

BID giving free walking tours through Flatiron

By Maciej Wroblewski

With the coming of spring, the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership has launched a series of free walking tours through one of New York's most historic districts.

The 90-minute tours are free to the public and commence every Sunday at 11 a.m. at the southwest corner of Madison Square Park, at 23rd Street and Broadway. Scheduled throughout the rest of the year, the walks take visitors through streets that conjure images of a New York that used to be and provide some of Manhattan's most impressive architectural attractions.

Tour participants are directed to the site of Stanford White's love nest, where the famed architect wooed showgirl Evelyn Nesbit, "the girl on the red velvet swing." There they learn why the lovers had to gain access to their hideaway by slipping through the back of one of America's best-known toy stores.

Next, they marvel at the beauty of the New York State Appellate Courthouse, a jewel box in marble located at Madison Avenue and



Tour participants learn about the Flatiron District's architecture and famous residents.

East 25th Street. They visit the sites of the original Madison Square Garden and the original Delmonico's restaurant, and hear the story of the first community Christmas tree lighting in the United States, a tradition that endures to this day. Last but not least, visitors discover the origin of the phrase "23-skidoo" and how it

relates to New York's most unusual skyscraper, the world-renowned Flatiron Building.

"The Flatiron neighborhood has a rich and storied history, as well as many modern day attractions such as great restaurants and retailers, said Jennifer Brown, executive director of the 23rd Street Partnership Business Improve-

ment District. "The BID-sponsored walking tours are a wonderful way to attract new visitors to the area and to provide those who live and work here an opportunity to learn more about its history."

The tours are conducted by a rotating trio of guides, each of whom is an expert in city lore. They are Miriam Berman, the author of *Madison Square: The Park and its Celebrated Landmarks*; Frederick Cookinham, who has been leading tours throughout the city for the New-York Historical Society as well as other notable institutions; and Mike Kaback, a native New Yorker whose tours have entertained and enlightened visitors for the last seven years. And although tours follow the same basic route each week, no two tours will be exactly the same.

The Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership BID is a not-for-profit organization to find out more about the tours and The Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership, visit www.discoverflatiron.org.