

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **BRONX "BASE BALL" GAME TO SHOW 1864 ROOTS OF AMERICA'S "NATIONAL PASTIME:" BRINGDAD**

Get a lead on Fathers' Day, and transport Dad or Granddad back in time to a 19th-century game of "base ball" complete with authentic rules and replica bats, balls, and uniforms--and no helmets or gloves.

Entitled "Take Me Out to the Ball Game: 1864," the event portrays the earliest roots of "base ball" and takes place Fathers' Day Weekend, Saturday, June 14, from noon to 3 p.m., at the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum and gardens in Pelham Bay Park, The Bronx.

Playing by 1864 rules, the Mutual Base Ball Club of New York will take on the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club of New York, with the historic 19th-century mansion and carriage house as a backdrop. (Watch "dem" antique rippled windows, "will youse?")

This is the first time the modern teams have played each other, though they competed in the 19th century, including in 1864. Both of the original teams were connected to the Fire Department of New York City. The original New York Mutuals played from 1857 to 1876, and were named after the Mutual Hook and Ladder Company Number 1 of New York.

The original New York Knickerbockers were organized in 1845, the first baseball club, and the first to adopt rules and jerseys. They were named for the Knickerbocker Engine Company No. 12. "The Knickerbockers were the very beginning of baseball," says the Mutuals' Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich.

The Mutuals, also known as the Green Stockings, were immortalized as one of the teams in the famous Currier & Ives print "The American National Game of Base Ball." The club was a charter member of the first professional league in 1871, and the National League in 1876. The modern-day club, established in 1999, is known for its experienced ballists, historical accuracy and replica equipment.

Bats from the 19th century were always wood and often heavier and thicker in the handle. They tapered gradually from the handle to the barrel and were sometimes made without the knob on the handle. Painted rings reflected the team's color. The uniforms were also distinct from modern day, featuring knickers; long, colorful stockings; and caps with short brims, rather than helmets.

While the Mutuals home field is at the Old Bethpage Village Restoration on Long Island and they tour regularly, they rarely play in New York City. The Knickerbockers are a newer, less well-known team also based at Old Bethpage, and this is their debut game in the City, and their first modern match with the Mutuals.

After the June 14 "base ball" game, team members will play a game of Rounders, splitting to create two teams of children--and maybe a few dads-- from the audience.

Rounders is a 19th-century English child's game similar to "base ball" in having four bases and involving batting. The pitching configuration is different, and the opposing team can "soak" base runners out, by tossing the very soft leather playing ball at them.

Other activities include a one-day-only exhibit of vintage baseball memorabilia, a raffle of the vintage replica game ball, a 50-50 raffle, and tours of the mansion and garden. And, no, attending doesn't mean missing a home Yankees game--The Bronx Bombers will be in Houston that day.

Cost for the historic games is \$20 for adults, \$10 for children 6 to 17. Children under 6 are free. Discounts for members apply. Tours of the 19th-century Bartow-Pell mansion and garden are free for the occasion. Registration is recommended, though not required. For more information or to register, call (718)885-1461, email [info@bpmm.org](mailto:info@bpmm.org), or visit [www.bpmm.org](http://www.bpmm.org).

The Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, in Pelham Bay Park at 895 Shore Road, The Bronx, is mass-transit accessible by taking the number 6 train to its end, Pelham Bay station. From there take the Westchester Bee-line number 45 bus to the first stop. By car, Bartow-Pell is just off the Hutchinson River Parkway at the City Island/Orchard Beach exit.

A source of serenity amidst New York City's largest park, the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum is a National Historic Landmark surrounded by exceptional gardens. The furnished Bartow-Pell Mansion is a federal-style stone building, the sole remaining example of the type of country living that existed in the Pelham Bay Park area in the early 19th century. Annually, over 2,000 school children and their teachers participate in historic programs at the site.

At over 2,700 acres, Pelham Bay Park is the city's largest park. Its best-known feature is the 1.1 mile long Orchard Beach, the only public beach in The Bronx. The Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, opened in 1946, is owned by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, operated by the non-profit International Garden Club, Inc., and is a member of the Historic House Trust of New York City.

###