

THE QUEENS MUSEUM NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR ASSOCIATION

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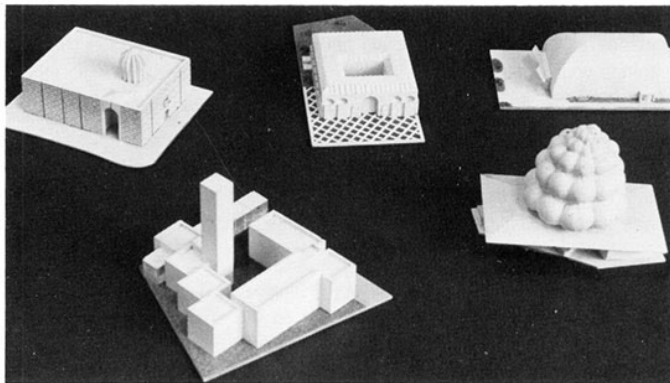
...FOND MEMORIES OF THE FAIR

Anniversaries hardly have a chance to

fade as programs about the future Expo 92 in Spain and Flushing Meadows Corona Park begin to develop. Many who attended Jim Ogul's great slide lecture, this past August, on the U.S. plans for Expo 92 will be delighted to read the most recent update. This issue is also filled with interviews highlighted by a chat with an Aquacade show girl. You've come to the right place to get the scoop on World's Fair news and programs.

'64

Important Models of 1964 Fair Pavilions Given to Museum



Scale models (1:32), by Lester Associates, of some of the 1964 World's Fair Pavilions recently donated by David Oats. From left: Pakistan, Lebanon, Morocco, Brass Rail Restaurant and Dancing Waters.

The Queens Museum received an important donation, from David Oats, of over 100 scale models showing 1964/65 New York World's Fair pavilions. The models were made by Lester Associates, the official model-maker for the Fair Corporation, and also the creator of The Panorama of New York City.

Most of the models (constructed at a scale of 1:1200) were originally part of The Panorama which during the Fair included a complete depiction of the site with all the pavilions. After the Fair's demolition in 1966, these models were removed as part of continuing efforts to keep The Panorama up-to-date.

Especially impressive are 15 larger models depicting such major pavilions as Ford, General Electric and New York State. These models (constructed at a scale of 1:32) were originally part of a 900 square foot Fair model. Before the Fair opened, this large model was located at Fair Administration Offices and used for public relations purposes. During the Fair it was on view at the American Express Pavilion.

The Museum is grateful to Oats for this important donation. Oats' interest in the Fair stems from his special relationship with Fair President Robert Moses. Oats met Moses when, as a young boy, Oats was caught sneaking into the Fair while it was under construction. Moses took a liking to Oats and invited him to official Fair festivities. After the Fair closed Oats frequented the Park and sought to preserve bits of the Fair, like these models, that were being discarded. Today, Oats is editor of the *Queens Tribune*.

Mark These Dates On Your World's Fair Calendar

SPECIAL EVENTS:

December 1990—Admission to The Queens Museum is free during December 1990 courtesy of New York Telephone's funding of the new "Sponsor A Month" Program. For more information about this Program, please call David Rodriguez, Director of Development.

Sat, Dec 1, 1990—10AM-5PM: "World's Fair Celebration Day" features a World's Fair marketplace (organized by the World's Fair Collectors Society), World's Fair films, a park tour at 2PM led by Pierre Montiel and an oral history project room. With early admission at 9AM, Members of The Queens Museum World's Fair Association get the first opportunity to purchase vintage world's fair items from over 20 dealers tables.

Sun, Dec 2, 1990—2:30PM: Slide lecture on "Tunnels, Bridges, & Roads: Building the Infrastructure of Modern New York," by Laura Rosen, Administrator of the Special Archive at the Triborough Bridge & Tunnel Authority, and Curator of the TUNNEL exhibition.

EXHIBIT:

TUNNEL: An Exhibition Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Queens Midtown Tunnel—Nov 9, 1990 through Mar 2, 1991. It was hoped that the Queens-Midtown Tunnel would be constructed in time for the 1939 Fair; but because of funding delays it actually opened on November 15th, 1940, three weeks after the Fair closed. Photographs and renderings tell the dramatic story of the Tunnel's construction.



New York Telephone returns to Flushing Meadows Corona Park, where they exhibited at the 1964/65 Fair, to offer Free Admission to The Queens Museum during December 1990. Photo: AT&T Photo Service.

FAIR FEATURE

Interviews

The Queens Museum's World's Fair Collection contains oral history tapes which we have gathered from people who visited and worked at the two New York Fairs. The Museum is constantly adding to this collec-

tion and during "World's Fair Celebration Day" on Dec 1 a special oral history room will be set-up to record those of you who have vivid memories of the Fairs. Here are some excerpts from this on-going project.

Making a Splash as an Aquacade Show Girl in 1939

Interview with Ruth Morrow on 7/18/80



Photograph from the now-defunct newspaper, the Journal American, showing would-be "Aquabelles" auditioning for Billy Rose's Aquacade, Spring 1940. Collection: The Queens Museum.

It was advertised in the newspaper that they were hiring swimmers, dancers, and show girls for the Aquacade. I was a show girl. The call was at the Hippodrome which was a great big theater... Billy Rose's theater. I would say there were thousands of people, and we all lined up, one group at a time, and Billy Rose would choose. We got \$35 a week and did two shows every day with no days off. Times have changed, right? I don't believe we even got sick days. We were going to go on strike, as I recall, and then Billy Rose came through and gave us \$45 a week. It was the union that got us the raise.

I remember a little hangout diagonally opposite the Fair... it was called the Crow's Inn and was Johnny Weismuller's favorite spot. We would all congregate there after the show. I remember we use to sneak across the parkway and one night the police stopped us. They were very nice about it. They said they didn't want to have to pick up all the bloody pieces all over the road, so we never did it again. It's funny, the small things you remember.

I was 18 going on 19. We were show girls and a lot of people raised their eyebrows but we had the greatest time. I'm still friends with some of the girls and I met my husband there. Most of the girls I know met their husbands through the Fair. My husband was a state trooper. He was stationed at the state trooper's exhibit and that's where I met him.

Perry Rathbone's Memories of Masterpieces

Back in 1939 Rathbone, now a Vice President at Christie's, was the day-to-day supervisor of the Masterpieces of Art Pavilion at the Fair. Here is an abridged version of the talk he delivered during The Queens Museum's "World's Fair Anniversary Day" on April 29, 1989.

I could say everything was in readiness for Mr. Grover Whalen—the great panjandrum of this earth-shaking event—to push a button. But it would be untrue. The building for my international cultural exhibit, unmistakably called MASTERPIECES OF ART, would not be finished. For reasons we never heard, the hod carriers (those who carry cement) union went on strike. Most people today don't know what a hod carrier is, but in 1939 half a dozen other building trade unions found it easy to call a sympathy strike with them. All work ceased on our up-to-date building designed by the distinguished architectural firm of Wallace K. Harrison and his French partner M. Fouhieux, later replaced by Max Abramovitz. Our uncompleted temporary art museum would not be hard to finish because it was totally unadorned and required no wood work, no windows or flourishes of any kind since it was designed in the then popular International style. But there was a hook; the insurance underwriters ordained that our \$30,000,000 art exhibit must be housed in a totally fire-proof structure built out of concrete throughout; even the gallery benches for tired visitors must be of concrete.

What we didn't realize was that concrete is made of fire-resistant cement and sand, but alas, also of water. Even in the month of May, when the paralyzing strike was finally settled, water in the concrete dries slowly on Flushing Meadows!! Our upholsterers with the wall-hangings contract were more than impatient to start work and insisted on installation while moisture was still evaporating from the concrete walls. Water does funny things to fabric. Another delay. We acquired a truck load of giant electric fans to aerate the walls and drive out the wetness. Then, finally, just a bit after opening day, all 413 paintings and 19 sculptures were put in place and lighted.

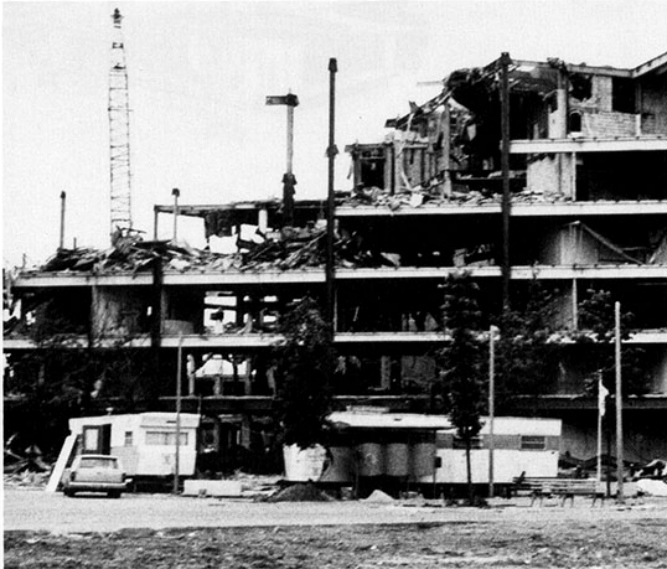


View of the Masterpieces of Art Pavilion with the Tylon visible in the background, 1939. Photo: Perry T. Rathbone.

FLUSHING MEADOWS CORONA PARK

After The Fairs

by Peter M. Warner



Demolition of the Better Living Center built for the 1964-65 World's Fair, 1966. Photo: Peter M. Warner.

When the 1939/40 Fair closed on October 27, 1940, New York City Parks Commissioner Robert Moses planned to convert the site into a major park. Demolition started immediately and only a few fair pavilions were allowed to remain. The New York City Building was used first as a recreational facility and then for some meetings of the United Nations, after which it was returned to recreational use. The New York State Amphitheater (now the Gertrude Ederle Amphitheater) became a combination theater and public swimming pool. Gardens on Parade became the Queens Botanical Gardens and were subsequently moved to Kissena Park during preparations for the 1964/65 Fair.

Moses hoped that the 1964/65 Fair would generate the money to finish the park. But when the 1965 season closed on October 17th, the Fair Corporation did not have sufficient funds to complete the park as planned. Many pavilions were abandoned by exhibitors and had to be demolished at the expense of the Fair Corporation. The Unisphere, symbol of the 64/65 Fair, remains. The U.S. Pavilion stood empty until 1975 when it was finally demolished.



Robert Moses (center) with Queens Borough President, Mario J. Cariello (left) and Commissioner of Parks, Thomas Hoving (right) at the reopening of the New York City Building, July 1966. Photo: Peter M. Warner

Plans to use the New York State Pavilion are being developed and its programming is now known as Theater In The Park. The Singer Bowl, renamed the Louis Armstrong Stadium, was extensively renovated and enlarged, and is now the National Tennis Center, site of the U.S. Open. The New York City Building reopened in July 1966, and was operated by Triborough Bridge & Tunnel Authority to exhibit The Panorama of New York City. The Queens Museum took over part of this building in 1972 and the ice skating rink still occupies the other part. The Hall of Science & Space Park was also reopened but after a few years was closed. After extensive remodeling and with new exhibits, the former Hall of Science & Space Park reopened in 1986 as the New York Hall of Science.

Other surviving structures from the 1964/65 Fair include The Port Authority Heliport Building, now Terrace On The Park, a catering facility. The Press Building is now a police station and the Fair Corporation Administration Building is now a Parks Department facility known as the Olmsted Center. Plans are underway today to improve more areas of Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

THE QUEENS MUSEUM

New York City Building
Flushing Meadows-Corona Park,
Flushing, New York 11368-3398

Museum Hours: Tues.-Fri. 10-5, Sat. & Sun. 12-5, Closed Mon

Recorded Information: (718) 592-5555 • Administrative Offices: (718) 592-2405

Free Parking

Letters to the Editors are welcome. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

Editors: Connie M. Cullen, Marc H. Miller

Photos: Phyllis Bilick (unless otherwise credited)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Queens Museum New York
World's Fair Association

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

My check for \$25 is enclosed

Please make your check payable to:
The Queens Museum, N.Y.C. Building,
Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Flushing, NY 11368-3398.

SPOTLIGHT ON EXPO 92 IN SEVILLE

The Next World's Fair

During his Aug 26, 1990 talk at The Queens Museum, Jim Ogul, Project Director for the U.S.A. Pavilion at the upcoming 1992 World's Fair in Seville, Spain, was greeted by an enthusiastic crowd of eager questioners. The audience was heartened to hear that with the recent Congressional Appropriation of \$13 million, the U.S.A. will definitely be joining over 110 other countries in Seville's ambitious celebration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the New World. But with less than 20 months remaining until the opening of Expo 92, Ogul still faces the formidable task of raising \$30 million, constructing the pavilion and finalizing exhibits.

Expo 92 in Seville and the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona are only some of the projects that will mark Spain's celebration of the Columbus Quincentenary. For us at Flushing Meadows Corona Park—the home of the Unisphere—one project of particular interest is the construction of a giant 303 foot high Armillary Sphere in Madrid by sculptor Rafael Trenor and engineer Jose Antonio Fernandez Ordonez. If funding is found, this sculpture, dedicated to Columbus, will be over 100 feet taller than the Unisphere, effectively challenging our monument's long held title as the "World's Largest Global Structure." We'll keep you posted!



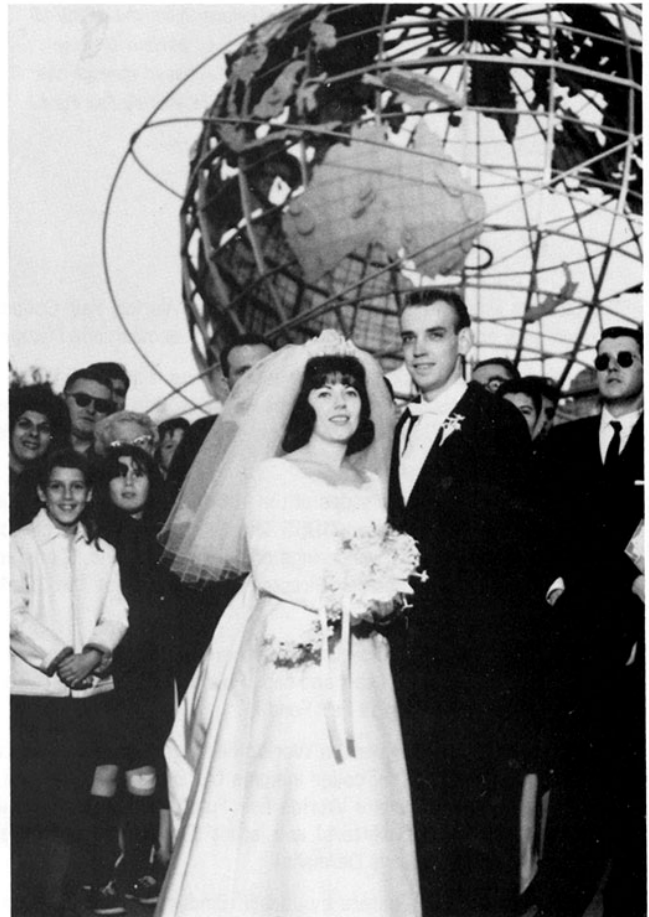
The 13th Century monastery of Santa Maria de las Cuevas (where Christopher Columbus lived and prepared for his voyages) located on the Island of La Cartuja, site of Expo 92. Courtesy: Burson-Marsteller.

PHOTO FINISH

In Fall 1989 we held a Photo Contest as part of the 50th and 25th Anniversary Celebrations, for the 1939 and 1964 Fairs, respectively. We were looking for the best amateur photo from each Fair that captured the real spirit of the times. Among all the wonderful entries were these two winning photos. Each winner received a copy of the catalog for the blockbuster exhibition on the Fairs at The Queens Museum, "Remembering the Future: The New York World's Fairs From 1939 to 1964."



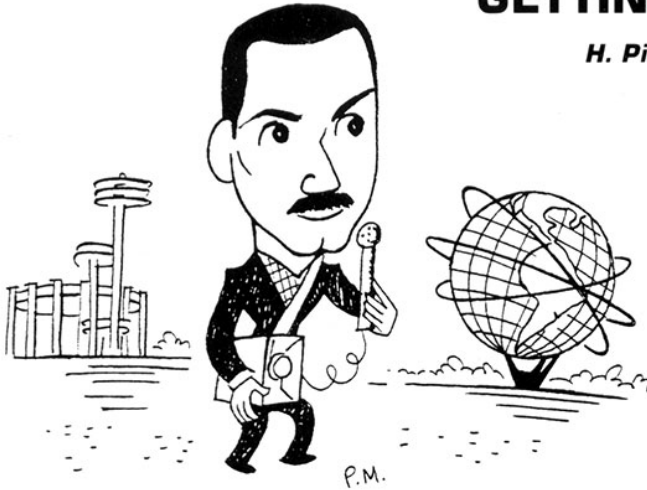
1939 Winner
Mariette van Kerekhove, now Mrs. John Frosien, of Astoria, NY, shown at right, with a friend enjoying a refreshing moment at the Fair.



1964 Winner
Barbara Le Goff of Woodside, NY, who as a bride went to the Fair.

GETTING TO KNOW

H. Pierre Montiel



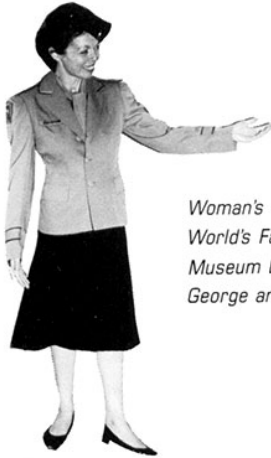
Self-portrait by Pierre Montiel showing him leading a tour of Flushing Meadows Corona Park, 1990. Courtesy: Pierre Montiel.

One of the most popular features of the World's Fair events sponsored by The Queens Museum in Aug 1990 were the Sunday afternoon tours led by H. Pierre Montiel. The knowledgeable and articulate Pierre has been doing tours for the Museum for three years. His interest in the Fairs goes back over 25 years when as a 12 year-old boy he visited the 1964-1965 Fair on a weekly basis and fondly remembers the Belgium Waffles.

At about the same time he got his first exposure to the 1939 Fair through picture books he found at his local library on West 83rd Street. Montiel has worked as an illustrator for publications like *Interview* and *Hollywood Studio Magazine* and he sometimes does caricatures and cartoons at parties and social occasions. Montiel's work can be found at the homes of Katherine Hepburn, Claudette Colbert and other celebrities.

The Queens Museum owns a series of gouache and ink drawings of the 1939 Fair that he generously donated in 1986. Photocopies of Pierre's hand-drawn map of Flushing Meadows Corona Park, complete with depictions of Fair pavilions, are handed out to all who take his park tour.

Ed. Note: As part of "World's Fair Celebration Day" on December 1, Pierre will lead a Park tour starting at 2:00 pm.

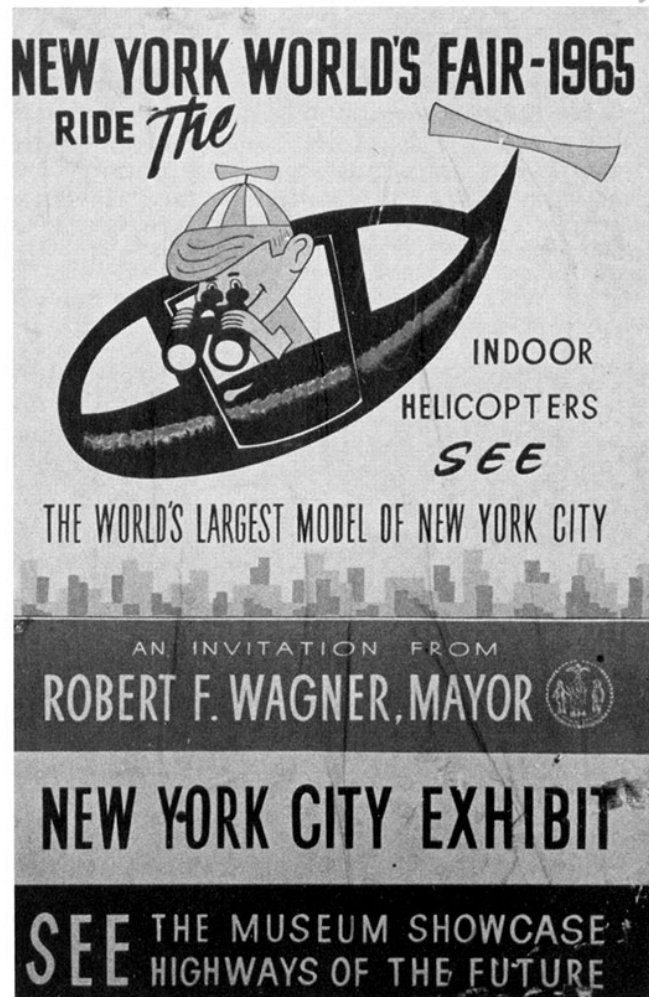


Woman's Guide Uniform from the 1939/40 World's Fair modeled by Miriam Brumer; Museum Educator. (Purchased through the George and Mollie Wolfe World's Fair Fund.)

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

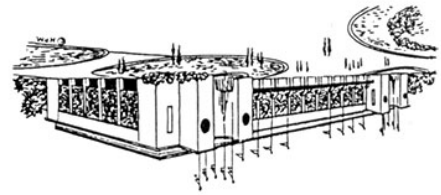
The Queens Museum continues to expand its World's Fair Collection through gifts and purchases. Among our recent acquisitions include:

- A three-sided Kiosk originally used during the 1965 Fair with posters advertising The Panorama—"the world's largest model of New York City." (Donated by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.)
- 287 professional color slides of the 1964/65 World's Fair including a set of 50 slides entitled "1965 Tour Of The Fair" and a collection of 150 slides showing renderings of the Fair pavilions. (Donated by Walter Giebelhaus, former Director of Programs at the 1964/65 Fair.)
- Complete Woman's Guide Uniform from the 1939/40 World's Fair including jacket, skirt, scarf and cap. (Purchased through the George and Mollie Wolfe World's Fair Fund.)
- Complete 1939/40 Pinkerton World's Fair Policeman's Uniform with the pants, belt, badge, collar insignia (All purchased through the George and Mollie Wolfe Worlds Fair Fund), hat (Donated by Jack Gottlieb of David's Outfitters) and jacket (Donated by John Riccardelli in memory of Chris DeAnglis).
- 1939 World's Fair Posters by Joseph Binder, in three sizes, and a copy of *Views The New York World's Fair* published by Grinnell Lithographic Co. featuring illustrations by Mark Freeman. (Donated by Mark Freeman.)



"Ride the Indoor Helicopters. See the World's Largest Model of New York City," Poster, 1965. (Donated by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.)

Inside this issue learn more about the artist who created this illustration of The Queens Museum. H. Pierre Montiel, 1988, gauche and ink.



New York City Building
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Flushing NY 11368-3398

THE QUEENS MUSEUM NEW YORK
WORLD'S FAIR ASSOCIATION

FLUSHING MEADOWS CORONA PARK: UPDATE

As the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation's Administrator for Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Arne Abramowitz is one of the most knowledgeable people about the current state of the Park and recently we spoke with him about upcoming plans.

The Unisphere

"We are currently investigating how much it will cost to conduct an engineering study and to clean the Unisphere. It is made of stainless steel so structurally it is very sound. Some things have gotten loose, however. The other day we discovered that Malaysia was a little loose, so we are interested in having someone tighten up some of the continents. We also have a plan to relight the Unisphere. During the Fair it was lit from these tremendously huge towers. We found out where the foundations were and we will be using those footings to build new lighting towers."

The Fountains

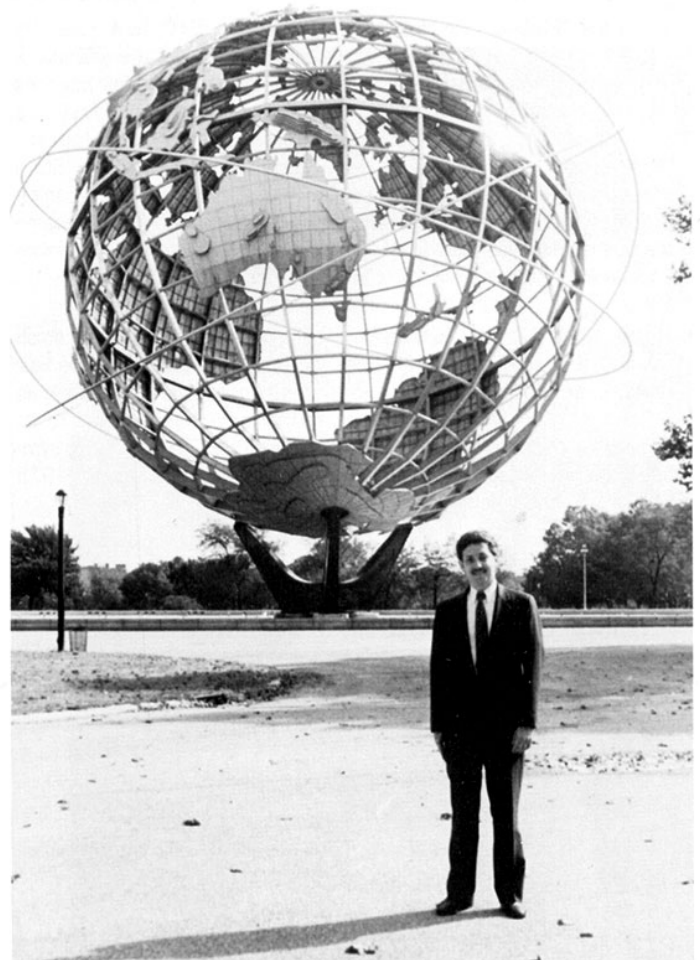
"The fountain around the Unisphere currently works but we will be restoring the full double ring of 60' jets going around it. We'd like to keep the fountain on during daylight hours but people want to use it as a bathing pool. The way it was designed it needs to have at least two feet of water and we feel that's unsafe. We will also be restoring the reflecting pool, which is between the Unisphere and the Rocket Thrower."

The New York State Pavilion

"The New York State Pavilion has three components. The theater, known as Theater in the Park, is being redone by the Queens Council on the Arts. For the pavilion itself we had many requests but only a few 'follow-throughs.' The floor which has the map of New York State is probably unsalvageable at this point. The rooms around it have potential but we haven't come up with a use for them yet. The towers are a problem. The elevators don't work. We've had concessionaires take a look to make a restaurant, cocktail lounge or a gallery. But the cost of building over 200 feet in the air, plus the need to comply to the building code, which the building doesn't meet, makes it very difficult for someone to do something up there. Estimates range from \$3 to \$5 million. The thing that bothers me is that in 25 years there hasn't even been any proposals to do something with the towers."

The Amphitheater

"The Ederly Pool and Amphitheater is in the redesign stage for reconstruction. The idea is to restore the theater and put a swimming pool adjacent to it. Right now the pool is part of the stage area. The interior of the Ederly facility will be a year-round health center. We are trying to change the appearance as little as possible to restore what is there which will also save us money." Thanks Arne!



Arne Abramowitz, Administrator for Flushing Meadows Corona Park, seen by the Unisphere, 1990.