



## Block Association Boasts Bonanza For Beautification

By Hedy Campbell

In early December, we reported that the Block Association had applied for a Love Your Block grant from the Citizens Committee of New York. Now we are proud to report that we were selected as one of 60 organizations citywide to receive the \$500 award. The funds are slated to pay for this year's spring planting effort, which will take place on **June 5**. If you'd like to participate, please contact John Hewitt at (212) 866-0229 or [jhewittmd@hotmail.com](mailto:jhewittmd@hotmail.com). In case you're new at this, the way our spring planting event works is that the Block Association will provide soil, mulch, annuals, and ivy to residents of particular buildings who have signed up in advance to plant and take care of the tree wells in front of their buildings.

Beside the financial good news, the grant also includes other benefits. Three members of our board of directors spent several hours one Saturday morning learning how to build a tree well guard for less than \$75. We're also entitled to request special assistance from three city agencies. We have asked the Dept. of Transportation to survey our neighborhood for suitable bike rack locations and also to do a street light survey to determine whether our streets are adequately illuminated. The survey is a critical first step toward replacing standard-issue streetlights with

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# The West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association *NEWSLETTER*

## Seventh Annual Yard Sale Set for May 15; Helping Hands Needed

By Hedy Campbell

For the past six years, your Block Association has been presenting the crowd-pleasing spring Yard Sale. We are pleased to announce that the date this year is **Saturday, May 15**. It will be open for browsers and buyers from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on W. 103rd St. between West End Ave. and Riverside Dr. The rain date is Sunday, May 16.

We are very fortunate to have Bob Aaronson, a W. 103rd St. resident, as Yard Sale coordinator this year. If you still have questions after reading this article and visiting our website, then call him at (212) 662-4046 or email him at [yardsale@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:yardsale@w102-103blockassn.org).

Now is the time to reserve a **vendor space** at the Sale. Anthony Bellov, our expert vendor coordinator, has already received reservations from veteran vendors who value this opportunity. Go to our website [w102-103blockassn.org](http://w102-103blockassn.org) and click on "2010 Yard Sale" for detailed information and a link to the vendor agreement. Spaces cost \$35 for Block Association residents, \$50 for others. Each space is 10 feet wide by 8 feet deep. As this is a neighborhood event, noncommercial vendors are given priority. Tables are not provided, so if you need one, be sure to make your own arrangements in advance.

Deborah Lott, who so ably organized the **silent auction and raffle** last year, will do so again. If you have an item of

value you would like to donate (a few days at your weekend house, tickets to a sports event or a performance, or a gift certificate you're not likely to use, for example), please send email to her at [auktion@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:auktion@w102-103blockassn.org) or call her at (212) 749-1637.

We will again be hosting a **Community Sale table**, for the benefit of the Block Association, where we will sell donations of new or gently used toys, games, CDs/DVDs, art, crafts, or household items *in good working order*. In other words, things you would give or sell to a friend. Beginning Monday, May 3, you can drop items off with the doorman at 240 W. 102nd St. between the hours of 8 a.m. and midnight. For more information, please email us at [commtable@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:commtable@w102-103blockassn.org) or call (212) 316-0434.

Since clothing donations will not be accepted at the Community Sale table this year, we're planning to make

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### BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Regular Block Association meetings are held twelve times a year, usually on the second Tuesday of every month.

TIME: 8:00 p.m.  
PLACE: 306 W. 102nd St.

The next three meetings are scheduled for Mar. 9, Apr. 13, and May 11.

# Cafe Frida: Fine Mexican Fare Replaces Argentine Steakhouse

By Hedy Campbell

What might explain the transformation of La Rural, recently reviewed in these pages, from Argentinian steakhouse to **Cafe Frida**, a Mexican restaurant with distinct Oaxacan underpinnings? Maybe one of the owners took a trip north from South America to Central America. Or perhaps the company decided to reproduce the formula of its Columbus Ave. original between W. 77th and W. 78th Sts. to another location a bit further uptown. Whatever the explanation, the new menu and slightly changed décor warrant a visit.

According to one inquisitive diner, it is Cafe Frida's house policy to use only fresh fruit and agave nectar in its cocktails, resulting in relatively lower sugar dosage but somewhat steeper prices (\$13 and more). The hibiscus and pomegranate margaritas and the mojitos

most certainly went down very easily. Are they worth the surcharge? I'll leave that to more experienced palates to decide. If cocktails aren't your libation of choice, have a sangria or choose from a good-sized list of wines by the glass or by the bottle.

The homemade guacamole (\$11) served in the traditional *molcajete* is hard to resist once it's on the table. I always wish the well in the dish were deeper. For those who like the opportunity to try lots of menu items, we recommend the Carnaval de Salsas, a nice presentation of five of the twelve different salsas that are listed on the menu (\$6 for the platter or \$3 for a single). I wondered why a similar tasting platter of the seven varieties of tacos wasn't available. Currently, diners can choose only between appetizer- and entrée-sized portions (\$8-\$9 and \$15.50-\$16.50, respectively, the latter

served with rice and beans). So far I've happily sampled *tacos al carbon* (sliced steak) and *tacos pastor* (marinated pork shoulder). Five more to go on future visits!

Quesadillas are available with a choice of fillings; one guest gave a big thumbs-up to cheese, spinach, and wild mushrooms. A special of lentil soup made with bits of sausage and chunks

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## Bloomington Aging in Place Expands Activities

By David L. Reich

In response to requests at its public meetings, Bloomington Aging in Place has formed a Social Activities committee headed by Phyllis Sperling and Dorothy Crouch. The committee is supporting ongoing activities such as the book, bridge, writing, and walking groups, which have been meeting regularly, the "Dinner in the Neighborhood" group, which has a fluctuating membership and gets together from time to time in local restaurants, and one-time events such as the 80th Anniversary celebration of the Master Apartments (see page 8). For more information about joining any of these activities, send email to [activities@bloominplace.org](mailto:activities@bloominplace.org) or leave a message at (212) 592-1758.

BAiP's next panel discussion will be "Medicare Basics: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You." The meeting

is scheduled for **7 p.m. on Thursday, March 18** at the Marseilles Community Room, 230 W. 103rd St. It will provide a brief overview of Medicare with a focus on clarifying enrollment decisions and choices, covered services including home care, and beneficiary rights and protections. The expert panel will also offer advice and advocacy tips for problem areas, such as coordination with other insurance, post-hospitalization issues, and how best to get help with individual problems. Bring your questions and concerns. Light refreshments will be served.

Progress is being made on the website at [bloominplace.org](http://bloominplace.org). Photos are needed to display the beauty of our neighborhood, how rich it is in variety, and how easy it is for seniors to live around here. If you have appropriate images to donate, please call (212) 866-5769 or send email to [info@bloominplace.org](mailto:info@bloominplace.org).

## Block Association Help Wanted List

Your Block Association is looking for volunteers to help with several projects this spring focussed on the 80+ street trees on our blocks. We need one or more of you to survey the trees and tree beds and then work with the Parks Dept., building owners, and suppliers to improve the care of both. We also need someone to download an iPhone app from [treesnearyou.com](http://treesnearyou.com) and then use the app to update the tree data on our map. To volunteer for these tasks, please use the contact information below.

### The West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association Newsletter

Published four times a year.  
**Hedy Campbell and David L. Reich**, co-editors. Comments and questions related to the Association or Newsletter are welcomed. Send US Mail to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1940, New York, NY 10025 or email to [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org). Phone messages may be left at (212) 866-5769. Faxes may be sent to (212) 866-5916. Recent issues of the Newsletter may be viewed at <http://www.bloomingtondale.org/newsletter102-103.htm>

## Carolers Bring Light On Darkest Night

After a reasonably mild fall, winter made its presence known with a blast as last December came to a close. Temperatures dropped, the first snow-storm of the season blustered through, but neither prevented the show—in this case the Block Association's annual holiday caroling—from going on. We had as healthy a turnout as we always do, although, regrettably, this year the canine headcount dropped to nil.

Jauntily protected from the Arctic chill by his signature fur hat, Anthony Bellov led the group around the neighborhood. With song sheets in hand, we blessed each block with our version of "Dona Nobis Pacem" ("Give Us Peace"), sung as a round. We send our many thanks to this year's group leaders Dayle Vander Sande and Jacki Buffon. The courtyard of 300 Riverside Dr., our usual stop for "The Twelve Days of Christmas," this year also provided a little shelter from the wind and served as a venue for brief welcoming remarks.

Thanks to building manager Seth Jucovy and the residents of 310 Riverside Dr., we enjoyed the hospitality of the Riverside lobby as our venue for cider, snacks, and convivial conversation. There we discovered that our fame has spread: our caroling event had been recommended to one of the carolers by a neighbor on W. 113th Street! Thanks to hot plate owner and 310 RSD resident Terri Chmurak, our cider was warm! Deborah Lott graciously added homemade chocolate peppermint bars to the refreshments. Board member Ginger Lief pitched in by distributing flyers. Molly Campbell deserves a shout out for cheerfully agreeing to ride shotgun, helping prevent a ticket for double parking while supplies were being unloaded.

If this is an event you would enjoy helping to coordinate, send an email to [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org) or leave

## Block Association Annual Meeting to Hear About West End Avenue Preservation

The Block Association has scheduled its annual meeting for **Thursday, March 25 at 7 p.m.** at the Marseilles (230 W. 103rd St.). You are invited to attend what is sure to be an informative and engaging program.

First, we will take a few minutes to present the 2009 financial report (see page 5) and elect the board of directors. Then we will hear from members of the West End Preservation Society who will bring us up to date on their efforts to establish a historic district for all of West End Ave. WEPS was formed about two years ago in response to a developer's plans to demolish four West End Ave. brownstones. The brownstones date from the original development of West End Ave. between 1885 and 1900.

According to Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell, who supports the landmarking initiative and has been invited to our meeting, the group "has filed a formal request for the Landmarks Preservation Commission to evaluate and designate a historic district..." Toward that end, WEPS commissioned Columbia University historian Andrew Dolkart to conduct a survey of every building along West End Ave., a 260-page document. WEPS has also worked for the support of the area's elected officials.

The second part of the program will acknowledge another treasure of our neighborhood: residents who have lived on our blocks for 50 years or more. We

have identified several. If you know of anyone who should be included, please inform us at (212) 865-8524 or by email to [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org). As a step toward preserving their memories, each will be asked to share a short anecdote that illustrates how the neighborhood has changed in that time as well as one that highlights how it has remained the same. Each honored resident will be presented with a certificate acknowledging his or her accomplishment.

a message at (212) 865-8524. We will do it all again at the end of this year so watch for an announcement in the December Newsletter or look for a flyer in your building lobby. Many voices make merry music!

have identified several. If you know of anyone who should be included, please inform us at (212) 865-8524 or by email to [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org). As a step toward preserving their memories, each will be asked to share a short anecdote that illustrates how the neighborhood has changed in that time as well as one that highlights how it has remained the same. Each honored resident will be presented with a certificate acknowledging his or her accomplishment.

## Theater Party Scheduled For Saturday, April 10

The W. 102nd & W. 103rd Streets Block Association will once again host an excursion to attend a new Pan Asian Repertory Theatre production: *Ching Chong Chinaman*, a comedy that centers on a Chinese-American family whose lives are touched by a stranger from China. Written by Lauren Yee and directed by May Adrales, *Ching Chong Chinaman* is an "incisive and hilarious look at assimilation and identity."

To join your neighbors for the show and a post-performance discussion, set aside **Saturday, April 10 at 3 p.m.** and contact Camille Colon (646-345-5209 or [concestafaciabella@hotmail.com](mailto:concestafaciabella@hotmail.com)). Tickets are \$35. The show will be presented at the West End Theatre, 263 W. 86th St., in the Church of St. Paul & St. Andrew on the second floor.



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# Vivian Hewitt and Her Extraordinary Art Collection

By Marlene Lee

You step through the second-floor entrance of the house and look over a railing down into a ground-level room. One brick wall and three pristine white walls extend high above you supporting twenty or thirty paintings, in effect, a two-story living room and art gallery. You are in the home of Vivian Davidson Hewitt, retired Chief Librarian of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and her son, retired physician, Dr. John Hewitt, board member of our Block Association.

The paintings you see are the pieces that remain after the sale of 58 works to the Bank of America as The Hewitt Collection of African American Art. After touring the country for ten years, the collection recently arrived at its home, the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts+Culture in Charlotte, NC, as a gift from the bank. The Hewitt Collection was the catalyst for creating the new \$18 million center.

Vivian Hewitt and husband, John, Sr. (deceased) assembled a remarkable art collection over the course of their fifty-year marriage. Vivian estimates that she and her husband have collected somewhere between three- and five-hundred paintings. The two met in 1949 in Atlanta where John taught English and Humanities at Morehouse College and Vivian taught in the graduate library school at Atlanta University. They began the collection on their honeymoon in New York City where John grew up.

“Our first purchase was a print by Orozco from the Museum of Modern Art,” Vivian remembers. A reproduction of Roualt’s *The Old King*, purchased from the Carnegie Museum in Vivian’s home town, Pittsburgh, accompanied the Hewitts’ son, Dr. John, from college to this day. After purchasing quality reproductions for a time, they decided to focus on original art, particu-

larly that of African-American artists working in New York.

“We bought what we loved, what we could afford, and what we wanted to live with,” Vivian says, emphasizing that it is not necessary to be wealthy in order to collect art. “John was a medical journalist and freelance writer. I was a librarian.” They never tried to bargain down the price of local artists but instead took out loans when necessary. They purchased art for birthdays, Christmas, and holidays.

The Upper West Side home was renovated in order to accommodate their paintings and books. Dr. John and his father performed most of the construction work and Vivian did most of the design and decoration. “I always wanted to be an interior decorator,” she confesses.

Among their friends was Jacob Lawrence and his wife, Gwen. Lawrence’s *Playing Records* now hangs in the Hewitt Collection in Charlotte. Also represented in the collection are other prominent artists, among them Romare Bearden, Jonathan Green, and Henry Ossawa Tanner.

Photographs of distinguished family friends hang in a back hallway of the house: Langston Hughes (“I took clarinet lessons from his uncle,” says Dr. John), Sidney Poitier, Dean Rusk, Gordon Parks. August Wilson spoke alongside Vivian at one of the collection’s openings.

Among the first drawings you see in the hallway by the front door are Ves Harper’s original costume designs for Alvin Ailey’s production of *Revelations* in 1958. Harper was a close family friend. “The company was so poor he made their costumes from parachute material sold in army surplus stores,” says Dr. John. Harper’s name still appears on the playbill when *Revelations* is performed.

In the 1960s, Haiti attracted Vivian’s

and her husband’s attention. The island was a destination for the French, Italians, and South Americans, Vivian says, but few North Americans visited. During their second honeymoon Vivian and John fell in love with Haitian art. Through her work at the time as chief librarian for the Rockefeller Foundation, Vivian had become familiar with the Haitian art scene. Because of the Foundation’s gifts to the Centre d’Art of Haiti, she met most of the island’s artists and collectors, among them Luce Turnier, the foremost Haitian woman artist at the time, who became a close personal friend. The brilliant coloring of the hangings in the Hewitt home reflects their Haitian period. “We were firmly established in the art community there,” says Vivian.

Dr. John leaves collecting to his mother, aka The Chairman. His father died in 2000. Vivian Davidson Hewitt is still collecting. “Once a collector, always a collector,” she says. “When I see something I love, I buy it.”

What is Dr. John’s relationship to the paintings? I ask.

“They are a natural part of the family,” he replies. They’re like the air he breathes. He remembers many of the artists represented in the collection. In St. Thomas he visited with Earl Hill, who had become a good friend. “When I was nineteen I worked in a St. Croix hospital, putting in an eight-hour shift as a paid laboratory assistant, then another shift volunteering as an orderly in the emergency room.” Earl Hill and his art in St. Thomas, so close to St. Croix, were a magnet for Dr. John’s visits. “I was more interested in being with the artists and watching them paint than in collecting,” he says.

While he can sip champagne at openings with the best of them—and has done so with “The Chairman” throughout the United States—what Dr. John

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## Vivian Hewitt and Her Art Collection

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remembers most fondly are family trips to Haiti when he was a boy, watching artists work at the art colony, La Brochette. "Such bright, happy colors," he says. He spent hours hanging about the artists' homes and studios. The recent earthquake has deeply affected the Hewitts. The fate of some gallery owner friends is still uncertain.

A large, handsome quilt created by Vivian's daughter-in-law hangs in a place of honor on one living room wall. The fabric art is a reproduction of Jonathan Green's painting, *Easter*. Around the four borders are stitched replicas of the other fifty-seven paintings in the Hewitt Collection of African-American Art. It hung in a prominent place for John Hewitt's seventy-fourth birthday party given by his wife. The Bank flew a video crew to record the celebration and asked Wynton Marsalis to narrate as well as perform background music for the footage.

"We are to the black community what Dorothy and Herbert Vogel are to the white community," Vivian explains. She refers to the Vogels, a modest librarian and postal worker, who collected over 5,000 paintings, some of which are now housed in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C.

A sense of fulfillment shines in Vivian's face as she describes her experience flying back and forth across the country to speak at Hewitt Collection openings. "When I look down at the Grand Canyon, I think of Ray Charles singing 'America the Beautiful.' So much beauty. Such opportunity."

Her ancestors grew up on a 600-acre farm outside King's Mountain, NC, and now the Hewitt Collection is housed in the nearby city of Charlotte. "We've come full circle," she says quietly, reflecting a sense of personal accomplishment and inner peace.

## Income, Expenses Increase Over Last Year; Contributor Count Remains About the Same

In the midst of difficult economic times, your Block Association has seen about a 10% increase in total contributions to match a similar increase in expenses. Unfortunately, the ambitious goal of significantly increasing the number of residents contributing during the year has not been met.

Newsletter advertising no longer covers the cost of production but recently a new volunteer, Agnes San Pedro, has been scouring the neighborhood for more advertisers. Several of her successes can be seen in this issue.

The Block Association ran a "visibility event" in the lobby of 310 Riverside Dr. last year and is planning more for other buildings in 2010. The purpose is to let our neighbors know what we are doing and to encourage them to become contributing members.

If you have ideas about how we can expand our membership and especially if you are prepared to assist in that endeavor, please contact us. See the box on page 2 for contact information.

### 2009 Financial Report

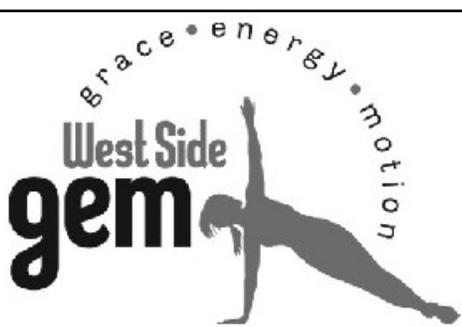
1/1/2009 balance	<b>\$26,106.95</b>
12/31/2009 balance	<b>26,174.88</b>
Net increase	<b>67.93</b>

### INCOME

Building contributions	\$15,354.00
Individual contributions	22,635.00
Newsletter ads	1,900.00
Yard Sale	4,508.60
Logo items	15.00
Interest	7.34
Other income	<u>608.40</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$45,028.34</b>

### EXPENSES

Contributions, dues	\$1,455.00
Event expenses	779.19
Post office, bank charges	199.95
Banner	352.22
Web hosting	10.24
Contribution envelopes	612.72
Newsletter production	3,031.64
Security guard (53 wks)	<u>38,519.45</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$44,960.41</b>



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# Red Harlem Readers: Food For the Mind, Body, and Soul

By Molly Sugarman

The Upper West Sider with a thirst for the spoken word might head to *Selected Shorts* at Symphony Space but there's another, closer, venue that offers a more intimate proximity to the literary arts and their creators. Red Harlem Readers—actors, poets, playwrights,

essayists, short-story writers—perform every Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m. at the Indian Café, 2791 Broadway, between W. 107th and W. 108th Sts. at no cost to the audience. One can stay for dinner but there is no obligation to do so.

The Readers are remarkable for their talent, their variety, their diversity, and their sense of community – our community. The group takes its name from a little-known fact about the blocks of W. 106th to W. 110th St.: they were once—about 40 years ago—the home of Native Americans from many tribes who joined together in this corner of the city to apply their sweat equity to a building on W. 109th St. just for Native American families and to convene the Circle of Red Nations in a storefront on Columbus Ave. between W. 106th and W. 107th Sts., the backyard of which was used for Native American events.

Seating in the Café is “family style,” that is, you sit where there is an empty chair, no matter who else is sitting at the table. You may be joining a neighbor you hadn't met before, the afternoon's playwright, or an actor's friends, but you always know they are people who have an interest in the arts.

There's a feeling of camaraderie as friends of the performers, actors, and neighbors drop in for the informal, but not amateur, productions. Performers are often members of Actor's Equity and the plays range from Albee, Pinter

## On The Menu

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 3/7/10  | <i>Cooking with Pearl</i> , a new comedy by Jamal Williams. Johnnie Mae reads the part of Pearl Bailey  |
| 3/14/10 | <i>A Long Stone's Throw</i> , Alphie McCourt reads from his memoir about life in Limerick and New York. |
| 3/21/10 | <i>Death in New Jersey</i> , a new comedy by Nicole Pandolfo.   |
| 3/28/10 | <i>And Ya Don't Stop</i> , a hip-hop musical by Nicole Kearney.   |
| 4/11/10 | <i>GOG</i> , a new play by Owa  |
| 4/18/10 | Native American Writings presented by Cordis Heard and/or Poetry of Robert Watlington                   |
| 4/25/10 | The Red Wheelbarrow Poets Anthology: poets from New Jersey read their work.                             |

and Chekov to lesser-known contemporary award-winners or even works being read for the first time.

The Red Harlem Readers have included Native American themes in their performances but are not confined to any genre. One time the reading may be about aging minds; another, relationships to the past and to other people. There was once a reading about Native Americans adjusting to life in New York City. There was also the teacher whose poetic rap cut to the heart of human experience. The first readings of this new year were from Mahatma Ghandi.

Eclectic, engaging, thought-provoking. The marvelous thing about Red Harlem Readers is not just its prodigious talent but its sense of community. Don't get up and leave after the last round of applause! The mind-engagement has just begun as emcee/performer Ronald Wyche starts the talk-back with performers and playwrights, then turns to the audience for their thoughts, reactions, memories of times gone by.

“Food for the mind, body and soul” is the motto of the Red Harlem Readers. Wyche works hard to achieve it, as he elicits reactions, suggestions, and complaints about the pieces read or the world in general. It goes beyond a Q & A.; he tries to get people to think.

As to food for the body, that starts with the cup of spiced tea—free—with which you are greeted. The venue,

the tea, and rehearsal space are all provided by Chander Malik, owner of Indian Café and also Bombay Frankie Roti Roll on Amsterdam Ave. at W. 109th St. (where the six or so hours of rehearsals for each performance take place). A lover of the arts, Malik also donates a stipend to the performers.

The Readers was founded in 2007 by Richard Gaffield, Cordis Heard, and Laurence Holder, all of them theater professionals for many years. Submissions are encouraged and the best are selected for presentation. It's a volunteer operation with high standards.

Gaffield, a 30-year veteran of the theater as an actor and director, lives on W. 107th St. To him, the after-show talks that follow the Readers' weekly sessions are similar to the conversations that used to take place among locals at the bar of the Indian Café.

“Bar talk changes with the people who come there,” he said. “It's an extension of that kind of discussion.”

This discussion can generate more practical critiques for new playwrights than a workshop with professionals, Gaffield says. “Civilians are the ones who are important when the play goes up; they buy the tickets.”

But there's no ticket to buy on Sunday afternoon. Just bring your mind, body, and soul, drink some tea, and enjoy.

## Support Your Block Association Mugs & Caps Available Now!

White porcelain **coffee mugs** or off-white **baseball caps** each with the Block Association logo and motto “*Where Community Spirit Thrives*”

Blue recyclable **tote bag** (logo only)  
**Mugs: \$5, Caps: \$10, Bags: \$5.**

**See page 2 for contact information.**

# Seventh Annual Yard Sale Set for May 15; Helping Hands Needed

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arrangements for **textile recycling**. Bins would be provided to us in which donors could place used clothes, linens, curtains and drapes, throw rugs, and other types of textiles. Usable items would be recycled via shelters and similar organizations. Items that have given up the ghost would be sent for processing into new material.

To keep our visitors and vendors well fed we will be offering a variety of **refreshments**, mostly homemade. To contribute baked goods (cookies, cakes, or cupcakes, for example) or if you have resources or ideas for this aspect of the Yard Sale, contact Hedy Camp-

bell at [food@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:food@w102-103blockassn.org) or call (212) 865-8524. Sandwiches, fresh fruit, yogurt, and cold beverages, as well as baked goods, are welcome.

Most of all, please **volunteer**. We need all sorts of help to set up, staff the Block Association tables, and clean up. Give us an hour or two of your time and we'll give you all the appreciation you could want as well as the well-being that can only be gained from contributing to one's community. This is a great way for teenagers to help out and get community service hours for school. To sign up, send email to Bob Aaronson at [yardsale@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:yardsale@w102-103blockassn.org) or call him at (212) 662-4046.

# Spate of Graffiti Defaces Mail Boxes, Buildings

There are those who see graffiti as art but your Block Association sees these markings as vandalism. This winter, several "taggers" attacked mail storage boxes on W. 102nd St. at West End Ave. as well as W. 103rd St. at both West End Ave. and Riverside Dr. For the first time in quite a while they also defaced several buildings on W. 102nd St. just west of West End Ave.

The graffiti on the buildings were quickly painted over by the building owners. The Block Association is waiting for somewhat warmer weather to repaint the mailboxes with the standard colors supplied by the Post Office. Photos of the tags will be taken and sent to the graffiti squad at the 24th Precinct.

## Updates >>> News Updates >>> News Updates >>> News

### Tree Bags Removed by NYRP

One of the few recurrent eyesores of our neighborhood is the plastic bag that gets caught in the upper branches of a street tree where an ordinary mortal can't reach it. However, Bette Midler, the Divine Miss M., isn't an ordinary mortal and she could help.

Midler founded New York Restoration Project (NYRP) to produce change for a "cleaner, greener New York." She came across a product called the Bag Snagger, essentially a hook on the end of a long and extensible Fiberglas pole, with which an expert can remove a bag caught in a tree as much as 40 feet off the ground. Several were acquired by NYRP. We could spend over \$400 for this tool but NYRP was willing to send a crew to our neighborhood to do the removal job for us. In spite of the snow, they came on February 18th and did the job as a service to our community.

We hope that anyone who saw the crew at work took the time to say thank you. To learn more about NYRP, visit the website [www.nyrp.org](http://www.nyrp.org).

### Dead Street Trees Replaced

You might not think of winter as a time for planting but several of the dead street trees that were removed in our neighborhood last fall were replaced in late 2009 as part of the city's Million Trees program.

Among the tree beds with new, firmly staked trees is one just east of the southeast corner of W. 103rd St. and West End Ave. Another dying tree had been removed further east on W. 103rd St., but the bed remains empty. A bit further away, three trees were removed on W. 104th St. between Broadway and the Post Office and all three have been replaced. The Block Association will be updating its tree map in the spring. If you would like to help with the data collection, please use the contact information on Page 2 to let us know.

### Old Sewer Pipes Replaced

Just as a major sewer line replacement was being completed at the corner of W. 104th St. and Riverside Dr. late in January, a similar project started up at the corner of W. 103rd St. and Riverside Dr., closing off the service road and W. 103rd St. for several weeks during working hours. In order to replace the pipes and the storm drains, electric cables first had to be moved. Contractors working for the city dug up the service road south of the intersection as well as parts of W. 103rd St. at the corners and east of the intersection. At press time, the work had still not been completed.

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## With Assist from BA, Orfeo Duo Gets Grant

The Orfeo Duo, a violin and piano ensemble, has received a grant from the Fund for Creative Communities for 2010. The Block Association has been its fiscal sponsor for several years.

The grant enables Vita and Ishmael Wallace to continue their “What a Neighborhood” series of concerts, which (according to the Orfeo Duo website) celebrates Morningside Heights, Manhattanville, and the Manhattan Valley primarily through the music of living composers. The Orfeo Duo will give a free public concert on **Saturday, March 27 at 5 p.m.** at the Nicholas Roerich Museum (319 W. 107th St., between Broadway and Riverside Dr.).

The grant program is funded by the New York State Council on the Arts and administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Congratulations, Vita and Ishmael.

## Block Association Boasts Bonanza For Beautification

*Continued from Page 1*

a historic model, a project the Block Association has previously considered.

We have asked Sanitation for stepped up enforcement to ensure that our corner litter baskets are not being used for household trash. From the Parks Department, we have requested a survey to determine whether there are suitable spaces for additional trees as well as stump removal and planting of new trees in existing tree wells. In advance of our spring planting event, Parks will also deliver to us a supply of mulch. As a result of the grant program, we’ve also learned of tree stewardship programs, tree stewardship workshops, and adopt-a-trash-bin initiatives. Watch for newsletter articles with updates on these topics as we learn more about the opportunities available.

## Neighborhood History: the Master Turns 80

By Ginger Lief

The Master Apartments, at the northeast corner of W. 103rd St. and Riverside Dr.—built in 1929 to house a theater, a school of fine arts, and a museum as well as living space for people in the arts—was saluted on its eightieth anniversary on Sunday, February 7. More than 200 residents, friends, and neighbors participated in the celebration.

Although the theater, school, and museum are no longer a part of the Master, artists still pursue their work in the building. During the first three hours of the anniversary events, a number of artists graciously opened their studios. Those sharing their artistic pursuits were: Ellyn Kerr, “Master Artists Slide Show”; Jerone Hsu, “Contemporary Scrolls”; Eric Hoffmann, Photography; Michael Walter, “Gem Stone Cutting”; Wei Jane Chir, “Tea & Artist’s Book”; Lillette Eckenrode, “Art from the Heart”; Roger Winter, Paintings; Alex Zwarenstein, “Paintings in Progress”; Michael Deegan and Sarah Conly, “Theatrical Design”; and Richard Chalfin, “Better Book Getter.”

The day was highlighted by a presentation entitled “Roerich & Horch—The Odd Couple, Friend & Foe & How It All Began.” Mildred Speiser, the first of thirteen Master Readers, all of whom live in the building, welcomed the audience “to our Super Sunday Master Matinee.” Other readers were: Michael Walter, Debbie Bernfeld, Rose Podrasky, Tony Bien, Lisa Berger, Elliot Shapiro, Robert Leuze, Debby Noble, Jerone Hsu, Caroline Husted, Ted Welch, and Jennifer Stock. Amidst jokes and props, and much laughter, they told the story of the unlikely collaboration of two adventurous men, Louis Horch and Nicholas Roerich, which lies behind the construction of the Master as both a home for the arts and a residential building.

Louis Horch was a self-starter who

began his career as a runner on Wall Street. Within a few years, at the age of twenty-five, he started his own foreign exchange firm and became a multi-millionaire. The afternoon reading cited Horch for his forward-thinking vision—“the Bill Gates of his times.”

In contrast, Nicholas Roerich, fourteen years Horch’s senior, was a child of privilege, educated in his homeland of Russia in both art and law. He came to believe that art would unify humanity and he had a vision of the arts brought together under one roof.

It was Horch who came forward to support Roerich’s vision after Roerich had come to America. The collaboration of the two men lasted through the building of the Master and the early years of the museum and affiliated institutions. Then, amidst scandals and tax fraud in the late 1930s, Roerich settled in India. Horch had evicted Roerich’s entourage and his museum, replacing it with his own Riverside Museum but Roerich’s presence in the neighborhood continues. The Nicholas Roerich Museum is today located at 319 W. 107th St., near Riverside Dr.

At the conclusion of the reading, neighbor Cynthia Navaretta, publisher of art books and poetry, gave her reflections on Oriole Horch Feshbach, the daughter of Louis Horch, who was director of the Riverside Museum, which remained at the Master until 1971.

This very successful celebration was produced by long-time Master resident Mildred Speiser who organized the day’s events, recruited a crew of helpers, and researched, wrote, and directed the reading. That crew included Lani Sanjek, Judy Pietrasiewicz, Phyllis Sperling and Roger Sanjek, members of Bloomingdale Aging in Place, who set up the sound system and the refreshments and greeted visitors, and Master residents Terri Chmurak, who took care of the hot cider, and Peter Miller, who supplied microphone stands.

# On Broadway

**Openings and Closings:** ♦♦The **Andrade Shoe Repair** shop, previously on the west side of Broadway between W. 97th and W. 98th Sts., has moved uptown to the storefront formerly occupied by an accountant, Irving Pearlberg. The newly renovated space is between W. 99th and W. 100th Sts., also on the west side of Broadway. ♦♦After a false start several months ago, the shoe store called **Shoe Club**, previously on the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 99th St., has moved a half block south to the space formerly occupied by **Oppenheimer's Meats** and long vacant. For a few weeks, the

new awning displayed an unusual new name whose orthography was interrupted by a floral design, making it hard to read. Now the more prosaic **Shoe Club** appellation has returned. ♦♦The off-price women's clothing and linens shop **Society West** has had a "Store Closing" sign up for the past month. ♦♦At the beginning of this year, **West Side Health Foods** on the west side of Broadway between W. 96th and W. 97th Sts. closed. An employee was overheard saying to a customer, just before the closing, that the rent asked for a new lease was much higher than they could afford. Then, a few weeks later, the

space underwent a bit of sprucing up with some painting and replacement of fixtures, whereupon it reopened with the same name: **West Side Health Foods**. It is, however, under new management, according to a current employee. **In Limbo:** ♦♦The space that used to be **Sterling Optical** on the west side of Broadway between W. 100th and W. 101st Sts. had paper covering the windows for a long time. Then it was cleaned out and seemed to be on its way to renovation and a new tenant. Now all work has ceased. A Buildings Dept. stop-work order that was dismissed long ago is still posted on the front door.

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Block Association Member

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## Cafe Frida: Fine Mexican Fare Replaces Argentine Steakhouse

*Continued from Page 2*

of plantain was a soul-warming treat on a below-freezing night.

In the entrée category, diners I know were well-pleased by *brocheta de camarones*, skewered shrimp and mushrooms, served with rice (\$21); rack of lamb served with cilantro mashed potatoes and mixed vegetables (\$26) and *enchiladas suizas*, corn tortillas filled with tomatillo, chicken, and Mexican cream sauce, then topped with Mexican cheeses and briefly broiled (\$16.50). Chicken in a mole sauce (\$19.50) was tasty, but one guest found the Oaxaca-style mole too gritty and sweet.

Although I seldom have room for dessert, I found a corner for *platanito macho*, an enormous flaming sweet banana awash in a puddle of Grand Marnier sauce and accompanied by a scoop of vanilla ice cream. I gave it high marks for both dramatic presentation and taste. The *pastel de tres leches* cake was light and sweet, and a better alternative, perhaps, for the already-too-full.

Cafe Frida is located at 768 Amsterdam Ave., between W. 97th and W. 98th Sts. Phone: 212-749-2929; website: [cafefrida.com](http://cafefrida.com). Lunch is served on weekdays from noon to 4 p.m.; brunch is offered on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Happy Hour lasts from 4 to 7 p.m. Dinner is served every day from 4 p.m. The restaurant closes at 10 p.m. on Sundays, at 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and at midnight on Fridays and Saturdays.