



NEWSLETTER

December 2013

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POLICE BLOTTER

Crime Rates Are Up in Our Precinct

By MOLLY S. SUGARMAN

In September, it was grand larceny and robbery that pushed up crime stats in the 24th precinct. Churches, supermarkets, and gas stations were all the scenes of crime. Sadly, a purse left in a pew is just as likely to be targeted by a thief as a purse hanging on a chair in a bar. So, too, is property in an unlocked car while you are pumping gas.

In October, crimes grew more serious, with four shootings, two rapes, and two gun possessions. The good news is that in October, police caught the supermarket purse snatchers. The admonition from police is still valid: Ladies, keep your purse on you, not in that awfully convenient child seat on the front of the cart.

Those arrests were among five made in 28 days. Also included was the arrest of a man who was out of prison for one day (he had served 10 years for rape) before he perpetrated two robberies and impersonated a police officer to a tourist.

The 28th and 24th precincts shared a crime spree by a 14-year-old boy who snatched necklaces from the necks of their wearers. A picture of the suspect led to an arrest, with the help of the perpetrator's school principal. Another suspect, a 16-year-old, will be arrested soon.

Assaults were also up, to a total of 12, but the good news is that arrests have been made for 9 of them. Three, including one of the shootings listed above, are still open. Three were domestic violence. Of the others, one was a friend who swung a bat—some friend! The assailant is known to the police from other incidents.

Car break-ins increased as well. One arrest was made while the crime was in progress around midnight on Riverside Dr.; offi-

cers arrested three juveniles.

Also on the rise in September was grand larceny from residences. Since there was no evidence of forced entry, police are thinking the culprit(s) may be in the employ of the residents or have access. Do not widely distribute keys to your apartment!

Other topics of interest discussed at recent precinct meetings include:

Identity theft, which is also on the rise. If you do an internet search for identity prevention, NYC, you'll find the NYPD's recommendations. They include:

- Never carry your Social Security card.
- Never give personal or bank account information to someone who calls you
- Monitor your credit report and bank statements.
- Keep a list of your credit card numbers and the issuers' phone numbers so you can quickly cancel your cards if they're stolen or misused.

The **Bicycle ID Program** operated by the Crime Prevention office involves engraving your bicycle with a serial number that can aid in its recovery if it's stolen. The service is free, and can be provided at your location or the precinct. The Crime Prevention office will also conduct a free apartment safety survey. Call (212) 678-1850 for both services.

Augmented Staffing has been a priority for some time. The precinct has asked for and received additional help. Extra officers are being deployed in and around the area. A **Scout-er Taskforce** has been approved, so keep your eyes out for police officers on wheels along Riverside Dr. Because of the spike in crime, between 15 and 25 uniformed police will also patrol Broadway from 86th St. up to 110th St. on Wednesdays and Fridays; they'll also be on Amsterdam Ave. and in other areas.

Annual Caroling Scheduled...with a Twist or Two

If the sun is setting at tea time, it must be time to go caroling. Every year the Block Association sponsors this musical stroll around the neighborhood to celebrate the winter solstice and the holidays. The group will convene in the lobby of **865 West End Ave. on Fri., Dec. 20 at 7 p.m.**

There are two things that make this year's event different from previous ones. First, the Block Association has agreed to support long-time resident and caroling participant Jon Reiner's request to film the event. Jon is working on a documentary about François Bourdon, the Christmas-tree vendor who sets up shop each year by Benjamin Moore on Broadway (see page 5 for more information about the film) and wants to include footage of the caroling in the film. Any caroler who prefers not to appear in the footage will have his or her privacy respected.

Additionally, Jon would like to treat François to a little holiday spirit by bringing a carol or two across Broadway to him at his stand. That group will convene at 865 at 6:20, and will be back in time to gather with the group for the regular circuit. If you'd like to be part of the advance party, contact jonreiner@nyc.rr.com.

The other anomaly is that Chanukah began in November and ended in the single-digit days of December. Will choir-master Anthony Bellov nonetheless include favorite Chanukah songs amid the Christmas and winter chestnuts? Come join and find out firsthand!

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For years residents have been asking us, “Can I pay with a credit card?” Lately the question has changed to, “Can I pay online?” We’re excited to report that the answer is now YES! Thanks to Cheryl Futscher, our talented webmaster who continues to improve our online presence, we can now accept payments via PayPal. Go to w102-103blockassn.org and click on the Join Us tab.

You’ll also find links to all sorts of valuable and interesting resources, such as a map of all of the trees on our blocks and a list of alternate side parking holidays, blog entries, a neighborhood calendar of events, photos and bios of our Residents of Long Standing, and much more. Take a look and take advantage of the convenience of making your contribution electronically.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Block Association Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 27, 2014. If you have an idea for a topic or speaker write to info@w102-103blockassn.org. If you know someone who’s lived on our blocks for at least 50 years, he or she is eligible for our Residents of Long-Standing Hall of Fame. Please bring him or her to our attention via the email address above or call (212) 865-8524.

BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

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

Dec. 10 , Jan. 14, Feb. 11 at 306 W. 102nd St. at 8:00 p.m.

Residents Safely Discard Toxic Waste at Fall Drive

Electronic garbage poured out—on hand carts, walkers, and shopping carts—as residents gratefully cleared their closets of old electronic devices they’d been wondering what to do with. As always, the pile of obsolete technology was museum-worthy in its historical scope. We received everything from a black dial telephone to a huge TV that weighed in at more than 115 pounds!

Although only 20 people had signed up in advance to drop off items on Sat., Oct. 26, many more came in response to flyers posted in buildings and after having noticed the Block Association banner and signs on the day of the drive. Drop-offs were nonstop from before the official start time of 11 a.m. until after the last jam-packed car was driven away. In all, four car loads of waste were kept out of the landfills. Well, five, actually, as someone drove up with a car full of electronics and we sent her over to the Lower East Side Ecology’s event at 96th St. and Amsterdam Ave. so she could make her contribution directly.

As an extra bonus, the board president of one co-op said he would set up a battery recycling bin in his building. Bags, cans, and boxes of batteries—both rechargeable and single-use—were dropped off at the e-waste event, which prompted his decision. We urge all residents to encourage their co-op boards and landlords to add battery recycling bins to buildings. They can be emptied whenever LESEC (leseccologycenter.org) has an e-waste recycling event or at next May’s Block Association Yard Sale.

The Block Association would like to thank the board and staff of Alexandria House, 250 W. 103rd St., for letting allowing the e-waste drive to be staged at the building and for helping us hang signs and deal with bulky items. We would also like to thank Bob Aaronson, who provided muscle and transportation for the event, Terence Hanrahan, who did more than his share of the heavy lifting, and Andres Veranes, who encouraged the Block Association to start and continue e-waste drives. Andres coordinates them each and every time we have them.

Many people thanked us for holding the event and even more asked when the next one will be. Thanks to Andres and the support squad, we are providing a much needed and appreciated service to our neighbors.

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THE WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION, info@w102-103blockassn.org

NEWSLETTER Published four times each year. Hedy Campbell and Nancy Butkus, co-editors. 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. Phone messages may be left at (212) 865-8524. Recent issues of the Newsletter are available online at 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.

GUARD SCHEDULE Your contributions to the Block Association provide funding for our street guards. Rafael Hernandez makes rounds Tuesday through Saturday; Roy Chavarriaga is on duty Sunday and Monday. Guards patrol weekdays from 5 p.m. until midnight and from 6 p.m. until 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. To report neighborhood security issues to the guards or to request their assistance on the street, call the office of Starr Security at (212) 767-1110.

Bar Craft: Broadway Dive, Deeper than it Appears

By CAITLIN M. HAWKE

Burning to know more about Troubadour Magma? Does Theakston Old Peculiar seem odd to you? Are you intrigued by Allagash Curieux? If you're familiar with these names, you're already in heaven. If not, welcome to the Broadway Dive's expertly curated world of craft beers.

In 1982, when owner Lee Seinfeld first started working at Brats, the Broadway Dive's predecessor, there were five bottled beers to choose from and nothing on tap. Now there are 22 draft lines and more than 300 bottles! Over the decades, Lee developed a strong connection to our neighborhood. Lee met his wife and partner Mary Ellen Graziano here while working at the Abbey Pub, then owned by Michael Kearney. Kearney also owned Brats, which Lee bought when he had the opportunity in 1991. Lee, with his partner Jim Petersen (who's got a scuba dive shop sideline that contributes to the double entendre of the bar's name), co-owns the Dive Bar (W. 96th St. and Amsterdam Ave.) as well as Dive 75 (Columbus Ave. and W. 75th St.). His history surely makes this Seinfeld the quintessential Upper West Sider. Don't bother to ask him about the "other" Seinfeld, by the way. Lee was here first.

Although Lee claims that his taste in beer runs more toward Pabst Blue Ribbon, that didn't stop him from exploring the craft beer niche market in the early 1990s, just as they began to become more popular. A huge champion of local sourcing for both beer and food, Lee now loves nothing more than discovering new products at the farmers' markets he frequents regularly. When he finds a great upstate brewery or cidery, he delights in bringing it to his city customers' attention. In fact, the Chatham Brewery makes the Dive's house amber ale exclusively for Lee.

Over the past few years, with the help of his oldest son Nicholas, who now manages the Broadway Dive, the establishment has become something of a mecca for the artisanal brewing community. Who knew that there were 35 home brewers within a stone's throw of the Dive? Lee and Nicholas do. They host the local club's monthly meeting so that folks who tinker with hops, malts, and yeasts in their apartments can gather to share the results and their recipes.

Brewers aren't Lee's only clientele. Music lovers crowd in for the "couscous" (as in acoustic) music nights Chris Andrews organizes. Two talented bartenders, Sarah Litzsinger and Howard Kaye, with significant Broadway theatrical credits on their resumes, put together "Broadway Comes to the Broadway Dive" twice a year. A retired Juilliard professor sits down to the piano from time to time as well. There's an occasional celebrity spotting as well; Kelsey Grammer, James Gandolfini, Bill Murray, Kevin Spacey, and Courtney Cox have all belled up to the bar, as have Ted Kennedy and Gary Hart. All this and, of course, sports events keep the Dives hopping.

Lee is not only a successful small business owner who employs 35 people. He's also ever-mindful of his community and has a sterling reputation for helping out when he can. He's given away a lot of catered meals to help schools and other groups raise funds. "I gotta be honest with you," Lee said, "I am very proud of my accomplishments on the Upper West Side. The community is a big part of me. I've watched the Broadway Dive's neighborhood change, and I love what it has become."

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Halloween Parade a Howling Success

By JANE HOPKINS

As a first-time Halloween Parade coordinator, I wasn't sure what to expect. Now I've seen the magic with my own eyes, and had a great time working with so many neighbors who contributed in so many ways. Who knew that the event is enjoyed by so many kids and adults of all ages...plus pets!

At 6 p.m. approximately 200 children and adults paraded north on West End Ave., down W. 103rd, along Riverside Dr. and back up to finish on W. 102nd. Volunteers greeted the trick-or-treaters along the route and distributed various goodies. At the parade's end, where W. 102nd St. between Riverside Dr. and West End Ave. had been closed off, food and entertainment were plentiful. Folks gathered to chat, show off their costumes, enjoy the activities, and sample cake, candy, and cider.

Here's a grateful shout-out to those who contributed: the administration and residents of St. Luke's were awesome! They loaned and delivered tables, provided an enormous, beautifully decorated homemade cake, and graciously provided everything we forgot. Carl Riehl played his accordion while leading the line of superheroes and heroines around the block. Sunny Naughton led children in arts and crafts activities and Diana Caldarazzo painted faces. Janet Harvilchuck volunteered to read Halloween stories. Alan Smith and Bill Anderson did a great job adding to the spooky atmosphere at 308 W. 103rd St. Previous parade coordinator Marc Reiner shared his extensive notes with me and guided me every step of the way.

Other contributors include: Hedy Campbell, Cynthia Doty, Bob Flanagan, Laura Hanrahan, Terence Hanrahan, Celia Knight, David Reich, and Randy Schreiner, who provided hands-on support throughout the evening. Deborah Lott and Sax Freymann both donated to the refreshments table. Many anonymous contributors provided us with great quantities of candy. With my first year behind me, I'm able to report that Halloween on our blocks isn't only about costumes and candy. It's about community spirit as well.

Eco Committee Plants 1,000 Bulbs; Tucks in Trees for Winter

The Eco Committee is happy to report that for the first time, we were able to sponsor a fall bulb planting and mulching event. We planted over 1,000 daffodil bulbs and were able to mulch half of our 90 trees. The mulch is especially important as it protects the trees from animal waste and salt.

We are grateful to every one of the 42 people who participated, especially the 10 youngsters, many of whom had never before wielded a trowel! Extra big thanks are due to: Precious Costello, Tommie of Royal Wolves, and Amy Mooney, who went to New Jersey to collect 30 bags of mulch and topsoil. Without them, this event would not have happened. Camille Colon and Eve Sinaiko collected the daffodil bulbs from the Daffodil Project; Moe Imerukaj and the residents of 878 West End gave permission to use their sidewalk as our staging area. Moe stored all the mulch and soil, and provided us with a big folding table, a hose, a trash barrel, a broom, and trash bags. Debi Cohen and her two sons removed unsightly and broken cement blocks from four tree wells at 884 West End. Thanks also to the folks at 300 Riverside, who stored the bulbs.

And last but not least, thanks to the members of the Eco Committee who turned out in force and put in many hours of raking, digging, and mulching.

MEET THE NEIGHBORS

Chamber Music with Cabbage, *Tree Man* and More

By JULIA C. SPRING

LILY FRIEDMAN

Lily Friedman, pianist and performer, is co-founder and music director of Summertrios (summertrios.org), which for 25 years has offered three one-week residential programs each summer for amateur adult musicians. Every holiday season Summertrios holds benefit events in Lily's apartment. On New Year's Day the menu is *Stuffed Cabbage and Chamber Music*. The world-class Summertrios faculty will play classics and enjoy a buffet with guests from 2 to 6 p.m. On Tues. Jan. 7, a *Russian Christmas Celebration*, featuring Russian folk instruments, begins at 5 p.m. Suggested contribution for New Year's Day is \$100; for Jan. 7 it's \$50; submit your check to Lily (885 West End Ave., 11E) ahead of time as your RSVP; if you have questions, contact her at (212) 222-1289 or lilypiano@summertrios.org.

DEB RABBAI

Deb is a cast member of *Broadway's Next Hit Musical*, a completely improvised musical awards show that tours the country (broadwaysnexthitmusical.com). The first act features 'Phony Award' nominated songs based on audience suggestions. The second act is a fully improvised, always different musical based on the audience-chosen winning song. Every song, dance, and joke is based on the audience's ideas.

The next shows are on Fri., Jan. 10, at 7 p.m., and Sat., Jan. 11, at 9:15 p.m. at Triad/Stage 72 (158 W. 72nd St., between Broadway and Columbus Ave., 2nd floor). Tickets are \$15, \$25, or \$35 plus a two-drink minimum. To order, call (212) 868-4444 or go to Smarttix.com.

DAN GOODMAN & JOANNA ROSS

Dan and JoAnna produce and strut their stuff in two regular stand-up comedy shows, one in the neighborhood and one on the Bowery. Every Thursday at 9 p.m. is *The Happy Happy Hour*, at Underground Lounge, on the corner of W. 107th St. and West End Ave. Admission is \$5 (or \$3 with ID as a college employee or student).

At 8 p.m. on Dec. 28, Jan. 25, and Feb. 22, their *Schtick a Pole in It* is at RBar, 218 Bowery featuring some of the city's best comics and pole dancers—more gymnastic than burlesque, no stripping allowed. For details, see the show's Facebook page.

DEBORAH BOOTH

Deborah, flautist and recorder performer specializing in early music, has several concerts in the neighborhood this winter. Two are at St. Michael's Church (99th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave.): the *Baroque Ensemble Advent Concert* on Fri., Dec. 6, at 8 p.m. and its traditional *Christmas Choral and Orchestra Concert*

on Wed., Dec. 18, at 8 p.m. Her early music Ensemble BREVE will perform duets of harpsichord with flute or recorder at the Roerich Museum (319 W. 107th, between Broadway and Riverside Dr.) on Sun., Feb. 23, at 5 p.m. More details, including suggested donations, are at flute-recorder-deborahbooth.com/performance.htm.

DEB PINES

This debut murder mystery by Deb, an award-winning *New York Post* copy editor and headline writer, was published in late May. *In the Shadow of Death: A Chautauqua Murder Mystery* is called quirky, fun, and long on local color. Available now in paperback or on Kindle at amazon.com.

JON REINER

Jon is directing a documentary film, *Tree Man*, about the intrepid people who come to the city to sell Christmas trees from sidewalk stands. For many years, Jon's family has been a customer of François, whose stand is in front of Benjamin Moore on Broadway between W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts. Much of the film will be shot there and elsewhere in the neighborhood between Nov. 24 and Dec. 25. If you have a Tree Man story, write to jreiner24@gmail.com. If you'd like to appear in the documentary, join the Block Association for the annual solstice caroling event on Fri., Dec. 20; see the article on page 1 for details.

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Marc Sorkin

Block Association Member

Mexican Festival: Muy Bueno!

By KATE MCLEOD

When I opened the door of Mexican Festival (formerly Maria Bonita and before that Mama Mexico) at the corner of Broadway and W. 102 St., even though the restaurant was closed, a wave of “Mi casa es tu casa” washed over me.

I arrived in advance of my dinner companions and was offered any available seat. The manager took my friends’ names and remembered mine in that same “mi casa es tu casa” mode. This manager’s welcoming attitude must be contagious, as every staff member had a serious case of it. I took in the atmosphere. It was lively but not deafening. You can actually have a conversation! This really big restaurant feels intimate.

My friends started off with cocktails: a Margarita (\$12) and a Mojito (\$10). Both noted the freshness of the ingredients but felt that the mixes were a little too sweet. The guacamole (\$11), among the best I’ve ever tasted, was made at table-side, which is pure culinary theater.

A friend ordered the black bean soup (\$9) packed with chorizo and bacon and seasoned with cilantro. Unlike many bean soups that are all beans, this one was thick with smoky bacon and chorizo—more a satisfying stew than a soup.

A quesadilla with cheese, spinach, and sliced steak (\$12) was accompanied by a kicker green sauce (*muy caliente*) and sour cream. The tortillas were thin and crisp and the well-chosen combination of ingredients combined into a delicious mouthful. It was served alongside a pyramid of rice. My friends’ were a little less content with their meals. Carnitas Michuacan (\$16) was plentiful and the moist pork had been simmered in a delicious mix of spices, but an excess of cartilage made it a chore to eat. The Cemita Poblana (\$12) was spicy pork combined with cheese but the bun dwarfed the filling and was stale.

Flan is as good a test of a Latin restaurant as crême brûlée is in a bistro, so that’s what I ordered for dessert. It came on a large plate surrounded by a delicious orange sauce, whipped cream, and fresh strawberries. On its own, the custard was a little too dense; a bite accompanied by a bit of the sauce and fruit and cream made it work. I’d order it again.

Artemio the bartender said that all of the liquor used in the mixed drinks is top-shelf brands. He went on to explain that some of their impressive menu of tequilas are infused in-house with chiles and other ingredients. Artemio and his partner bartender, Manuel, are passionate about creating a first-class bar. They’ve got one of the roomiest spaces in New York to work with, and it’s definitely worth a visit. Happy-hour discounts on all drinks apply Mon. through Thurs. until 7 p.m.

Mexican Festival is open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It is located at 2672 Broadway, (646) 912-9334; mexicanfestivalrestaurant.com.

BAiP News

By DAVID L. REICH

Bloomington Aging in Place (BAiP) owes a great deal to Herman Sands, a neighbor from 315 Riverside Dr. Herman and his wife, Phyllis Sperling, were at the root of BAiP’s creation. Six years ago, inspired by a model they had seen implemented elsewhere, they brought the idea to our community with characteristic seriousness of purpose and enthusiasm. Together, they were the catalysts of the chain reaction that resulted in BAiP. In the ensuing years, dozens of volunteers created a structure to serve those in our area who wish to age in place with a greater sense of community.

In Herman’s case, aging in place wasn’t just an idea he championed; Herman rolled up his sleeves and worked hard to make the vision a reality. He became a founding Board Member and served on our Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) committee. With the help of many others, his efforts formed the basis of our organization, which is thriving and supporting hundreds of our neighbors.

Sadly, we lost our dear friend Herman to cancer on Oct. 17. At BAiP’s Nov. 14 meeting, the Board of Directors voted to establish an award in Herman’s memory to recognize distinguished volunteer service in advancement of BAiP’s mission. Our award committee welcomes nominations from neighbors who have been positively affected by the work of a BAiP volunteer. Nominations may be submitted with a brief written statement of support to SandsAward@bloominplace.org or by mail to BAiP, Box 497, New York, NY 10025.

We also welcome new volunteers: info@bloominplace.org or (212) 842-8831.

Homelessness and Panhandling Attract DA’s Attention

The District Attorney’s office is working with four local churches and two transient residences to minimize the increase in on-street drinking and on-the-steps sleeping, according to Sandrine Fermino, Community Affairs Coordinator for the Northern Manhattan DA’s office. Complaints about the early morning “homeless encampment” in the 103rd St. subway station have been lodged with the city as well.

At the September meeting of the 24th Precinct Community Council, residents voiced complaints about transients from residences on 108th and 104th Sts., as well as about random individuals sleeping or passed out or ill on the sidewalks. Although the Community Affairs Office’s response was that the upsurge is due to churches giving refuge to Occupy Wall Street participants who come to New York from out of state, the descriptions given by the complainants didn’t fit that profile at all.

Ms. Fermino had a different take. She said that despite their

2014 Alternate Side Parking Calendar Now Available
Check w102-103blockassn.org for the 2014 DOT calendar and a map showing the times at which the alternate side parking rules apply in our area.

desire to do good, four churches have been overwhelmed by the number of homeless people sleeping on their steps. They are working with the DA to enforce “No Trespassing” rules. Ms. Fermino also noted a planned meeting with the directors of the residences from which drinkers appear to come.

Bottom line: When in doubt about whether to report a situation involving homelessness, call 911. The person passed out on the sidewalk may be sleeping or may be in serious trouble. As an alternative, you can call the precinct at (212) 678-1811 or use the 311 app.

On Broadway

By DAVID L. REICH

★ The hopes for an **Alamo Drafthouse**, or any thriving business, in the former Metro Theater have been dealt a severe blow. The message on Alamo's website was: "Construction costs have risen tremendously since engaging in the project back in early 2012 (due in some measure to ongoing Hurricane Sandy reconstruction efforts) and ultimately the location is no longer financially viable for us." The odd reference to "Hurricane Sandy reconstruction" implies that sometime in the future, when there might be a lull in New York City construction, the price will be right for development of the site. Don't hold your breath. Meanwhile, the banners announcing the Alamo's arrival in 2014 still hang from the Metro's marquee, rubbing in the loss.

★ The space currently occupied by the **Rite Aid** drugstore on the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 104th St. is being advertised on *propertyshark.com* as available for leasing from April 2014 as are the spaces leased by **Casa Puebla**, on the second floor, and **El Taller Latino Americano**, the educational, cultural, and community center, on the third floor. According to Dena Fisher, Director of Programs and Community Outreach at El Taller, there is some indication that Rite Aid has agreed to a modest rent increase but El Taller is looking at a 140% jump from about \$7000+/month to \$17,000/month for its lease renewal in August 2014. They are seeking help from the public and from elected officials, to convince the landlord to negotiate a manageable rent.

★ On the northwest corner of Broadway and W. 99th St., the sneakers and sporting goods store, **NY Sport Trax and Shoes**, closed at the end of August. By the beginning of October, work had started to convert it to the neighborhood's newest **Starbucks**.

★ **Mexican Festival**, the latest Mexican restaurant in the large space on the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 102nd St. has opened replacing **Maria Bonita** and, before that, **Mamá Mexico**. (See the review on page 6.)

★ After many years, all the scaffolding surrounding the beautiful façade of the **Marseilles Residence** on the southwest corner of Broadway and W. 103rd St. has finally come down. The main purpose of the scaffolding had been to facilitate the installation of new windows in the more than 100-year old building, but that project was severely delayed during negotiations with the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Unfortunately, the retail space on the Broadway side of the building, formerly occupied by **Strawberry and Radio Shack**, remains empty.

★ **Xi'an Famous Foods** is scheduled to open a new shop on the west side of Broadway between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts. on Dec. 7 in the space that was previously a deli. The management is offering a free "burger" or noodle dish to anyone who "likes" the shop on Facebook and brings in a coupon from the social networking site that day.

★ Not much progress is visible on the southeast corner of W. 106th St. and Broadway where a **7-Eleven** is supposed to replace a long-gone discount linens shop. David Chkheidze, director of retail leasing for Massey Knakal Realty Services, says the landlord has been making repairs to the building in preparation for the new tenant but has been stymied by long waits for city permits and delays in required Con Edison work.

★ The **Sprint** cellphone shop on the east side of Broadway between W. 97th and W. 98th St. closed in the middle of November. The nearest Sprint store is now on the west side of Broadway between W. 108th and W. 109th Sts.

★ The retail space at 2608 Broadway on the east side between W. 98th and W. 99th Sts. that was formerly occupied by the **Hummus Place** restaurant will be another dental office for **New York Smiles**, owned by Dr. Chun Lee. Dr. Lee currently has an office on Grand St. and also one on the second floor of the northeast corner of W. 96th St. and Broadway. At press time, it was not known if the W. 96th St. office would remain open.

HELP WANTED: Block Association Newsletter Staffers

The Block Association's quarterly newsletter often receives compliments on the breadth of its coverage and its snappy look. This public face of the organization is delivered to each of the more than 2,000 apartments in our territory, and is the cornerstone of our fund-raising efforts. Currently, we are trying to find both a new editor and a new designer. The editor interfaces with the board of directors to determine the content of each issue and works with writers who contribute the various articles. Attendance at monthly board meetings (second Tuesday of each month) is encouraged. The designer works with the ad sales manager and with the editor. Facility with graphic design software is necessary. For more information, please write to editor@w102-103blockassn.org or call 212-865-8524.

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