



WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2021

VOL. 51, NO. 3

Open Streets Survey

AT THE JUNE 15 WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEETING, representatives from the West 103rd Street Open Streets Community Coalition and the Open Streets Project gave a presentation about the designation of W. 103rd St. from Broadway to Riverside Dr. as an **Open Street** and answered questions about the plan.

Close to 50 neighbors attended part or all of that meeting. During the discussion, opinions were both positive and negative about the Open Street designation. There were also many questions about the meaning of “Open Street” and confusion about the signage on the barriers on the corners of W. 103rd St. at both Broadway and West End Ave.

In light of this discussion, board members decided that it would be valuable to survey the larger membership about this issue. We will analyze and share the survey results with Block Association membership and other groups, including the West 103rd Street Open Streets Community Coalition, the Open Streets Project, elected officials, and the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), which is responsible for Open Streets planning city-wide.

According to the DOT, there are two different types of Open Streets. W. 103rd St. was designated a **Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street**, the definition of which is on page 6. This designation was made during the COVID pandemic as a way for people to spread out. Anyone could apply for the designation, and our board was not involved in the process.

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES to fill out this survey and return it no later than **Oct. 22**. You can fill out the paper survey that is inserted in this newsletter and either mail it to the Block Association in the envelope provided or drop it off with the doorman at 240 W. 102nd St. between 8 a.m. and midnight. If you prefer to fill it out electronically, go to surveymonkey.com/r/RG36YVX.

Before you complete the survey, please read the definition of Temporary Limited Local Access on page 6.

(continued on page 6)

Block Association Honored by Helen Rosenthal

AT THE END OF JUNE, Block Association Board of Directors chair Cynthia Doty was happily surprised to receive the following message from New York City Council Member Helen Rosenthal:

Greetings,

Please accept the attached Certificate of Appreciation in gratitude for all your many contributions to our community. Our Block Associations are the heart of the Upper West Side and it has been my honor to work with you for the benefit of our residents.

Warmly,

Helen Rosenthal

New York City Council Member, 6th District



We are pleased to have been recognized for our ongoing efforts on behalf of the neighborhood, especially right now, as we’ve just celebrated our 50th anniversary. Thanks to Council Member Rosenthal’s office for showing us some love.

Survey inside — Respond by Oct. 22

THE WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

info@w102-103blockassn.org
 Hedy Campbell, editor; Amy Edelman, copy editor; Ariana Koblitz, designer; Terence Hanrahan, advertising manager. 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. Previous 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

Our security guard makes rounds seven days a week from 7:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. **TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED** due to security concerns. Request to resume at (646) 772-2243.

BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Block Association meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of the month at 8 p.m., via Zoom. Email info@w102-103blockassn.org if you'd like to attend.

Oct. 12

Nov. 9

Dec. 14



Help Wanted

IF WE'RE GOING TO FORGE AHEAD with our plan to host a Halloween Parade and Party (see p. 3), a mastermind who will wield the magic wand that brings the event together needs to Apparate. Steadfast, seasoned volunteers are at the ready. If you can help, contact editor@w102-103blockassn.org.



Work for the Open Streets Coalition

THE PARK TO PARK 103 COALITION is looking to hire neighborhood residents for outreach for 15- to 30-hour-per-week commitments. Compensation starts at \$25 per hour, up to \$2,500 per month. Contact pfrishauf@gmail.com if you're interested.

Join our email list by going to the Block Association website (w102-103blockassn.org)

UPCOMING BLOCK ASSOCIATION EVENTS

Open Streets Survey
 (see page 1)
 Due Oct. 22

Halloween Parade and Party
 (tentative—see page 3)
 Sun., Oct. 31

Fall Tree-Well Cleanup
 TBD

Election Day
 (see page 5)
 Tues., Nov. 2

Winter Newsletter
 Early December

Solstice Caroling
 Tues., Dec. 21
 7 p.m.

Security Guard Service Update

By BOB AARONSON

AS A RESULT OF SOME ONGOING PERFORMANCE ISSUES, the Board of Directors of the W. 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association agreed to a temporary suspension of the nightly security patrols while we looked for a replacement contractor with better supervision and training of their employees.

We are currently in the process of contracting with a new service that will provide active coverage of our five-block area on a consistent seven-day-a-week schedule from 5:30 p.m. through 11:30 p.m.

We hope to have the guard service back up and running by early October. More information to come!

Help Us Host Halloween

FIFTY YEARS AGO, WHEN THE BLOCK ASSOCIATION WAS FOUNDED, one of the very first regular events that was organized was a Halloween Parade and Party. It's a tradition we're very proud of. The northeast corner of W. 102nd St. and West End Ave. fills up with costumed children and their parents, who then proceed to march around the block. Afterward, many families linger to enjoy refreshments and entertainment, schmoozing with friends and neighbors. Meanwhile, the volunteers always share a moment of satisfaction that is the direct result of seeing a community come together to make something happen that benefits so many. We've had to cancel only a couple of times in recent memory: Superstorm Sandy and COVID-19 were the crises that required us to squelch the fun.

Based on the information available to the board as summer turned to fall, we decided that we're game to put the parade back on the calendar and have it slated for the evening of Sun., Oct. 31. However, our most recent coordinator has retired. Without a replacement superhero willing to pull the strings together, we'll be regrettably

but nonetheless dead in the water again this year.

That benevolent mastermind will ride herd on details such as coordinating with the precinct to close the street to traffic for a couple of hours; emailing volunteers to confirm their availability; and creating and distributing a publicity flyer. We can provide all kinds of background information, lists of volunteers and donors of candy and baked goods from past years, flyers from previous years that will just need to be updated and a list of people who will post them, and other forms of support. Board members are always on hand the evening of the event, so the coordinator will not be alone to shoulder the load. We'll even provide a superhero cape!

Have you enjoyed the parade in the past? Do you look forward to enjoying it someday with your children? Is Halloween the holiday that you anticipate all year long? Even if you don't care about Halloween but are good at event planning, you're qualified. Send an email to Halloween@w102-103blockassn.org and save the day for the kids in our neighborhood.



Photo: Steve Morris

IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS since we last published a photo of the gingko tree that was born of seeds saved from the one that thrived in front of 872 West End Ave. before it was killed in 2015. (See [weebly.com/uploads/8/8/7/5/8875571/102-3blkassociationfall_2019final.pdf#page=3](https://www.weebly.com/uploads/8/8/7/5/8875571/102-3blkassociationfall_2019final.pdf#page=3) for a photo.) Here's what it looks like now, flourishing in New Jersey. Thanks to Howard Stokar for sending the photo along. Although we don't know how much the man who killed the tree ultimately paid in fines, we do know the matter was settled with the NYC Parks Dept.

Bloomingdale Abloom

By DAYLE VANDER SANDE

BROADWAY BLOOMS: JON ISHERWOOD
ON BROADWAY is a sculpture exhibition at eight locations on the green malls of Broadway between W. 64th St. and W. 157th St. It will be on view from now until next spring. Delayed by the pandemic, the exhibit finally "bloomed" this summer and is meant to bring "a sense of interconnectedness in a space that can otherwise feel impersonal, anonymous, and alienating," according to the sculptor.

"Why do we give flowers?" Isherwood asks. "The act can convey love, celebrate accomplishments, offer comfort in grief, repay hospitality, or simply beautify a space and bring personal joy. Beyond their universal



Jon Isherwood's *Given and Received*, on the mall at W. 96th St. Photo: Dayle Vander Sande

appeal, flowers carry diverse cultural meanings—from the imbued spiritual symbolism of the lotus flower, to the holiday tradition of poinsettias, and the association of roses with love. Across time and space, flowers reflect one's connection to community and to one another. Nature gifts us flowers, a spontaneous eruption of beauty that brings joy and wonder, and in return

we offer them to one another. It is this spirit that I offer the city *Broadway Blooms*, a series of eight marble sculptures in the form of flowers."

For a photo tour, an illustrated exhibition checklist, and video links for *Broadway Blooms*, as well as more information about the Broadway Mall Association, visit broadwaymall.org.



Jon Isherwood's *A Chance's Wish*, on the mall at W. 103rd St. Photo: Dayle Vander Sande

315 W. 103rd St.: An Update

By ANTHONY BELLOV

THOSE AMONG US WHO'VE WALKED to the W. 103rd St. Riverside Park entrance can't help but be aware of the ongoing, seemingly endless delays with the work being done on the elegant late-19th-century brownstone at 315 W. 103rd St. Head shaven, wearing a very inappropriate "hat," and having sat under scaffolding for a decade, this building clearly has had some issues. Now, suspiciously, there are unmistakable signs of life from within.

Problems solved? Happy ending? Well . . . not exactly.

A recap:

In January 2009, the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) issued a permit allowing the enlargement of this building: the vertical addition of two stories on top and the horizontal enlargement of 15 feet into the rear yard. Construction commenced. In the process, the building's original cornice was removed, destroying the visual rhythms the row of buildings on that block had created. (While both row houses just west of 315 also had rooftop additions added, the original cornice line and visual impact were appropriately considered and respected.)

Significantly, the work permit was originally granted because the then-owner declared the building vacant. In fact, it was fully occupied by rent-paying tenants at the time construction began. If the DOB had known this, the permit would have been denied.

The tenants of 315, living in a (technically illegal) construction site

with gaping openings above and behind, wrote to the DOB, identifying numerous falsehoods within the application and demanding a Stop Work Order (SWO), which was issued in June 2009, and work was frozen. Since then, 315 has been repeatedly the subject of SWOs and been cited for violations of said SWOs and other building-code violations on numerous occasions. Tens of thousands of dollars of resulting fines remain unpaid.

Approximately 200 community members signed a petition calling for the removal of the partially completed enlargement. Local and state politicians and organizations also expressed concerns to city agencies.

In November 2014, the building was sold to two LLCs, who, three months later, submitted an application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), which was about to designate the area a historic district, for a rear-yard addition. The LPC responded to this application by email, saying, "If you would like a staff level approval [avoiding a public review and LPC board approval], you will have to retain rear wall and utilize existing openings."

In June 2015, the LPC designated the Riverside-West End Historic District Extension II, which includes 315 W 103rd St. All modifications to 315 as of that date required approval of the LPC.

In September 2015, the DOB issued a "Notice of Objections," stating the previously approved plans were contrary to code and that significant changes were required to correct the violations. Since this was after the landmarks designation, LPC approval

would also be required.

In December 2016, the DOB ordered that the wide-open rear of the building be enclosed to make it weather-tight and partially lifted the SWO solely for that purpose. They also issued a notice to revoke the overall permit for the building, on the grounds that LPC approval was needed for it.

During the last two weeks of December, construction workers, using a jackhammer and other equipment, excavated and demolished portions of the original rear exterior masonry wall, despite the SWO, eliciting yet another fine.



Photo: Terence Hanrahan

On December 28, the DOB again ordered that the rear of the building be enclosed. They would order this repeatedly over the next several months. As of March 2017, there was still at least one pre-existing tenant in the building.

Between April and June 2017, construction workers took advantage
(continued on next page)

JAMES PEREZ

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Election Day Voting Schedule

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW about the upcoming election:

ELECTION DAY
IS TUES., NOV. 2.

Early Voting will take place from Sat., Oct. 23, through Sun., Oct. 31. Hours vary from day to day.

For residents of our neighborhood, voting, whether it be early or day-of, takes place at West Side High School (140 W. 102nd St.). Enter through the back door of the school, accessible via the pathway at W. 101st St. and Amsterdam Ave., except if stairs present a problem. In that case, access the building through the main entrance on W. 102nd St. just east of Amsterdam Ave.

Absentee Voting: You can request an absentee ballot at absenteeballot.elections.ny.gov. The deadline by which an online application for an

absentee ballot must be received is Mon., Oct. 18. In-person applications will be accepted through Mon., Nov. 1. Absentee ballots must be postmarked or hand-delivered no later than Nov. 2.

Registering to Vote: There are a variety of ways to register. The most old-school method is to submit a voter registration form by mail. The tech-savvy may complete an online form at the Dept. of Motor Vehicles website, but only with a DMV-issued ID. The deadline for submitting your registration is Fri., Oct. 8.

For more information: Contact the New York City Board of Elections (vote.nyc.gov; (866) Vote-NYC or (212) 886-2100; the website offers an online chat option) or the New York State Board of Elections (elections.ny.gov; (518) 474-6220; email info@elections.ny.gov)

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315 W. 103rd St.

of the partial lift of the SWO, and removed the remains of the rear exterior wall, replacing it with a new concrete block wall (CMU) on the expanded footprint of the building, despite having no approval from the LPC to do so. In fact, the LPC told the DOB on May 1, 2017, that "an LPC permit is required even if it is a permit for a temporary installation of the CMU wall."

In January 2018, the LPC approved plans for minor changes to the rear wall, notably a fire escape and modifications to windows and doors, even though they had never approved the wall itself.

In August 2019, in response to a lawsuit from a neighbor, the LPC wrote, "[T]he Commission made clear that the January 2018 certificate of no effect (CNE) did not include approval of the rear wall itself. Rather, that wall was deemed a temporary wall, and would thus require Commission approval if and when the property owner decided to make the wall a

permanent change."

In October 2019, the LPC granted a new CNE, approving additional modifications to this "temporary" wall. However, again in February 2021, the LPC described the wall as temporary, stating that approval would be needed "if and when the property owner decided to make the wall permanent."

Nonetheless, new tenants started moving in at the beginning of August, and it appears that at the moment at least four of the units are occupied. A neighbor complained to the DOB on August 5 that the building was being occupied without a certificate of occupancy, and instead of inspecting, the DOB issued a temporary certificate of occupancy on August 6, which is valid for 90 days. It is not clear if in granting the temporary certificate of occupancy the DOB considered that the LPC has not approved the rear wall and sees it as temporary, if the DOB is concerned that the building has over \$40,000 in unpaid fines, what is required for the DOB to grant a full certificate of occupancy, or for how long the DOB will issue temporary certificates of occupancy.

And the saga continues.

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Choose to Reuse

By SHARON WASKOW
IT'S EASY BEING GREEN

IT SHOULDN'T TAKE MUCH CONVINCING that the climate crisis is calling attention to itself these days. Wildfires, droughts, floods, heat waves, excessive rain, and violent storms provide strong evidence that there is no time to waste in stepping up our commitment to a greener lifestyle.

One easy way for us to lower our carbon footprint is to replace the disposable items in our lives with reusables. By cutting back or eliminating single-use items, you can save the energy and materials that went into them *and* prevent waste. Choose to Reuse (hennepin.us/choose-to-reuse/tips/replace-with-reusables) highlights 10 disposable items to stop using right now!



1. **Paper and plastic drinking cups:** Both eventually end in landfill. Instead carry a reusable drink

2. **Plastic grocery and produce bags:** They are not recyclable. Reuse your stash of plastic bags or use cloth bags for all shopping, not just for food.
3. **Paper towels:** Replace them with rags, sponges, or reusable wipe-up cloths.
4. **Plastic utensils:** Ask restaurants to omit them when packing your takeout order. Carry your own reusable utensils for when you eat away from home.
5. **Single-use coffee pods:** They are not recyclable. Replace with reusable pods.
6. **Disposable razor blades:** Use an electric or reusable razor instead.
7. **Single-use plastic straws:** Do without or carry a reusable straw. Happily, New York City will have a straws-upon-request law in effect in November, forbidding restaurants from providing single-use plastic straws unless specifically requested by a customer.
8. **Baggies and Ziploc bags:** Instead, use reusable containers made of reusable plastic, stainless steel, or silicone.
9. **Liquid soap containers:** The pump is not recyclable. Choose a brand that permits refills or opt for bar soap or laundry sheets.

10. **Cleaning wipes:** Cut back on disposable wipes such as disinfecting wipes, mop cloths, and dusters by using a green cleaner and reusable cloth.

Changing habits can take a while. If you start small and keep at it, before long you will be creating a lot less waste and setting a positive example for friends, family, children, and grandchildren.

Here are some links that provide suggestions for eco-friendly reusable items:

- buzzfeed.com/alexandranapoli/reusable-items-that-will-make-you-an-eco-friendly-person
- tru.earth/20-Eco-friendly-products-that-will-replace-the-single-use-disposable-items-haunting-your-kitchen

Consult our *It's Easy Being Green* newsletter for monthly reviews of plastic-free products (itseasybeinggreen.org). Consider subscribing to keep in the know on New York City environmental information and tips for a greener lifestyle.

It's Easy Being Green is your neighborhood climate-education and personal-action group.

(continued from page 1)

Open Streets Survey

Temporary Limited Local Access

Multiple blocks of streets are [so] designated for pedestrian and cyclist use and enjoyment. Local vehicle access is allowed for limited use. Drivers are advised to be extremely cautious and to drive 5 MPH or slower on the **Open Streets. No through traffic permitted while Open Streets are in effect.** Only vehicles that must do the following are allowed on the street:

- Parking (all regulations apply)
- Picking up/dropping off
- Local deliveries

- Emergency vehicles
- Access-A-Ride
- Utility vehicles
- Necessary city service vehicles

Source: NYC Department of Transportation website, nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/openstreets.shtml

Please note that Temporary Limited Local Access for W. 103rd St. applies from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week.

Instructions:

If filling this survey out online, please enter the control number located at the top right of page 7. Go to surveymonkey.com/r/RG36YVX or open your camera app and use this QR code:



If mailing the survey back, please use the enclosed envelope, or drop it off with the doorman at 240 W. 102nd St. between 8 a.m. and midnight.

Survey

1. Which block do you live on?
(Check one)

- W. 102nd St. between Broadway and West End Ave.
- W. 102nd St. between West End Ave. and Riverside Dr.
- West End Ave. between W. 102nd and W. 103rd St.
- W. 103rd St. between Broadway and West End Ave.
- W. 103rd St. between West End Ave. and Riverside Dr.
- West End Ave. between W. 103rd and W. 104th St.
- Other (specify):

2. How did you **FIRST** become aware that W. 103rd St. from Broadway to Riverside Dr. was designated as an **Open Street** by the NYC Department of Transportation?
(Check one)

- From the signage on the street barriers
- By word of mouth
- At an **Open Streets** event
- From a survey from the **Open Streets** project
- Through the W. 102nd & W. 103rd Streets Block Association
- From the media, such as local publications, Twitter, other online sources
- Other (specify):

3. Did you attend the W. 102nd & W. 103rd Streets Block Association meeting on June 15 that included a presentation and discussion about **Open Streets**?

- Yes
- No

4. Before receiving this survey, were you aware that W. 103rd St. from Broadway to Riverside Dr. has been designated as a particular type of Open Street known as a **Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street**?

- Yes
- No

5. Before receiving this survey, were you aware of the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) **definition** of a **Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street**? (Please refer to the definition provided on page 6.)

- Yes
- No

6. Do you use a personal car?

- Yes
- No

IF YOU ANSWERED NO, GO ON TO QUESTION 7.

6a. Where do you typically park the car? (Check one)

- In a garage
- On the street
- Other (explain):

6b. How do you use the car?
(Check all that apply)

- To commute to work
- When I want to leave NYC
- For traveling around NYC
- For ferrying children around, including to/from school
- Other (specify):

6c. As a personal car user, how satisfied are you with the designation of W. 103rd St. between Broadway and Riverside Dr. as a **Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street**? (Circle a number from 1 to 10 on a scale in which 1 is the lowest level of satisfaction and 10 is the highest.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. Do you use a bicycle or scooter?

- Yes
- No

IF YOU ANSWERED NO, GO ON TO QUESTION 8.

7a. How do you use the bicycle or scooter? (Check all that apply)

- To commute to work
- For work, such as making deliveries
- For traveling around NYC

- For ferrying children around, including to/from school
- For recreation
- Other (specify):

7b. As a bicyclist/scooter user, how satisfied are you with the designation of W. 103rd St. between Broadway and Riverside Dr. as a **Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street**? (Circle a number from 1 to 10 on a scale in which 1 is the lowest level of satisfaction and 10 is the highest.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. As a neighborhood pedestrian, on a scale from 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with the designation of W. 103rd St. between Broadway and Riverside Dr. as a **Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street**? (Circle a number from 1 to 10 on a scale in which 1 is the lowest level of satisfaction and 10 is the highest.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. Do you have a disabling condition?

- Yes
- No

IF YOU ANSWERED NO, GO ON TO QUESTION 10.

9a. Please describe the disabling condition: _____

9b. Has the designation of W. 103rd Street as a **Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street** had a positive or negative impact on you in any way, in terms of your disability?

- Yes (explain):

No

10. What are your **preferred** modes of transportation when getting around the city **for work**? (Check all that apply)

- Public transportation

(continued on next page)

- Personal car
- Bicycle
- Taxi, Access-A-Ride, or another car service
- Other (specify):

11. Did you change the way you went to work when the COVID pandemic began?

- Yes (explain):

- No (explain):

IF YOU ANSWERED NO, GO ON TO QUESTION 12.

11a. Once COVID is no longer a threat, do you plan to resume traveling **to work** the way you did before the pandemic or will you stick to your new mode of transportation?

- Plan to resume traveling to work the way I did before the pandemic

- Plan to stick to my new mode of transportation.

12. What are your preferred modes of transportation when getting around the city **for purposes other than work**?

- Public transportation
- Personal car
- Bicycle
- Taxi, Access-A-Ride, or another car service
- Other (specify):

13. Did you change the way you traveled **for purposes other than work** when the COVID pandemic began?

- Yes (explain):

- No (explain):

IF YOU ANSWERED NO, GO ON TO QUESTION 14.

13a. Once COVID is no longer a threat, do you plan to resume traveling the same way for purposes other than work as you did before the pandemic or will you stick to your new mode of transportation?

- Plan to resume traveling the way I did before the pandemic

- Plan to stick to my new mode of transportation

14. Have you, as a passenger in a taxi, Access-A-Ride, or other car service, had a driver who misunderstood the signage on the barriers on W. 103rd St.?

- Yes (explain):

- No

15. How important are the following expressed purposes of designating W. 103rd St. between Broadway and Riverside Dr. as a **Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street**? (Circle a number from 1 to 10 on a scale in which 1 indicates that it is not important and 10 indicates that it is very important.)

- Slows down traffic to 5 MPH
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Limits vehicles to those parking, dropping off/picking up, making deliveries, emergency services, Access-a-Ride, utility companies, city services
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Promotes off-sidewalk use by bicyclists
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Promotes off-sidewalk use by pedestrians and those in wheelchairs
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Provides space for neighborhood gatherings and events such as block parties, musical and dance performances
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

16. How important are the following suggestions offered at the June 15 Block Association meeting for the future of W. 103rd St. as an **Open**

Street? (Circle a number from 1 to 10 on a scale in which 1 indicates that it is not important and 10 indicates that it is very important.)

- Making W. 103rd St. from Central Park West to Riverside Dr. a “park to park” **Open Street** for bicyclists and pedestrians
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Widening parts of sidewalks to allow for more green spaces
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Widening parts of sidewalks for people to relax, chat
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Putting in speed bumps to slow traffic
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Holding events such as concerts, art activities, activities for children
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

17. Do you take part in concerts, films, or other activities for children and adults offered by the Riverside Park Conservancy?

- Yes

- No

18. Do you think that the offering of similar activities on W. 103rd St. is:

- A valuable addition
- Redundant to what Riverside Park Conservancy offers
- Other (explain):

19. Do you have additional questions or comments about the designation of W. 103rd St. between Broadway and Riverside Dr. as a **Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street**?

Make Music New York Brings Summer Solstice Concert to W. 103rd St.

By CELIA KNIGHT

ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 21, Make Music New York poured forth a cascade of music and song on the southwest corner of Broadway and W. 103rd St. The West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association co-hosted the event along with the West 103rd Street Open Streets Community Coalition and the Purple Circle Early Childhood Program. The spirit of collaboration extended beyond these three distinct community groups to the New York City Department of Transportation and the 24th precinct of the police department, among others.

The effects of the COVID-19 lockdown were devastating for singers and musicians. Suddenly, the give-and-take of in-person entertainment became a hazard. The word *improvisation* took on broader meaning as artists scrambled for new ways to make a living. Studio instructors on shoestring budgets sprang for unfamiliar apps and fixtures to build a presence online. Gig workers of all types found ways to band together and apply for funding. Amid all these changes came the recognition that even in a pandemic it was possible—indeed, essential—to create anew.

Enter Make Music New York, a nearly-15-year-old organization that presents two citywide musical events a year, during each solstice. As their website indicates, their mission is to encourage “music makers of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to take center stage and share their skills and passions through live performances in public plazas and parks, on sidewalks, and in front of shops, and in partnership with cultural institutions and businesses across all five boroughs.”

This past June, Make Music New York accepted the invitation to “distance, mask, wash, and enjoy” in response to a difficult situation. With a logistical assist from people at the Open Streets coalition, they were able to add a venue in our neighborhood to their annual summer solstice festival.



The first set of performances were by The Chamber Music Center of New York. Artistic director Mary Jo Pagano presented the selections and helped the musicians get situated. A group of students played a piece by Paganini, and faculty members played one by Beethoven. Comfortably spaced apart in purple folding chairs, they immersed themselves in their artistry. They barely seemed to notice the shiny bubbles floating above or the grocery deliverers weaving around them on their bikes.

These instrumentalists then made way for Marty Toub, a vocalist-guitarist who also provides media services for The Chamber Music Center. He and cellist Isaac Pagano-Toub (son of Mary Jo and Marty) played a series of songs by more recent composers (George and Ira Gershwin, Bob Dylan, Bill Withers, Sting, Bob Thiele, John Lennon, Leonard Cohen). He even included two works of his own.

By then yet another singer-songwriter waited in the wings. That was Esther Crow, who brought along her son, a seven-year-old mandolin player named Vincent; some puppets; and a bevy of elementary-school-age fans. Her energetic, rock-style storytelling recounted the cycles of the seasons and the curiosities of our natural habitat. Each of her musical creations had a fresh take on what people thought they already knew.

The last set featured an assortment of popular standards (from the likes of Burton Lane, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, Frank Loesser, and Charlie Chaplin) as well as world-music songs from Latin America and the Middle East. Vocalist Jean Ramirez was backed by Kai Ono (keyboardist) and Jeong Hwan Park (bassist). In a show of generosity, these three performers shared their space with several other

vocalists and musicians, including a Block Association area resident, who took a solo turn with smoothness and style.

All three headliners were allowed to promote their recordings, booking opportunities, and future appearances, but in keeping with MMNY guidelines, they did not take direct donations. Instead, they made deft use of their online links to engage the audience and attract new listeners.

The following websites provide more information about MMNY and the three Manhattan-based ensembles that performed for our neighborhood.

makemusicny.org

chambermusiccenter.org

esthercrow.com

jeanramirez.com (Also visit “Jean Ramirez–Home” on Facebook.)

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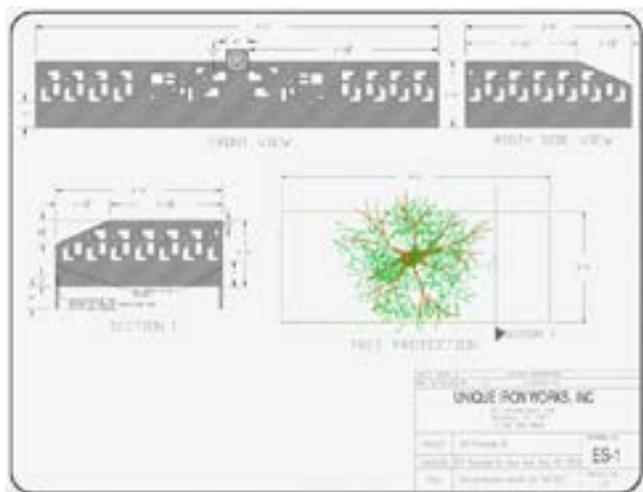
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TRIVIA - BEAT THE TRIVIA MASTER TUESDAY NIGHTS 9PM

Master Apartments Tree Wells: or, How a Theater Director Goes from Creating Musicals on Broadway to Creating Tree Wells Off-Broadway

By JEFF CALHOUN

MONTH SIX OF THE PANDEMIC: Riding the elevator down to the bike room in the Master Apartments building, Wendy Balter (board president) mentioned that she was going away and asked if I knew anyone who would like to water her plants. Since the pandemic had shut down all theater productions, I told her I would be thrilled to do it. When it became clear that I wasn't going to single-handedly kill her garden, we became fast friends.



Fast-forward to 2021: At a spring board meeting, our very conscientious superintendent, Enes Radoncic, pointed out the sorry state of our tree wells.

Since I had managed to keep Wendy's plants alive and the theater scene was still dark, everyone was game to make the *Master Apartments Tree Wells* my next production!

I quickly discovered how similar this was going to be to creating a Broadway show. The script was already written: "Design four beautiful wells

to highlight our trees and enhance the beauty of our building." All that was left to do was create the set, cast the foliage, and design the lighting.

The set would feature a formidable metal fence and a border of raised Belgium bricks that would extend to the sidewalk, doubling the planting area.

First and foremost, the new fence needed to protect the flowers from the dramatic weather conditions that tend to wreak havoc on the corner of W. 103rd St. and Riverside Dr. It also had to act as a fortress against cute canines

offering their own irrigation system. Last, I wanted to evoke the Art Deco style of our great architect, Harvey Wiley Corbett.

Gazmire Popovic, president of Unique Iron Works, was responsible for turning my two-dimensional sketch into the gorgeous laser-cut ¼-inch sheet-metal fence you see pictured here in

her construction drawing.

While the "set" was being built, I began "casting." Given the late planting season, I chose as my "actors" multicolored green-leaf begonias, for their immediate gratification and lasting blooms. A true audience-pleaser!

Now that the set was in place and the actors were well ensconced in their little stages, it was time for the lighting. I initially asked my lighting designer for both up-lights (to illuminate the trees) and path lights (for the plants)

so I could decide which looked best. When I was trying to make up my mind, I remembered what Dolly Parton said to me while we were working on *9 to 5* on the West End, "Honey, I don't understand why everyone keeps sayin' less is more. Where I come from, less is less, and more is more!" I decided to keep *all* the lights!

I want to thank our staff, Enes, Stephane, and Moises, for going above and beyond, as well as the board for their trust and all the neighbors who provided invaluable help. Together we made this a truly "Masterful" experience. And I've got a new Off-Broadway credit to add to my résumé.

So far, reviews have been great, and the best part of the production is that I've met more fellow residents and neighbors than I had in my previous 27 years living in this beautiful building.



Left: The construction drawing for the project. Photo: Unique Iron Works, Inc.

Above: The finished project. Photo: Jeff Calhoun
Below: Gazmire Popovic's laser-cut sheet-metal fence. Photo: Jeff Calhoun



ON BROADWAY

By DAVID L. REICH

THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL of activity on Broadway between W. 96th St. and W. 110th St. in the past six months. New shops have arrived or are coming, and old ones have moved or closed. From south to north, here's what is happening.

Blue Marble Ice Cream, on the northeast corner of W. 97th St. and Broadway (formerly the site of the Earth Café), opened in late March of this year.

Real Care Pharmacy, also called Value City Pharmacy, a small, independent drugstore on the east side of Broadway between W. 97th and W. 98th Sts., has closed.

Tower West Cleaners moved two blocks up, from the west side of Broadway near W. 97th St. to the west side of Broadway near W. 99th St.

King 99, a new smoke shop, has opened on the west side of Broadway between W. 99th and W. 100th Sts.

The **Janovic** paint store moved from the east side of Broadway between W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts. to the west side of Broadway between W. 99th and W. 100th Sts.

The former Urban Outfitters space on the west side of Broadway between W. 99th and W. 100th Sts. has been subdivided into a smaller space (south) and a larger space (north). The larger space will become one of 15 New York City offices for **One Medical**, a subscription (concierge) medical practice. They expect to open this office by the end of this year.

The **Get Smart 99 Cent Store** has opened on the west side of Broadway between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts.

Wolfnights--"The Gourmet Wrap"--has opened in the former Xi'an Famous Foods location on the west side of Broadway between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts.

In the space right next door, formerly inhabited by the window-blinds store, a sushi restaurant will be taking occupancy.

Gorillas is a two-year old German delivery company that operates in six European countries and now in New York. They moved into the northwest corner of Broadway and W. 102nd St. in the long-vacant former HSBC Bank (and previous to that, Starbucks) space.

Is Gorillas the start of a neighborhood trend? Across Broadway, in the old Janovic paint store, a company called **Gopuff** is running a delivery operation behind covered windows. Their slogan is "Daily essentials, delivered in minutes."

In another former bank space (Santander Bank) on the northeast corner of W. 103rd St. and Broadway, a primary-care office of **ColumbiaDoctors** has opened.

With the advent of outdoor dining in the COVID era, two restaurants flourish on the west side of Broadway between W. 104th and W. 105th Sts. **Café du Soleil** and **Serafina** have a total of 64 seats in street sheds and 88 seats on the sidewalk.

At **Plowshares Coffee**, on the east side of Broadway between W. 104th and W. 105th Sts., the operating hours are now 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., and two customers are allowed in the shop at one time (masking is required).

After a major interior renovation, **Ellington's**, the restaurant that used to be at Amsterdam Ave. and W. 106th St.

and runs the outdoor café in Riverside Park, is reopening at the former Henry's location on the northwest corner of Broadway at W. 105th St.

The jazz club **Smoke**, on the west side of Broadway between

W. 105th and W. 106th Sts., has signs posted on its windows saying, "Remodeling. Hope to see you soon." The cleaners and law office to the south of Smoke are also closed.

The arrival of a **Dunkin'** and **Baskin-Robbins** to the former Manchester Diner location on the northeast corner of Broadway and W. 108th St., which was announced in the West Side Rag last October, has still not come to pass, but the somewhat bedraggled sign is still there.

The **Hoshi Coupe** hair salon, on the northwest corner of Broadway and W. 108th St., is closed and the space is vacant. Two doors north, the shop that was previously identified by a large Sprint sign appears about to be relabeled as a **T-Mobile** store (T-Mobile owns Sprint).

In the same block, the offices of **TIAA**, the financial services company, which used to occupy several storefronts, are closed. The company's website says, "The TIAA associates currently servicing this area are working remotely."

Across Broadway, on the east side between W. 108th and W. 109th Sts., in the large shop previously occupied by Mattress Firm, **Park North Physical Therapy** appears to be preparing to move in.

That's it for catching up. With all the still-empty storefronts, there are sure to be more stories to be told about retail life on our stretch of Broadway.

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 **UnitedHealthcare**

BAiP Building Representatives: Making Connections Where You Live

By LEILANI STRAW

BLOOMINGDALE AGING IN PLACE (BAiP) ACTIVITIES and programs are well known to our members. Many are engaged in wellness classes or walking groups, have attended monthly presentations, or are members of one of our more than 80 small groups. BAiP building representatives and what they do to keep our community connected are less known. Let's change that!

BAiP has grown, since its start in 2009, to a current total of 1,400 members and has incrementally expanded its boundaries to include Riverside Dr. to Central Park and W. 96th St. to W. 110th St. The organization has invited volunteers to serve as representatives of BAiP in the buildings where they live.

Building representatives are members who serve as a liaison between their neighbors and leaders of our BAiP programs and activities. They share information by posting flyers and through email, keep an eye out for neighbors who might be isolated and need a helping hand, and might occasionally gather with BAiP members in their building for a meet-and-greet and information-sharing.

A recent survey by Gil Tauber,

compiled for the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group, shows that there are approximately 1,100 buildings within the overall BAiP geographic area, with representatives in 63 of these buildings. Within our own Block Association boundaries, there are 63 buildings with a total of 15 representatives. Of the buildings with no representatives, only three have more than 10 apartments. Our goal is to have building representatives in most buildings where BAiP members live.

Building representatives are in a unique position to identify residents in their respective buildings who are not yet BAiP members and introduce them to how special the organization is--an all-volunteer community charging no fees to participate and whose currency is the skills, knowledge, and enthusiasm members bring to the group, with a focus on community-building through activities, shared information, and the occasional helping hand.

New building representatives receive an orientation, focused on how BAiP's mission is carried out and

introducing key anchors: the Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) program; wellness and activity groups; BAiP presentations (BAiP Presents); and the Inclusion and Diversity program. Through our deliberate efforts, we have welcomed several new representatives over the past months. We invite you to consider this role as your contribution to your BAiP neighbors and our neighborhood.

To find out if your building has a representative, please visit the BAiP website: bloominplace.org/building-reps.html. If you are interested in exploring this important role, or to learn more about BAiP, please email buildingreps@bloominplace.org.

Leilani Straw is coordinator of BAiP Building Representatives and is a former president of the BAiP Board of Directors



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THE PARK TO PARK 103 COALITION that is working to create a pedestrian-friendly corridor along W. 103rd St. from Central Park West to Riverside Dr., working with Street Lab, Streetopia UWS, the Frederick Douglass Tenants Association, Hostelling International, the Amsterdam Columbus BID, Bosino restaurant, student sketch artists from LaGuardia High School, and many others, hosted a well-attended event on Sat., July 24, on W. 103rd St. between Amsterdam Ave. and Broadway. The colorful street mural depicted was one of the results. You can follow the organization's efforts on Twitter [@parktopark103](https://twitter.com/parktopark103) or contact pfrishauf@gmail.com.

Meet Your Talented Neighbors

By JULIA C. SPRING

I'm starting with two concerts that are actually indoors, one in September and one in December! Other offerings include marble flowers on the Broadway median, model-railroading, and a pizza-reviewing vlog.

VITA WALLACE/WHAT A NEIGHBORHOOD!

On Tues., Sept. 28, 6 p.m., Vita will be at the piano for a free concert, *Vine and Fig Tree*, part of Columbia University's Sacred Music series at St. Paul's Chapel. She, mezzo-soprano Hayden DeWitt, and Margaret Cuonzo, ukulele, offer an exuberant program in honor of love, peace, and natural abundance. Art songs by Schumann, Brahms, Alma Mahler, and others (including two specially commissioned from Derek Henderson) will be interspersed with simple Shaker songs. All concerts in the series are available at religiouslife.columbia.edu/sacred-music

ELIZA LANSDALE, MIMI DAITZ, AND BARBARA MORGAN/ RIVERSIDE CHORAL SOCIETY

The three will be singing as the RCS resumes its annual holiday concert at St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at E. 51st St., on Fri., Dec. 17, 8 p.m. The program centers on a performance of Haydn's *Creation Mass* with full orchestra. Tickets will be available at riversidechoral.org.

BROADWAY MALL ASSOCIATION

After a year's pandemic delay, a new exhibit, *Broadway Blooms: Jon Isherwood on Broadway*, has gone up along the Broadway medians from W. 64th St. to W. 157th St. Sculptor Isherwood has carved large flowers from eight different kinds of Italian marble; on the south median at W. 103rd St. is *A Chance's Wish*. A photo tour of the blooms is at broadwaymall.org. (For more on this exhibit, see page 3.)

HEATH HURWITZ

During the pandemic, Heath has gotten back into the hobby of model-railroading after a 25-year hiatus. He has been documenting his journey on YouTube, which you can access through his website, humancity.org. He would like to meet others in the area who are interested in model-railroading: human.c.itjunction@gmail.com.

ANTHONY BELLOV AND DAYLE VANDER SANDE

These creative neighbors launched a YouTube vlog last May and have already completed three seasons of the *Eats-A-Pizza* show. In his alter-ego of Tony Roni, Anthony and his cohort, Peeta Peppia, and their cameraman, Crusty (Dayle), are eating their way through the greater metropolitan area, sampling pizzas and rating them in a very amusing way. They've already done south Brooklyn and the Jersey Shore. Connecticut is next and Bloomingdale ("Manhattan's Pizza Gold Coast") is coming this winter. The ones I watched were funny, with more riffs on pizza than I could ever imagine, much less enact. They invite you to watch, laugh, and subscribe, so they can continue this venture: [youtube.com/watch?v=DsjxQ1OBeZU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsjxQ1OBeZU). (You are warned to watch these on a full stomach if you want to avoid ordering a pizza two minutes later.)

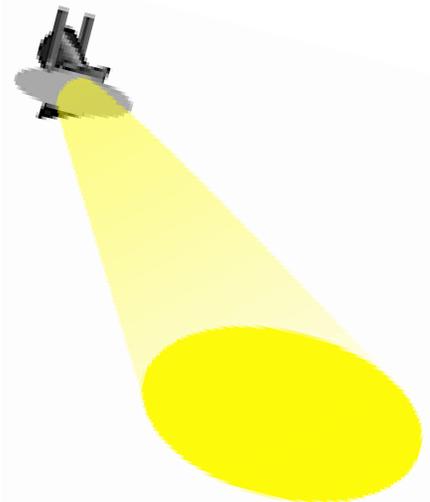
ELIZABETH COFFEY AND MARK WISNIEWSKI

Mark and Elizabeth have received advance review copies for the inaugural volume of their *Coollest American Stories Anthology*, which has been described in the last two columns. They would love to send these copies to anyone who reviews books, publishes book reviews, or knows someone who would like one to review (networking appreciated). Please contact them at coolestamericanstories@gmail.com.

LILY FRIEDMAN/SUMMERTRIOS

Lily is a founder and piano instructor in this 30-year-old organization that teaches adult amateur chamber musicians. This past summer Summertrios successfully resumed their week-long residential workshops at Rider University. Visit the website to learn about workshops and events during the year, including a performance of the *Brandenburg Concertos* in an area apartment sometime around New Year's Day: summertrios.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 Winter 2021 Newsletter (or beyond) to creative@w102-103blockassn.org. Do it today, before you forget!



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