

GIVING SPRING A CHANCE!

By Peggy Sloane

At first glance, spring doesn't seem to have much of a chance in Hell's Kitchen. The view from most of our windows is uniformly grey, relieved only by the blue of the sky. You have to look hard to find a tree... though there are a few hardy survivors of tunnel fumes and truck fenders. In our whole neighborhood there are only two tiny plots of green grass, both almost lost amidst the curving concrete ramps of the tunnel bridges. As the days grow longer and the air milder, children have only the vacant parking lots to play in, and neighbors have only their front stoops on which to gather. But spring is a state of mind as much as anything... an easing of winter's tension, a breath of fresh air, a feeling of hope for brighter days ahead, and this year there are real reasons for hope in Hell's Kitchen.

For member of the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association (HKNA), the winter has been filled with hard work which now shows signs of bearing real fruit... this spring, next

spring and in the years to come. So if you're still in the "bah-humbug" winter blues, listen to this!

Clinton South is about to have it's first playground! "Bob's Park" on West 35th Street (between Dyer and 10th Avenue) is going to open with much fun, food and fanfare on May 7th. The event is being jointly sponsored by Clinton Housing Development Company and Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association. Everyone is invited to join the street cleanup in the morning (10am-12pm) followed at 1pm by a dedication, speeches, entertainment, great food, games, music and most important of all, instructions on how you can get a key and enjoy this wonderful facility.

• Hopefully, Bob's Park is just the beginning. HKNA's planning committee has designated a number of other potential park sites as part of a long-term vision for the greening of Hell's Kitchen. We are working closely with Community Board 4 and other relevant state agencies to make these plans a reality in the

near future. Once we're underway, we'll be needing all you frustrated gardeners, so dust off your gloves and trowels!

• In the meantime there will be more trees in our neighborhood, some by this summer, more by fall. Our own Green Space Committee is working with the city to replant the many empty tree pits which line our streets. In addition, Port Authority has informed us they will be planting 30 new trees in tunnel entrance areas. Get involved and help insure that all this greening comes to your block! And while you're at it, plant some flowers too!

• Stop by our booth at the 9th Avenue Food Festival (May 20 & 21), talk to us, learn about other exciting projects underway including traffic improvement, community safety, The Three Bridges Design competition, and much, much more. The Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association is less than a year old, but already we're

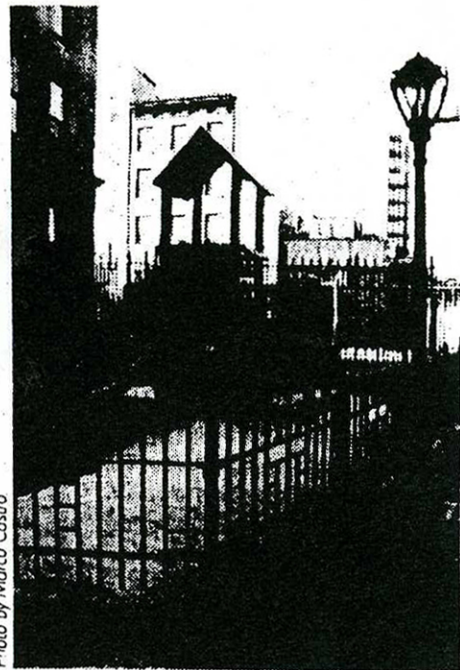


Photo by Marco Castro

'Bob's Park' used to be a parking lot

making a difference. Get involved... because it's fun, because it matters, because this is our home!

• Be sure to attend our general meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at the Clinton South Community Center on 37th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues. It starts at 6:30pm.