

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2017

VOL.47, NO.1

Annual Block Party May 20th Please Come Out and Help

BLOCK PARTY? SPRING BAZAAR? YARD SALE? For the fourteenth consecutive year, the Block Association is pleased to present the very popular day of mingling, ogling, haggling, nosing, and savoring. It will be Sat., May 20th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on W. 103rd St. between West End Ave. and Riverside Dr. The rain date is Sun., May 21st.

The coordinator of the event is once again Bob Aaronson, a W. 103rd St. resident. If you have general questions after reading this article and visiting the Block Association website (w102-103blockassn.org), then call him at 212-662-4046 or email him at blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org. As you read about all of the various activities that take place at the Spring Bazaar, please consider volunteering to help them run smoothly. Whether you have only an hour to spare or would like to take on a bigger role, we badly need your help and can guarantee a lively time with neighbors!

We're planning on having:

Vendor Spaces: De-cluttering? Got valuable stuff to sell? Looking for trades or barter? Our vendors have what you need, and our buyers are looking for everything. If you want space, please go to the Block Association website and click on "2017 Yard Sale" for an application and detailed information. More than 1,000 people pass through the event, so it's a great

opportunity for vendors. If you have specific questions that aren't answered on the website please email Jane Hopkins at vendors@w102-103blockassn.org. Space is limited and vendors are already applying.

Live Music: Classical? Pop? Jazz? World? Would you like to present? Contact music@w102-103blockassn.org.

Split-Pot Raffle: Last year's winner took home almost \$1,000. We'll be selling raffle tickets in the weeks preceding the Block Party as well as the day of. Buy early and often!

Refreshments: To keep our visitors and vendors well fed we always offer a variety of refreshments, many of them homemade. It's an opportunity to share the goodies you make or

(Continued on page 5)

BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Regular Block Association meetings are held monthly, usually on the second Tuesday of every month at 8 p.m.

306 W. 102nd St.

March 21
(annual meeting, see right)

April 11

May 9

Annual Meeting Set for 3/21 Note New Venue

AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING THIS YEAR, scheduled for Tues., Mar. 21, the Block Association will provide a forum at which residents can engage with two influential people: Captain William Burke, the new commander of the 24th precinct, and Virl Andrick, President of Friends of Straus Park, who will speak about the history of this local gem and explain the challenges that face the organization. We'll also present information about issues of local concern such as the installation of the natural gas line on West End Ave., our consideration of curtailing the guard service (see page 9), our upcoming Earth Day Spring Planting event (see page 2), and the dedication of the bench we've sponsored in memory of Len and Cherie Tredanari.

As usual, we will also take care of some Block Association business matters, such as electing a Board of Directors, reviewing the events of the past year, and presenting the annual financial report. Attendees can also expect an impassioned call for volunteers, especially since one of our board members moved out of the area earlier this year, and two others will be stepping down after years of dedicated service. Please consider taking an active role in caring for our neighborhood and volunteer to serve.

Also, as we do each year, we will honor those who have lived in the

(Continued on page 3)

Join Us for Spring Planting Day

By MARK SCHNEIDERMAN

EARTH DAY is on April 22nd! Not entirely coincidentally, this will also be Block Association Spring Planting Day! Come beautify the neighborhood and help the health of our blocks' trees. All ages are welcome. Extra credit is available for those under 5 or over 95.

What: Spring Planting Day

When: Sat., Apr. 22nd,
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Collect your flowers, soil, and gear outside of 878 West End Ave.

Contact me at markschneiderman@yahoo.com in advance to volunteer or indicate your building's interest in having its tree wells planted. I'll reserve your favorite tree well for your planting pleasure. And having a good head count of how many tree wells we'll be planting will help us estimate how many plants and how much mulch and fertilizer to buy.

Your Help Is Wanted

WE HAVE TWO BIG EVENTS COMING UP and will need able bodies to lend their hands for both.

Our annual spring tree well cleanup and planting will take place on Apr. 22. Mark Schneiderman has agreed to coordinate it. If you can help out by volunteering to help transport plants from the nursery in New Jersey in advance, or to be on hand the day of the event, please contact him. See left for his contact information.

We're holding our annual Spring Bazaar on Sat., May 20. We'll need helpers to complete tasks in advance (publicity, raffle prize solicitation, selling raffle tickets in particular) and on the day of the event (setting up, staffing the refreshments table, cleaning up, selling raffle tickets, etc.). Contact event coordinator Bob Aaronson for specifics. See page 5 for contact information.

The West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association Newsletter

info@w102-103blockassn.org

Hedy Campbell, editor; Jacob Gross, associate editor; Brad Spear, designer. 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

Rafael Hernandez makes rounds Tuesday through Saturday; Roy Chavarriaga is on duty Sunday and Monday. Guards patrol weekdays from 6 p.m. until midnight and from 7 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.

Correction

Due to a communications glitch that occurred somewhere between our submission of a pdf file and our printer's publication of the Winter 2016 newsletter, a small capital E showed up in place of the number 5 a number of times on page 4 of the print edition. The corrected version is available in the newsletter archive at the Block Association website. Our apologies for any ensuing confusion.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE WEBSITE

Oh, What a Web We Weave

By CAITLIN HAWKE

IN ADDITION TO ALL THE BASICS about how to become a Block Association member or renew your membership, our website has lots more to offer. Click on w102-103blockassn.org and you will see a "Resources" tab along the horizontal navigation bar that runs across the top of the page. There you'll find information about some go-to neighborhood resources, like the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group, BAIp, the TriBloomingdale Initiative, and more. There's also the 2017 parking calendar for you alternate-side-of-the-streeters. And then there's the blog with features like "Hyper Local Eats" and a huge, growing album of historic photos of our streets. Go to the blog to see more and you can subscribe to receive the posts directly via email: w102-103blockassn.org/blog. Missed one of our quarterly newsletters? You'll also find a huge archive of past issues at the website and bios of our two dozen Residents of Long-Standing inductees.

Check out the Block Association website. You'll never miss a beat, since we're on the job 365 days a year.

BLOCK ASSOCIATION UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Meeting (see p. 1)

Tues., Mar. 21

Spring Tree Well

Cleanup

(see above left)

Sat., Apr. 22

Poetry Place (see p. 4)

Sat., Apr. 30

Spring Bazaar

Sat., May 20

(see p. 1)

Annual Meeting Set for 3/21

(Continued from page 1)

neighborhood for 50 years or more. As a step toward preserving their memories, each will be asked to agree to a short interview in advance of the meeting, and will be presented to the community at the meeting. Each honoree will receive a certificate acknowledging his or her contribution and a small gift. If you know anyone who qualifies, please contact Hedy Campbell at editor@w102-103blockassn.org or by phone at 212-865-8524.

Please note that the meeting will take place this year in the Riverside Lobby of 310 Riverside Dr. Because

the Marseilles senior residence community room, in which we are always graciously allowed to hold our meeting, will be undergoing renovation, we had to seek another space. Many thanks to the residents and management of the Marseilles for their years of support, and to the board, residents, and management of the Master Apartments for helping us out this year.

For more information about the Block Association, visit our website, w102-103blockassn.org or write to info@w102-103blockassn.org.

2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

By SUE MADERER, TREASURER

Your Block Association had an over \$5,000 decrease in total income. This was due to a drop in building contributions as well as a drop in yard sale income. We did get a number of new contributors (thank you all!!), but again I need to state that the total number of contributors compared to our population is low. We had a slight drop in expenses, with the security guard being our largest expense. The security guard expense will increase this year due to the implementation of a new minimum wage. Due to ad revenue our newsletter did not cost us anything (thank you Jane Hopkins). We showed a loss for the year of just over \$2,500.

Income	
Individual Contributions	\$22,115
Building Contributions	11,695
Spring Yard Sale	4,446
Newsletter Advertising	4,000
Other Income	492
Total Income	\$42,748
Expenses	
Security Guard	\$39,270
Printing	3,822
Dues & contributions	1,715
Operating Expenses	470
Total Expenses	\$45,277

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DAYCARE - OVERNIGHT

Meet Your Talented Neighbors

By JULIA C. SPRING

Our talented neighbors write books, play instruments, exhibit paintings, read poetry, produce plays, and sing in the spring.

LYNNE SAGALYN

Lynne, a professor at Columbia Business School, has recently published *Power at Ground Zero: Politics, Money, and the Remaking of Lower Manhattan* (Oxford University Press, 2016). Available at Amazon, the book's website is poweratgroundzero.com.

MARY JO PAGANO

The Chamber Music Center of New York, whose founder and artistic director is Mary Jo, will present a free concert by its young musicians on **Sat., Apr. 8, at 7:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary of St. Michael's Church (225 W. 99th St.). Works will include chamber music by Dvorak, Schumann, Mozart, Haydn, Vivaldi, and others. Visit chambermusiccenter.org for more information.

ANTHONY DECURTIS

The Soundtrack of Our Lives will open the 2017 Tribeca Film Festival on **Wed., Apr. 19** at Radio City Music Hall. *Soundtrack* is a documentary about the life of music executive Clive Davis, based on his bestselling autobiography co-written by Anthony — who also appears in the film! The screening will be followed by a concert featuring Aretha Franklin, Earth Wind & Fire, and Jennifer Hudson. For more information go to tribecafilm.com/stories/clive-davis-the-soundtrack-of-our-lives-tribeca-opening.

KATYA & JOHN REDPATH

Following in the spirit of January's fun and successful evening of disident songs, sisters Sasha and Katya Chavchavadze offer another musical salon of songs from around the world, with special guests and group singing encouraged. This will be at Katya and John's apartment (300 Riverside Dr.,

Apt. 2A), **Thur., Apr. 20, from 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.** Seating in their living room is limited so RSVP to 646-682-9235 or katyaredpath@mac.com.

MILDRED SPEISER

The 19th Annual Poetry Event sponsored by the Riverside Park Conservancy will be held at "Poetry Place" (Franklin Latner's bench on the island between lanes of Riverside Dr. at W. 103rd St.) on **Sun., Apr. 30, at 2 p.m.** (if it's raining, in the lobby of 310 Riverside Dr., also at W. 103rd St.). The event and the bench are in memory of Franklin Latner, a neighborhood resident and poet. Come with a poem to share and/or listen to others' readings. Bring a chair or blanket to sit on if you wish.

ELIZA LANSDALE, MIMI DAITZ & BARBARA MORGAN

On **Sat., May 6, at 8 p.m.**, at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, the Riverside Choral Society will perform Schubert's powerful Mass in E Flat and Brahms' Alto Rhapsody. Tickets, ranging from \$25 to \$100, are available at riversidechoral.org/upcoming.

ANTHONY BELLOV & DAYLE VANDER SANDE

The Bond Street Euterpean Singing Society, which Anthony and Dayle founded, will present *Oh Promise Me: 19th Century Songs of Love and Marriage* in the period grand double parlor of the Merchant's House Museum (29 E. 4th St.) on **Saturday, May 6, at 7:30 p.m.** Performances sell out so reserve rickets by calling 212-777-1089 (ext. 303) or visiting merchantshouse.org.

TISA CHANG

The Pan Asian Repertory Theatre will present the New York premiere of *Acquittal* from **Mon., Jun. 5 through Sun., Jun. 25** at the Studio Theatre at Theatre Row (410 W. 42nd St.). Translated from the Urdu, Shahid Nadeem's play focuses on four women

imprisoned under stringent Pakistani Islamization laws in the 1980's and is based on the playwright's own incarceration at that time. Call 212-868-4030 or e-mail info@panasianrep.org for information about times and possible group or individual discounts.

NADJA HANSEN

Nadja has recently launched Art Explorations, a business providing personally curated gallery and museum tours for families, adults, and groups. These tours are designed around your personal interest, whether it be a specific collection, special exhibition, or a theme of your choosing. Private tours of temporary exhibitions she is offering this spring include the Emily Dickinson exhibit at the Morgan, Marsden Hartley's paintings of Maine at the Met Breuer, the Whitney Biennial and its exhibit of portraits, and the Frieze New York Art Fair. If you do not find what interests you on her website (nadjahansen.com) contact her at nadjahansennyc@gmail.com.

Do you have an upcoming publication, release, concert, exhibition or other arts event, physical or virtual? Let me know. Send questions or notices for inclusion in the Summer 2017 newsletter (or beyond) to creative@w102-103blockassn.org. Do it today, before you forget!

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Annual Block Party May 20th

Please Come Out and Help

(Continued from page 1)

bake. If you (and a friend?) would be willing to coordinate the refreshments table, put in an hour or two serving at it, have resources or ideas, or want to donate, contact either bakesale@w102-103blockassn.org or food@w102-103blockassn.org.

Fun Family Activities: Do you have a skill to show off? Face painting, caricature drawing, poem writing, just to name a few? It's all part of the atmosphere. Let us know what you'd like to do by contacting yardsale@w102-103blockassn.org.

Recycling and Rummage Sales: We'd like to continue these activities but need help in organizing them. If you can help out, please contact yard-sale@w102-103blockassn.org. Then we can accept textiles (used clothing, curtains, linens, throw rugs, etc.) for recycling and provide information on recycling options. Electronics recycling is now the responsibility of building managers and owners, but if you want or need extra help, let us know by contacting ewaste@w102-103blockassn.org.

As you can see, we need all sorts of volunteers to make the day successful. In addition, we'll also need able hands to distribute flyers, coordinate publicity, and help with set up and clean up. Give us an hour or two of your time and we'll give you all the appreciation you could want and the sense of well-being that can only be gained from contributing to one's community. It's also a great way for teenagers to get a taste of community service, perhaps earning needed hours for school. To sign up, email Bob Aaronson at YARD-SALE@W102-103BLOCKASSN.ORG or call him at 212-662-4046.

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Active, Acting, and Aging in Place: BAiP's Blooming Stage Players

By CAITLIN HAWKE

THREE YEARS AGO the Blooming Stage Players, a play-reading troupe, was founded within BAiP by two Block Association members, Ozzie Alfonso and Janet Doeden Hansen. It was BAiP's 16th activity group and now sits alongside 63 other activity groups currently ongoing all around our neighborhood and led by volunteers. Each BAiP group has a special bond, but members of the Blooming Stage Players became a family after taking a play they had read and presenting it in a staged reading for the BAiP community. Since that first play two years ago, their zest and appeal has grown.

Once a play is selected for a community reading, the group's bimonthly meetings become intense rehearsals requiring the "actors" to gather several times a week to rehearse the chosen play. The goal is to work on one to two community readings each year, and there is no shortness of enthusiasm in the group for becoming stage actors. The process of meeting regularly and reading plays has been a formative one for the group. But the focus of readying a staged reading, getting the lines and movements into muscle memory, and working in an ensemble has a singular effect of soldering this community of theater lovers together.

Seasoned professionals from the theater, radio, and television world, Ozzie and Janet have taken turns directing and producing. Their most recent success was a progressive, feminist play within a play by British writer Tony Layton

entitled "*The Ladybirds*." The synopsis of the play begins, forlornly, "The village drama group has lost all their men. The future looks bleak..." Blooming Stage Players knows the feeling well! Their first staged reading, directed by Ozzie with Janet producing, was retitled "12 Angry Women" for lack of male actors. And it was a huge crowd-pleaser with standing room only at the Bloomingdale branch of the New York Public Library, a greatly valued partner in this endeavor.

The Blooming Stage Players would welcome any men out there who would like to try out for future readings or join in this group. So, Bloomingdale men of a certain age, if you are interested, we are saving a spot for you in this troupe! Email BAiP's activities leaders, Caitlin Hawke and Phyllis Sperling, to learn more: activities@bloominplace.org.

With 64 ongoing groups of all kinds, Bloomingdale Aging in Place has something for everyone. Check out our website, bloominplace.org, and become a member today!

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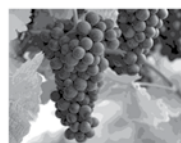
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Development to Our North Raises Concerns

SOME TIME AGO, we became aware of a proposed development by West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing (WSFSSH) on the north side of W. 108th St. between Amsterdam and Columbus Aves. Three existing parking garages, whose rates are about half the cost of other lots in the neighborhood, and a homeless shelter that stand on city-owned land would be demolished to build an 11-story complex of 250 low-income housing units and 110 beds of transitional housing. Although the location isn't part of our immediate territory, the project is likely to have an impact on our blocks in several ways, as was described to us at a recent board meeting by representatives of Save Manhattan Valley (SMV), an organization that was established to encourage dialogue between the developer and the community while the project is still in its planning stages.

Although all were in agreement that adding affordable housing units to the neighborhood would be a good thing, increased traffic and consequent safety concerns; potentially negative impact on M.S. 54, the middle school across the street from the site; the zoning variance that the proposed 11-story tower requires (existing zoning limits construction to seven stories); the environmental impact; and the permanent loss of 800 parking spaces in the neighborhood were compelling areas of concern.

In response to the community's concern about losing affordable parking, WSFSSH said it would wait at least five years to develop one garage, which has 90 spaces, and work with a parking planner to potentially increase the capacity to 125. The development's website also states they are "continuing to explore possible ways to incorporate some amount of parking into the development, if funding can be identified."

A study commissioned by the city explored the possibility of subterranean parking under the development, but

found it would cost \$17 million and create only 118 spots, unless much more money were spent to excavate the ground below.

The Block Association has written a letter supporting SMV's goals of requiring community input and an environmental impact study in the planning of this development. If you would like to contact SMV, which is circulating a petition in opposition to the project and has retained legal counsel, visit the organization's website or Facebook page. Or you can email info@SaveManhattanValley.org.

You can also visit the development's website at wsfsshatwest108.org.

It's Easy Being Green!

Turn Food Scraps into Compost

We know that many of our residents are already committed composters. Bravo to each and every one of you! But for those of you who haven't jumped on the bandwagon, here is some information that you'll find will make it easier than ever to repurpose much of your daily trash, reducing landfill and creating nutrients for plants. Thanks to ardent composter Laura Hanrahan for providing much of the information.

An internet search using the term "countertop compost bin" yields over 300,000 results! Clearly, there are plenty to choose from ranging from utilitarian, inexpensive plastic, to retro steel bucket to sleekly-styled bamboo. If you'd rather go all the way with repurposing, you can instead use a quart-size yogurt container or the like. Line it with one of the plastic bags in which you brought your produce home, and put the lid back on. When the bag is full, remove it and store it in the freezer until you're ready to make a delivery. Replace the bag and start all over again.

There are two nearby Greenmarkets that will accept compost donations: The

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212 866 3016

one on W. 97th St. between Amsterdam and Columbus Aves. (Fri. 8 a.m.-2 p.m.) and the one on Broadway between W. 114th and W. 115th Sts. (Thurs., 8 a.m.-3 p.m.; Sun., 8 a.m.-1 p.m.). Most other Greenmarkets accept scraps as well. The GrowNYC website lists all of the locations.

We've covered the why, how, and where of composting. The only remaining mystery is what kinds of scraps can be collected and donated. According to GrowNYC, "Accepted materials include fruit and vegetable scraps, non-greasy food scraps (rice, pasta, bread, cereal etc.), coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, egg and nut shells, pits, cut or dried flowers, houseplants and potting soil. [Please, NO: meat, chicken, fish, greasy food scraps, fat, oil, dairy, animal waste, litter or bedding, coal or charcoal, coconuts, diseased and/or insect-infested houseplants/soil or biodegradable/compostable plastics.]

Give it a try and see if you can fit composting into your routine. If you're shopping at a Greenmarket anyway, it's not even an extra trip. And if you become a regular and are offered a bag of compost in return for your donations, say yes and make a gift of it to your favorite gardener!

Changes Coming to the Broadway Malls

By JACOB GROSS

THE MEDIANS THAT RUN ALONG Broadway separating northbound and southbound traffic, sometimes hosting public art or greenery, are so ubiquitous that they are easy to overlook. Just what are they called, anyway? Are they dividers? Islands? Plazas?

Actually, they are called malls, specifically the Broadway Malls. They fall under the auspices of the city's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and are maintained by the Broadway Mall Association. And now the mall abutting our block, on Broadway between W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts., as well as the mall between W. 103rd and W. 104th Sts., is slated for renovation.

DPR plans to improve the malls' borders and fencing; improve greenery by restoring the soil, renovating existing planters, and installing new ones; add seating; and improve accessibility with new pedestrian ramps. Plans for our mall specifically include increasing the area devoted to public art installations.

At a January general meeting of our local Community Board 7, the board's 40 members voted unanimously to approve the project. In February, the city's Public Design Commission also voiced approval. The total cost to renovate the two malls will be about \$550,000 in public funds, allocated by our local city councilmembers. As exciting as the project sounds, remember that change takes time: the bidding process for contractors will likely not begin until this fall, and construction will probably start sometime next year.

For more information on the Broadway Malls, visit the Broadway Mall Association website at broadwaymall.org.

On Broadway

By KERSTIN HASENPUSCH AND JACOB GROSS

★ **Toast**, the French restaurant on the northwest corner of Broadway and W. 105th St., has closed. Their other location, on the west side of Broadway just south of 125th St., is still open.

★ **Eve & Nico**, the international arts and crafts store on the east side of Broadway between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts., has closed. You can still purchase their products online at eveandnico.com, or at their store on 7 N. Dean St. in Englewood, New Jersey.

★ **Mama's Pizzeria** will soon open **Mama's Too** on the east side of Broadway between W. 105th and W. 106th Sts.

★ **Effy Hair Boutique** has opened on the east side of Broadway between W. 107th and W. 108th Sts., in the space formerly occupied by Keratinbar. Effy, the shop's namesake stylist, previously worked a couple of blocks south at Blondi's Hair Salon.

★ Signs at the former site of Tara Hill Tavern, on the southeast corner of W. 108th St. and Broadway, are advertising that a **Chinese restaurant** will be opening. The name is not known at this time, although the signs say the restaurant will specialize in "dry pot," a Chinese cuisine in which all food is served in sauce in a communal pot.

★ **Szechuan Garden**, the Chinese restaurant at the southwest corner of Broadway and W. 98th St., has closed.

★ We reported in the last issue that an unknown grocery store will open in the former site of D'Agostino, on the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 110th St. According to preliminary reports, the store will be a branch of **H Mart**, a chain of groceries that specializes in Korean and other Asian food.

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By DAYLE VANDER SANDE



THE DAYS ARE BRIGHTENING, the robins are reappearing in the parks, the thaw is washing away the grit of winter's detritus down the gutters, and what starts to enter our minds as the equinox nears? Spring cleaning! We open the closet and plug in the threadbare wire of the old vacuum, and sputter, sputter — the machine is kaput! We live in an age that promotes disposable consumerism, but you think, "It worked perfectly just last week!" How can you know for sure whether to ditch it or fix it?

We are fortunate to have the answer just a few blocks to our north at Crown Sales and Services, on the east side of Broadway between W. 107th and W. 108th Sts. A crown jewel of the neighborhood for being an old timey shop rarely found anywhere in the 21st century, Crown specializes in machine repair of old and new machines of various kinds, from vacuums to sewing

machines to electronic appliances such as your VCR, DVD player, TV, stereo, or computer.

As we well know that technology changes faster than it takes us to rewind the vacuum cord, we can rest assured that, in the 50 years they've been in business, the guys at Crown have tinkered with it all. Started in 1968 by George, who began as a repairman and manager of a Singer Sewing Machine dealer across from Crown's present location, the store fulfilled his promise to "chase them out." Only one year after George opened his store, Singer closed its doors. Meanwhile, Crown Services became the place to go for household appliance upkeep, and remains so today. Over the years, George's reputation has extended to great New York institutions such as the costume shops of Broadway theaters, Fashion Week, Columbia University, St. John the Divine, St.

Patrick's Cathedral, hotels, and the like for industrial needs as well.

A step past the threshold into the store and you will be stunned to see floor-to-ceiling shelves of sewing machines ranging from antiques (even one dating



from the year 1900) and vacuums of every age, shape, size, and nozzle, to the latest

models available for sale. Crown is an authorized dealer of top name brands — Elna and Janome sewing machines and Miele vacuums head the list of "better" toys.

Do you need an old heirloom floor lamp rewired? Go to Crown. Can't part with your record player (I hear vinyl is back!) but it plays 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ at 29 $\frac{1}{4}$? Call Crown. Speakers have started to buzz? The doctor is in six days a week, and with multiple people on staff (George still works Tuesdays and Thursdays), their combined expertise covers a wide array of paraphernalia. Just ask!

Crown's longtime success depends on telling customers the truth of their diagnosis. If something is not worth fixing or cannot be repaired, they will be upfront with you. Can't bring it in? They could come to you! If you just need a part or a vacuum bag, you surely know where to find it. Crown also has a notary public! This is the personalized variety service our neighborhood has come to expect from family-owned Crown for five decades and counting for your spring cleaning and so much more any time of year.

Crown Sales and Service, 2792 Broadway, 212-663-8968 or 212-663-9325; hours: Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m. to 6 pm; Sat., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; crownsalesandservice.com.



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Ramen Strong

By KATE MCLEOD

NARUTO RAMEN, which has several restaurants including one on Broadway at W. 100th St., has been here for about two years. Why we never noticed it? Who can tell?

My companion and I took out two delicious ramen meals and an edamame appetizer. The Tan Tan Ramen has a meaty, spicy broth with bean sprouts, scallion bok choy, fish cake, minced pork, and “homemade” chili oil. It’s hard to determine how the “homemade” aspect of the chili oil makes it unique because it is already mixed into the broth. The good thing is that the restaurant will temper the heat upon request.

This soup is slight on filling ingredients, but Naruto has toppings. For a



small price, you can add egg, kimchi, roasted pork, or chicken breast. The toppings cost \$1-\$3. And just as a general note, the noodles are delicious.

My companion ordered the Chicken Cutlet Curry Ramen. The warming curry flavor dominates this filling dish. A crispy chicken cutlet was sliced into manageable portions atop noodles mixed with broccoli, a boiled egg, fish cake, corn, scallions, and bean sprouts.

Platters are available with chicken, teriyaki-style or curried. There are a couple of salads, kale and daikon radish, as well as a steamed chicken appetizer with dipping sauce. The edamame were delicious and I am anxious to try Naruto’s gyoza, Kurobuta sausage made with Berkshire pork, pickled vegetables, and anchovy egg.

Prices range from \$11-\$16 on the regular menu. A lunch special that includes an appetizer, ramen, and beverage is served from noon to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday.

You can eat there at the bar or sit at one of a few tables. For a long narrow space it is surprisingly pleasant — modern, bright, red, and artsy. Beer and wine as well as soft drinks are available.

All in all, considering our busy, busy lives, this is a sensible delicious meal at a very good price that is filling and easy on the wallet.

Naruto Ramen is located at 2634 Broadway between W. 100th and W. 99th Sts.; telephone 212-222-0229; narutoramenex.com. The restaurant is open Sun. through Thur. 12:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.; Fri. and Sat. 12:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. Delivery is available. The restaurant does not take reservations. Major credit cards accepted.

Increase in Wages Causes Decrease in Guarding We Ask You to Weigh In

THE BLOCK ASSOCIATION is facing a dilemma and needs your input in order to make the necessary decisions. Following New York State’s recent minimum wage hike, the service that provides our security guards felt it was necessary to pass along to us the additional costs that would result from the higher hourly rates. Although we certainly support higher wages for the workers who provide the service, it was immediately clear that the increase will break our budget.

Right away we took two steps to help reduce the predicted deficit: we negotiated a small but significant reduction in the increase with the guard service company, and we shaved an hour off of each of the nightly guard shifts. Combined, the two money-saving measures will help us just barely break even this year.

The challenge has prompted the Board of Directors to open a serious discussion of whether to continue

the guard service, a question we have addressed periodically in the past. We’ve always concluded that since we were making ends meet, we should stick with it. We believe that having guard service contributes to the safety of residents, discourages vandalism, and adds to real-estate values in the neighborhood.

However, our board has been steadily shrinking lately, and overall fewer and fewer volunteers step up to help with events. Reduced monetary contributions from both residents and co-op boards mean an additional shortfall for which we will need to compensate. All in all, it’s clear that the effort to raise nearly \$50,000 a year in order to maintain the guard service presents a mighty challenge to an already over-subscribed handful of dedicated volunteers.

So we ask you to weigh in:

- Do you think that the guard service is of value?

- Would you be willing to become a contributor in order to preserve guard service?
- If you already contribute, would you be open to making a larger contribution in order to preserve guard service?
- Do you think your board or landlord would be open to making a larger contribution?

Even if we opt to curtail the guard service, the Block Association isn’t going anywhere. We will continue to focus our efforts on plantings, community events (Halloween parade, Solstice caroling, annual meeting, spring bazaar), and maintaining relationships with other organizations and our political representatives.

We don’t want to make this decision in a vacuum: we need to hear from you so we can determine how best to move forward. Send email to info@w102-103blockassn.org.

