

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018

VOL.48, NO. 1

## Block Party, May 19 Volunteers Needed!

IT'S NEARLY TIME for the annual W. 102nd-103rd Streets Block Party (a.k.a. the Yard Sale or the Spring Bazaar)! For the fifteenth consecutive year, the Block Association is pleased to present the very popular day of mingling, haggling, noshing, and savoring. It will be open to all on Sat., May 19, 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 20.)

The coordinator of the event is, once again, Bob Aaronson, a W. 103rd St. resident. As you read about all of the various activities that take place at the Block Party, please consider volunteering to help make this event a success. 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 barterers? Our buyers are looking for everything, and more than 1,000 people pass through the event. To reserve a vendor space, go to the Block Association website ([w102-103blockassn.org](http://w102-103blockassn.org)) and click on "Block Party" for detailed information and the vendor agreement form. If you have specific questions that aren't answered on the website, email Jane Hopkins at [vendors@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:vendors@w102-103blockassn.org). Space is limited and vendors are already applying.
- **Fun Family Activities:** Do you have a skill to show off? We could use face-painters, caricaturists, jugglers, magicians, just to name a few. It's all part of the atmosphere. Let us know what you'd like to see and/or do. Contact [blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org)
- **Live Music:** Classical? Pop? Jazz? World? Would you like to perform? Contact [music@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:music@w102-103blockassn.org)
- **Split-Pot Raffle:** Last year's winner took home almost \$600. 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

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## Block Association Annual Meeting to Address Small-Business Crisis

THE BLOCK ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING will be held Thurs., Mar. 22, at 7 p.m. in the Riverside lobby of 310 Riverside (The Master). All are welcome to attend. This year, in response to the many concerns we have heard from you, we will have community leaders from Gale Brewer's and Danny O'Donnell's offices address the issue of the many commercial vacancies in our neighborhood and how to save the mom-and-pop stores on Broadway from vanishing altogether. Two local stores will be represented: Silver Moon and Best Copy.

### Also on the agenda:

Local neighborhood police coordinators will stop in to introduce themselves. A member of the 24th Precinct auxiliary police will be on hand to describe the force's role in the community and to take questions.

We will present the Block Association's annual report, highlighting our accomplishments of the last year.

The Board of Directors will be nominated and approved, and a call will be made for volunteers to join us, especially as an existing board member has chosen to step down this year, leaving us short-handed. We also use the opportunity to answer whatever questions you may have about the neighborhood or the organization.

As we do each year, we will honor those who have lived in the neighborhood for 50 years or more. See page 2. If you know anyone who qualifies, please contact us at [editor@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:editor@w102-103blockassn.org) or (212) 865-8524.

For more information about the Annual Meeting, please email [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org).

## Spring Planting Day Saturday, April 21

COME JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS to beautify, protect, and care for our beloved neighborhood trees. The Block Association will supply fresh soil, mulch, and lots of flowers.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

## Spring Planting Day Saturday, April 21

We will meet in front of 878 West End Ave. at 10:30 a.m., and will go until we run out (probably around 12:30). Kids are welcome!

This year, rather than stage all of the heavy bags of mulch in front of 878 West End, we are going to place the bags next to the tree wells that will be planted. All other gardening materials and the flowers will still be in front of 878.

Need more info? Email: [trees@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:trees@w102-103blockassn.org)

## 2017 Financial Report

By KOMAL RATHI, CO-TREASURER

**YOUR BLOCK ASSOCIATION** earned slightly less than \$3,000 in total income compared to 2016. This is due to a decline in both building contributions and income from our spring Block Party. Individual contributions increased by \$1,800 (thank you to existing and new members for your generosity). The basic cost of our guard service increased significantly because of the minimum-wage hike, but we reduced the hours of the security guard by one hour per shift and cut one shift, which together account for just over half of our \$2,900 reduction in expenses in that area (see page 8). Due to advertising revenue, our newsletter did not cost us anything (thank you, Jane Hopkins!). We showed a loss for the year of just over \$2,700.

### Income

Individual Contributions	\$23,960.48
Building Contributions	8,735.00
Newsletter Ads	4,005.00
Events	2,946.31
Total Income	39,646.79

### Expenses

Security Guard	\$37,170.97
Newsletter Production	3,347.29
Event Expense	931.92
Operating Expense	251.64
Contributions and Dues	675.00
Total Expense	42,376.82



## Galling All Old-Timers

**DID YOU KNOW** that the Block Association operates a Neighborhood Hall of Fame for residents of long standing? It's true! We launched it in 2010 and are proud to have initiated 27 people so far. All you have to do to qualify is to have lived within Block Association territory for 50 years or more. What's the territory? W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts. between Riverside Dr. and Broadway, including the south corners of W. 102nd and the north corners of W. 103rd and the buildings on West End Ave. in between.

Participants are interviewed and, if they don't mind, photographed (thanks, neighbor Gus Butera). Then they're introduced at our upcoming Annual Meeting (Mar. 22 at 7 p.m.), and presented with a certificate and small gift. Attendance at the meeting is not required. After the meeting, their bios and photos will be posted on our website. Click on the "Neighborhood Hall of Fame" tab on our website to read past inductees' bios and see their portraits.

If you qualify, or know someone you think might, please contact Hedy Campbell at [editor@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:editor@w102-103blockassn.org) or (212) 865-8524.

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

[info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org)

Hedy Campbell, editor; Amy Edelman, 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:email@w102-103blockassn.org).

### GUARD SCHEDULE

Our security guard makes rounds Monday through Thursday from 6 p.m. until midnight, and on Friday and Saturday from 7 p.m. until 1 a.m. To report neighborhood security issues to the guard or to request his assistance, call the office of Starr Security at (212) 767-1110.

### BLOCK ASSOCIATION UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Annual Meeting

310 Riverside Dr.

Thurs., Mar. 22, 7 p.m.

(see p. 1)

#### Monthly Board Meetings

306 W. 102nd St., 8 p.m.

Apr. 10

May 8

#### Spring Tree-Well Cleanup

Sat. Apr. 21, 10:30 a.m.

(see p. 1)

#### Yard Sale

Sat. May 19, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

(see p. 1)

# What's New at the Website

By CAITLIN HAWKE

**Y**OU'VE READ MANY TIMES here how there is additional information available on the Block Association's website. But did you know that there are more than 250 blog posts, covering all manner of neighborhood news? There are stories of things merely seen in the neighborhood, quirky and otherwise. There are posts of historical pictures in the Throwback Thursday section. There are restaurant highlights. And there are treasures from the vaults of this newsletter's print archive.

Recently, I have been writing a miniseries about empty storefronts. This has led to a handful of interviews that readers of the newsletter might enjoy. Click on the blog tab on our home page — *w102-103blockassn*.

*org* — and scroll down to see a recent interview with filmmaker Christopher Ming Ryan, who grew up in our neighborhood and was moved to record the last day at Joon's fish market. There's also a long interview with Silver Moon proprietor Judith Norell about the experience of owning a business on Broadway. You'll see an exchange with author Dan Wakin, who has just published a book about the historical characters who inhabited the row of seven townhouses on Riverside between 105th and 106th streets.

And for those of you who wonder how this newsletter comes together four times a year like clockwork, you'll enjoy reading my interview with long-time editor Hedy Campbell.

In one way or another, Hedy has been involved with the publication for almost 30 years. When she started working on it, it was a single, legal-size sheet that she generated monthly on a typewriter. Now that it's grown to a 10-page quarterly, she assigns articles

to a crew of about a dozen reporters, each with a specific area of interest. Once articles are submitted, the work to edit and otherwise ready them for the graphic designer begins. She's happy to have been able to recruit some new members to the team: For the last couple of years, Brad Spear has designed the publication, artfully shoehorning the ads (ably sold and managed by Jane Hopkins) and articles into the layouts and tweaking the look of the newsletter. In the last year or so, Jacob Gross had been assisting with the editing and proofreading, but with his move on to grad school, Amy Edelman has taken over that position.

Read more about Hedy Campbell, her role with the Block Association, and her life in the neighborhood in the Block Association blog. And make sure to subscribe to the blog so that you don't miss a post. Three months is a long time to wait for news, especially when life around us is moving at the pace of a New York minute.

## Dark, Dark, Go Away! By HEDY CAMPBELL

**E**ACH YEAR, WHEN THE CROWD starts to gather for our annual solstice caroling event, then grows and grows and grows some more, I stop to think about what makes this particular event so popular. Is it the singing? Clearly there are many in the crowd who relish the opportunity to raise their voices in song. Is it the sense of tradition? Could be. People celebrated the solstice with song long before it became known as a Christmastime event. Is it the idea of a roving party at which you get to truck out silly hats and festive scarves and see dear friends and neighbors year after year?

Perfect weather again this year might have helped account for the enormous crowd. It was cold enough to feel like winter, but not enough to deter people. Under the very able and experienced guidance of Anthony Bello and Dayle Vander Sande (thank you both!), and with a surprise escort provided by the NYPD 24th Precinct auxiliary police officers (thank you, coordinator Joan Martinez!), we blessed each block with "Dona Nobis Pacem." We wended our way up and down our blocks, making our usual penultimate stop at 300 Riverside, where we serenaded residents with our enthusiastic rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" in three-part harmony.

Our final stop in front of 305 Riverside positioned the group perfectly for retreat into the warmth of the Master Apartments' Riverside lobby, where the co-op board graciously allowed us to serve refreshments.. Thanks to them and to the staff for always providing us with everything we need. Other thanks go to David Reich, who always lends us his hot plate, a critical piece of equipment, and to Mildred Speiser and Nancy Wight, who always help with refreshments.

The next winter solstice takes place at 5:23 p.m. on Fri., Dec. 21. By the time we gather at 7 p.m., the days will already be growing longer! See you then!

## Help Wanted

**O**UR ABUNDANT GRATITUDE to our two newest volunteers! Howard Tedoff is learning the ropes in anticipation of taking over one of the two co-treasurer positions, and Amy Edelman has already taken on the lion's share of the work editing the newsletter.

Looking ahead, we anticipate needing people to help with our annual Block Party on May 19 (see page 1). Posts that particularly need to be filled are:

- **Publicity Coordinator:** Send email notifications to media outlets with community calendars and to the administrators of neighborhood email lists; coordinate volunteers to post flyers on bulletin boards in local building lobbies.
- **Refreshments Manager:** Our usual person can't be on-site the day of the event but will set you up with everything you need.
- **Cleanup Squad:** Even just two or three able bodies will make the tail end of the day much easier for those who have been on-site since the morning.

# Meet Your Talented Neighbors

By JULIA C. SPRING

**W**INTER'S OVER, no matter what Punxsutawney Phil says, so here are events — mostly music but also drama, ballet, and poetry — for us to enjoy in the springtime.

## THOMAS SAUER

A member of the music faculty at Vassar College, Thomas will be giving a piano recital including the music of Chopin, Henze, and Beethoven on **Fri., Mar. 23, 8 p.m.**, at The New School (66 W. 12th St.). Admission is free.

## MARK STEINBERG and SERENA CANIN

Mark and Serena are the violinists of the Brentano String Quartet, which will be performing a free concert at Advent Lutheran Church, 2504 Broadway (93rd St.), on **Mon., Mar. 26, 7:30 p.m.** Works by Gesualdo, Hartke, and Beethoven are included.

## RICHARD WILSON

Also on **Mon., Mar. 26, 8 p.m.**, composer/pianist Richard will be featured in a recital at the Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St.. The program consists of twelve mazurkas by Chopin as well as Richard's recent composition "Mimesis."

If you miss him in March, Richard will perform his own piano solos and chamber music on **Tues., May 15, 8 p.m.**, also at the Kosciuszko Foundation. Tickets for each performance are \$20 cash at the door.

## CHARLES WUORINEN

Charles's 80th birthday will be celebrated by the Da Capo Chamber Players at Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., **Thurs., Apr. 12, 8 p.m.** ([dacapochamberplayers.org](http://dacapochamberplayers.org)). Tickets are \$20 (\$10 students/seniors). The American premiere of his opera *Brokeback Mountain* (librettist Annie Proulx) will be performed by the New York City Opera, **Thurs., May 31, through Mon., June 4**, in Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater, 10 Columbus Circle. <https://nycopera.com/brokeback-mountain>.

## MARY JO PAGANO

The Chamber Music Center of New York will present a free concert on **Sat., Apr. 14, 7 p.m.**, at St. Michael's Church Sanctuary (entrance on Amsterdam between 99th and 100th). It will offer chamber works by Mendelssohn, Prokofiev, Mozart, and other composers performed by the young, talented musicians of the Chamber Music Center, of which Mary Jo is artistic director.

## BAIP PLAY-READING GROUP

This activity group plans to present its annual stage reading on **Sat., Apr. 28, 2 p.m.**, at the Bloomingdale branch of the New York Public Library, 150 W. 100th St. The program will include two one-act English contemporary comedies; admission is free. Check [activities@bloominplace.org](mailto:activities@bloominplace.org) just in case the schedule is changed.

## MILDRED SPEISER

On **Sun., Apr. 29, 2 p.m.**, the annual Poetry Event, organized by Mildred and sponsored by the Riverside Park Conservancy, will be held at Poetry Place (the benches on the island between upper and lower Riverside

at 103rd). If it is raining, it will move to the lobby of 310 Riverside Dr. (also at 103rd). The event is in memory of Franklin Latner, neighborhood resident and poet. Come with a poem to share and/or listen to others.

## ELIZA LANSDALE and BARBARA E. MORGAN

Eliza and Barbara are sopranos with the Riverside Choral Society, whose next concert will be on **Sat., May 12, 8 p.m.**, at Church of the Holy Trinity, 213 W. 82nd St. Ninety singers and the Society's Wind Ensemble will perform Bruckner's Mass in E Minor and motets by Bruckner, Brahms, and Hugo Wolf. Tickets start at \$25 and are available for purchase on the choral society's website ([riversidechoral.org](http://riversidechoral.org)).

## ANTHONY BELLOV and DAYLE VANDER SANDE

Leaders of our neighborhood solstice caroling and co-founders of the Bond Street Euterpean Singing Society, Dayle and Anthony will be singing with the society at the Merchant's House Museum (29 E. 4th St.) on the evening of **Sat., May 12**. The program of 19th century art and popular songs, Oh Promise Me — Songs of Love and Marriage, will be performed in the museum's magnificent 1832 double parlors. It coincides with an exhibit of wedding gowns and other memorabilia from the family who lived in the house for almost a century. Visit [www.merchantshouse.org](http://www.merchantshouse.org) for exact time and tickets; reservations needed.

## BRETT GOLD

Brett's debut big-band recording, *Dreaming Big*, whose release was announced in our Summer 2017 issue, has received excellent reviews. Cuts have been played on many radio stations internationally, and it has been high on several "Best of 2017" jazz lists. Information and to purchase: [www.brettgoldnyjo.com](http://www.brettgoldnyjo.com)

(Continued on page 5)

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(Continued from page 4)

### BLOOMINGDALE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

You can always check out its website ([www.bsmny.org](http://www.bsmny.org)) for frequent and free concerts. There's one on **Fri., June 1, 8 p.m.**, in David Greer Recital Hall, 323 W. 108th St. — A Jazz Tribute to Leonard Bernstein, featuring the jazz trio of faculty member Zach Lapidus.

*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 2018 newsletter (or beyond) to [creative@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:creative@w102-103blockassn.org). Do it today, before you forget!*



(Continued from page 1)

## Block Party, May 19

make or bake. We have a coordinator who will get all the ducks in a row in advance but can't be present that day. If you (and a friend?) would be willing to be in charge on the actual day, or to put in an hour or two staffing it, or are willing to donate, contact [food@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:food@w102-103blockassn.org)

- **Publicity:** We'd love to have someone in charge of getting the event on community calendars, neighborhood email lists, etc. It's a great job for someone who's got time in advance of the event and is handy on a computer. We can provide a flyer and even make a quantity of copies, but could use a hand posting them on neighborhood building bulletin boards.
- **Recycling:** We'd like to continue offering textile recycling (used clothing, curtains, linens, throw rugs), but need someone to be in charge of it.
- **Setup and Cleanup:** There's a lot to do at the start of the day and again at the end. Extra hands are a big help.



As you can see, we need all sorts of volunteers to make the day successful. 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 the gratifications of volunteerism, perhaps earning needed community service hours for school in the bargain.

To volunteer, email Bob Aaronson at [blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:blockparty@w102-103blockassn.org) or call him at (212) 662-4046.

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# BAiP Harnesses the Power of Knowledge

By CAITLIN HAWKE

**WHEN BLOOMINGDALE AGING IN PLACE (BAiP)** came into existence nearly nine years ago, it was anchored in three core pursuits, all to keep older adults connected and safe in this community: establishing a network of neighbors assisting neighbors who need a helping hand; offering social activities for adults of any age; and disseminating information and resources about aging-related issues.

BAiP's Panels Committee is in charge of the third initiative, hosting informational sessions six or seven times a year so that neighbors of any age can be well armed to deal with concerns around housing, health care, technology, safety, and much more.

Chaired by neighbor Dorothy Crouch, the Panels Committee currently includes Judy Pietrasiewicz (who, for a number of years, served as co-chair), Lani Sanjek, Lo-Yi Chan, Lydia Dufour, Roses Katz, Bonnie Mairs, Gil Tauber, Jane Tuttle, and Jon Cardon. Additional volunteers show up to assist the committee in producing events, like Marlene Schonbrun, who works with Lo-Yi on the audio-visual subcommittee.

Members of the committee meet regularly to brainstorm new topic ideas, then seek local experts to host the panels. But the committee's work doesn't stop there: They take care of promotion and the technical setup as well as providing refreshments,

because these events have a social element. If you haven't attended one, think of a town square filled with people you know, just indoors. It is a great way to feel part of a community within a community.

In 2017 alone, seven panel presentations were organized on subjects as varied as useful housing protections that can help seniors stay in their homes; a guide to the latest scams and advice about how to not fall prey to phone, mail, and internet con games (germane for anyone of any age); and how to combat back pain. A huge crowd of neighbors turned out to hear a scientific session on the aging brain presented by a behavioral researcher from the Columbia University Medical Center and a neuropsychologist at the Nathan Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research.

The success of the BAiP panels relies not just on the thoughtful programming that committee members see to, but also on community partners that provide the meeting space, such as the Marseilles Residence (W. 103rd St.) and the Bloomingdale branch of the New York Public Library (W. 100th St.). These spaces, for which BAiP is deeply grateful, have allowed the organization to share its resources across the entire neighborhood.

Unfortunately, the Bloomingdale library branch is slated for a renovation and will close mid-year for about

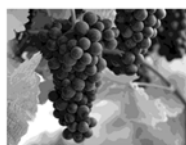
12 months. Until then, from March until May, the Panels Committee has a great lineup of topics in preparation for the library, and has plans to resume in an alternate space once the renovation starts. The 2018 topics will include a scientific presentation on the aging eyes; a session on how to avoid/obtain court-appointed guardianship; and a primer on what probate is and the legal steps to closing out an estate or becoming an executor.

These upcoming topics demonstrate the committee's intent to appeal not just to older adults but also to those who might be assisting elderly parents and friends.

If you missed a topic that interested you, resources from the various panels are archived on BAiP's website; visit [bloominplace.org](http://bloominplace.org), click on the "Get Assistance" tab and then go to "Reference Library."

BAiP's Panels Committee is open to input from the community about future topics and speakers. Send your suggestions to [panels@bloominplace.org](mailto:panels@bloominplace.org). To receive regular notice of BAiP's panels, become a BAiP member today. Membership is free and open to anyone living west of Central Park between 96th and 110th streets. To join, sign up at [bloominplace.org](http://bloominplace.org) or call (212) 842-8831 and leave a message with your name and contact information (including your address) and indicate that you wish to become a member.

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# Donation State of Mind

**DOING YOUR SPRING CLEANING?** Rather than throwing things out, consider giving them to those in need. Here's a partial list of local organizations that could really use donations.

## General clothes, household goods, furniture:

- **The Department of Justice** collects gently used and new items for victims of domestic violence. These include toys, books, clothing, janitorial and toiletry items, household goods, and small items of furniture. If you are interested in donating, contact Camille Colon at (646) 345-5209.
- Very close to home, the **St. Luke's Halfway House** at 306 W. 102nd St. will take men's and women's clothing, kitchen supplies. Stop by and speak to someone at the front desk.

## Business clothing:

- **The Relief Boutique.** This local (W. 116th St.) organization provides business apparel free of charge to disadvantaged women who are employed, returning to work after unemployment, or entering the workforce for the first time. They are looking for donations of gently used or new professional clothing, including suits, dresses, skirts, shirts, pants, blazers, shoes and boots, handbags, jewelry, scarves, and (new) tights, pantyhose, and socks. More information: [reliefboutique.org/donate](http://reliefboutique.org/donate)
- **Dress for Success** is also looking for new or gently used professional clothing for women; you can drop donations off at their location on E. 31st St. on the third Saturday of each month, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. More information: [newyork.dressforsuccess.org/get-involved/donate/](http://newyork.dressforsuccess.org/get-involved/donate/)

## Babies' and children's clothes, toys, gear:

- **Room to Grow** accepts donations of clothing up to size 5T, shoes to size 10, toys, books, feeding supplies, larger equipment, such as high chairs and playpens, baby-proofing gear, baby monitors, and

more (see the website for the full list: [roomtogrow.org/get-involved/how-to-help-in-new-york.html](http://roomtogrow.org/get-involved/how-to-help-in-new-york.html)). Donations can be dropped off at 7 W. 30th St., Floor 3 (between 5th Ave. and Broadway), Mon.–Fri., 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; there is also the option of curbside service; either way, they ask you to call before bringing anything down: (212) 620-7800. More details at the website.

## Prom dresses:

- With the cost of prom tickets averaging \$100 a person, many teens in need could use donated prom dresses. Your donations are tax-deductible. Go to the **Operation Prom Dress** website for details on what they'll accept and local places where you can drop dresses off: <http://operationprom.org/donate.php>

## Pet supplies:

- **The Mayor's Alliance of NYC's Animals** offers a list of pet-related charities and rescue organizations that are always looking for pet food, blankets, bowls, leashes, collars, toys, and treats. See <http://www.animalallianceny.org/help/other/supplies.htm>
- **Riverside Animal Hospital**, 250 W. 108th St., between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave., will accept old towels and blankets to use as bedding.

## Books:

- **The St. Agnes Branch of the New York Public Library** accepts book donations Mon.–Sat., 1–4 p.m., 444 Amsterdam Ave. (between 81st and 82nd). <https://www.nypl.org/locations/st-agnes>
- **Children's books:** Reach Out & Read is a program that encour-

ages pediatricians' offices to educate parents about the importance of reading to children. New books are given to children ages six months to five years during well-child visits, and donated books are given to siblings who come along to these visits or are placed in waiting areas. The William F. Ryan Community Health Center at 110 W. 97th St., (212) 316-7905 (ask for Rayna), will accept donations of new and gently used children's books.

<https://reachoutandreadnyc.org/getinvolved/volunteer/>

## Art materials:

- **Materials for the Arts (MFTA)** collects unneeded items and makes them available for free to nonprofit organizations with arts programming, government agencies, and public schools. MFTA will take a wide range of materials, including general art supplies, audio and visual equipment, beads and jewelry, fabric, trim, and sewing notions, and much more. Get more information at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcla/mfta/html/home/home.shtml> or contact [donations@mfta.nyc.gov](mailto:donations@mfta.nyc.gov) or (718)-729-2065.
- **Free Arts**, a nonprofit organization that operates arts programs for children, will accept donations of arts and crafts materials as well as fabric. The office is at 1431 Broadway, at W. 40th St. Contact [info@freeartsnyc.org](mailto:info@freeartsnyc.org) or call (212) 974-9092.

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# On Broadway

By KERSTIN HASENPUSCH

★ **The West 96 Deli** opened on W. 96th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave.

★ **Techtronics**, a computer, tablet, and smartphone specialist, has opened on the east side of Broadway between W. 97th and W. 98th Sts. Services include repairs, factory unlocking, data recovery, and sales of new and second-hand devices, as well as accessories.

★ **Variazioni's** clothing store on the northwest corner of Broadway and W. 101st St. has closed. The second location, also on the west side of Broadway but a few blocks to the south, remains open for business.

★ **The Broadway Restaurant**, on the east side of Broadway between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts., which has been an institution in the neighborhood for nearly 50 years, has been closed since a fire in early January. Although we don't know when repairs will begin, we have it on good authority that the coffee shop will reopen.

★ **The Santander Bank** on the northeast corner of W. 103rd St. and Broadway has moved farther uptown to the east side of Broadway between W. 108th and W. 109th Sts.

★ **H Mart** is finally open! In space last occupied by D'Agostino's on the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 110th St., you'll now find Asian grocery items, fresh produce of all sorts, an abundance of fresh fish, household items, and beauty products.

## Try TriBloomingdale!

The TriBloomingdale initiative is a way to connect neighbors from the West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association with members of the W. 104th St. Block Association and BAiP. TriBloomingdale currently offers a brisk Sunday-morning walking group

# Board Decides to Continue Guard Service

**T**HANK YOU to those who gave us input about whether the Block Association should continue providing guard service. We value your comments and took them very seriously. After a great deal of consideration and debate, the Block Association board has decided to continue providing the service, at least for the time being. It'll be tricky, as there's just been another minimum-wage hike and a consequent increase in cost, and there's another one coming down the pike. Here is a recap of how we're dealing with the budgetary challenges and how we plan to go forward:

- The number of guard shifts has been reduced from seven to six.
- The length of each shift has been reduced to six hours.
- A new guard has been assigned to our blocks; even the manager of the guard service identifies guard complacency as a big hurdle.
- A Google Voice number through which anyone can call or text the guard during his shift using the Google Voice app has been established. Once we have approval from guard service management, the phone number will be distributed to residents.
- We are raising our suggested contribution amount to \$140 annually (\$35 quarterly). As always, contributions of any amount are gratefully accepted.

and a monthly neighborhood networking group for sole proprietors working from home. Please email Caitlin Hawke for more information or to start your own TriBloomingdale group: [chawke@bloominplace.org](mailto:chawke@bloominplace.org).

Details are here: [w102-103blockassn.org/tribloomingdale-initiative.html](http://w102-103blockassn.org/tribloomingdale-initiative.html)

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# Serafina

## It's a Franchise; It's Good!

By KATE MCLEOD

REMEMBER the local restaurant Toast? It is toast, because its landlord raised the rent to the point where this successful, independent restaurant had to close its doors after 20 years. Now, Serafina, a franchise restaurant easily spotted by its bright yellow awning, has taken the space. I can't imagine what they are paying in rent, but it is high enough that they need to be good.

The first thing you notice when you walk into Serafina is that the layout of the space is pleasing and the graphics are beautiful. A three-dimensional lit-up "LOVE" greets customers even before the host does. There's a small bar at the back of the room with two reasonable-size televisions that display sports. It's easily ignored if you, like me, don't know what sport Tom Brady plays. Just kidding. Sort of.

The story of how the creators of Serafina decided to open a restaurant is worth a read on their website. In short,

two guys lost at sea in a sailboat kept themselves going by talking to each other about pizza, which sums up why Serafina has an extensive pizza menu, offering more than 20 different thin-crust options. And we also learn from their website that the pizzas are made from "00 Italian flour, filtered water, extra virgin olive oil, and sea salt from Sicily," and produced "in ovens hand built with lava stone from Mount Vesuvius, fueled by burning cherry-wood."

Somehow we never did try the pizza. But we enjoyed the lasagna and the ravioli with spinach and ricotta. *Farfalle al limoncello*, with bow-tie pasta, baby shrimp, lemon zest, cream, and the lemon liqueur, was delicious. The spaghetti with *vongole* (fresh clams) was disappointing, however. The clams, served still in the shell, were so small and sparse that my meal did not seem complete.

Appetizers, which include minestrone, burrata, carpaccio, and tuna tartare, run from \$8.50 to \$21.00. Salads, such as grilled organic chicken with romaine, mesclun, and pesto dressing; arugula with sliced seared filet mignon; and artichoke hearts with Parmigiano Reggiano, cost \$10 to \$19. Pastas

are priced between \$13.50 and \$26.00 (the latter for a risotto dish with Champagne and black truffles!). Main courses are \$14 to \$33. Desserts include classic Italian specialties like tiramisu and Italian cheesecake and range in price from \$8 to \$14. They also have a nice brunch menu (\$12.50–22.00).

There's a decent wine list, which includes a house label. Cocktails and a good selection of beers round out the adult-beverage list.

Overall, I liked Serafina, and I think the staff aims to please. On both of my visits, with only one minor exception, we were impressed by the service. The wait staff tends to be older; perhaps they're more experienced. Other guests seemed to be enjoying their experience as well. Although I'm one of those New Yorkers who is nostalgic for the individuality of our small neighborhood restaurants, I enjoyed my visits to Serafina enough to make a little exception for it.

Serafina is at 2737 Broadway (corner of W. 105th St.), [serafinarestaurant.com](http://serafinarestaurant.com), (212) 301-0664. Open for lunch, Mon.-Thurs.; brunch, Fri.-Sun.; and dinner daily; happy hour daily, noon to 7 p.m. Take-out and delivery available. Major credit cards accepted.



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