



WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2021

VOL. 51, NO. 4

## Halloween Returns with a Vengeance!

**W**HAT A WONDERFUL TREAT IT WAS to be able to host our annual Halloween Parade and Party again! And what a spectacular trick it was to bring the event back to life so spectacularly after a pandemic pause! Hundreds of adorably costumed children attended; it was the biggest crowd any of us could remember.

Credit for that trick goes to Mary Chestaro, a professional party planner who answered our cry of desperation. Without a volunteer to coordinate the shindig, we would have had no other choice than to cancel the fun. We're so grateful that she pulled out all the stops and used her professional skills to make it an even bigger and better event than ever. Our thanks to her, and to her husband, Will Coss, who is also in event-planning, for all they did to make it happen, especially during their busiest time of year.

Other volunteers who deserve a big shout-out include Bill and Dolores Weeden, who returned (in costume) as King and Queen to lead the parade; Peter Frishauf, who managed closing off the street and offered other support; Terence Hanrahan, who facilitated equipment retrieval from our supply closet at St. Luke's and shoehorned the additional stuff back in; Olivia, from Mind Body Music NYC, who supplied musical entertainment; Janet Harvilchuck and Hedy Campbell, who read not-very-scary stories; and board members Bob Aaronson, Celia Knight, and Sue Maderer, who helped distribute candy alongside neighbors Jill Chase and Gay Haubner. Speaking of candy, especially sweet thanks to the many of you who dropped off candy in advance of the event; we had tons to give away to trick-or-treaters as the parade concluded. Thanks also to the 865 West End Ave. staff and residents for both allowing us to use their courtyard and tolerating the enormous influx of revelers—and the noise that goes along with! The staff and residents of St. Luke's can always be counted on to have our backs, and this year was no exception.

If you had a good time at the party this year, make sure to pay it forward next year and lend a hand or make a donation. If you couldn't join us, make it a plan for 2022. We'll see you on Oct. 31.

## Come Caroling . . . in Person!

**H**OW GLAD WE ARE TO BE RESUMING SOME OF OUR TRADITIONS, even if we must do so with safety concerns in mind. Sponsoring the annual Solstice Caroling event in real life this year definitely goes on that list.

On Tues., Dec. 21, the winter solstice, we'll meet in front of 865 West End Ave. at 7 p.m. Greetings will be exchanged, song sheets distributed, headlamps turned on, and sleigh bells warmed up. Then, led by affable Anthony Bellov and delightful Dayle Vander Sande, we'll weave up and down W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts. to celebrate the lengthening of the light, bringing favorite holiday tunes, good cheer, and blessings for peace as we go. Masks are suggested, and we'll do our best to spread out a bit when we stop to serenade our neighbors.

Regrettably, we don't think it's safe to repair indoors to warm up with conviviality and refreshments, as we usually do. But feel free to bring a hot beverage in your own commuter cup and we can conclude the event with a sip and a toast to brighter days.

You can find our song sheets in the Events Calendar section of our website. You may print a copy in advance, or take advantage of being able to read song lyrics on the illuminated screen of your phone. Some hard copies will be available. If you're a caroling regular, we're looking forward to seeing you. If you're a newbie, come join us! For information, write [caroling@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:caroling@w102-103blockassn.org).

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**THE WEST 102ND &  
103RD STREETS BLOCK  
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

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

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**EMAIL LIST**

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

**GUARD SCHEDULE**

Our security guard makes rounds seven days a week from 5:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. To report neighborhood security issues to the guard or to request his assistance, call him at (917) 474-4221.

**BLOCK ASSOCIATION  
MEETINGS**

Block Association meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of the month at 8 p.m., via Zoom, and are open to all. Email [info@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:info@w102-103blockassn.org) if you'd like to attend.

Dec. 14  
Jan. 11  
Feb. 8

## A New Guard from a New Company Is on the Block

By BOB AARONSON

**O**UR NEW SECURITY PROFESSIONAL is Robert Huggins, an employee of Allied Universal Security. He began working with us on Oct. 22, and he patrols every night from 5:30 to 11:30 p.m. He wears a black uniform, with SECURITY written on the back of the jacket, and a black face mask; I've literally bumped into him while out walking!

Robert is outgoing but doesn't draw attention to himself. He will be training a second guard, who will work weekends. If you need to contact Robert, his number is (917) 474-4221. Feel free to put it on your speed dial so you can call him to look out for you if you're coming home late, or if you see something of concern. Make sure to say hello to him when you see him on the street.

If you have questions or concerns, please write [security@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:security@w102-103blockassn.org).

## Just in Case We Get Some Snow This Year

**D**EPENDING ON YOUR POINT OF VIEW, last year's minimal snowfall was either a godsend or very disappointing. We won't take a position, except to remind landlords, supers, co-op boards, building owners, and anyone inclined to lift a shovel that snow removal is a responsibility to take seriously. If you've ever pushed a stroller, wheeled a shopping cart, or tried to navigate the sidewalks with a cane, walker, or wheelchair after a big snowfall, you know what we mean.

Here are the rules according to the NYC Dept. of Sanitation: "Every  
(continued on page 7)



## Make a Donation to Help Those in Need

**F**OR MANY YEARS, A FORMER BOARD MEMBER has worked with the U.S. Dept. of Justice's New York office to help the needy at holiday time. The beneficiary of the project again this year is Womankind, which operates domestic-violence shelters in Queens and Brooklyn and also offers a variety of additional support services. On Womankind's behalf, the DOJ is collecting donations of small toiletry items that can easily travel with families when they are relocated. Think travel-size shampoo and conditioner, skin lotion, adhesive strips, and so forth. To donate, please mark your package for Camille and drop it off at the lobby desk of 305 Riverside Dr., or call (646) 345-5209 to arrange for items to be picked up.

**UPCOMING BLOCK  
ASSOCIATION EVENTS**

**BAiP Presents:**

**"Learning from Art: Lessons from the Mona Lisa"**

(see page 9)

Thurs., Dec. 16

4 p.m.

via Zoom (see BAiP website)

**Solstice Caroling**

(see page 1)

Tues., Dec. 21

7 p.m.

**Spring Newsletter**

Early March

**Annual Meeting**

TBD

**Spring Planting**

TBD

# The Open Streets Survey: An Overview of the Results

By BOB AARONSON

**I**N THE FALL NEWSLETTER, we included a survey of the Block Association community about the designation of W. 103rd St. from Broadway to Riverside Dr. as an **Open Street**. As you may remember, the board's public meeting in June elicited both positive and negative opinions about the designation, including questions about the meaning of the "Open Street" term and confusion about the signage on the traffic barriers at the corners of W. 103rd St. at both Broadway and West End Ave. We have had a chance now to study the survey results and a brief summary is below. A full analysis will be published on the Block Association website.

- **Survey Distribution and Responses:** The survey was distributed with the Fall Newsletter and members could respond either directly online or by returning the completed paper survey.
- **Response Numbers:** Approximately 2,100 newsletters/surveys were distributed and there were 184 responses. A little more than half the responses were submitted directly to Survey Monkey while the paper responses were manually entered into Survey Monkey. The respondents were well distributed among our assessment area, as 44% of respondents lived on W. 103rd St., 32% on W. 102nd St., and 24% on West End Ave.
- **Knowledge about W. 103rd St.'s designation as an Open Street:** 79% of respondents first learned of the street's designation as a "Temporary

Limited Local Access Open Street" from the signage on the barricades.

At the time they filled out the survey, 67% of respondents knew that the street had that designation but only 34% knew what it meant.

- **Safety:** 28% of all respondents reported difficulties with taxi, Access-A-Ride, or other car service drivers not understanding the traffic restrictions on the Open Street. In addition, about 7% of the respondents acknowledged having a disabling condition; there were some positive and some negative comments about the impact on them of the Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street designation.
- **Satisfaction with West 103rd St. as a Temporary Limited Local Access Open Street:** "As a neighborhood pedestrian," 35% of respondents reported being satisfied, at the very highest rating (a "10") while 22% reported their satisfaction at the very lowest rating (a "1"), with the rest landing somewhere in between the two poles.

**What we need from you:** We were very pleased so many of you participated in our survey. Now we need additional feedback: We're asking for **constructive** ideas about how we might address the following: "signage"/informational issue(s); moderating/enforcing traffic speed; bicycle/scooter delivery issues; and any other matters you feel are still unresolved. Please email your comments to [SurveyOpenStreets@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:SurveyOpenStreets@w102-103blockassn.org).

## Alternate Side Parking

**S**O FAR, THE NYC DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION seems to be continuing to give those who park on the street a break. Alternate-side-of-the-street parking regulations will continue to be in effect only on the latest day of the week posted. For example, if a

sign says "No Parking Mon. and Thurs.," you can ignore the Monday restriction. Caveat parker: Since many spots have been given over to outdoor dining, spots on the side streets are more in demand than ever. The DOT calendar of parking regulation suspensions is now available.

## Open Streets: Park(ing) Day and More

**T**HE WEST 103RD STREET OPEN STREETS COMMUNITY COALITION and its partners (the Marseilles, the Purple Circle Early Childhood Program, the Frederick Douglass Houses, the Columbus Amsterdam BID, and Hostelling International) participated in Park(ing) Day, Fri., Sept. 17. Maybe you can remember all the way back to 2009, when a Park(ing) Day event last took place? It was in front of the Marseilles.

Park(ing) Day is an opportunity for communities to transform parking spaces into temporary parks, or parklets. Our 2021 event took place in two locations on W. 103rd St.: one in front of the Marseilles (230 W. 103rd St.), the other on the south side of the street near the corner of Amsterdam Ave. Music, games, chalk art, and a toy giveaway were features at both locations. A magician entertained children of all ages at the Marseilles.

In related news, the Horticultural Society of New York and the City Cleanup Corps are now offering their services to Open Streets program participants. You may see a team of workers cleaning up W. 103rd St. from time to time; they did a bang-up job on their first sweep last month. And we've already received four new trees on the block between Broadway and West End! There's also talk of support for tree-well care come springtime.



Photo: Peter Frishauf

Go to the NYC DOT site, [www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/alternate-sideparking.shtml](http://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/alternate-sideparking.shtml). For a PDF of the 2022 calendar go to [www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/asp-calendar-2022.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/asp-calendar-2022.pdf).

# In Memoriam: Ed Vargas



Photo: courtesy of the Vargas family

**E**ARLIER THIS FALL, our neighborhood lost an honorable resident: Heriberto Vargas, better known as Ed (Mar. 8, 1948–Oct. 1,

2021). Ed Vargas spent his entire professional life working for a greater good, devoting all of his abundant energy to a single cause: economic, political, and social justice for working people. He earned his stripes as a labor leader, beginning as a shipping clerk for the ILGWU and culminating with his position as director of labor relations for the New York State Department of Labor. He held numerous positions in between, helped establish the Working Families political party, and contributed to efforts to ensure fair elections in Chile and South Africa.

In addition, Mr. Vargas formed a close bond with the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition, coordinating

its annual commemoration of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory tragedy. He also served on the national executive board of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and the board of El Puente, a youth arts and education nonprofit in Brooklyn.

A native of Brooklyn and veteran of the U.S. Air Force, he was married to Liz Weiner; was the father of three children, Greg, Ariane, and Sofia; and the grandfather of two, Caroline and Levi. Donations in his memory can be made to [rememberthetrianglefire.org](http://rememberthetrianglefire.org). Our heartfelt condolences to his entire family.

## Community Rallies to Reopen the Metro Theater

**T**HERE IS A NEW EFFORT UNDERWAY by community members to reopen and reimagine the Metro Theater on Broadway between W. 99th St. and W. 100th Sts. The Art Deco movie theater has been closed for decades. The outside is landmarked; however, the inside is not and has been gutted over the years. Now the Friends of Metro Theater has started a grassroots effort to resurrect the theater, their petition to that effect

having already collected more than 3,000 signatures. The owner of the theater, Albert Bialik, has resisted all past offers to sell or rent to an arts group, but Friends of the Metro Theater are hoping that this time the large outpouring of community interest and fundraising will finally bring new life to this historic space. If you are interested in joining the group or learning more about with their efforts, go to [friendsofmetrotheater.org](http://friendsofmetrotheater.org).

*Join our email list by going to the Block Association website*  
([w102-103blockassn.org](http://w102-103blockassn.org))

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# Caitlin Hawke Receives 2021 Jim Torain Award

By MARJORIE COHEN

SINCE 2018 (WITH A HIATUS IN 2020 FOR THE PANDEMIC) the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group (BNHG) has honored the memory of its former member Jim Torain with the Jim Torain Award. This year's award went to Caitlin Hawke for the impressive work she has done to help share and promote the history of our neighborhood.

The award was presented to Caitlin at the Dec. 1 BNHG program, *Grant's Tomb: The President's Final Year and How His Tomb Came to the Upper West Side*, which featured Louis Picone, author of *Grant's Tomb: The Epic Death of Ulysses S. Grant and the Making of an American Pantheon*. A link to the webinar can be found at the BNHG website, [upperwestsidehistory.org](http://upperwestsidehistory.org).

**ABOUT JIM TORAIN:** Jim spent most of his life working tirelessly to preserve the legacy of the Old Community, where he grew up. The Old Community is the name given to the African-American neighborhood that flourished on W. 98th and W. 99th Sts. between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue and was destroyed in the mid-1950s as part of the city's urban renewal plan. Without Torain's work, the history of this vibrant neighborhood, once the home of so many talented and accomplished New Yorkers, might have been lost to time.

**ABOUT CAITLIN HAWKE:** The members of the planning committee of the BNHG first met Caitlin when putting together a series about medical institutions in the neighborhood. Caitlin, who had served for many years

as executive director of the Pasteur Foundation, helped with background on the New York Pasteur Institute, the site of groundbreaking scientific research on rabies and tetanus vaccines, which once stood at W. 97th St. and Central Park West.

Over the past years, Caitlin has developed an extensive collection of historical photographs of our immediate neighborhood and researched the context of each, turning up many fascinating stories in the "Throwback Thursdays" posts on the blog she writes for the W. 102 & 103 Streets Block Association [[w102-103blockassn.org/blog/category/throwback-thursday](http://w102-103blockassn.org/blog/category/throwback-thursday)]. She has done impressive research on the history of the area and encouraged others to delve into it as well.

Over the years, as a volunteer with

the Block Association as well as an early volunteer with Bloomingdale Aging in Place (BAiP), she has encouraged others to dig out their historical photographs and create oral history. In 2020, Caitlin presented the history of her own building, 855 West End Ave., as part of BNHG's ongoing series of public programs.

Caitlin's fondness for the place she lives leads her to contribute her energies to *creating* the history of the neighborhood as she would like it to be, both as past co-coordinator of activities for BAiP and through her current professional work as associate director of programming at the Columbia Aging Center, a university-wide center housed at the Mailman School of Public Health.

**ABOUT BNHG:** The Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group was founded in 2001. Its members conduct research, lead walking tours, and present programs by historians, authors, and local history enthusiasts. They also maintain a collection of historical material pertaining to the Upper West Side, known as Bloomingdale in colonial times. The collection is housed at the Bloomingdale branch of the New York Public Library, 150 West 100th St., and is available to all.

*[Editor's Note: Caitlin Hawke, although not a Block Association board member, has been an exceedingly generous volunteer. She's been active in the organization for many years, initially tackling the project of getting our website up and running. Currently, she manages the website, writes the blog, facilitates our much-valued connection with BAiP, and in all manner of other ways, great and small, contributes to what we do. She presented the fascinating program about her building, the St. Andoche, referenced in the article, at our 2020 annual meeting. The BNHG award is well deserved, and we're grateful that she's also chosen to support the Block Association so steadfastly. Congratulations, Caitlin!]*



Photo: Janet Mackin

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# On Broadway

By ELIZA LANSDALE

**T**HERE CONTINUES TO BE A lot of activity between W. 96th and W. 106th Sts. Here's what we know.

## CLOSED

- **Sneaker Pawn** and **Blondi's**, both on the east side of Broadway between W. 105th and W. 106th Sts., have closed.
- **Yu Kitchen**, on the east side of Broadway between W. 100th and W. 101st Sts., also gone.
- **Upper West Candy Grocery** convenience store, on the east side of Broadway between W. 98th and W. 99th Sts., is shut up tight and dark.

## OPEN

- **Slavik's VIP Fitness** has opened on the street level of the otherwise shuttered building at the southeast corner of W. 106th St., in the space where the Il Gatto Nero restaurant used to be.
- **Discount Mart** opened where the Get Smart 99 Cent Store was, on the east side of Broadway between W. 103rd and W. 104th Sts.
- **GoHealth Urgent Care**, part of Northwell Health, has opened on the west side of Broadway between W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts., occupying the space where Cure Urgent Care was. The GoHealth site on the east side of Broadway between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts. is still open.
- **Gopuff** and **Gorillas**, on either side of the street between W. 102nd and W. 103rd Sts., are open and doing their speedy-grocery-delivery business, though you'd never know from the opaque windows and doors.
- **Schatzie Prime Meats** has relocated next door into the space where it once had its burger joint, on the west side of Broadway

between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts.

- **Popz Toys**, on the east side of Broadway between W. 97th and W. 98th Sts., a family-owned toy store specializing in gifts for infants, crafts, and board games, just opened.

## OPENING SOON

- **Smoke Jazz and Supper Club**, on the west side of Broadway between W. 105th and W. 106th Sts., is expanding into the two storefronts just south of it. There's no projected date for the grand opening but the entire club will be much larger, with a wonderful new bar area.
- The store just north of Smoke remains vacant. There was talk of a **Roberta's** pizzeria opening here (brave folk, with Mama's Too right across the street) but no sign of anything yet. This whole block is looking pretty spiffy, with the newly opened **Ellington** restaurant anchoring the south corner (in the old Henry's spot), and **Six Corners Marketplace** holding its own on the north.
- **Street Taco Bar & Taqueria** is a new eatery that will be at the old location of Mexican Festival (on the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 102nd St.). The interior is very funky, including a Volkswagen minibus sawed in half. FUN!

Stay tuned for more!



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# Wolfing Down at Wolfnights

By DAYLE VANDER SANDE

**J**UST DAYS BEFORE HALLOWEEN, I tried out Wolfnights, a new gourmet-wrap place around the corner on Broadway. Its logo, with orange wolfish eyes staring searingly into yours, assumes a ravenous hunger that needs to be slaked: you crave, you drool.

The wraps bear names rife with wit: Howling, Little Red Riding Hood, Dire Wolf, and Mowgli (the boy raised by wolves in *The Jungle Book*), to name a few. Each wrap is crafted with a house-made dough and any wrap may be made into a bowl as an alternative (prices for wraps or bowls range from \$10.98 to \$13.50).

I ordered the Brothers Grimm, which was scarily scrumptious! The wrap is made of chestnut and chili dough and filled with grilled chicken, pickled shitake mushrooms, raisins, and chipotle aioli. It made for a mouthwatering pleasure that turned me into a terrifyingly voracious canine—an American werewolf in Bloomingdale! I gnawed at my prey with euphoric delight! The portion was generous, and I easily could have made two meals of the bounty had it not been so exceedingly delectable and my gullet so surprisingly stimulated!

A week later, I introduced an insatiable friend to the pack—that is, the Pack—a scrambled egg sandwich in fig dough, with lamb bacon, melted cheddar, sumac onions, tater tots, pickled jalapeños, and chipotle aioli. We howled, we bayed, and broke our fast with unfettered indulgence! The flavors combined in perfect balance with every bite, and we hankered for the next.

For the herbivore, there are choices such as the Once Bitten, grilled portobello wrapped in a fig dough with green papaya slaw, goat cheese, beets, and sage aioli; or the Ghost: quinoa and sunflower seeds in whole-wheat dough, with grilled portobello, shallots, edamame, scallions, zaatar, mixed greens, and citrus sumac vinaigrette.

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## Wolfnights

Wolfnights caters to those on special diets, as well—keto, calorie-counting, or gluten-free. Still, I promise no one leaves gluten-free! Founder Itai Afek based his formula on Mediterranean and Thai cuisine, stating, “We make sure that each bite contains salty, sweet, sour, crunchy, and chewy elements, by using unique house-made ingredients to create consistent, one-of-a-kind wraps.”

With two other locations in Manhattan, including 99 Rivington Street and 235 Bleeker Street, Wolfnights plans to create a chain nationwide. Check out their website at [wolfnightsusa.com](http://wolfnightsusa.com) for the full menu, which also includes sides, beverages, and desserts, gift cards, and a loyalty program.

Enter, all ye who dare cave in to temptation and desire epicurean satisfaction. Once bitten, you will go wild for Wolfnights!

Wolfnights, 2675 Broadway, between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts. Hours: 11 a.m.–10 p.m. (last delivery 9:30 p.m.) [wolfnightsusa.com](http://wolfnightsusa.com)

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# Make It Your Business!

A NEW COLUMN WRITTEN BY READERS

*The Block Association loves to support the small businesses in the neighborhood. We profile newcomers, review restaurants, track the comings and goings in the On Broadway column, and keep our advertising rates low so the businesses can reach our 2,000-plus readers at a low cost. We've heard many tales of shopkeepers who have gone above and beyond to provide exceptional service to customers, and thanks to the contribution below from a longtime resident and former board member, we've decided to go public with them. Tell us your tales! We want to hear about those moments when your experience in one of our local shops reminded you all over again why living in this neighborhood is so satisfying. Send your positive anecdotes to [editor@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:editor@w102-103blockassn.org).*

**I'M A LONGTIME (42-YEAR) BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEMBER** and, while I am not “ancient,” I am old and most times technically challenged.

In this digital age, I find that I always have some type of technical issue: my cell phone, my laptop, my streaming, my Netflix, and so on. In my household, I'm the butt of all the standard jokes.

Not anymore, at least as far as my cell phone is concerned. I recently made the acquaintance of Shawn Bhandari, manager of

the AT&T store on the west side of Broadway between W. 104th and W. 105th Sts. (2727 Broadway), who far exceeded any expectations I had of customer service and professionalism and, frankly, downright niceness. In total, I've spent probably eight hours at the store, upgrading service, adding and deleting apps, discussing my bill, getting advice, and so forth. I actually feel that I am moving toward the twenty-second century and exchanging my horse and buggy for an electric car.

Even while sitting in the store, waiting for my turn, I watched other customers call him by his first name, as he offered them bottles of water, tried to maximize discounts for them, and really engaged them in the effort to determine their needs. I am a longtime government employee, and I can tell you that this level of service is something even the government doesn't offer.

I can recommend Shawn for all of your phone needs; you will feel like a valued customer because, in his eyes, you are.

—Camille Colon

**Shawn Bhandari**  
Store Manager



AT&T  
Authorized Retailer

2727 Broadway  
New York, NY 10025

Tel: 212.389.2727  
Email: [attbroadway105@gmail.com](mailto:attbroadway105@gmail.com)

(continued from page 2)

## Snow

owner, lessee, tenant, occupant, or other person having charge of any lot or building must clean snow and/or ice from the sidewalk within four hours after the snow has stopped falling, or by 11:00 a.m. if the snow has stopped falling after 9:00 p.m. the previous evening.”

Mainly, those in charge of the larger buildings do a pretty good job

of clearing the sidewalks. Owners of smaller buildings, especially if you're spending a lot of time elsewhere these days, please have a plan in place before a blizzard is upon us. If you're able-bodied and are happy to have a good excuse to work up a sweat, lend a hand and clear the storm drains so that the snowmelt has somewhere to go other than ponding at the corners.



# Planet-Friendly Gift-Giving Ideas

By SHARON WASKOW

IT'S EASY BEING GREEN

**T**HE HOLIDAY SEASON offers each of us an opportunity to align our planet-friendly values with our gift-giving choices. Here is a list of gift ideas geared to build community, support local business, and reduce environmental impact.

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- Criterion ([criterion.com](http://criterion.com)) offers classic films from the Criterion Collection

## EXPERIENCES

- Membership to a museum
- Series of in-person or virtual Pilates, yoga, dance, or exercise classes
- Tennis lessons (check out Riverside Park's clay courts at W. 96th St. or the hard courts farther north, near W. 119th St.: [nycgovparks.org/parks/riverside-park/facilities/tennis](http://nycgovparks.org/parks/riverside-park/facilities/tennis))

## CONSUMABLES

A gift basket or gift certificate to a favorite restaurant/bakery/wine shop/specialty food shop

Look for these certifications on items:

- **Fair trade** - ensures fair trade compensation for people who grow our food ([fairtradeamerica.org](http://fairtradeamerica.org))
- **B corp** ensures social, environmental, and transparent accountability ([bcorporation.net/about-b-corps](http://bcorporation.net/about-b-corps))
- **Rainforest Alliance** certification recognizes and chooses products that contribute toward a better future for people and the planet. ([rainforest-alliance.org/find-certified](http://rainforest-alliance.org/find-certified))

## HOMEMADE

- Print a photograph and frame it
- Consult Smitten Kitchen ([smittenkitchen.com](http://smittenkitchen.com)) for delicious recipes for baked goods, spiced nuts, and much more.
- Knit, crochet, draw, sew, macramé gift items (use your imagination!)

## FOR KIDS

Magazines:

- *Babybug, Ladybug, and Ranger Rick Jr.* are for young kids
- *National Geographic Kids*
- *Highlights*

Board Games:

- Hex & Co., 2911 Broadway ([hexnyc.com](http://hexnyc.com))

Dance Lessons

- Bridge for Dance, 2726 Broadway ([bridgefordance.com](http://bridgefordance.com))

Steam Education:

- Robofun, 2672 Broadway ([robofun.org](http://robofun.org))

## GIFT YOUR TIME AND TALENTS TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Offer help with childcare, cooking, pet care, and so forth.
- Help someone declutter a closet, rearrange furniture, learn a skill, organize photos on the phone or computer.

Most of all, enjoy the holiday, be safe, love your neighbors!

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

*Consider subscribing to the It's Easy Being Green newsletter to keep in the know on New York City environmental information and tips for a greener lifestyle ([itseasybeinggreen.org](http://itseasybeinggreen.org)).*



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# Meet Your Talented Neighbors

By JULIA C. SPRING

Our world gradually opens up. Make sure you call or check websites before attending anything in case there are changes and/or masking and vaccination requirements.

## JEAN-PIERRE SCHMITT

The Classical Saxophone Project, in conjunction with the Lebanese Chamber Orchestra, will present a free public concert, "Music for Lebanon," livestreamed from St. Joseph Church in Beirut, Lebanon, on **Sat., Jan. 8, 1 p.m., EST.** This concert is a humanitarian project to assist the musicians in that country in the wake of the 2020 explosion at the Beirut port. Jean-Pierre will conduct and CSP co-founder Javier Oviedo will play the classical saxophone, along with Lebanese violinist Mario Rahi, in the premiere of *Crux Fidelis*, a saxophone concerto commissioned by CPS from prominent Lebanese composer Naji Hakim. If you wish to help, contact Jean-Pierre, [jp@classicalsaxproject.org](mailto:jp@classicalsaxproject.org). You may also donate at [gofund.me/d689f7b4](https://gofund.me/d689f7b4).

## ELIZABETH COFFEY AND MARK WISNIEWSKI

There will be a launch party for their inaugural volume of the anthology *Coollest American Stories 2022*, on **Thurs., Jan. 13, 7-9 p.m.**, at the KGB Bar (Red Room), 85 E. 4th St. ([kgbbar.com](https://kgbbar.com)). Come hear the authors read their works. Feel free to bring friends along. The anthology itself is available on **Jan. 11**, through Barnes and Noble, Amazon, and [CoollestAmericanStories.com](https://CoollestAmericanStories.com).

## ANTHONY BELLOV AND DAYLE VANDER SANDE

Anthony and Dayle, founders of and performers in the Bond Street Euterpean Singing Society, will be singing with this group—after a year's

pandemic pause—in "Love in the Parlors—A Valentine in Concert," at the Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St., on the evening of **Mon., Feb. 14.** For more information about this gala classical art song program and to buy tickets (reservations are required), visit [merchantshouse.org](https://merchantshouse.org).

Now for a few of the usual local suspects and what they are offering:

## BLOOMINGDALE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Its free faculty-recital series resumes, most **Fridays at 8 p.m.** These and other events for 2022 are listed at [bsmny.org/events](https://bsmny.org/events).

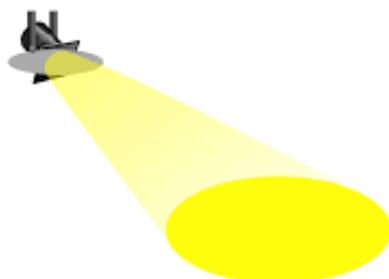
## MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Also back: live performances of student and professional musicians. Most are free and livestreamed. Go to the "Performances" link at [msmny.edu](https://msmny.edu) and click on the "subscribe" box to receive regular emails about all MSM events.

## NEW PLAZA CINEMA

This virtual moviehouse continues to offer films to rent as well as online talkbacks and lectures: [newplazacinema.org](https://newplazacinema.org).

*Do you have an upcoming publication, release, concert, exhibition, or other arts event, physical or virtual? Let me know. Send questions or notices for inclusion in the Spring 2022 Newsletter (or beyond) to [creative@w102-103blockassn.org](mailto:creative@w102-103blockassn.org). Do it today, before you forget!*



# BAiP Presents

**ON THURS., DEC. 16, AT 4 P.M.,** BAiP Presents will feature Linda Seidel, Ph.D., an art historian and leader of the much acclaimed BAiP group Picturing an Exhibition, on "Learning from Art: Lessons from the *Mona Lisa*." The presentation will be delivered via Zoom. Please check the BAiP website for details on how to join BAiP and/or register for the event (registration opens Dec. 9), and also to see links to some of the past presentations: [bloominplace.org/presentations.html](https://bloominplace.org/presentations.html).

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9PM

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Or contribute online at [w102-103blockassn.org](http://w102-103blockassn.org).