

THE STOCKADE ★ SPY



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The Changing Face of Erie Boulevard

Editor's Note: This is the second of two articles on Erie Boulevard. Last month's article focused on the public improvement being undertaken by the New York State Department of Transportation.

It is not uncommon for businesses on commercial stops such as Erie Boulevard to change ownership and/or use frequently. Not so common, however, is when that change is accompanied by substantial private investment, major renovation, and new construction. Much to the delight of city officials, the latter is occurring on Erie Boulevard, and the end result is good news for city residents, both as consumers and as taxpayers.

Since December, two new restaurants have opened on Erie Boulevard: Burger King at the site of the former Just Jack's fast food restaurant, and the Pentagon Restaurant, in the building formerly occupied by the Electric Grinch. Both owners have made substantial improvements to their properties: Burger King not only erected a new building but also made public improvements along North College Street and Liberty Street; the owners of the Pentagon, meanwhile, substantially renovated the existing building. So far both restaurants seem to be doing brisk business.

Other commercial improvements are in the works. Last Fall the Cumberland Farms grocery chain received city permission to demolish their present building at the intersection of Green Street, along with the former Pine Grove dairy building next door, and to replace it with a new store, situated next to Morrett's Restaurant. The remainder of the site will be used to erect self-service gasoline pumps and to provide customer parking. The proposed reconstruction, which should occur this Spring, will increase both the store's convenience and accessibility.

Unquestionably, the most exciting development project slated for Erie Boulevard is the proposed conversion of the former central fire station into luxury office space. The project is contingent upon the developers, Edison Plaza Associates, obtaining a federal grant of approximately \$500,000 to assist in the financing of the \$1.6 million renovation. Grant awards will be announced in February; if successful, the project should be under construction by Fall. If the grant is not forthcoming, the project will likely be forestalled until other financing can be secured.

Despite all the recent and planned activity, there are still several vacant properties on Erie

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Saint Valentine, Mon Amour

by B. A. Nilsson

The middle of February always has struck me as being a singularly cold and unpleasant time for St. Valentine to have chosen to drive the snakes out of lovers' lane — or whatever it was he did. We're left celebrating passion indoors or heavily bundled, when a little patience might have tossed this day into, say, late spring.

This probably accounts for the emphasis on jewelry. What else can you do? There's something appropriate about the moniker "ice" for diamonds: you scrape a layer of it off your car before going out to spend a sum of money ludicrously large considering the disproportionately small return you get. I suppose that ice acts as cold-weather bond, steadying your love until the approach of courtin' months.

Which was brought home to me a few years ago when a young cousin of mine was unwillingly brought over for a family dinner which occurred one Valentine's Day. She twisted uncomfortably in her seat — at fourteen it is unfair to be subject to the boring convivialities of your elders — and played with an item on her finger throughout the meal. Later, when I could speak to her privately, I asked what it was.

She brightened. "Friendship ring," she told me. "Ronny gave it to me!"

"A friendship ring? What's that?"

She explained that they weren't really going steady — her parents wouldn't allow that — and Ronny couldn't afford a pre-engagement ring, that was supposed to come next — and he didn't have an ID bracelet — so he bought her this ring.

I examined it. In the midst of a gold-plated band was a high and fancy setting, rumored to contain an authentic diamond chip.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she asked, and I praised it, fearing that somehow I was praising the emperor's new clothes.

A couple of Valentine's Days later, Anne had that pre-engagement ring, but it came from a young man named Bill. "What happened to Ronny and the pre-engagement ring?" I asked. She told me that he had lost interest in her when the warm weather arrived, and the ring was now in her jewelry box. "But look at this!" she demanded.

This time I could see the diamond. True, it wasn't much bigger than a fleeting thought, but every now and then, if you held it to the light,

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The Status of Riverside School

The Schenectady School District has postponed all action on the sale of Riverside School until the results of Brown School's petition to Gordon Ambach, the New York State Commissioner of Education, are known. This petition requests that the sale of the School by the Board to Blake Realty Co. be set aside because of the School Board's failure to adhere to its announced bid procedure.

The petition will be considered by the Commissioner at a hearing in Albany at a time and place not yet announced, probably mid February. This is a formal administrative hearing, open to the public, but as in a courtroom, only the authorized representatives and their witnesses can speak.

To implement the resolution voted at the November 8, 1984, meeting of the Stockade Association — to support the viable effort of a private school to acquire Riverside School," the Association has sought legal counsel and retained Arkley L. Mastro, Jr.

In a letter to the Commissioner outlining the interest and activity of the Stockade Association over many years in maintaining Riverside School as a vital part of a living and complete neighborhood, Mr. Mastro requested the right for the Association to present its views at the hearing. Because the complaint concerns the form of the sale, only those directly involved, Brown School, The School Board, and Blake Realty, will address the hearing. However, the Association has achieved the status of *amicus curiae*. The status *amicus curiae*, when translated from Latin and legal jargon, means friend of the court and permits submitting written memoranda of law or opinions to the Commissioner. Mr. Mastro is proceeding with the steps needed to open this route for the Association to express its views.

As soon as a time and place are set for the hearing, the Association will inform the members and attempt to provide transportation to those who can and wish to attend.

Impressive and ponderous as these activities are, they should not be regarded as final. There is no assurance of Brown's success and no reason to think that the Commissioner's decision, whichever way it goes, will be the last step in the process that determines the fate of Riverside. Those people concerned with the impact of substituting a multiple family dwelling for the local school should be actively working to convey the views of the neighborhood to the

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**Services to Families
 in Violence**

To: Stockade Spy

From: Marcy B. Kolchinsky, YWCA
 Families in Violence
 44 Washington Ave.,
 Schenectady, NY 12305

The Schenectady YWCA Services to Families in Violence will sponsor a "HUG-A-THON" during the week of February 7 through 14 to raise community awareness to the problems of domestic violence and to raise funds for the YWCA Shelter for battered women and their children.

Those who volunteer to be huggers go out and seek sponsors, who agree to donate a certain amount per hug or a flat donation. During that designated week, the hugger hugs as many people as he or she can; at work, at school, at home, anywhere. Each person who receives a hug, confirms that by signing the hugger's sheet. Huggers then return to their sponsors and collect the pledges.

Hug-A-Thon Hug Quarters will be set up on Saturday, February 9 at Canal Square in Schenectady as part of the Colonial Festival Week. Chuck E. Cheese will be there, local Girl Scouts doing face painting, David Ross of Clifton Park will be doing cartoons and autographing his Hug Books, and much more.

"Hugs make us feel good and make impossible days possible. Hugging is a good way to focus public attention on the problem of woman abuse. Positive loving behavior like hugging is a constructive alternative to the violence that exists in families, today" says Marcy B. Kolchinsky, Hug-A-Thon Chairperson. "Each time that you give a hug, you will be helping a battered woman and her child. It enables her to take charge of her life and stop the violence in her home."

The Schenectady YWCA Shelter has assisted over 3000 women and their children since it opened on Valentine's Day 1979. It offers a safe house, counseling, advocacy, as well as referral to other helping agencies in the community.

For more information contact the YWCA at 374-3394.

The Status of Riverside (Cont'd from pg 1)

Schenectady City Government, to the Schenectady City Board of Education, and to the representatives of their political parties. Individuals at all levels should be addressed, directly if you are personally acquainted, otherwise by letter. In formal letters it may be very useful to send copies to all of those concerned. A list of names and addresses has been distributed by flyer and published in the January SPY.

Nursesey at St. George's

St. George's Co-operative Nursery School was started some 31 years ago under the auspices of Father Darwin Kirby of St. George's Episcopal Church. It began as a community service project and is now the only existing school in the Stockade. St. George's Episcopal Church continues to support this project by providing classroom space.

The nursery school is unique in many ways. It is one of the only nursery schools in the area to have a five day morning program for a mixed 3 and 4 year old group. It is a non-sectarian, co-operative school which seeks to bring the parents and their child together for their first school experience. It provides a warm, supportive atmosphere in which 3 and 4 year olds can begin to develop their curiosities and skills and learn to function in a group setting. The program seeks to foster thinking ability, enjoyment of learning and concern for others.

The day starts at 8:45 A.M. and ends at 11:30 A.M. During a typical day the children have about an hour to choose their own activities from a great variety of equipment and materials — blocks, woodworking, modelling with play dough, cutting and pasting, water play, painting, dramatic play, puzzles, etc. This is a time when children can freely express themselves and experiment with their environment. Stories, music, group play and a snack time follow clean-up time. The children then go out doors.

During outdoor play the children either use the equipment in the parking area — a slide, climbing frame, tricycles and large blocks — or they enjoy the stockade neighborhood. You may see them playing at Riverside Park, taking nature walks or looking at the houses and gardens that are unique to the stockade.

The program is often augmented by cooking projects, science projects, special events and field trips. Every month the class attends the films for children at the Schenectady Public Library. For field trips the class has gone apple picking, on a hay ride, to see Christmas tree displays and sledding. Visits have also been made to a fire house, a museum, an ice cream factory and a pet shop. In January, a 5 year old who attended the nursery school a year ago will give a piano recital for the present class. She will also teach a song about dinosaurs.

The success of the nursery school program depends largely on parent participation. For a cooperative school to function effectively, parental involvement is essential. Participating parents aid the full time teacher in directing the school and in assisting her in class 2 or 3 mornings a month. Children love sharing their first school experiences with their parents.

At St. George's Co-operative Nursery School Children have the opportunity to learn to make social contacts in groups. They learn to cooperate, to take turns, to share, to verbalize their feelings and to respect each other. And most importantly, the children are able to have fun and to enjoy being 3 and 4 years old.

Please feel free to visit and join in the fun. Tuition is only \$50 per month. For further information, you may call the school at 374-0526 or Dottie Finnerty at 399-1674.

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Sunday's Restaurant

Sunday's is back — probably the most novel restaurant setting that's within easy walking distance of Stockade residents — on the second floor of the former church and, later, senior citizens center, on Union Street.

Sunday's is now in the hands of an experienced restaurateur, the 31-year-old John Coolidge, whose career already includes service with the Pizza Hut, TGI Friday, and Carrie Nation organizations. And after years with the chains, where the menus must follow a set format and the atmosphere resemble the prescribed family look, John's enjoying the opportunity to do things *his way* . . . to plan the decor to fit this unique setting, arrange the menu in consultation with his chef, and form his own policies.

Born in Niskayuna, where his father was M.D., John Coolidge now lives in Duanesburg.

Chef John O'Leary, who was with the original Sunday's, has returned and with him, his recipe for Boston brown bread, served hot from the oven with entrees. John will tell you that there's a big call for this New England and national favorite, and bowser bags are often needed.

The bar manager is the affable Bill Stoner, and these three are joined by a staff that's all local, all new to Sunday's, and all very friendly, even to a before-opening-hours visitors, such as your reporter.

Lunch and dinner menus both demonstrate a willingness to differ from most restaurant patterns. Dinner's 13 entrees include Chicken Tangerine, with chicken tenderloins sauteed together with stirfried vegetables in tangerine sauce; Seafood Adriene, with crabmeat, shrimp and scallops blended with mushrooms, scallions, garlic butter and Mornay sauce, plus several other out of the ordinary items.

The lunch menu, heavy on burgers, sandwiches and salads for the business people who "appreciate our fast service in a different atmosphere", according to Coolidge, includes several specialties for customers who can linger. And lingering will be pleasant, with the ultra-high ceiling, stained glass windows, and ample space between tables, all adding their contribution to the atmosphere. A Coolidge contribution is carpeting throughout, which helps conversation at busy times. All told, those stairs will be well worthwhile climbing.

John Coolidge took over Sunday's, he says, because he "liked the atmosphere and wanted to bring it back to life.

"I wanted to give the community a change; to offer a varied menu, keep prices reasonable and take full advantage of the potential in this unusual building — so that people will leave satisfied with the food, atmosphere, service and price they've paid."

NOTE: When you come to a restaurant to interview the owner at 10 A.M., and find 6-8 people busily working, with some obviously already there for several hours, you realize again that operating a restaurant is a hard, demanding task with ultra-long hours. Anyone who can do it successfully over the years deserves respect. Your reporter has a feeling that Sunday's new management and staff will earn it.

John H. Ronayne

Matilda The Cat

The staff of the *Stockade Spy* is thinking of adopting a mascot. One of those being considered is Matilda, the gray and white cat, residing at 119 Front Street where monthly staff meetings are held.

Matilda has a perfect record of attendance at the meetings and as hostess deserves much credit. Ordinarily the cat has little more than contempt for human beings, but at staff meetings her personality changes and she becomes downright hospitable. This is especially noteworthy as she is essentially an outdoor animal. Her hobby is hunting and her record catch three mice in one night.

Matilda replaced another gray cat, Clyde. Clyde was considered quite smart because he rang a bell to get in the house. It must follow that Matilda is twice as smart as she rings a bell both to get in and out (see picture).

Another contender for the title of *Spy* mascot is Benson, Barbara Carroll's English Sheep dog. We realize that an English Sheep dog has universal appeal but then Benson has yet to attend a staff meeting.

Dawson VanEps



'Matilda Rings Bell to Get Out.'

Saint Valentine Mon Amour

(Continued from page 1)

there was the hint of a sparkle. "We're going to get married as soon as we graduate from high school," she explained. "Our parents are making us wait."

But by the time she became a senior, Bill was out of the picture and his ring was in the jewelry box. Tommy, you see, was going to be a lawyer, was in fact already in law school — an older man, which I'm sure drove some of Annie's coevals crazy, she now being a jewel herself.

Tommy presented her with an engagement ring that Valentine's Day, a carat-and-a-half of pure luster. Already this man was thinking like a lawyer. Perhaps he was acting like one, too; he did something which disrupted her affections, something which involved another woman and a plea of "guilty with an explanation," which the judge didn't accept. Only this time, the ring didn't go into the jewelry box; it paid for part of Annie's college costs, and she and her new husband are struggling to put a life together with lots of education but little remuneration.

There's a moral in there somewhere — I can't find it but I'm sure you will. I do catch myself thinking about a recently-published study in which scientists discovered that rats forced to run on a treadmill manufactured a chemical which can cause cancer, leading them to conclude that exercise can be bad for your health. They're not taking into account what we've known all along; the rat race is bad for you.



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The Changing Face of Erie Boulevard

(Continued from page 1)

Boulevard and another property will be vacant soon. The former Chez Pierre II restaurant, next to Coyne Laundry, has been closed for several years, and Floyd Ladd's gasoline service station hasn't pumped gas in well over a year. The State Theatre, which has been dormant for a number of years, will fall to the wrecker's ball this spring, as part of the conversion of the former Barney's department store into approximately 70 market rate rental units. Fortunately, the theatre facade, the arcade, and all of the adjacent commercial establishments on Erie Boulevard will remain intact, and consequently the visual impact of the theatre demolition on Erie Boulevard will be minimal. The imminent departure of Grossman's Lumber, however, will be quite noticeable. The popular building supply store is relocating to the former Big N Plaza on Maxon road, where it will have more building square footage and a substantially larger parking area. No word yet as to what business will move into the building vacated by Grossman's.

Overall, the retail and business changes occurring on Erie Boulevard are viewed by the city as being very positive. Coupled with the multitude of public improvements currently planned for Erie Boulevard, they should create an atmosphere that is quite conducive to further business growth and investment.

Glen Gibbs
Assistant Planner
Department of Planning &
Economic Development

To: The Department of Planning and
Economic Development and The Stockade
Neighborhood Association

January 15, 1985

I am writing in response to Mr. Glenn Gibb's article concerning the Riverside Park's bath house structure. His article was published in the November 1984 issue of the *Stockade Spy*. I would like to indicate that I am pleased that this is an issue which has apparently been re-opened for discussion. As Mr. Gibbs noted, the fate of the buildings renovation or demolition has been put off for too long a time.

As a resident of lower North Street in the Stockade, the existence of the bath house has posed some very real problems. Kids play in and around the building which is dangerous due to the condition of the building itself. The building provides shelter to transients and also adults and adolescents who find it an ideal place to hang out. The building has borne the brunt of every variety of vandalism over the years. If the city plans to renovate and retain the building, the determination and action should most certainly occur within 1985.

My neighbors and I have phoned the Schenectady Police on numerous occasions and not only during the summer months. Behavior goes on under the bath house which is common knowledge to those living within the immediate area; smoking pot, drinking alcohol (minors and otherwise) smashing glass, fights, loud music, explosives and sexual relations. I hope we won't have to wait until something terrible happens to ultimately remove the building from the park. Anyone I have ever spoken to regarding the building is in favor of it's destruction.

Personally, I would greatly favor the destruction of the building. I think an open hearing should be pursued and that stockade community residents should be canvassed and asked their opinions on the subject. To my knowledge, this has not been done at the community level.

Sincerely,
Kristine Kelley

From: Eli I. Taub, P.C.
Attorney at Law
162 Lafayette Street
Schenectady, NY 12305

December 13, 1984

To: Mr. Glenn Gibbs
Department of Planning and
Economic Development
City Hall
Jay Street
Schenectady, NY 12305

Dear Mr. Gibbs:

I read with interest your recent article in *The Stockade Spy* about the unused bath house. As a resident of the Stockade and member of the Stockade Association, I agree with your conclusion that "some action needs to be taken soon." The first question that comes to my mind is what is a "historically significant building." Because a building was once used (and other buildings are used sooner or later) would that make it "historically significant" in any manner?

The choice between preservation and demolition is not an "over-simplistic" view of the problem. The building has no real historic significance other than it was once "used." It serves no useful purpose at the present time other than as an eyesore and a place where teenagers can gather to keep warm from time to time during the winter. We have very little parking area and demolition would serve an absolute useful purpose - increase of space available for use within the park.

Cost must be taken into account with respect to usage, et al. Feasibility studies cost money and quite often are a waste of time and money. Construction, etc. and then providing for regular maintenance also costs money. And then what do you have?

In summery, the area is now a park. The building has no historical significance. The building is an eyesore. The building lacks practical re-use if monies were invested in it. The answer therefore does seem to be very simple: demolish it and use the open space for the park.

Very truly yours,
Eli I. Taub

Tidings

A gift that traveled some 5000 miles brought home a renewed Christmas for John Ronayne, 104 Front Street. On vacation in Istanbul in 1978, he relished Turkey's national drink, raki, aptly called 'lic milk'. Since then, wife Marjorie has made several efforts to find raki in this area, with success — until Patricia Bokan appeared at Englehardt's Liquor Mart, on Union St. When Marjorie mentioned her problem, Patricia picked up the phone and heard such an answer: "WHAT?" and "That's been discontinued for years!" Finally her perseverance made the connection in New York City. Result: two bottles of raki under the Ronayne Christmas tree.