



WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2020

VOL.50, NO. 1

Plans for Spring Block Party Uncertain

EVERYBODY SEEMS TO ENJOY OUR OUTDOOR SPRING BASH, no matter whether we call it a Spring Bazaar, a Block Party, or a Yard Sale. The vendors do well, the browsers do well, people enjoy reconnecting with their neighbors, somebody wins a bunch of money from the raffle, and the Block Association makes money. Everybody wins!

But we may have to skip it this year, we're sorry to report. Bob Aaronson, who has so ably and cheerfully coordinated it in past years, has unexpectedly found himself unavailable this spring and we have so far been unsuccessful in our efforts to find a replacement.

We've discussed downsizing the event, limiting it to raffle ticket sales and a silent auction, but the wonderful benefits of an entire community being able to congregate for a day on a street closed to traffic would be, regrettably, lost. We've discussed other formats for the event, but keep finding ourselves at the same conclusion: Without someone willing to ride herd on the many aspects of the event, most of which are actually performed by stalwart volunteers, we can't take it on.

Can you be the one to save the day? Let us know! Contact info@w102-103blockassn.org as soon as possible. We're open to all suggestions, especially the ones that come with a willingness to volunteer to help.

Architectural History to Be Keynote of Our Upcoming Annual Meeting

COME JOIN US ON WED., APR. 1, FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING. The featured topic this year will be the fascinating architectural history of 865 and 875 West End Ave. Anthony Bello, a longtime Block Association resident and history buff, has prepared a thorough and entertaining presentation about the two buildings, both of which were designed by Rosario Candela, preeminent architect of the early 1900s.

In addition, new inductees to our Neighborhood Hall of Fame will be introduced. If you know anyone who has lived on our blocks for 50 years or more and has not already been so honored, please let us know. You can find more information about the Hall of Fame on p. 3, or write to us at editor@w102-103blockassn.org. Board members will recap the events of the past year, present the 2019 financial report, and summarize current concerns. Our annual election of the board of directors will also take place.

The meeting will take place at 7 p.m. in the community room of the Marseilles senior residence (230 W. 103rd St.). For more information, write info@w102-103blockassn.org.

Block Association Faces Critical Hurdles

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO READ PAGES 6 AND 7. There, you'll find specifics about the issues we're currently weighing, background about the organization's purposes, and our desperate need for volunteers to take over specific functions. Without your help, we will not be able to host our spring fundraiser, nor will we be able to continue producing our much-admired newsletter. We would also like to take action to improve or eliminate guard service, but find ourselves at an impasse. On the verge of our 50th anniversary, it would be a shame to have to reduce our role in the community. Please read the articles and find a way to participate.

The West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association Newsletter

info@w102-103blockassn.org
Hedy Campbell, 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. Previous issues of the Newsletter are available online at w102-103blockassn.org.

EMAIL LIST

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

GUARD SCHEDULE

Our security guard makes rounds 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 him at (646) 772-2240, or call the office of Starr Security at (212) 246-1040.

BLOCK ASSOCIATION UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Meeting
Wed., Apr. 1 (No fooling!)
7 p.m.
230 W. 130rd St.

Spring Planting
Sat., May 16
10:30 a.m.
878 West End Ave.

Annual Block Party
TBD

Summer Newsletter
Early June

What's New at the Website A Reflection on the Storefront Die-off

By CAITLIN HAWKE

WITH NEW GROUPS FORMING LIKE UWS SAVE OUR STORES (UWSSOS.org), at least I am in good company as I fret about the storefront crisis. I've been writing when I can on this topic, and there are now six installments of an ongoing blog series called *Empty Storefronts and the Changing Streetscape*, which you can read at the Block Association's blog: w102-103blockassn.org/blog.

The latest blog post, which went up just a little while ago, is an interview I conducted with Jen Rubin, granddaughter of Leon and daughter of Alan--both owners of Radio Clinic, or the shop that you may recall as RCI Appliances.

Formerly located at W. 98th St. and Broadway, RCI was the quintessence of a mom-and-pop shop. Jen Rubin's book, *We Are Staying: Eighty Years in the Life of a Family, a Store and a Neighborhood*, chronicles her family store's rise and fall in a tender, loving, but clear-headed analysis of Broadway's ever-changing streetscape and the pressures that small-business owners are up against.

If I could buy every neighbor a copy of this book, I would. It's that rooted in our neighborhood. A natural-born writer, teacher, and storyteller, Jen covers Radio Clinic from its inception in the Depression, through its radio heyday, and into its reinvention as a small appliance shop. She covers the painful chapter of the store's looting during the 1977 blackout, which gave the book its title. In the aftermath, "We Are Staying" was the message her father taped up on the gutted storefront when he became weary of replying to passersby what his plans were.

Come check out the blog for more from Jen, more about this beautiful book, and more about the erstwhile heart and soul of Broadway: mom-and-pop stores. They are disappearing faster than ice shelves are melting. As with the changing climate, we're in the 59th minute of the 11th hour of a crisis well worth fighting against. Our neighborhood depends on it.

Go to w102-103blockassn.org/blog, where you can subscribe and get posts directly to your email. To learn more about Jen Rubin or to read her book, visit rubinjen.com.

Historic Bloomindale

RESIDENT BLOGGER AND HISTORY BUFF CAITLIN HAWKE dug up this 1940s tax photo of 855 West End Avenue. Built in 1895, the building was known for roughly 30 years as the St. Andoche. The builder was the Civil War-era actor Maggie Mitchell who named it for the second act of the play that made her famous, *Fanchon, the Cricket: A domestic drama in five acts*,

from a tale of George Sand. Mitchell lived in the building for more than 20 years.

Looking west across West End Ave. at W. 102nd St. in the 1940s.



BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Regular Block Association meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m., 306 W. 102nd St.

Mar. 10

Apr. 14

May 12

June 9

It's Time to Spruce Up the Spruces

By MARK SCHNEIDERMAN

WELL, WE DON'T ACTUALLY have any spruces on our blocks, but it is nonetheless the right time of year to care for our beloved neighborhood trees. Join us on Sat., May 16, to clean out the tree wells, refresh the soil, and plant cheerful annuals that will keep us smiling well into the fall. The Block Association will supply topsoil,

mulch, and lots of flowers. Together we'll provide the labor that results in months of colorful blossoms. Meet me in front of 878 West End Ave. at 10:30 a.m., and we'll plant until we run out (probably around 12:30 p.m.). Kids are welcome! Materials will be staged in front of 878; mulch will be strategically placed so no hauling will be necessary. Need more info? Email: trees@w102-103blockassn.org



Did You Live Here in 1970?

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 31 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 (Apr. 1 at 7 p.m.), and presented with a certificate and small gift. Attendance at the meeting is not required. After the meeting, bios and photos of our newest inductees 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 (212) 865-8524 or editor@w102-103blockassn.org.

Tri It On

By CAITLIN HAWKE

WANT A GREAT EXCUSE TO FOCUS ON THE HERE AND NOW, to meet neighbors, and to do something analog? Why not lead a TriBloomingdale activity group?

Launched almost six years ago, the TriBloomingdale Initiative takes one great neighborhood, Bloomingdale, with lots of community-minded neighbors of all ages, adds three anchor community organizations—BAiP, West 104th Street Block Association, and us--and matches neighbors up across a variety of activities to solder together a broader group of neighbors, who can

then pursue common interests locally.

We've had ice skating, bird watching, brisk walking, reading, climate-change-awareness-building, and networking for sole proprietors. For more information about these, see: w102-103blockassn.org/tribloomingdale.html.

Now we're in search of more leaders. Do you love backgammon? Boggle? Want to share your knowledge of bridge, and teach some beginners? How about starting an intergenerational reading group for parents and kids? A group to go shoot photos with? Or a monthly klatch in your home or at a local diner?

Times are tough, as we're all glued to our laptops and smartphones looking for our next hit of dopamine. TriBloomingdale is about walking away from the digital and moving toward the analog or IRL (internet-speak for In Real Life) versions of ourselves. We're lucky to have a great place to live, with terrific neighbors just within reach. And TriBloomingdale activities are a great way to meet your neighbors and pursue a common interest without swiping, or posting, or ghosting.

Please email me with your idea and we'll "tri" it on for size: charwke@bloominplace.org.

On Broadway

By MARK SCHNEIDERMAN

SOON TO OPEN

★ **Purple Circle**, a nonprofit pre-school and leader in progressive early-childhood education, which has made its home for the last 30-plus years in the Anshe Chesed synagogue on W. 100th St. between West End Ave. and Broadway, is moving to the west side of Broadway, between W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts. This is the space that houses the campaigns of Democratic candidates every so often. The arrival of Purple Circle there is a big win for those concerned about empty stores on Broadway. Also, I'm sure the Purple Circle kids will help out with seasonal planting!

★ **Au Jus**, an Oklahoma BBQ and overall "roasted meats" spot is taking over the former Starbucks location at 2621 Broadway, between W. 99th and W. 100th Sts. They have three other locations and a nice-looking website.

OPEN

★ **Calle Ocho** opened its new location at 2756 Broadway, between W. 105th and W. 106th Sts., having moved up from W. 81st St. This is the location that has housed about seven restaurants in the last five years; let's hope Ocho is the charm.

★ **Six Corners Marketplace** opened at the southwest corner of Broadway and W. 106th St. You may recall that this is the spot where the KFC once stood. They did a good job on the renovation. It has a full selection of deli, coffee, a smoothies/juice bar, prepared foods, and other packaged items.

CLOSED

★ **The Subway** (i.e., the sandwich shop named after the dirtiest place in NYC) on the southwest corner of W. 103rd St. and Broadway closed. If you are in need of a "sandwich artist" consultation, never fear. Mexican Deli at 2711 Broadway, between W. 103rd and W. 104th Sts., will cre-

ate sandwiches functionally equivalent to those at Subway, as well as surprisingly good tacos.

★ Across the street from Subway (both the former sandwich shop and public transportation), the **Starbucks** at the southeast corner of W. 103rd St. and Broadway closed. They were run out of business by the combination of two locally owned coffee shops (Peaky Barista, on the east side of Broadway between W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts. and Plowshares, on the east side of Broadway between W. 104th and W. 105th Sts.)? Or did the Toll brothers' plans for the building have something to do with it? Given that making fun of Starbucks is too easy, readers can insert their own witty remark here.

★ Speaking of the Toll brothers, their demolition of the former **Marrakesh Hotel** above the Starbucks will begin shortly. In its place, luxury condos will rise. I got a sneak peak at the (not-yet-public) design and façade of the new building. To my pleasure, the design looks appropriate for the neighborhood. It is a brick façade (not the standard-issue luxury-condo glass-curtain wall). There will be retail on the bottom floor, which will not be empty! This is an upgrade from the perpetual vacancy and occasional Halloween store in the ground floor space under the Marrakesh.

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TRIVIA - BEAT THE TRIVIA MASTER TUESDAY NIGHTS **9PM**

Meet Your Talented Neighbors

By JULIA C. SPRING

GRETCHEN CRYER

Best known for her performance in *I'm Getting My Act Together and Taking It on the Road*, playwright/actor/teacher Gretchen is now directing *True Stories*, five solo memoir performances by their authors. The actors include her son, Jon Cryer, Linda Manning, Brian Sheridan, Abby Stokes, and Steve Wruble. Each will perform five times during the run, **Apr. 28–May 17** at Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. Go to truestoriesplay.com for details, schedule, and tickets.

CAROL WINCENC

Flutist Carol's final golden anniversary concert will be on **Thurs., Apr. 16, 7:30 p.m.**, at the Staller Center, Stony Brook University. She will perform mostly modern works, concluding with Andrew Thomas's "A Samba," which has some 30 musicians on stage (mostly flutists!).

ELIZA LANSDALE, MIMI DAITZ, AND BARBARA MORGAN

These local residents will be singing with the Riverside Choral Society at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall on **Sat., May 9, 8 p.m.** They will be performing selections from *The Creation* oratorio, and the *Creation Mass*, with full orchestra and well-known soloists. For tickets and details, go to river sidechoral.org.

DAVID OCHOA

David co-leads an ongoing collage/decoupage workshop **Thursdays, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.**, in the basement of the Morningside branch of the New

York Public Library, 2900 Broadway, between W. 113th and W. 114th Sts. No sign-up required--just show up. Basic materials are provided, though some participants bring their own. If you have questions or want to see some sample collages, contact David, voolf61@gmail.com.

NEW PLAZA CINEMA

Despite the water main break that flooded the New York Institute of Technology auditorium and rendered it unusable, New Plaza continues in its mission to screen independent films on the Upper West Side. It is in consultation with other possible locations, so check in regularly with newplaza cinema.com to find out when screenings will start up again. A recent fundraiser at Symphony Space, a showing of *Cinema Paradiso* with a panel discussion afterward, attracted more than 450 people, so there is strong local support for their mission.

SENIOR SCENES CALENDAR OF CULTURAL EVENTS

Joseph Beinhorn sends out a regular email listing reduced-price cultural events for seniors. If you want to be on his list, email him at joseph beinhorn10@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 2020 Newsletter (or beyond) to creative@w102-103blockassn.org. Do it today, before you forget!

2019 Financial Report

By KOMAL RATHI, CO-TREASURER

THE BLOCK ASSOCIATION saw total income decline by \$320, compared to the previous year. While individual contributions were steady, building donations declined by \$4,730. This was mostly made up by the net income from events, which was \$4,935. Expenses increased by \$6,716 over last year, mainly because of an increase in the cost of the security guard, triggered by the change to the minimum wage. We showed an overall decrease in our operating account of about \$5,474. We thank all donors, advertisers, and Block Party participants for their 2019 contributions.

Income

Individual Contributions	\$26,933.30
Building Contributions	8,690.00
Newsletter Ads	2,590.00
Events	5,190.50
Grants	327.19
Total Income	43,730.99

Expenses

Security Guard	\$42,442.63
Newsletter Production	3,957.35
Event Expenses	1,213.23
Operating Expenses	691.61
Contributions and Dues	900.00
Total Expenses	49,204.82

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Our Block Association:

The Stronghold of Our Neighborhood

By DAYLE VANDER SANDE

AS YOU ARE READING THIS NEWSLETTER, you are already aware of the variety and wealth of resources the West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association offers its residents, with regular activities, restaurant tips, news about the neighborhood, and celebration of some of the remarkable people who live among us. Our website (w102-103blockassn.org) is an invaluable resource, offering calendar updates, archives of our newsletters, a blog with special reports and articles about the history of our area, and many fascinating photos you won't want to miss. Dedicated people work together to make the Block Association a success, but if you are relatively new to our neighborhood, you may not know its history, what its purpose is, and how rare it is today to have such an active organization on your side.

Mayor John Lindsay made a push to start up block associations as a more constructive way to address problems on a very local scale

Our Block Association has been operating continuously for almost 50 years now. Speaking with some longtime residents who have lived on these blocks for decades, I have formed a clearer picture of what life on the Upper West Side was like long before I arrived on the scene myself, more than a quarter-century ago—and yet I still feel a relative newcomer!

My interviewees unanimously agreed that the neighborhood became extremely dangerous in the early 1960s and remained so for many years to come. Muggings, open prostitution, drug dealing, holdups, and even gunshots were commonplace during those

years, to the point that it was no longer a desirable area, especially as a place to raise children. One resident who has lived on our blocks since 1959 recalls that W. 103rd St. was so violent then that it was regularly patrolled by an ambulance at the ready. She recalls one remarkable incident that started to mobilize neighbors: Police captured an armed man breaking into one of the West End Ave. residences. Some tenants chose to move out as a result, including one man who owned multiple firearms himself. My source tells me her 10-year-old son at the time exclaimed, "Everyone should get a gun and we should have a war here on West End Avenue."

Perhaps he heard this on the street, as it was an idea shared by many resident gun owners, who thought it the only viable solution to form a sort of militia and take matters into their own hands.

The mayhem was not endemic to the Upper West Side, however; the entire city was unsafe then, and Mayor John Lindsay made a push to start up block associations as a more constructive way to address problems on a very local scale. He recognized that concerned residents could best improve their own neighborhoods, not policy alone. Hence, our association was formed, among thousands of others in the city.

For us, the main driver was to fund a guard to patrol our blocks. This expense continues to constitute the lion's share of our annual budget today. In addition, it was our charge to replant trees, beautify the blocks, and report sidewalks and lighting that needed repair. Over time, the grassroots efforts of the organization's founders, some of whom still live on our blocks, have proved invaluable in creating a safer environment for our residents. We continue to serve as liaison to the 24th police precinct and to city and state government officials, giving voice to residents' concerns about such issues as preservation of rent regulations and zoning.

Residents who remember those harsher times, helped in those preliminary battles, and have remained here believe unequivocally, from firsthand experience, that the Block Association

is essential to the well-being and security of our neighborhood. Beyond increasing safety, it builds community, creating friendships and reliable networking. It is vital for generating a sense of place. The annual Block Party, Halloween

Parade and Party, and Solstice Caroling are three long-successful events that have brought people together time and again.

The operation and success of the W. 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association relies on volunteerism. It operates entirely on a volunteer basis, and involvement from new members is always welcome and, in fact, desperately needed. Some board members have been serving with steadfast dedication for nearly three decades, and know that regularly passing the baton keeps an organization fresh. Please see the Help Wanted list as well as the other articles announcing events to find out how you can participate. Given the diversity of talents and backgrounds of our residents, and how many of them there are, there's every reason to believe our association can continue to grow and thrive. Find a way to contribute a little time and energy, and make a financial contribution.

The Block Association is a keystone to making our neighborhood a place where we get to know, come to trust, and look out for one another. It is a boon to your investment in your life and your home. In this large city, where a person can easily feel anonymous, it is nice—even essential—to feel that you belong to something. Making your mailing address feel like your community takes a village, and in our case, its town center is the W. 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association.



So What Does the Block Association Do, Anyway?

ANSWERING THAT QUESTION depends a little on how you look at it. From a budgetary standpoint, almost all of the money we raise goes toward providing guard service. A great deal of energy goes toward raising that money and monitoring the guard's performance.

Most of the people who make it a priority to devote their time and effort to the organization, and that includes both current and former board members as well as the many who volunteer regularly in other capacities, would instead respond that development of "neighborly ties" and a communal spirit of mutual obligation, as so well described by Jane Jacobs, is what keeps them coming back. Some of us think the organization creates a connective tissue in which every individual who lives here is included. How do we go about that? Please see the list of Block Association functions and activities listed here:

We maintain contact with other organizations such as:

- Community Board 7 (Helen Rosenthal)
- Manhattan Borough President's office (Gale Brewer)
- New York State Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell
- BAIp
- W. 104th St. Block Association
- TriBloomingdale, a coalition of our Block Association, the W. 104th St. Block Association, and BAIp
- Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group
- 24th precinct Community Council
- West Side Federation of Neighborhood and Block Associations
- Broadway Malls Association
- Riverside Park Conservancy
- Co-op boards and landlords of the area buildings

We organize a full calendar of events including:

- annual meeting with Neighborhood Hall of Fame induction

- spring tree-well cleanup/planting
- Block Party
- fall tree-well cleanup/mulching
- Halloween parade and party
- solstice caroling

We publish a quarterly newsletter with a circulation of 2,100 apartments! It regularly:

- keeps people up to date on issues concerning the neighborhood
- announces Block Association events
- reports on changes to the local commercial landscape
- publicizes residents' creative endeavors
- profiles the shopkeepers whose stores are a part of our everyday lives

We maintain a website that is chockablock with:

- myriad useful resources
- a timely, informative blog
- historical photographs
- and a link so you can pay your dues via PayPal

How You Can Help

BELOW YOU'LL FIND BASIC JOB descriptions of various roles that need filling. Please consider which one best suits you and let us know that you can help. Contact info@w102-103blockassn.org to volunteer as soon as possible!

NEWSLETTER STAFFERS

Our quarterly newsletter is our way of keeping in touch with every resident in the area. In fact, it's the only means we have of connecting with every resident. Every single one of the more than two thousand apartments in the neighborhood gets one. The editor is retiring by the end of the year. The designer has graciously continued doing his work despite having moved out of the city years ago, but needs to be replaced by someone local. The advertising salesperson is topnotch. We have great writers, but a few more would be even better. We have a great distribution system, but need to replace

a couple of retiring stalwarts. Training, software, and other forms of support are available.

SPRING BLOCK PARTY COORDINATOR

A coordinator for the event is needed. It can continue on as a yard-sale-type event as it has in recent years. Or it can become something else. We're open to new ideas. A crib sheet explaining how the event comes together, and a list of volunteers who will happily perform all manner of tasks can be provided. Additional volunteers who are willing to help get the various tasks done would be a god-send as well! We always need people to help with publicity, to get set up the morning of the event, to staff the Block Association table, and to clean up at the end of the day,

GUARD SERVICE LIAISON

We've spent years talking about

the guard service the Block Association provides to the neighborhood. We spend a fortune on it, and are very sure that we're not getting our money's worth. We've analyzed data, changed guards, discussed and debated it. Do we need a guard? Do we put effort into improving service with the existing company? If we can't, do we further curtail or eliminate the service altogether? We need someone who has the time to dig into this issue, act as point person with the current service provider, and review the guard's route reports.

ANNIVERSARY EVENT PLANNER

In 2021, the Block Association turns 50! We'd like to do something splashy and celebratory. We have some ideas. Specifically, we're thinking about hosting an event that capitalizes on how many performers reside on our blocks. Help us make it happen.

NeighborLinks Is Here—Your Gateway to BAiP!

By CAITLIN HAWKE AND
MARIAN ANDERSON

HERE'S SOME NEWS for anyone who has been sitting on the sidelines wondering about Bloomingdale Aging in Place—or BAiP, as it is known to almost everyone. Prior to every BAiP Presents monthly event (bloominplace.org/presentations.html), BAiP has launched a 30-minute meet-up called “NeighborLinks,” where you can learn about free membership, meet other members, connect with BAiP’s various groups and offerings, and, especially, find ways to connect one-to-one with nearby neighbors who have similar interests. This might mean, among other things, finding a dining buddy, a walking partner, or someone with whom to exchange, say, pet-sitting duty.

Conceived as a prelude to BAiP’s regular monthly presentation (to which all are welcome), the new NeighborLinks meet-up will be held each

month from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the Ben Barrack auditorium of the New Jewish Home at 120 W. 106th St.. Come bring your questions to folks who can answer them on the spot. If you find what you are looking for, join BAiP! And don’t forget that joining BAiP is simple: Free membership is open to all adults living between W. 96th and W. 110th Sts., and Riverside Dr. and Central Park West.

Upcoming BAiP presentations are listed in this newsletter but include ones on Mar. 24 (What Patients Say, What Doctors Hear) and Apr. 16 (Hearing Loss and Cognitive Impairment), both starting at 7:00 p.m. So come at 6:30 p.m. for NeighborLinks and feel free to stay for the presentation.

Please contact us if you have questions or comments about BAiP and this new way to link up adults in our neighborhood. Email us at neighborlinks@bloominplace.org or leave a message at (212) 842-8831 x16.

BAiP Presents Calendar

PRESENTATIONS take place from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the first-floor auditorium of *The New Jewish Home*, 120 W. 106th St. For more information, please email BAiPPresents@bloominplace.org or call (212) 842-8831, Ext. 44.

Tues., Mar. 24: *What Patients Say, What Doctors Hear*

How can refocusing the doctor-patient conversation lead to better health outcomes?

Thurs., Apr. 16: *Hearing Loss and Cognitive Impairment*

The latest information on the link between hearing loss and decreased cognition and efforts to make hearing aids more affordable.

Thurs., May 21: *BAiP Community Forum*

A gathering of BAiP and a showcase of BAiP’s diverse range of community-building initiatives.

Thurs., June 18: *Mind/Body Paths to Wellness*

Experts in the areas of complementary and integrative health will discuss the roles these play in improving health and demonstrate techniques of Qi Gong and Tai Chi.

A Solstice Caroling Marked by Firsts!

By HEDY CAMPBELL

WE’VE GATHERED TO GO CAROLING to celebrate the winter solstice on our blocks for years and years—like almost 40! You’d think we’d have seen everything by now. Not so! For the first time in anyone’s memory, we carolers were greeted with cookies! An especially thoughtful resident of one of the townhouses on the north side of W. 102nd St. between Broadway and West End Ave. must have taken note of the event and decided to thank us with a platter of freshly baked sugar cookies! Sufficiently recovered from our initial astonishment, we quickly made the cookies disappear; our smiles lingered long after the last one was gone. Thank you from all of us, nameless cookie elf! The other first was that we were able to enjoy the Broadmoor’s new, brightly

illuminated canopy, inaugurating it with our cheerful noise. How much easier it was to read our song sheets there than under poorly lit scaffolding or crowded under a streetlight! We know the Broadmoor didn’t design it with us in mind, but we’re nonetheless grateful for the abundance of wattage. Choirmasters Anthony Bello and Dayle Vander Sande once again led us with their usual enthusiasm and rich voices. Thank you to them both. Thanks also to the board, staff, and residents of the Master Apartments, who always provide us with everything we

need for post-caroling refreshments. 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 on Mon., Dec. 21. Make a note so that you, too, can walk with us as we sing to lighten the darkest day.



Posh Pizza Proves Perfect!

By HEDY CAMPBELL

WHEN MAMA'S TOO OPENED last fall, I found it hard to imagine what all the fuss was about. What's the big deal about yet another pizza parlor? Is such a plethora of pizza a positive? It took me a while to give the Mama's



Too pie a try, but now that I have, I understand why the place has made it onto "best of" lists and why people get an impassioned look in their eye when they describe their preferred variety.

Mama's Too is an offshoot of the original Mama's (on the corner of W. 106th St. and Amsterdam Ave.) and is run by the son of the first location's proprietors. There the similarity ends. Mama's Too has dramatic spot lighting, brick walls, and pizzas with toppings you'll never see on a standard-issue pizzeria menu. There are, of course, house pies (square or round) and a pepperoni pie. But then there's the Funghi, with cremini mushrooms, caramelized onions, and whipped ricotta. The Rustica has mozzarella, Parmesan, charred potatoes, rosemary, and plenty of cracked black pepper. The 18th Avenue sports fennel sausage with peppers, mozzarella, and ricotta. Angry Nonna features soppressata, hot Calabrian chili oil, and hot honey. Cacio e Pepe, like the classic pasta dish from which it draws its name, is a



cheese-lover's dream come true, with a combination of whipped mascarpone, mozzarella, pecorino, and Parmesan. Pear and Gorgonzola is another popular combination, although it's only available in the shop, not for online ordering. This is artisanal, fancy, delicious pizza.

What I learned the hard way, when I promised dinner guests that Mama's Too was on the menu, is that you can't just pick up the phone and call in an order of the half-pepperoni/half-mushroom variety. Advance orders are only taken online, and whole pies are the only option. They're not cheap, either; prices range from \$24 to \$34 per pie. And there's a delivery charge. In addition to being able to score a slice of the pear pizza, the other advantage of going in person is that you can select a slice or two of this and a slice or two of that (\$4-\$5 per slice). It's much more fun to be able to sample several of the varieties. Wanting to taste everything, I over-ordered on my first couple of visits and was happy to discover that leftovers reheated beautifully. Planning to bring your pizza home is a good idea, too; there are very few seats and, each time I've gone in, they were full of happy customers.

Mama's Too is located at 2750 Broadway, on the east side of the street between W. 105th and W. 106th Sts. It's open daily from noon till 11 p.m. You can find the menu, as well as information about catering, at mamastoo.com. A small selection of soft drinks, wine, and beer is available. Telephone (212) 510-7256. Credit and debit card minimum is \$10.

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