sudden appearance of nearly three dozen people from an area they had dismissed in their plans as uninhabited.

It soon became apparent that the planners were themselves having second thoughts about the usefulness of the so-called "double corridor" design, the one that would have isolated a whole neighborhood and would have spun motor cars through frontrooms along Beach Street. By this time, however, the community activists had taken a longer, sharper look and were hoping the planners would have second thoughts about the entire highway.

The two favored plans are the Arterial and the Interstate Outboard, according to West Side Highway Project people. Less flak has come from communities about these two plans, they said, and they are therefore concentrating on tidying up their designs to suit particular objections...such as Washington Market venom over the double corridor design. But both

plans leave much to be desired, even if a highway is to be desired at all. The Arterial plan simply would tear down the existing West Side Highway and pave West Street over. Demolition, concrete, and the yellow stripe would cost the city about \$70 million. The problem with this design is that it would forever place a wall of traffic between Manhattan and the Hudson River.

The Outboard would send less pollution wafting over Manhattan, say the planners, because it will sink the highway down about where the end of the Morton Street pier meets the Hudson River. There will be more carbon monoxide deep in the tunnel, but it will be pumped out constantly (a little more slowly, perhaps, during brownouts) to dissipate into the atmosphere over the river rather than over the land. This is the plan favored by construction companies, suppliers, developers, real estate promoters, and most everyone who sent the Beame Team more than \$1,000. The Outboard would cost something like \$1.7 billion just to run the highway from Battery Park to 42nd Street, and it has taken most of its heavy blows from Upper West Side activists who note that the present incomplete plan appears to empty the highway directly into Riverside Park. Tough break, Upper West Side, we'll just have to cut down a few trees here because there's nothing else we can do....

One of the biggest financial attractions of the Outboard plan is its landfill. Everything from the present edge of Manhattan to the end of the piers would become new land. A ribbon of parks where the deer and the antelope play, if you believe Outboard Plan proponents, but a City Planning Commission liaison confessed that some housing "might" be built.

The communities have a right to be suspicious about the use of this landfill. The new property next to the river is likely to be the most valuable real estate in the city ten years hence...which is how long it will take to complete it...and the city is almost certain not to allow such prime turf to languish under the picnic baskets of a public park. The deer and the antelope will have to play indoors.

Politicians and contractors are lusting after the Outboard not only because of the price tag...\$3 billion to finish it to the GW Bridge...but also because 90% of the funding would come from Washington. Washington exacts its pound of flesh, however, by mandating that the Manhattan Interstate obey the same regulations as one that runs through rural Idaho or Mississippi. Never mind that this is Manhattan., and that a lot of people live here. And never mind

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Washington Market

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that the local share would still be a minimum of \$300 million...more than for any other highway design and perhaps more than any other public project in a decade.

The prospect of this landfill Interstate spouting up carbon monoxide through little catheter tubes and spawning high-rises along the shoreline has galvanized Washington Market to action. The prospect of realtor-generated zoning changes has also kept local blood coursing. The fledgling community association has gone out collecting petition signatures and ran its own voter-registration campaign...which seems to have doubled the voting population of the area.

The WMCA is urging persons opposed to the West Side Highway to make their opinions known in writing to the West Side Highway Project, 19 Rector Street, care of Ron Bixby. The position paper must be in by October 27, and it is suggested that the writer demand a delay on highway construction decisions until better plans are forthcoming.

With a little luck and a bit more pressure, the planners may even listen.

Commentary

The SAA meeting seemed to reach a consensus on the issue of zoning and crime. The zoning crisis will be met by presenting Community Board Two and the City with the expressed and documented views of the community. Crime will be prevented by the cooperation of residents. The community will protect itself in a reasonable, non-violent manner.

But what are the implications of these positions for the community, and for the larger community of New York City? When does the demand for safety and privacy become elitist and/or fascist?

We have struggled with this dilemma all week. We have talked it out with those who agree with our opinion and with those who are radically opposed to it. In an effort to sort out the logic from the passion we researched the meaning of that umbrella word "community".

After rejecting many definitions, we settled on one which defines a community as a group of people who have a sense of responsibility for each other's welfare. All members of a community have the right to walk the streets without running the risk of physical and verbal harassment, just as they have the right to live in their apartments and lofts free from the fear of being deprived of life and property. To this end everyone has the right to hold the City responsible to community demands for safe, decent living conditions. However, as every individual also belongs to a larger community — that of the City of New York — it would seem imperative that the demands made of the City should aim to bring decent living conditions to all New Yorkers. It is not enough to restrict high-rise buildings in SoHo and complacently to allow and accept buildings above ten stories (the height, Capt. Mannino stated, after which the incidence of crime rises markedly) in other areas of New York.

Although residents can and should demand that businesses in the area must be responsive to the special needs of the community, the debt that SoHo has to other areas of the city cannot be ignored. For, although it appears to be human to strive for Utopia, all individuals should ask themselves every day, "Why am I excluding this business, this group or this individual from my community?" "Do I have the right to so exclude?"

Protest that is righteous against an after-hours drug club on the grounds that it attracts crime may be fascist if it is aimed at a fast food franchise. Yet protest against such a franchise on the grounds that it will destroy local small businesses and give little to the community in return may be justifiable.

Just as we do not believe that there is any obvious or arbitrary position that one can take on zoning or crime prevention, we do not believe that the dangers inherent in exclusive attitudes can be overlooked by anyone in this community.

— Kerrie Bryan Jacks

We agree.

— Kathleen Cronin Tinkel

— Peggy Smith Lyons

New York block security program

A helpful all-purpose security handbook, entitled "Safeguard Your Home, How to Protect Your House or Apartment", is distributed free by the police department. You can obtain a copy by calling Lt. Dom Gaeta, Crime Prevention Officer of the First Precinct, 766-1811. Sections of the booklet have been excerpted here.

Securing Your Building

If you live in an apartment house, you and your neighbors must share the responsibility for the security of your building and for protecting each other. Protection for your own apartment is an important first step, but you must also be concerned about securing the common areas of your building which are open to all tenants: hallways, elevators, the lobby, and laundry room. It is essential that a sturdy lock be installed on the front door, that the door automatically closes and locks after it is opened, and that the door be kept locked at all times. To limit access to the building, a bell-buzzer system connected to each apartment is very effective to allow every tenant to know who is ringing his bell and to prevent tenants from admitting unidentified strangers.

1. The Door

Glass or thin wood panels are dangerous and are an invitation to burglars. You should strengthen them by backing the glass or wood with metal sheeting that is wider and longer than the dangerous panel. Plain glass panels can be replaced with reinforced wire glass, or a protective mesh grille can be fitted over the panels. Or you can replace your door with a solid core wood door, one and three-quarters inch thick. It is the safest type. Sliding glass doors can be secured by placing a piece of wood or a piece of broomstick in the door track, and by installing more expensive high-security plastic or glass which is virtually unbreakable.

Regardless of how strong your door is, if it fits loosely in the frame, it can be pried open. Weak or loose fitting frames must be strengthened or rebuilt of steel or sturdy wood. If the building is old, and the frame hard to repair, then a special buttress-type lock should be used. If the door hinges are exposed on the outside they must have non-removable hinge pins.

Locks

Do not use spring locks on any outside door. Spring locks work simply by closing the door. They can be easily opened with a plastic card by a burglar and give you little protection.

1. Dead-Bolts and Drop-Bolts

Doors should be equipped with either a drop-bolt or a dead-bolt.... A dead-bolt should extend at least one inch into its receptacle to prevent the lock from being forced open, while a drop-bolt is even better because it cannot be pried apart.

2. Double Cylinder Locks

Doors with a glass or wooden panels can be protected with a double cylinder lock that can only be opened from the inside with a key. This prevents someone from breaking a panel and sticking a hand inside the door to open the lock. However, under the building regulations you cannot use this type of lock on either of the two exits required by law to be available in case of fire emergencies.

3. Buttress-Type Locks

If you live in an older building, the frame of your door may be very weak. If the frame cannot be strengthened or repaired, you should use a buttress-type lock, sometimes called a "police lock." This lock uses a long steel bar that fits into a floor receptacle and wedges against the inside of the door to prevent it from being pried open.

4. Peepholes and Chain Locks

The installation of a peephole is inexpensive and simple. Buy a peephole lens and drill a small hole a half inch in diameter or less through the door. A chain lock is mounted on the inside and permits the door to open three or four inches with the chain still hooked. The chain will allow you to open the door to see your visitor before he enters, but chains can be snapped by a sudden hard push against the door. Use the peephole first to see who your visitor is, and then the chain lock to ask questions before you permit anyone to enter your house or apartment.

5. Cellar Doors and Garages

Use a case-hardened steel shackle padlock with pick resistant cylinders.

Windows

1. Double-Hung Windows

Double-hung windows, the most common kind, often have a simple, crescent-shaped locking device that is poorly constructed and can be pried open.

Other window locks, like the friction latch and the rotating peg which slides into the path of the window as it is being opened, can also be easily forced. None of these should be relied on for adequate protection.

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N. Y. block security

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Double-hung windows can be secured in several different ways. The simplest way is to drill a hole through both the lower and upper window frames and insert a long nail in the holes, through both frames. Another simple way is to use a slide or barrel bolt that locks into the frame. A key controlled plunger that locks both frames closed and which must be opened by a key provides better protection because it prevents the window from being opened even if a burglar breaks the glass pane. However, key devices cannot be used on fire exit windows.

2. Casement Windows

Most casement windows have their own simple lever-type locking mechanism which cannot be opened from outside. Make sure that locks and operating hooks are paint free and in good condition. If they are not sturdy they may be pried open.

3. Bars and Gates

For windows that are readily accessible, especially those at street level, it is advisable to install bars or gates for maximum protection. Of course, there must be at least one emergency exit in case of fire. For these windows, and those on fire escapes, the Fire Department has approved an accordion gate which can be quickly opened from the inside, but not from outside the window. This will stop intruders, while allowing for an emergency exit.

Special plastic (polycarbonate) and laminated glass that cannot be broken easily can also be used to strengthen windows. However, new window frames are sometimes needed before this high-security glass can be installed, making it quite expensive.

Lights On — The Safety Bargains

Lighting deters burglars by making them believe that you are at home, day and night. Burglars will rarely take the risk of entering an occupied house or apartment. For a house, install outside lights at the front, rear, and side so that you can see anyone approaching. You should also brighten the driveway

Sanitation & the law

The Sanitation Department has warned that summonses will be issued to all residents who dispose of garbage in anything other than a tied plastic bag. Also, the department will enforce the requirement that garbage must be placed in front of a building.

Free forever

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tion), the vagaries of law and regulation enforcement, warning of recurrent local crises and, even more importantly for the long run, have follow-up coverage as these issues lose 'news' value but continue to effect our daily lives. Local reporting of the West Side Highway project, the crime 'wave', its probable sources and means of stopping it, SoHo's legal and 'customary' status in the city, and the routine but important business of city, county, state and federal governments, for example, has been pathetic. SoHo, with its cocoon of Italian-American neighborhoods, is an emerging community, whether that is seen as desirable to most residents or not. The community must devise ways of making the development more coherent, less painful; true to its origin but able to respond to changed, perhaps contradictory, present and future needs as well. This is not a task for publicists or journalistic bumblebees.

and garage. Place outside lighting under the eaves of the house and garage. If the cost seems too high, you can light up much of the outside from the inside. Use vandal-resistant fixtures (unbreakable plastic globes) for outside installation.

You can buy an automatic timing device for your house or apartment so that when you are away from your home your lights will be turned on when it gets dark. Even better, leave a small light on day and night, even when you are at home and asleep.

Insurance

Under a new federal program, everyone in New York City can buy inexpensive, non-cancellable, easy-to-get burglary and robbery insurance for a home or store. The cost is \$80 a year for \$10,000 worth of residential protection. Commercial rates vary, depending upon gross receipts and kind of business, but they are equally affordable. No matter how many robberies or burglaries a policy holder suffers, his government policy will be renewed.

However, you must help yourself too. The government requires that you have solid locks on all entry doors and some kind of locking device on each window. You can purchase this insurance from any local insurance agent or broker, and you can get additional information from the Crime Prevention Officer at your local police precinct.

— "Safeguard Your Home",
from the N.Y.P.D.

Yes, there is . . .

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community south of Spring Street, was addressed by Charles Leslie, who explained the implications of the present zoning legislation for the SoHo area. Comments from the floor indicated that community attitudes and opinions on the zoning issue should be sampled as soon as possible and the suggestion for a zoning committee of the SAA was accepted. The work of this committee will encompass the coordination of all information pertaining to zoning the area. This information would in turn become the basis of a questionnaire to be circulated among renters and co-ops in SoHo. This committee will be responsible for mapping strategy for dealing with local and city government.

Although there was genuine interest and concern about the zoning problems it was evident that the majority of those present were restlessly awaiting the discussion of criminal activity in the area.

The discussion of crime revealed that the incidence of robberies, attempted rapes and muggings has increased in the last two months. It was decided that prevention of crime should be emphasized and, to this end, observation patrols were proposed. These patrols will consist of men and women who will tour the SoHo area in groups at selected hours. In the past, the visibility of these groups has been found to be an effective deterrent to crime. Individuals were urged to carry whistles (available at any dime store) that could summon help from neighbors. On hearing a whistle blown, loft dwellers are advised to go to their windows and call out and/or shine flashlights into the street. If there is a crime in progress, observers should always call the police.

Juice bars

Because much anxiety was expressed about the rumored juice bar at 99 Prince Street, it was decided that a demonstration would be held at 11 a.m. on October 11th. Women, men, children and dogs walked a peaceful picket line while a generally supportive group of local workers and small business people looked on.

The community should be aware of the hazards juice bars present. These juice bars are so called because they serve a variety of fruit juice rather than hard liquor to their dancing patrons. They are havens for those who would exploit the glittering young thrill seekers by supplying them with illicit drugs. The bars do not contain their stoned patrons, who flow into the streets which consequently become swamped with noise, dirt and crime. It is against this exploitation and disregard for human beings that the protest is aimed.

Landmark Library threatened

The Jefferson Market and two other neighborhood branches of the New York Public Library (in the Bronx and Staten Island) may be closed November 18th unless the city can be persuaded to rescind an order requiring that 1.57 million dollars be shaved off this year's library salary budget.

The Jefferson Market (at 425 Sixth Avenue) and the Hudson Park (at 10 7th Avenue South) branches are the only libraries for the entire SoHo/Village community. Both branches are small, and barely complement each other. More to the point, neither alone can adequately provide all the library services needed for this large diverse community.

The SoHo Observer finds it incredible that New York, with far too few branch libraries already, would even consider closing that 'poor person's university', a neighborhood branch of the public library. While we suspect the closings may have been announced for particularly outspoken communities to create a public outcry against general library budget restrictions, the Observer is coordinating a campaign to save the library, beginning by collecting signatures on the petition below. Please sign and send it to the Observer, 75 Spring Street, New York 10012, by Wednesday, October 23rd. We will deliver the petitions to Mayor Beame. (If you need additional copies of the petition, call 966-3388 or 431-4647.)

For energetic readers, letters protesting the projected closing can effectively be sent to Mayor Abraham D. Beame, Councilmen-at-Large Henry Stern and Robert Wagner, Jr., and Councilwoman Carol Greitzer, all at City Hall, New York, N.Y. 10007. The letters can be very brief, as they are tallied like votes, pro and con.

-----PETITION-----
Dear Mayor Beame:

I am a resident of the SoHo/Village community served by the Jefferson Market Library. I am opposed to closing this much-needed neighborhood library, and insist that it remain open.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

ADDRESS _____

'Green Book' finally in print

That indispensable mini-compendium, New York City's Official Directory, the 'Green Book', is finally being reissued after nearly two years of unavailability. Unfortunately, if the past offers a reliable guide to the future, it will have a short run and be out of print again just weeks after it hits the streets.

Copies cost \$3.50 each from the Hall of Records, 31 Chambers Street, or \$4.00 by regular (\$4.25 by insured) mail. Dated November 1974, this edition should be available in late November or early December. To insure getting your copy, order it by mail, enclosing a check drawn to The City Record, 31 Chambers Street, New York, N.Y. 10007. For further information concerning the book or its publication details, call the publisher at 566-2616.

If you have any dealings at all with government agencies (city, county, state or federal) — such as filing taxes, appealing citations, suing in Small Claims Court, renewing licenses, researching a term paper — or just want to know who and where the bureaucrats are, this is an invaluable volume. We still use our frayed but sturdy 1970 copy several times each month, although brilliantly out of date (especially since the change of administration), and can't wait for the 1974 edition.

In future issues

The Observer is researching new subjects for inclusion in forthcoming issues. To stimulate our readers' interest and to enable them to comment or add to the list, some of these subjects are listed below. In general, we invite our readers to comment, send in letters to the editors or submit articles for publication on subjects of specific interest to residents of these south-of-Houston communities.

- West Side Highway Project
- Inter-relationships between SoHo and the Italian-American community — research reports by an academic sociologist.
- Reports from Community Board Two and its committees.
- Reports from the offices of elected officials when relevant to this district — City Council, Board of Estimate, State and Federal legislatures, etc.
- Reports from civic organizations — First Precinct Council, the St. Anthony and St. Alphonsus community groups, the SoHo Artists Association, etc.
- Charter Revision Commission.

SUBSCRIBE! THE SOHO to OBSERVER

The Observer needs money if it is to continue to publish. This financial support can come from many individuals throughout SoHo and the south Village communities. Please subscribe if you can so the Observer can continue.

\$5 for 12 issues

\$10 for 24 issues

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WHOLE FOODS, 119 Prince

GAA Firehouse

Tuesday, October 15th, 3:40 a.m. — The persistent clatter of smashing glass cut through our sleep and we became conscious of smoke and men's voices raised in a working cadence. Smoke! The clock showed 3:40, and a steady chopping sound joined the other noises from the airshaft. Inconceivable to lie in bed and speculate, no way of seeing from the bathroom window, nothing to do but get dressed and go out.

It was the Firehouse at 99 Wooster Street. More smoke than flames came from the right, top-floor window, where figures of firefighters could be seen walking around and going up and down the circular staircase to the floor below. It appeared the fire had begun in the walls or ceiling of the northeast corner of the top floor, as sparks flew out occasionally when those surfaces were struck. From the street it looked like an electrical fire and the damage appears to be extensive, with top-floor ceiling and walls ripped down, and water running steadily down to the second floor around the oddly still-lit fluorescent fixtures.

A few (perhaps 10 or 15) people watched from the street and others from windows in nearby buildings, but there seemed to have been no one in the building when the fire began, and no GAA representative in attendance as it progressed.

By 9 a.m. a pile of blackened rubble on the sidewalk, broken glass in the airshaft and charred walls remained.

That afternoon the Observer interviewed Morty Manford, the president of the Gay Activists Alliance, who stated that it was extremely unlikely that the fire was accidental. It is now a case of suspected arson. The Firehouse will be rebuilt and the clearing of debris was already well under way at the time of the interview. All those who wish to support this rebuilding should send donations to the GAA, P.O. Box 2, Village Station, New York, N. Y. 10014.

CONTINUED COMMUNITY MEETING

Tuesday, October 22nd, 8:30 p.m.
66 Greene Street

Moot points

Continued from page 3

sidewalks or crosswalks. These are just a few considerations. (Lest anyone misunderstand, the three editors of The Observer own, collectively, four large dogs and seven cats.)

Mail delivery (or is it non-delivery?) — *Personal experiences confirm hearsay reports that something is radically wrong with mail delivery in SoHo. The problem may be caused by inaccessibility of mailboxes, incorrectly labeled or unlocked mailboxes, the rapid growth of the area or Post Office inefficiency, or it may be compounded of all of these. We would like to hear from readers regarding problems with mail delivery in SoHo, as the Observer will discuss them with a representative of the Post Office in the hope that we can cooperate for more efficient service. If you have any specific complaints, or general comments, call Kerrie or Kathleen at 431-4647 or 966-3388.*

Little, and late

99 Prince — David Mancuso, director of a soon-to-be-opened gallery (reputedly planned to become a 'juice bar', and picketed as such by residents of this community last Friday) at 99 Prince Street, has advised that he plans to address the assembled SoHo community at the meeting next Tuesday, October 22nd.

Planners' report — The second part of a little-known report entitled, "Tribeca — Existing Conditions", has been issued this month by the City Planning Commission. Copies of the document (which includes about 30 pages each of text and maps/charts), should be available to interested members of the public by writing to the Commission, 2 Lafayette Street, New York, N. Y. 10007.

THE SOHO OBSERVER

CLASSIFIEDS

Beginning with this issue, The SoHo Observer will take classified ads from local individuals and businesses. The charge is \$5 for a single-unit, \$9 for a double-unit ad. There is a limit of two units per advertiser per issue. The closing date is the Friday one week prior to issue date – that is, closing date for the issue dated November 4th is Friday, October 25th. Copy may be delivered to Peggy at the SoHo Observer, 75 Spring Street, 6th Floor during business hours (9 a.m. – 5 p.m.) Monday through Friday, or call her at 925-1318.

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