



WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2024

VOL. 54, NO. 1

## The Spring Block Party Is Back: June 15!

**A**FTER A FIVE-YEAR HIATUS, we are thrilled to announce that the Block Association's spring Block Party is on, set for **Sat., June 15, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**, on W. 103rd St. between West End Ave. and Riverside Dr.

The coordinator this year is neighbor Shaurya Gaur. She will need lots of help from all of us to pull this off. As you read about the various activities that we have planned, please consider volunteering to help make this event a success. Whether you have only an hour to spare or would like to take on a bigger role, we badly need your help and can guarantee a lively time with neighbors! Unless otherwise specified, contact [blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org) to volunteer.

### HERE'S WHAT WE'RE PLANNING:

- **Vendor Spaces:** De-cluttering? Got valuable stuff to sell? Looking for trades or barterers? Our buyers are looking for everything, and more than 1,000 people pass through the event. To reserve a vendor space, go

(continued on page 6)

## Did You Live Here in 1974?

If you did and you haven't already been inducted into our Hall of Fame for residents of 50 years or more, now's the time! And if you didn't live here then, but you know someone who did, please connect us. The first residents were inducted in 2010, and we're proud to have included more than 40 people since then.

How does one qualify? All you have to have done is to have lived within Block Association territory for at least half a century! What's the territory? W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts. between Riverside Dr. and Broadway, including the south corners of W. 102nd and the north corners of W. 103rd and the buildings on Riverside Dr. and West End Ave. in

(continued on page 3)



## Annual Meeting: Tues., Apr. 16



### MEET COUNCIL MEMBER SHAUN ABREU

This year's Annual Meeting is scheduled for **Tues., Apr. 16, at 7 p.m.** We're grateful to the Marseilles for allowing us to host the meeting in person in their community room. It's been a long time since we've been able to meet face-to-face! The meeting will also be accessible via Zoom and will be livestreamed on our YouTube channel. All are welcome to attend, either in person or virtually.

We're excited to introduce the community to our new City Council Member, Shaun Abreu, who replaced Gale Brewer as our representative following the recent citywide redistricting. We are looking forward to finding out how his goals and priorities will encompass and address the needs of our residents.

### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BLOCK ASSOCIATION

Community room of the Marseilles (230 W. 103rd St.)  
Tues. Apr. 16, 7 p.m.

#### How to attend virtually:

- **Zoom:** RSVP to [am@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:am@w102-103blockassn.org) and include your name and address.
- **YouTube:** Go to our website ([w102-103blockassn.org](http://w102-103blockassn.org)) and click on "Resources" and then "YouTube" (note that on YouTube, you will not be able to ask questions or vote).

In addition to hearing from Council Member Abreu, we will report on the Block Association's 2023 activities; present our financial report for 2023 and budget for 2024; introduce this year's inductees into our Neighborhood Hall of Fame (see article, left); and elect our 2024 board of directors.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO RUN FOR THE BOARD?

We are always looking for fresh energy and ideas. If becoming a board member is of interest to you, please let

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**THE WEST 102ND &  
103RD STREETS BLOCK  
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

[info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org)

Hedy Campbell, editor; Amy Edelman, copy editor; Ariana Koblitz, designer; Terence Hanrahan, advertising manager; Avery Hudson, indexer. Comments and questions related to the Association or Newsletter are welcomed. Address letters to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1940, New York, NY 10025. Email may be sent to [editor@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:editor@w102-103blockassn.org). Phone messages may be left at (212) 865-8524. Previous issues of the Newsletter and the index are available online at [w102-103blockassn.org](http://w102-103blockassn.org).

**EMAIL LIST**

The Block Association maintains an email list to notify residents about important matters that arise between issues of the Newsletter. You can join the list by sending your email address, full name, home address (with apartment number), and phone number to [email@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:email@w102-103blockassn.org).



**Join Us**

[www.w102-103blockassn.org](http://www.w102-103blockassn.org)

# Help Wanted

**CO-TREASURER:**

One of our treasurers is retiring and we need a replacement. Komal Rathi, thank you for years of meticulous recordkeeping! Familiarity with Quicken and Access software is advantageous, but not critical; they're not complex programs, and training will be provided. Write to [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org).

**SPRING BLOCK PARTY  
VOLUNTEERS:**

The event is scheduled for June 15 and we're going to need lots of volunteers to help make it happen (see page 1). In particular, we'll need people to coordinate publicity, organize advance raffle-ticket sales, be in charge of leafletting parked cars so the drivers know the street will be closed, set up for the event, staff tables, and clean up after the event. Write [blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org) to volunteer.

**BLOCK ASSOCIATION  
MEETINGS**

Block Association meetings are open to all and are usually held on the second Tuesday of the month at 8 p.m. Email [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org) if you'd like to attend via Zoom.

**Mar. 12**

**Apr. 9**

**May 14**



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Annual Meeting**

Guest Speaker: City Council Member Sean Abreu  
Marseilles community room  
230 W. 103rd St.  
Tues., Apr. 16, 7 p.m.  
(see page 1)

To join via Zoom: RSVP to [am@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:am@w102-103blockassn.org)

**Spring Planting**

SE corner of W. 103rd St. / WEA  
Sun., May 5  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (or until supplies run out)  
Email [trees@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:trees@w102-103blockassn.org) for more info  
(see page 3)

**SpringArts2024**

Sun., May 5, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
W. 103rd Open Street (Broadway to WEA)  
For more info: [parktopark103.nyc](http://parktopark103.nyc)  
(see page 7)

**Summer Newsletter**

Early June

**Block Party**

W. 103rd St. between WEA and RSD  
Sat., June 15  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
(see page 1)

## The Winter Solstice Was Especially Bright

**O**UR SOLSTICE CAROLING EVENT IS ALWAYS A GOOD TIME. This year was especially poignant, though, as it was the 40th anniversary of the event! That may be only 40 partridges in pear trees, but it's 480 drummers drumming, and that's the makings of one mighty drum circle!

Just as we have 39 times before, we met in the lobby of 865 West End Ave. on Thurs., Dec. 21. Because it was

an anniversary, we had to celebrate in some way, though, no? Thanks to Roberta Belulovich, who made good on her promise to provide us with new and improved updated songbooks, we did—in the form of a new spiral-bound edition that was enthusiastically received!

And if new songbooks weren't enough, this year was special because the event captured the attention of

Alan Winson, co-host of the *Bar Crawl Radio* podcast, which features "fun and informative talk with people making their community livable." Making our community even more livable is precisely what the Block Association does! Alan walked with the group along the route, and interviewed Anthony Bello, founder of the event, when we finished up. Anthony's remarks were included in

the end-of-year podcast, “I Want to Say Kaddish...” ([shows.acast.com/bar-crawl-radio/episodes/i-want-to-say-kaddish](https://shows.acast.com/bar-crawl-radio/episodes/i-want-to-say-kaddish)).

The solstice also happens to mark the birthday of a longtime 865 resident. Just as we were wondering whether he’d join us this year, the elevator doors opened and there he was! We segued right into “Happy Birthday,” then took to the streets.

The weather was just right: cold enough to feel like caroling season, but not so cold that we were rushing to retreat indoors after we finished blessing each block with “Dona Nobis Pacem” and serenading the residents of 300 Riverside Dr. with “The Twelve

Days of Christmas.” Maybe it was the festive weather that motivated so many people to join us; our crowd swelled to more than 70 people and a handful of dogs at one point.

Abundant thanks to Anthony and to Dayle Vander Sande, who, year after year, devote their time and energy to leading the group. In 2024, the winter solstice falls on **Sat., Dec. 21**. Look for an announcement in the *Winter 2024 Newsletter*, watch for the reminder email (sign up for our mailing list at [w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:w102-103blockassn.org)), and come join us. Perhaps this will be the year that we resume our pre-pandemic tradition of retiring indoors afterward to warm up with a glass of hot cider!

## Honoring Cynthia Doty

**B**EFORE SHE PASSED AWAY quite suddenly last July, Cynthia Doty was a longtime Block Association board member and served most recently as its chair. Her efforts on behalf of our neighborhood were one small part of a long career in community activism and local politics, which was evidenced by the roster of public figures attending her memorial service last fall—they comprised a veritable Who’s Who in New York government.

Her family has requested that donations in her memory be made to the Riverside Park Conservancy, and many neighbors and friends have already done so. Three Parks Independent Democrats, of which Cynthia was a longstanding member and director, has contributed and asked its membership to do the same.

Cumulatively, the sum received is very close to being enough to fund a bench in Cynthia’s name. If we can boost the numbers even a little bit, the Block Association will be in a good position to make the final contribution and get us to the goal.

Cynthia was devoted to our community. Please help us acknowledge her generosity by making a donation of whatever amount you can comfortably afford.

To pay by credit



card: visit [riversideparknyc.org/bench](https://riversideparknyc.org/bench). Once you’ve filled out your information, select the “Special Tribute” button and then “In Memory of” and enter Cynthia’s name. (Do not fill in the field regarding the engraving.)

To pay by check: Please make the check out to “Riverside Park Conservancy” with Cynthia’s name in the memo line, and mail to: Riverside Park Conservancy, 475 Riverside Dr., Suite 455, New York, NY 10115.

## Spring Planting Day: May 5

**S**PRING IS COMING AND IT’S TIME to spruce up our tree wells! Please join us on Sat., May 5, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., to help beautify our neighborhood. We need volunteers to help us set up, plant flowers in tree wells in front of various buildings, and clean up when the work is done. All ages are welcome. Bring your kids out to get dirt under their fingernails. Please email [trees@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:trees@w102-103blockassn.org) if you’re able to help out. If you can’t plant but can commit to watering the flowers going forward, and/or would like to help defray the costs of the plants, please let us know that too. We hope to see you on May 5!

(continued from page 1)

## Annual Meeting

us know by **Mar. 16**. According to our bylaws, all current directors are automatically eligible for inclusion on the ballot. Nominations of new directors are to be made in writing, whether via mail (P.O. Box 1940, New York, NY 10025) or via email ([info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org)), at least three weeks in advance of the Annual Meeting. All members in good standing are eligible for nomination. (A member in good standing is anyone 18 or older who lives in the territory and has either made a financial contribution in the past year or demonstrated consistent participation in Block Association activities.) Candidates need to be endorsed by at least two current members of the Board of Directors in order to become nominees and included on the ballot; no board member may endorse more than two candidates.

### OTHER INFO

Members in good standing (see definition above), whether attending in person or on Zoom, are eligible to vote in the election.

If you have any questions, contact [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org). We look forward to seeing you all on Apr. 16!

(continued from page 1)

## Did You Live Here?

between.

What’s involved? Participants are interviewed and, if they don’t mind, photographed (thanks, Gus Butera). Honorees are introduced at our Annual Meeting, which will take place this year on Tues., Apr. 16, and presented with a certificate—suitable for framing! (Attendance at the meeting is not required.) After the meeting, bios and photos of our newest inductees will be posted on our website. Click on the “Neighborhood Hall of Fame” tab to read past inductees’ bios and see their portraits. If you qualify, or know someone you think might, please contact [editor@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:editor@w102-103blockassn.org).



# Meet the Candidates

*Our district's longtime assembly member, Danny O'Donnell, announced recently that he will not run for re-election this year. At press time, four candidates, all Democrats, have thrown their hats in the ring for his seat. The New York primary on June 25 will determine which candidate will advance to the fall election. We asked all four to answer several questions that we thought would be on the minds of constituents. These were:*

1. *What do you see as the biggest challenges in our district?*
2. *What do you see as the biggest challenges in the city and state that the state government can address?*
3. *What actions should the state take to increase the supply of affordable housing?*
4. *What's your view of DOT's Open Streets program, such as that on W. 103rd St.?*

*We have heard back from three of the four candidates. (When we hear back from the fourth, Carmen Quinones, we will post her responses on our website, [w102-103blockassn.org](http://w102-103blockassn.org).)*

## MICAH LASHER

The biggest challenges facing the state—especially housing and mental health—have a profound impact on our district. More locally: the combination of vacant storefronts and sidewalk sheds contribute to a sense of decline, and many neighbors have safety concerns related to the proliferation of e-bikes. While there are no silver bullet solutions, I am eager to pursue state tools, from economic incentives (and, potentially, penalties) related

to vacant storefronts and long-term sidewalk sheds, to an e-bike registration program.

For years, state government paid woefully insufficient attention to mental health. Inpatient psychiatric beds declined by 20%, while adults in New York with serious mental illness rose 32%. As director of policy for Governor Hochul, I helped begin the work of reversing these trends, with a \$1 billion investment in new psychiatric beds, supportive housing, outpatient services, and mental health services in schools across the state. In the Assembly, I would continue this work and hold insurance companies and hospitals accountable for providing adequate care and discharge planning.

Experts believe we need 800,000 units of new housing throughout the state to relieve the pressure facing renters and home-buyers alike. I helped develop a plan known as the New York State Housing Compact, which the *Times* called the “first serious attempt by a New York governor since the 1960s” to tackle racist, exclusionary zoning and build hundreds of thousands of units of housing, with a particular focus on transit-accessible suburbs. While the Housing Compact was defeated by Long Island legislators, as a member of the Assembly, I would work to advance its components as individual pieces of legislation.

I support the goals of the Open Streets program—better public open spaces—but street design comes under the jurisdiction of municipal

government and elected officials, to whom I would generally defer on these issues.

## ELI NORTHRUP

New York's affordable housing crisis is maybe the most significant challenge facing our district and our state. As a public defender, I've also seen how stable housing directly benefits community safety. We must build additional housing that is truly affordable, while also providing tenant protections that help seniors and those at risk of eviction stay in their homes. Our state's incentive system must be completely transformed to hold private developers to account to build actually affordable housing that is responsive to community input and needs—not luxury towers with small numbers of affordable units. I will advocate for a Housing Access Voucher Program, which would help people access housing and also subsidize affordable housing construction through voucher bundling. New York State needs to invest in our existing public housing stock and think bigger—by constructing and converting additional housing to provide real, deeply affordable options.

Our state must finally fix the crumbling MTA. The subway system is the life force of our city, yet is largely inaccessible to the elderly, disabled, and young families, and many lines have outdated brake systems and signals—as evidenced in the recent crash at W. 96th St. State government must fully fund the MTA and ensure it has the



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resources and mandate to maintain and improve its trains and infrastructure.

Open Streets is an amazing program that should be continued and expanded. Open Streets provides spaces where we can gather together, connect as neighbors, shop, perform, and more. This is vital to our social infrastructure and sense of connectedness—as well as to our local businesses which are integral to the fabric of our neighborhood and our community's economic vitality. Fewer cars on the road make us safer and benefit our environment. Our Open Streets—and our block associations—make our community great.

### MELISSA ROSENBERG

Our district is currently facing an affordability crisis. With skyrocketing rents and limited housing options, our neighbors are finding it difficult

to make ends meet and stay in the neighborhood they call home. On top of that, our district has seen a concerning rise in traffic violence and bias and hate-motivated incidents. New Yorkers have a right to feel safe in their own city and we must act to protect all in our neighborhood.

The city and state government have an obligation to address affordability, street safety, and ensuring quality transit. Through streamlined regulations, investments in infrastructure, and affordable housing incentives, our governments have the tools necessary to fight the housing crisis and ensure our neighbors stay housed. Through increased enforcement of existing laws, and implementation of proven policies like daylighting, local officials can combat the alarming rise in traffic violations and hate crimes.

To increase the supply of affordable housing, the state must implement density bonuses for affordability, tax incentives to encourage development, and expedited approval processes for housing projects. Additionally, creating incentives for transit-oriented development and mixed-income housing can contribute to a more diverse and economically inclusive community.

The DOT's Open Streets program, such as on W. 103rd St., is a great step forward in creating pedestrian-friendly spaces. By converting our streets into community-oriented spaces, local residents can enjoy outdoor activities and support small businesses. I am thrilled with the program's success and would like to see it expanded. I hope the DOT will work closely with our community to ensure success in the expansion.



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## Spring Block Party

to the Block Association website ([w102-103blockassn.org](http://w102-103blockassn.org)) and click on "Block Party" for detailed information and the vendor agreement form. If you have specific questions that aren't answered on the website, email [vendors@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:vendors@w102-103blockassn.org). Space is limited, so plan to apply soon.

- **Fun Family Activities:** Do you have a skill to show off? We could use face-painters, caricaturists, jugglers, magicians, just to name a few. Let us know what you'd like to see and/or do.
- **Live Music:** Classical? Pop? Jazz? World? Would you like to perform? Contact us.
- **Split-Pot Raffle:** In previous years, winners took home several hundred dollars. We'll be selling raffle tickets in the weeks preceding the Block Party as well as the day of. Buy early and often! We also need volunteers to staff the raffle-ticket tables.
- **Refreshments:** To keep our visitors and vendors well fed, we always offer a variety of refreshments, many of them homemade. It's an opportunity to share the goodies you make or bake. If you are willing to donate baked goods and/or help staff the bake table, contact [food@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:food@w102-103blockassn.org).

[w102-103blockassn.org](http://w102-103blockassn.org).

- **Recycling:** We'd like to continue offering textile recycling (used clothing, curtains, linens, throw rugs), but need someone to be in charge of it.

### OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES/NEEDS:

- **Publicity:** We need someone to get the event on community calendars, neighborhood email lists, etc. It's a great job for a person who's got time in advance of the event and is handy on a computer. We can provide a flyer and even make a quantity of copies, but could use a hand posting them on neighborhood building bulletin boards.
- **Setup and Cleanup:** There's a lot to do at the start of the day and again at the end. Extra hands are a big help.

Give us an hour or two of your time and we'll give you all the appreciation you could want and the sense of well-being that can only be gained from contributing to one's community. It's also a great way for teenagers to get a taste of the gratifications of volunteerism, perhaps earning needed community-service hours for school in the bargain.

To volunteer, email [blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org).



## Please Move Your Cars

**W**E HATE DIRTY STREETS. As pointed out in "How to Be a Good Neighbor" in the last edition of this newsletter, one critical thing drivers can do to help is obey the law and move their cars twice a week, so street sweepers can do their job.

Now, if the NYC Department of Sanitation gets its way—and legislation passes that has been pending in the state legislature since 2011 (yes, you read that right: 2011, during the Bloomberg years!), a new fleet of street sweepers will be equipped with cameras that can issue parking tickets to drivers who fail to move their cars during scheduled cleaning times. These cameras will be able to read license plate numbers, and if a car is parked illegally, the system will automatically issue a parking ticket. You can read more about this in the Oct. 20, 2023, edition of the *Gothamist* ([gothamist.com/news/nyc-street-sweepers-should-have-cameras-automating-tickets-sanitation-commissioner-says](http://gothamist.com/news/nyc-street-sweepers-should-have-cameras-automating-tickets-sanitation-commissioner-says)).

And until this legislation is passed, for the sake of our neighborhood, please move your cars and let the sweepers in!



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REASONABLE RATES

# Open Street Spring Events

By PETER FRISHAUF

**P**ARK TO PARK CELEBRATES its three goals of safety, beauty, and inclusion with our signature spring events.

## STREETARTS2024/SPRING PLANTING: SUN., MAY 5



Eliza Lansdale (center) at the 2023 Spring Planting, on W. 102nd St. with (from left) Park to Park's Peter Frishauf, Youth Ambassador Ibrahim Danso, and Ira Gershenhorn

Join us for our spring kickoff event, planned in coordination with the Block

Association. Under the direction of Eliza Lansdale, a dedicated member of the association and known for her green thumb, volunteers will be planting and maintaining tree beds on W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts. (see page 3).

This year's festivities will also include

- "Music by the Marseilles," in the new, fully accessible parklet on W. 103rd St., between Broadway and West End Ave.
- Dancing on the street with several amazing troupes
- Chair yoga, Zumba, and other exercise
- Backgammon lessons with world champion Antoinette Marie-Williams
- "Yes to Chess," with neighborhood chess master Gabriel Profumo
- A bevy of our famously fun kids' activities



## Purple Waves: A New, Planet-Friendly Café

By SHARON WASKOW

### IT'S EASY BEING GREEN

**A** GREAT NEW ADDITION to our neighborhood, Purple Waves is a neighborhood café, wine bar, and gathering place based on sustainable principles. What does that mean? If you want to take out coffee, your options are to bring your own container or to sign up for the reusable-cup service offered by Deliver Zero ([deliverzero.com](https://deliverzero.com)).

All furnishings were resourced secondhand and food suppliers are selected for their circularity practices (reduce, reuse, repair, refurbish, recycle). In short, there is no plastic in sight!

It's beautiful and friendly, and the pastries, lunch food, and specialty drinks are delicious.

Proprietor Sharon Reuveni wants Purple Waves to be a prototype for other sustainable-minded establishments. Plans are in the works

to add a play oasis for little ones called Little Waves and possibly a refillables store.

Purple Waves is located at 285 W. 110th St. (on the northeast side of the roundabout at Central Park West). Still in its rollout phase, the café is currently open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends, with plans to expand into evening hours in March. You can follow them on Instagram (@purplewavesnyc) for updates, and their phone number is (212) 927-1101.

So take a nice walk and fuel up at Purple Waves. Let's give our community support to this planet-friendly endeavor!

*It's Easy Being Green is your neighborhood climate-education and personal-action group. Consider subscribing to the It's Easy Being Green newsletter to keep in the know on NYC environmental information and tips for a greener lifestyle ([itseasybeinggreen.org](https://itseasybeinggreen.org)).*

## MAKE MUSIC NEW YORK: FRI., JUNE 21

This popular summer-solstice event is back, at the Marseilles parklet and on the Amsterdam-to-Broadway block of W. 103rd St.

*For updates and more, sign up for the Park to Park email newsletter at [parktopark103.nyc](https://parktopark103.nyc) (under "Get Involved"). Big thanks to the NYC DOT for creating 6,200 square feet of new public spaces, with 38 fabulous planters beautifying the neighborhood year-round.*

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# Restaurant Review: Moon Kee

By GAY HAUBNER

I'M A SUCKER FOR DUCKS in a window. Golden brown ducks, as tan as your grandma in Coral Gables. In Chinatown joints, the ducks are often flanked by whole chickens and ribs, and once I saw a cluster of orange barbecued cuttlefish, which looked like they should be in the AMNH.

So, imagine my delight when the long-awaited Moon Kee finally opened its doors on the east side of Broadway between W. 100th and W. 101st Sts., and hanging in the window were ducks and chickens.

Like old-style Chinatown, Moon Kee does not invite you in or encourage you to linger. I've been in bus station cafés with more atmosphere.

I had planned to dine solo at Moon Kee at a Formica table under the unflattering light. I would have stuck it out, but there was no beer. At least it was bright enough that I could easily read the extensive menu while leaning on the counter, contemplating my take-out order.

I could not justify a half duck to myself at \$24. Instead, I ordered roast duck noodle soup (\$16), pan-fried pork dumplings (\$8), and poached choy sum with oyster sauce (\$14), and brought it home.

A pushover for Asian noodle soups (think ramen, pho, udon, soba) or any food wrapped in another food (dumplings, ravioli, blintzes, pierogi), I enjoyed the hell out of the soup and the pork fried dumplings: Chinese comfort food.

And that choy sum, which is charmingly called "Chinese flowering cabbage," was delicious. If I hadn't drenched it in the oyster sauce, it also would have been the healthiest thing I ate all year.

On my second Moon Kee visit, I decided to take out again. Yes, I know I can have food delivered, but I am waging war against bike delivery. I'm sure the delivery guys are nice men and

I hope they are not being exploited. There are still too damn many and they ride on the sidewalk, where I am being dragged by two dogs and there's a lady with a walker in front of me and a frantic mom wrangling a tantrumming toddler behind.

When I picked up my food, I asked, "Can I bring my own beer if I eat in?"

The answer was yes. Next time, I was eating in.

This time I doubled down on the dumplings. Moon Kee proclaims that it is "Absolute Hong Kong," which to me is dumplings: I got steamed pork soup dumplings (\$8) and

crystal shrimp dumplings (\$8). My main was crispy pork brisket (\$18). The shrimp dumplings were huge and delicious, the shrimp in a delicate wrapping that I dunked in the hot sauce included in my order. As good as a dumpling gets.

Soup dumplings, invented in Shanghai, did not transfer to Absolute Hong Kong successfully. They were fine, and one day I will learn not to order soup dumplings if I'm not at Joe's Shanghai.

The pork brisket, though . . . not crispy and mostly fat. My guess is pork belly, and some nephew said, "Call it brisket! Upper West Siders love brisket!"

I came up with a plan for my dine-in at Moon Kee. I invited a friend's starving-artist son and brought a cooler bag of beer. I was seated, popped open a Corona, and the nice waiter came over to ask if I wanted a beer. Starving Artist arrived, we ordered a lot of beers, and I got to take a five-pack home.

Starving Artist had never tasted congee, so we had congee with chicken (\$16). I had a spoonful, and can report Moon Kee's congee is soothing, with a baby-food texture and subtle taste. Starving Artist tried it, said, "Huh," and set the congee aside when the other dishes arrived.



These were both winners. The crispy sesame jumbo shrimp (\$28) were indeed crispy and verged on humongous. If I'm with someone who likes eggplant, I get eggplant. We inhaled the eggplant in spicy garlic sauce (\$16) and then exhaled garlic breath on each other.

At my second dine-in at Moon Kee, I discovered they have dim sum carts on weekends! And they offer a \$14 lunch special during the week. I also got to see the place buzzing with customers, which makes me happy, even if the two waiters were stretched a bit thin. The delivery guys and the owner pitched in to get tea, food, drinks, hot sauce, and checks to every table. I ordered the sweet and sour chicken (\$20), which brought back nostalgic memories of my dad bringing home takeout from Joe Huey's, the only Chinese restaurant in Duluth, MN. On the healthy side, I also ordered the sautéed string beans "in spicy" (\$16); I don't know in spicy what, but there was an abundance of dried red peppers.

The staff is friendly and helpful and the food comes piping hot. Between Moon Kee and Ollie's, I'm maybe leaning a little toward Moon Kee, 'cause it's a mom-and-pop (I guess just pop; I haven't seen any women staff). It's great to have a choice between two solid Chinese restaurants in our neighborhood.

On my way out on my last visit, I buttonholed the smiley owner, Sung Wei, whose father owned a Hong Kong street stall specializing in traditional Cantonese dishes; Mr. Wei said he had another restaurant in New Jersey, but since I neglected to find out where, exactly, or what that restaurant was called, my Jersey pals with a yen for Chinese will have to come to me. Preferably on a weekend, so we can point at food rolling by.

Moon Kee, 2642 Broadway; (646)-438-9283; <http://moonkeerestaurant.com>; Open M-F 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m., Sa/Su 11 a.m.-10 p.m.



Sautéed spicy string beans and sweet and sour chicken. Photo: Gay Haubner



# On Broadway

By KEITH TAURO

## OPEN



**Chipotle** has a new location at the southwest corner of W. 97th St. and Broadway, in the spot where Walgreens was.

**Broadway Deli** opened at the northwest corner of W. 104th St. and Broadway, the former Suba Pharmacy location. Be sure to check out the terrarium that is directly under you when you walk into the store. It's like being in a glass-bottomed boat!

## OPENING



**Auntie Anne's**, the pretzel chain, will have a new combo location with Carvel ice cream on the east side of Broadway between W. 96th and W. 97th Sts., next to Paris Baguette.

**Van Leeuwen**, speaking of ice cream, will be moving into the former Blue Marble store at the northeast corner of W. 97th St. and Broadway.

**Abigail's**, a restaurant with a Southern California vibe, will be opening on the southeast corner of W. 102nd St. and Broadway in the space formerly occupied and rather suddenly vacated by Street Taco. The restaurant is under the same ownership and word is that Street Taco will continue there on a takeout basis. The repainting of the signature bright-yellow storefront should have been a tipoff that something was up.

**Shakespeare & Co.**, the independent bookstore with two other NYC locations, is opening a new branch at the southeast corner of W. 105th St. and Broadway, in the former Steps clothing-store location.

## CLOSED



**Mel's Burger Bar**, the longtime favorite on the east side of Broadway between W. 110th and W. 111th Sts., has closed.

# Meet Your Talented Neighbors

By JULIA C. SPRING

## MARK WISH

Mark's fourth novel, *Necessary Deeds*, called "irresistibly engaging" by Pulitzer Prize winner Tim Page, was published by Regal House in late January. It is available online from [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org) or Amazon or you can order it through your local bookstore. Mark tells us the book is about "Manhattan, marital love, and murder, but also about discovering the truth and redemption."

## JIM RICHARDS

Jim's photos are on display in the lobby gallery of the Master Apartments, 310 Riverside Dr., **daily until Apr. 28**. He explores the parallels between nature reclaiming abandoned cars and human efforts to reclaim aspects of themselves. His photos contain sculptural elements and unconventional framing, including drawers that allow prints to be seen with the naked eye.

## SERENA CANIN

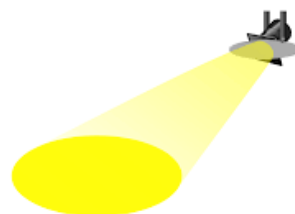
Serena is presenting Music Middays, which features outstanding young professional musicians in hour-long recitals on select **Tuesdays at noon**. Upcoming concert: **Tues., Apr. 16** (Merz Trio plays Chris Rogerson and Dvorak), at the Advent Lutheran Church, 2504 Broadway (northeast corner of W. 93rd St.). Admission is free. For more information: [musicmondays.org](https://www.musicmondays.org).



## ELIZA LANSDALE AND MIMI DIETZ

Eliza and Mimi will be singing in the Riverside Choral Society's spring concert at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall on **Thurs., Apr. 25, at 8:00 p.m.**, at the New York premiere of Scott Ordway's *The End of Rain*. A response to the California wildfires of the last five years, Ordway's symphony is a multimedia presentation, blending photography with choral music and text. The concert also includes Alberto Grau's *Kasar Mie La Gaji* ("The Earth Is Tired") and an encore performance of John Luther Adams's *Night Peace*. Tickets are available at [riversidechoral.org](https://www.riversidechoral.org).

*Do you have an upcoming publication, release, concert, exhibition, or other arts event, physical or virtual? Let me know. Send questions or notices for inclusion in the Summer 2024 Newsletter (or beyond) to [creative@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:creative@w102-103blockassn.org). Do it today, before you forget!*



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