



WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2013

VOL. 43, NO. 2

## ANNUAL YARD SALE:

### Big Turn-Out, Many Thanks

By BOB AARONSON

On May 18, a mild, barely breezy Saturday, cars disappeared from the 300 block of West 103rd St., and hundreds of neighborhood residents, Block Association members, and vendors spent the day ogling treasures, nibbling assorted snacks, home-baked cakes, cookies, and cupcakes, wolfing down locally-supplied wraps, buying raffle tickets, bidding in the silent auction, donating blood, and collecting electronic waste and old clothing for recycling. In the span of a single day, the Block Association succeeded in bringing together the community it serves and raising some much-needed income to boot.

An event like the Yard Sale doesn't come together in a single day, however. It's the product of many months of labor on the part of many volunteers: Anthony Bellov, once again, sold space to the vendors and choreographed their placement along the block. Hedy Campbell organized the refreshment table and was ably assisted by Laura Hanrahan, Kerstin Hasenpusch, her daughters Sophia and Nina Feldman, Nancy Becker, Eliza Lansdale, Deborah Lott, Sue Maderer, Evelyn Brodwin-Miller, Nancy Wight, Penelope Kim, and her daughters, Meredith and Gillian Nissenbaum. Special thanks are due the Dive Bar who contributed the delicious wraps. Sue Maderer, and newcomer Barbara Forbes continually rearranged the refreshments so they stayed fresh and attractive. This group did double duty as they organized and sold the treasures donated to the Block Association rummage sale. Mildred Speiser secured Zagat guides and umbrellas from First Republic Bank. Deborah Lott organized the silent auction and patiently explained how it worked, not to mention selling raffle tickets all day along with

Sue. Andres Veranes led collection of electronic waste (more than 15 computers, a half-dozen monitors, assorted hard drives, cell phones, batteries, disc players, and even a couple of cassette players, but no 8-track players this year) and delivered it to the Lower East Side Ecology Center event on Sunday. Sue Maderer, in her third role, collected textiles for recycling and Molly Sugarman, and Debi and Bruce Cohen (join me in welcoming them to the neighborhood) kept scavengers from walking off with both the e-waste and the textiles. Debi and Bruce also removed all the talismanic "No Parking" signs that festooned our trees all week.

Our newest community service, spearheaded by Hedy Campbell, provided a Bloodmobile from the New York Blood Center for "drop-in" blood donations. Twenty-eight of our neighbors took advantage of the opportunity to donate. Our good friends, the management and residents of St. Luke's Addiction Institute, again pulled out all the stops to lend a hand as well as several large tables, delivering them early in the morning and retrieving them at the end of the day. Ginger Lief and Celia Knight supervised the clean-up, helping (with Cynthia Doty's expertise) at least one vendor literally "fold her tent." Terence Hanrahan ensured that the vendor leavings were picked up and did yeoman's work, hauling them to the corners at West End Avenue for pick-up by the Sanitation Dept.

Prior to the Yard Sale itself, Terence, Cynthia, Molly, Dorothy O'Hanlon, Celia Knight, Ginger, Jane Hopkins, Sue, Nancy Butkus, and I sold raffle tickets on street corners, contributing to the pot that yielded a \$581 prize for charter Block Association member Asya Berger. Did you notice that some of the people mentioned were recognized for doing more than one job? Please help us out and plan on lending a hand next year when we start putting the Yard Sale together. More hands would make lighter work, and much more fun, for us all.

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## Varied Agenda Marks Annual Meeting

By TERENCE HANRAHAN

Every year, at a fall board meeting, the Block Association board of directors starts brainstorming, trying to come up with a surefire topic that will draw a crowd to our annual meeting. In the wake

of Superstorm Sandy, we were sure that emergency preparedness would be as big a draw as we could hope for. In the intervening months, however, complacency must have set in, as only about 25 residents turned out for the March 14 meeting. Which makes me wonder.... Why don't we turn our quest for a topic to you? If you have an idea for a topic that you think would draw a crowd to next year's

annual meeting, drop a note to [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org).

Poor turnout notwithstanding, we thought the meeting successful in a number of ways. Guest speaker Shelly Fine, representing our area's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), delivered an excellent presentation that was both thorough and entertaining. He ex-  
*(Continued on page 2)*

# BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWS

(Continued from page 1)

plained how a CERT helps in an emergency and described the work the team did following the storm. His show-and-tell demo of what he keeps in his "go bag" surely made listeners aware of how important it is to have essentials at the ready in case of unexpected displacement from their homes.

Another highlight was the induction of three residents into our Residents of Long-standing Hall of Fame. This is our way of honoring people who have lived within our territory for 50 years or more. The number of inductees is up to 20! This year's honorees were Tisa Chang, Phyllis Gluck, and Peter Juviler, all of 305 Riverside Dr. Within the month, their bios will be posted at the Block Association website. Regrettably, Peter Juviler passed away last month. Our condolences to his wife Anne Stephens, and his family.

Additionally, the 2012 financial report was presented, and a new Board of Directors was elected. We are happy to introduce two new members: Jane Hopkins, who manages newsletter ad sales, and Nancy Butkus, who works on the newsletter and the ecology committee.

## CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

### Become a Crime Reporter!

Do you have an interest in crime? Have we got a job for you! The only requirement is that you're free at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of every month. That's when the 24th precinct holds its monthly Community Council meeting. We need someone willing to attend and bring any important topics to the Block Association board's attention, either in the form of an emailed report or in person at our monthly meeting (second Tuesday of each month). Contact [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org).

### Everyone Loves a Parade

The Block Association Halloween parade is an annual tradition that goes way back to the Block Association's formation in the 1970s! It would be a shame to see a run like that come to an end. But unless someone steps up to organize the event, that's what will happen. We have a comprehensive organizational chart, plenty of people with experience to offer advice, and a good crew of worker bees. What lacks is someone to pull all the bits and pieces together into the extravaganza to which the neighborhood kids have become accustomed. Contact [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org).

## New Talent Steps Up

We're happy to report that several people volunteered their help. Bob Donohue now manages our data base and sees that messages are sent out to our email list in a timely way. He has lived in the neighborhood with his husband since 1994. Now retired, in his professional life he was an IT manager for the New York State Department of Transportation. The Yard Sale and the impressive work that's been done to the tree wells in our area inspired him to sign on.

Cheryl and Adnan Suvalic, who moved to the neighborhood two years ago, have agreed to manage the Block Association's newly redesigned website. Adnan originally hails from Bosnia and works as a software developer for a non-profit organization. Cheryl spent most of her formative years in Kentucky and now works as a business analyst for a life science company in New Jersey. Together they've started Always Public LLC, a software company, and are excited to announce that they're about to release their first app in the Apple App Store! It's called Quick Stop NYC.

And, speaking of our newly redesigned website, special thanks to Arya Iranpour, who spent many hours giving the website its new look. We wish him well as he tackles new ventures and owe him our thanks.

## BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

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

June 11, July 9, Aug. 13 at 306 W. 102nd St. at 8:00 p.m.

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## THE WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION, [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org)

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

**STREET GUARD** Your contributions to the Block Association provide funding for our street guards, Rafael Hernandez, who makes rounds from 5 p.m. to midnight, Sun., Wed. and Thurs. and from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m., Fri. and Sat., and Roy Chavarriaga, on duty Mon. and Tues. from 5 p.m. to midnight. The guards can be reached, through the office of Starr Security, at (212) 767-1110, to report neighborhood security issues or to request assistance on the street.

## Developers to Lease Douglass Housing Lots

By NANCY BUTKUS

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) has unveiled a contentious proposal to lease sites in eight housing projects to private developers. Five of the sites are downtown and three are uptown, including the Frederick Douglass Houses, which cover the area between 100th and 104th Sts. between Amsterdam and Manhattan Aves. Conceived to address the drastic shortfall of funds that resulted from federal and state cutbacks, the long-term leases would reportedly contribute \$30 to 50 million in yearly revenue. NYCHA posted a \$61 million deficit for 2012, a repair backlog of roughly 300,000 orders, and a need for \$6 to 7 billion in capital improvements.

The plan has stirred controversy among residents who distrust the way the authority has rushed the plan through, giving residents only weeks to organize a response. Although NYCHA does not need the residents' approval, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires documentation of resident engagement. Residents who attended Community Board 7 meetings voiced concern on a number of issues. The three new buildings will occupy land currently used for parking and green space but will face outward, away from the projects, potentially creating "us and them" living conditions. Another worry is that this could be the first move in an effort to sell off the projects altogether, as other cities such as Chicago and Newark have done. Real estate prices surrounding the 21-acre campus have risen exponentially since it was built in 1958. NYCHA has promised that 20 percent of the new high-rise apartments will be set aside as affordable, and has assured residents that no one will be displaced. NYCHA also plans to replace the lost parking spaces.

Still, there is rancor and a sense that the proposal is not addressing ways to integrate these two populations or provide a creative solution to complex urban issues. With 99-year leases, various tax breaks, and other details quite vague, it seems to be a lucrative deal for developers. But it could also provide an architectural and financial opportunity to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood; the developers could build LEED-certified structures and provide community and recreational spaces while creating jobs and even funding for additional classrooms at PS 163. The RFP is being issued this spring with the selection of developers to follow in the fall.

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### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SUMMER ON THE HUDSON EVENTS CALENDAR

#### MOVIES UNDER THE STARS

This year's theme is  
Song & Dance.  
Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m.  
Pier 1, at W. 70th St.  
**July 10:** Gold Diggers  
of 1933  
**July 17:** Duck Soup  
**July 24:** 5,000 fingers  
of Dr. T  
**July 31:** Fiddler  
on the Roof  
**Aug. 7:** Little Shop  
of Horrors  
**Aug. 14:** Pitch Perfect

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**July 14:** Drums  
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**July 21:** Vensaire  
**July 28:** Brown Rice Family  
  
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**Aug. 24**

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## No Need to Take The A Train To The Ellington



By KATE MCLEOD

If The Ellington is the new neighborhood hangout success I think it is, no surprise. Start with the fact that the staff is so nice you think you're in Kansas, although I'm not sure there are ample tattoo parlors in Kansas to meet the body art demands of these staffers.

The menu is from chef Lester Almanzar, formerly of Dovetail on W. 77th St. It's a nice mix of burgers, interesting flatbreads, salads, and main courses. Brunch selections also range from the standards to sandwiches, interesting omelets, and an inspired eggs Benedict with braised pork.

Allen Katz, of Brooklyn's New York Distilling Company, designed the cocktail menu, which recalls Duke Ellington's music with drinks named after songs: "A Slow Ride On The A Train" (Knob Creek bourbon, elderflower liqueur, fresh Fuji apple juice, fresh lime juice); "A Sophisticated Lady" (Perry's Tot - Navy Strength gin, fresh lime juice, simple syrup, cinnamon syrup); and "A Prelude to a Kiss" (Absolut Citron, Combier cherry liqueur, Cinzano extra dry vermouth). Fifteen ales on tap include a terrific "Bronx" ale.

Someone affiliated with the restaurant has a great selection of tunes on their iPod, but that evening they were streaming oldies. Wouldn't you expect a cool backdrop of jazz in a restaurant named The Ellington?

The walls are distressed barn board. There's a rustic chandelier in the center of the room that hangs down from tin ceilings. The bar area is defined by exposed duct work. The atmosphere is both charming and comfortable. The room has a big, long bar and two large TV screens turned to—you guessed it!—sports.

The people who work in this restaurant—at least the night we were there—understand hospitality. I noticed that when we asked to sit by a window at two tables for two, there was no herding us to a table of two. Later on, I noticed the staff moving a table to accommodate a party of four. We arrived on the early side. As the place filled up, it did get a bit noisy—there aren't a lot of noise-absorbing materials in the room.

Otherwise, The Ellington is a refreshing addition to the neighborhood and a fine place to hang out over imaginative cocktails and a varied and well-constructed menu.

The Ellington is open daily from 11 a.m. to 4 a.m. It is located at 936 Amsterdam Ave., the northwest corner of W. 106th St.; (212) 222-4050; [theellingtonny.com](http://theellingtonny.com); credit cards are accepted.

## MEET THE NEIGHBORS

# A MacArthur-Winning Composer, Jazz Players, Authors and Artists

By JULIA C. SPRING

It may seem as though life slows down in the summer, but not for artists in our neighborhood. You can find 21st-century music at the Guggenheim, jazz right on Broadway, and the opportunity to play in a jazz ensemble. A feminist musical has a revival and a one-woman show portrays several first ladies. There is a nearby reading from a new novel, and a book of illustrations and comics being published.

## CHARLES WUORINEN

In honor of his 75th birthday, the Guggenheim Museum will be presenting a concert of Charles' compositions on **Sun., June 9 at 7:30 p.m.** A conversation between him and cellist Fred Sherry will be part of the event.

Wuorinen is a past recipient of a Pulitzer Prize and a MacArthur award. This spring he will also receive an honorary doctorate at SUNY/Buffalo, where he is a faculty composer at its Morris Center for 21st Century Music. Further information at [charleswuorinen.com](http://charleswuorinen.com).

## PATIENCE HIGGINS

Along with his Sugar Hill Quartet, Patience will play the regular Friday night 'round midnight sessions (11:45 p.m. and 12:45 a.m.) at Smoke, on Broadway and W. 106th St. at least through June (check [smokejazz.com](http://smokejazz.com).) A long-time tenor jazz saxophonist in New York, Patience has won a Grammy for a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald on which he was featured. *Jazz Times* says, "if you like your jazz up-tempo and overflowing with vitality, look no further. Patience is a cooking, muscular-toned tenorman."

## JOYCE BURCHAM

Want to practice in a jazz ensemble yourself over the summer? Joyce is one of a small group of neighbors who meet on Tuesdays evenings at Bloomingdale School of Music to play jazz. The ensemble includes a piano, a flute, a violin, and an occasional bass, and needs extra performers in order to keep going over the summer. If you can read a lead sheet, you are welcome. For more information, contact [jlburcham@aol.com](mailto:jlburcham@aol.com) or 917-621-5021.

## DONNA TRINKOFF

Donna is the executive producer of *Tea for Three: Lady Bird, Pat and Betty*

([teafortthree.com](http://teafortthree.com)). A one-woman show created by and starring Elaine Bromka, it provides the perspective of these first ladies in their own words as they are thrust into the "hardest unpaid job in the world" by their husbands' political ambitions. Bromka has been an actress on television and stage, winning an Emmy for her role in *Catch a Rainbow*. The show runs through June at the Theater at 30th Street, 259 W. 30th St.

## GRETCHEN CRYER

An encore presentation of Gretchen's *I'm Getting My Act Together And Taking It on the Road* will be presented at New York City Center **Wed., July 24 through Sat., July 27** (four evening performances and a Saturday matinee). The musical opened in 1978 as part of Joseph Papp's Shakespeare Festival and ran for three years. Gretchen wrote the libretto and lyrics and starred in the original show, basing the story on her own experience. Tickets are available at [nycitycenter.org](http://nycitycenter.org).

## MARLENE LEE

Marlene, who is a retired court reporter and a graduate of Brooklyn College's MFA program, will give a reading from her new novel, *The Absent Woman*, on **Sun., July 1, at 7 p.m.** at Book Culture, 536 W. 112th St. Wine and cheese will

be served. Published in April, a review of her novel calls it "simple and beautifully written." If you want to follow Marlene Lee's writing and publishing adventures, her blog is [marlenelee.wordpress.com/feed/](http://marlenelee.wordpress.com/feed/). Her book may be purchased on Amazon or at the July 1 reading.

## PETER KUPER

In June, Peter Kuper's *Drawn to New York: An Illustrated Chronicle of Three Decades in New York City* will be published. Peter is an illustrator and comic artist whose works have appeared in *Time*, the *New York Times*, and *MAD* magazine. He has adapted many of Kafka's works into comics and teaches comic art in New York and most recently at Harvard. This book "is a reflection of one artist's 34 years on 12 miles of island with 8 million people." You can see more of his work at [peterkuper.com](http://peterkuper.com).

## SUSAN C. DESSEL

susan c desSEL ([desselstudio.net](http://desselstudio.net)) has an exhibit coming up at the Bloomingdale branch of the New York Public Library on W. 100th St. The exhibit, "What a Neighborhood!" consists of drawings on tin of Upper West Side buildings, created in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Orfeo Duo's "What A Neighborhood" concert program. The exhibit is from June 1 to June 28.

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Marc Sorkin  
Block Association Member

# Spring Planting Event Blooms

On Sat., Apr. 27 the Block Association held its annual event to clean tree wells, plant flowers, and lay down mulch. The weather was glorious and we had a record turnout: 57 participants, including many children and first-time gardeners. We planted 41 flats of flowers in 33 tree wells, and cleaned and mulched an additional 18—also a record. We distributed more than 80 cubic yards of mulch and replaced about 600 pounds of topsoil. This is the second year in which we have been able to work on the trees on Broadway, which always need a bit of extra love.

In addition to beautifying our blocks, Planting Day is crucial for maintaining the health of our street trees. Dog owners tend to keep their pets from urinating on flowers, and the mulch protects the trees all summer and fall. It's important now to keep the trees and flowers well-watered. Trees should be watered every week in which there hasn't been at least one inch of rain. If you have a young tree, a Tregator watering bag is helpful. Fill it once a week through October. Order them at [tregator.com](http://tregator.com).

Thanks to everyone who participated and contributed. This year we did not receive a grant from the Citizens Committee for New York City, as it is currently focusing on other neighborhoods. We are extremely grateful to them for past support. Instead, the Block Association sponsored the event, assisted by a generous gift from an anonymous donor. Many neighbors also contributed, enabling us to purchase more flowers than we'd originally planned, and leaving a small balance that will cover the cost of additional mulch and perhaps bulbs to be used this fall. More on that in the September issue, but save October 12!

Special thanks to our resident horticultural artist Precious Costello, who arranged many of this year's extra features, including the delicious cupcakes generously donated by Magnolia Bakery and the wonderful violinist, David Aron Steinberg, who supplied exquisite music to plant by. He also loaned us tables and other supplies. Wendy Mendy baked the cakes. Tommie Moseley, Louis Belducci, and Randy Kosman drove vans, helped with setup, and hauled supplies. Dorinda Jaquith staffed the snack table. Bob Siefring at Gristedes kindly loaned us grocery carts for transport—a huge help! Elisa Dunn and Nancy Butkus generously donated work gloves, coffee, and other items. A big thank you goes to the members of the Ecology Committee and our neighbors at the St. Luke's residence for assistance on many details.

# BAiP News

By LYDIA DUFOUR

The photo in February 15's *New York Times* article "Sun City It's Not" showed the Bloomingdale Aging in Place walking group during an early morning snowfall in Central Park, a clear indication that its participants are undeterred by climatic extremes. This and other BAiP activities continue to attract new members.

Four new groups have been arranged by Phyllis Sperling, activities coordinator. Two are reading groups, one dedicated to nonfiction and the other to mysteries. The others are poetry writing and memoir writing groups.

In April, Bonnie Mairs arranged a Dinner in the Neighborhood at the local Thai restaurant, Sura. A May salon hosted by Ms. Sperling and Herman Sands featured author Peter Wortsman, who spoke on Berlin's complex history.

Three informative evening events organized by BAiP were held at the Marseilles Community Room. In February, a panel addressed the concerns of the Sandwich Generation. In April, attention was focused on the city's abundant free and low-cost cultural, recreational, and educational activities. The May event explored "Relationships and Longevity."

Through BAiP's Neighbor-to-Neighbor senior outreach program, residents who need assistance or companionship can call (212) 842-8831 (select option 1, a direct connection).

To learn more about BAiP, call (212) 842-8831 or visit [bloominplace.org](http://bloominplace.org). For the email list, send your name, phone number, and address to [signup@bloominplace.org](mailto:signup@bloominplace.org).

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# On Broadway

By DAVID L. REICH

★ **Maria Bonita**, the Mexican restaurant on the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 102nd St. closed on May 2. It had opened a year before, after the long-time occupant, Mamá Mexico, had gone into bankruptcy and then departed. Maria Bonita never attracted the following of its predecessor. Shortly after it closed, one of the workmen removing cases of beer from the basement said that a new restaurant would be opening soon but he couldn't provide any other information.

★ The discount perfume shop, **Ruby Fragrances**, on the east side of Broadway between W. 99th and W. 100th Sts. just south of **Indus Valley Restaurant** has closed. The space is currently vacant.

★ **Rack and Soul**, the ribs and barbecue restaurant on W. 109th St. that moved east of Broadway when the large **Verizon Wireless** store took up the southeast corner spot, closed last November. Replacing it is the **Legend Sichuan Upper West Chinese** restaurant (so named to distinguish it from the other Legend Sichuan in Chelsea).

★ **The Big Apple Driving School** is one of two recently vacated retail spaces on the east side of Broadway between W. 105th and W. 106th St. The operation, which included various legal services as well, has moved to Washington Heights.

★ The other recently vacated space in that block, 2746 Broadway, had been occupied by **Riverside Liquors** for about 20 years. One of the owners, John Alvarez, has been in the retail wine and liquor business in this neighborhood for over 40 years with a previous shop at the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 105th St. He reports that his landlord responded to his request for a new lease by putting him off as the expiration date approached. Then Alvarez found out that his landlord had applied for his own license from the State Liquor Authority (SLA) to run a liquor store in the same location. When a new lease was not offered, Alvarez scrambled to find another location in the neighborhood and was lucky that the former **Papasito Mexican Grill** space was just becoming available. He moved inventory to the new shop in late March and then waited more than three weeks for permits from the City's Building Department to do the necessary renovations, which are now underway. Meanwhile **Upper West Liquors**, the company with the new SLA license at 2746 Broadway has posted a "coming soon" sign in the window. Kevin Krajick, one of the leaders in the successful effort to oust Papasito, reports that the landlord of that building is keeping other tenants, including the shoe repair shop, on month-to-month leases. He wonders whether the neighborhood can support so many liquor stores. There would be six between W. 107th and W. 98th Sts.

★ The former discount linens shop on the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 106th St. that is slated to become the second **7-Eleven** in our neighborhood is finally seeing some structural work, which will be followed by renovation on the ground floor, according to David Chkheidze of Massey Knakal, the real estate firm. No word on when the shop is expected to open.

★ The northwest corner restaurant space on W. 106th and Amsterdam Ave. has turned over again. The previous one, **Neighborhood**, is gone and, in its place, **The Ellington Bar and Kitchen** has opened (see review on page 4). The name honors jazz great Duke Ellington, who lived at W. 106th St. and Riverside Dr.

★ Renovation has been underway at the former location of **Zen Palate** on W. 105th St. just east of Broadway. The new occupant will be an Asian restaurant called **Pitaya** (that's another name for dragonfruit, a hot item according to the *New York Times* two years ago).

★ The small shop on the east side of Broadway between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts. called **101 Glass** is apparently closing. There is a "For Rent" sign in the window.

★ One of the few remaining unsheltered bus stops in our neighborhood, on the west side of Broadway at W. 97th St. in front of **Walgreens**, now has a shelter.

★ Six of the new, round bicycle racks have been installed in the parking lane on the west side of Broadway at W. 105th St. in front of **Henry's** restaurant.

★ **The Metro Bicycle Store**, on W. 96th St. just east of Broadway, is moving to W. 93rd and Columbus Ave. "to be nearer to the park."

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