

## The Urban Strategist/Ellen Stern

# HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWN

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July 4 is a day for celebrating many things. Calvin Coolidge’s birthday. The forty-eighth anniversary of Jean Lussier’s plunge down Niagara Falls in a rubber ball. The National Cherry Festival. And here, there, and everywhere, fireworks. But especially here. Because if there’s one business New York knows, it’s show business. Thanks to Macy’s money (over \$100,000 so far) and Disney’s talent, we will see fireworks to outdazzle all others on July 4. Talk about pyrotechnics!

The other day, there was a meeting in the city’s Department of Civic Affairs and Public Events. Arlene Wolff, glamorous deputy commissioner, welcomed the guests and bureaucrats. Nancy Mallory, director of special events for Macy’s, said that the celebration will begin at 9 P.M. She then introduced Tom Craven.

Craven is special-projects manager of the entertainment division of Walt Disney World. He has dark brown hair, sun-flushed skin, bright blue eyes, and, in his sky-blue polyester jacket and blue-and-white-checked pants, looks as if he’s hopped right out of a Disney cell. “This is not just a thing we’re doing,” he explains. “It’s a new show altogether, a big show even for us.” (The folks at Disneyland and Disney World normally expend 240 shells in their fireworks displays. For July 4, they will use 3,700.)

“We’re talking about six locations: Ellis Island, Liberty Island, Governors Island, and three barges in between.” Craven passes around a map of the harbor. “The shells range in size from three inches to twelve inches and explode at a maximum height of 1,200 feet. The show will be very patriotic. It begins around the Statue of Liberty, with fireworks effects at its base to illuminate and call attention to the statue prior to the aerial portion of the show.

“We synchronize the show to music, almost in computer fashion. Every shell is programmed to explode at a different moment in the music.” Craven pulls out his portable tape recorder and turns it on. The guests hear an overture of patchwork Americana which segues into “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee,” into “Columbia, the Gem of the



Shooting the works: Broad stripes and bright stars light up the sky on July 4.

Ocean,” into “Battle Hymn of the Republic”—and all the while Craven is explaining that “here” and “right here” the music will be punctuated by sparkly snaps, crackles, and pops. “Anyone in Battery Park, in Jersey, or in Brooklyn will be able to see,” he says. “We’re going after scope.”

As the orchestra heads into “The Star-Spangled Banner,” Craven’s face lights up accordingly. “There’s a pause,” he says, “and the sky is black. Then, at ‘the rockets’ red glare,’ the sky breaks up in red fireworks and builds toward the end of the show with a massive grand finale, including a helicopter flying a flag—measuring 60 by 100 feet—with lights like Christmas lights. The flag is held in position for about a minute, then returned to its base.” (There is more. At precisely 9:30, after our anthem’s last note, the city will throb with the tintinnabulation of hundreds of church bells. These have been programmed not by Disney but by Rodney Kirk, director of the July Fourth in Old New York Festival. “They’ll definitely ring for fifteen minutes,” says Kirk. “I wanted 30, but it’s a matter of energy. Most of the bell ringers are pretty old guys. But who knows? The adrenaline’s going to be so high, it may go on all night.”)

Disney has been collecting its 3,700 shells—plain red shells, multiple-break shells, novelty shells, and circle shells—for the past four years from China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Canada, France,

and Brazil. For reasons too chemically sophisticated to think about, blue shells are the most difficult to create. But this is the Fourth of July, and what would it be without reds, whites, and blues in the night? So Disney has blues.

The shells will be carefully delivered to Naval Weapons Station Earle in New Jersey a few days before the performance. At about 6 P.M. on the Fourth, they will be placed in the harbor. “We are very strict about safety,” says Craven. “Most fireworks are fired by hand, from five to six feet away. Ours are fired from 100 feet away. It’s all done by switches. Here in New York, we’ll adhere to local statutes and laws, which are probably some of the strictest in the United States.”

“Thank you,” says Arlene Wolff. “Are there any questions?” Up go the municipal hands. “Disney says that these fireworks can be seen for twenty miles,” says one guest. “So what about the fireworks in Coney Island, Rockaway, Flushing Meadows, and Jersey? What about interference?” Somebody else mentions that thousands of small boats are expected to clutter the harbor on July 4; how will they be cleared out in time? Will Liberty Island be closed to the public? What about brushfires on Ellis Island? What if it rains? And what about the presidential candidates and security? Gerald Ford is expected at 1 P.M. “He won’t want to miss Walt Disney,” observes a police inspector. “He’d lose 5 000 votes.”

# City Plans to Be 1st for the 4th

By OWEN FITZGERALD

Mayor Beame and a citizens committee unveiled plans yesterday for the city's official celebration of the nation's bicentennial observance, on July 4, billed as the biggest Independence Day party in the country.

It is titled July Fourth in Old New York and will last from morning until night, with a wide range of events slated for the streets and plazas of lower Manhattan from City Hall to Battery Park and from river to triver — the original colonial settlement of New York.

The mayor's office has estimated that up to 5 million visitors are expected in the city for the period of July 3 to 8, the week preceding the start of the Democratic National Convention here.

"The same energy which transformed an 18th century port into the present-day business, cultural and communications capital of the world is being used to make this Fourth of July celebration an event of July celebration an event which can happen only in New York," said the mayor at historic Fraunces Tavern, 54 Pearl St.

E. Virgil Conway, chairman and president of the Seamen's Bank for Savings and chairman of the festival committee, promised that the city's bicentennial festival would be "successful, proper, dignified, graceful but fun."

He said the committee was short of the \$250,000 and invited public contributions, which are tax deductible.

may be sent to the Committee for July Fourth in Old New York, 15 State St., New York, N.Y. 10004.

Beame presented a 1776 bicentennial flag to Conway and said: "I wish I could give money. But we've all got the same problems these days." The mayor said he was "certain" that New Yorkers

would contribute to the festival fund.

The festival, the city's on-land tribute to the nation's founding will take place the same time as Operation Sail, an international naval review in New York Harbor of more than 225 sailing ships and naval vessels from 30 nations.

DAILY NEWS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 1976

CUE, APRIL 3, 1976

## FORECAST

### BICENTENNIAL FIREWORKS!

July 4th in Old New York, the largest public festival ever planned for the city, will be the highlight of New York City's on-land salute to the Bicentennial.

From City Hall to Battery Park, from the East River to the Hudson, this festival will celebrate the unique and important role that New York has played—and continues to play—in all phases of American life.

The all-day revelry will begin at 7:00 a.m. with a sunrise ecumenical service of thanksgiving at Battery Park and continue through the day with pageants, ethnic festivals, children's plazas, historical re-enactments, parades and other very special events until 10 p.m. The celebration will conclude with a concert by the American Symphony Orchestra at Battery Park and with the grandest of July Fourth traditions — a spectacular fireworks display.

Other highlights will include an afternoon performance by the Newport Jazz Festival at the World Trade Center and "Nieuw Amsterdam," a dramatic outdoors re-creation of New York City as it was 300 years ago.

It's all free to the public and a special way for all New Yorkers to celebrate a once-in-a-lifetime 4th of July.



News photos by Paul DeMarle

## ***The Mayor Takes Drastic Steps***

Mayor Beame sizes up the action at Fraunces Tavern before stepping into the dance himself. He joined hands with some experts to trip through "Money in Both Pockets," an 18th century social dance to flute and violin. The musicians and dancers were members of the Country Dance and Song Society of America, and they were helping His Honor launch the city's bicentennial celebrations. High point will be the week of the Fourth of July, when some five million visitors are expected to be here on the week before the Democratic National Convention. —*Story on page 5*

# City Is Planning the Biggest Bang Ever for July 4

By OWEN FITZGERALD

The largest public festival ever planned for New York, entitled July Fourth in Old New York, will highlight the city's official on-land salute to the nation's bicentennial, it was announced yesterday.

The \$250,000 tribute will last from sunrise to after dark on July 4 and take place on the streets, squares and plazas of lower Manhattan, from City Hall to Battery Park and from river to river.

The shore-based spectacle of sight and sound will take place at the same time as Operation Sail, an international naval review of more than 225 sailing

ships and naval vessels from 30 nations — the largest such fleet seen here since the early 19th Century — unfolds in New York Harbor.

The sweeping plans for the city's official observance of the country's 200th birthday will be unveiled at noon today at historic Fraunces Tavern at 54 Pearl St. by the Committee for July Fourth in Old New York.

The day-long celebration, which Mayor Beame estimates will attract hundreds of thousands to the city, will start with an ecumenical religious service of thanksgiving at Battery Park at 8:30 a.m. and end with a spectacular half-hour long fireworks display at 9 p.m. from barges near Liberty Island.

Formal ceremonies at the Battery, with the Mayor and Gov-

Carey participating, will be capped by a 50-cannon salute by the Veteran Corps of Artillery. Marching bands will parade through the streets and a procession of ethnic groups and costumed participants will move from City Hall to their festival areas.

The day's program will feature "Nieuw Amsterdam," a major reenactment of the city's settling by the Dutch in 1625, on Front St. between Fulton and Beekman Sts., with facades and settings that were used in 1975

by the city of Amsterdam, Netherlands, to mark its 700th anniversary.

**Bands & Music Galore**  
The English program entitled "Young New York" will be held at William St. and Mill Lane, which is to be populated with men and women in costumes of the 18th century and reenactments of the historic events of that period.

Musics of all sorts will fill the air day and night. There will be parades of marching bands at noon, 2:15 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.

DAILY NEWS, TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 1976

## Planning a \$250,000 July 4th in the city

New York City is planning a quarter of a million dollars worth of festivities for its Bicentennial Fourth of July celebration, starting with an 8 AM Sunrise Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving at Battery Park and ending after dark with nearly \$100,000 worth of fireworks, choreographed and executed by Walt Disney Attractions, Mayor Beame was expected to announce today.

The financially troubled city will, however, not pick up any of the tab for what it calls "the largest public festival ever planned for this city." It will merely have to find a way to cope with an expected five million visitors.

Forty-seven organizations plus government and civic agencies are helping with services and funds,

for "July 4th in Old New York," the land-bound portion of an already announced plan to present the largest fleet of ships gathered in one place since the early 1800s. According to Matthew Alperin, coordinator of the Committee for July 4th in Old New York, about half of the \$250,000 needed for the land festivities has been raised. Macy's is providing close to \$100,000 to buy the fireworks.

The combination fireworks and light show will begin at dusk with a 12-minute light show playing off the Statue of Liberty. As the sky darkens, fireworks will go off from six locations: Ellis Island, Liberty Island, Governor's Island and three barges off the tip of Manhattan.

During the day, there will be parades, ethnic

celebrations and ethnic food, poetry readings, art exhibitions and crafts; readings of the Declaration of Independence; an exhibit of American crafts; the performance of American music from jazz to gospel, to bluegrass to sea chanties, work songs, rhythm and blues and rock. People will be asked to sign copies of the Declaration of Independence, and thus "re-ratify" it. There will be a reenactment of dramatic events in the original Dutch settlement, "Nieuw Amsterdam," historic walking tours, band concerts, and an American Theater Pavilion featuring leading actors and actresses.

On the water, 225 ships representing 30 nations will participate, and it is hoped that President Ford will be aboard one of them.

—Amei Wallach

By MARTIN ROGART

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK AP - The

country's biggest Independence Day celebration marking the bicentennial is planned in the historic streets of Lower Manhattan, Mayor Abraham Beame said Tuesday.

"July 4 will be a day of reflection and rejoicing, a reminder of who we are as a nation, and who we are as citizens of a city of splendid diversities, talent, wealth, history, creative imagination and energy," the mayor said.

The Committee for July 4 in Old New York, which has produced annual Independence Day celebrations since 1972, is coordinating the cooperative effort by government and the private sector.

"It will be the greatest and grandest of them all," observed E. Virgil Conway, chairman of the Committee, at a news conference in Fraunces Tavern where the proposed events of the celebration were announced.

The celebration will begin at 8 a.m. with an ecumenical service of thanksgiving at Bat-

tery Park and continue with other events and street happenings until 9:30 p.m.

While Colonial America will be portrayed on the streets, sailing vessels from all parts of the world will ply the waters around Manhattan island.

Front Street in the Fulton Market area will feature ox-drawn carts, farmers, wooden-shod children, Dutch wives in white-peaked caps, and traders and Indians bargaining over fur pelts and grain.

Wampum will be the currency of the day and transgressors will go to the stockade.

Colonial figures will be busy on South Williams Street and Mill Lane in political debates and in operating printing presses—and copies of historical documents will be posted on the streets showing the role the city played in the nation's search for freedom.

The city's major ethnic communities will produce their own festivals, featuring their heritage and contributions to the culture of the city.

There will be readings of the Declaration of Independence at Federal Hall, and an anthology of American music sung and prayed, demonstrations of Colonial crafts, and historic walking tours conducted around lower Manhattan.

The Newport Jazz Festival will give a free concert on the plaza of the World Trade Center.

The grand finale will be a half-hour fireworks display launched from a number of barges around the Statue of Liberty.

“And thus,” said the Rev. Richard Kirk, producer and director of the festival, “on land, and in the harbor, New York will have a celebration as big as the city itself and as exciting and unique as its people.”



DAILY NEWS,  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 1976

# ***The Mayor Takes Drastic Steps***

News photo by Paul DeMaria  
In the colonial setting of Fraunces Tavern, Mayor Beame is sprightly as an 18th century toff as he joins in dance soiree dubbed "Money in Both Pockets." Beame and County Dance and Song Society of America helped unveil the city's bicentennial plans for July 4 — *Story on page 5*