



WINTER 2022

VOL. 52, NO. 4

The Solstice Is Almost Upon Us: Welcome the Light in Song

WHEN WE FALL BEHIND in November, the sudden arrival of sunset in the late afternoon is almost too much to bear. But we can take heart in remembering that six weeks' worth of patience is all that's needed to change the trajectory. The winter solstice marks the end of the darkening and the beginning of longer periods of daylight, and there's no better way to celebrate it than by coming out to carol under the able leadership of Anthony Bellov and Dayle Vander Sande.

The date is Wed., Dec. 21. Where? We'll gather in front of 865 West End Ave. at 7 p.m. Song sheets will be provided, or you can find a pdf on the home page of our website (w102-103blockassn.org).

We're not quite ready to convene indoors again for post-caroling refreshments, but, weather permitting, we'll enjoy a cup of hot cider and a little nibble under one of the many scaffolds that currently decorate our neighborhood. If you have a thermal carafe you're willing to lend, or for more information, write solstice@w102-103blockassn.org or call (212) 865-8524. If weather requires the event to be canceled, a notice will be posted on the Block Association website by 5 p.m. on Dec. 21.



We Need Your Support!

THE BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT! Aside from sponsoring our regular events (Halloween Parade and Party, solstice caroling, tree-well beautification, Spring Block Party), we also pay for a security service to patrol our blocks nightly. This is expensive but it seems more important than ever with the uptick of crime in our neighborhood. If you haven't joined the Block Association and/or haven't donated, please consider doing so now. If you have joined, consider upping your regular donation. And if your building is not listed on our back page as a contributor, please contact your co-op board or landlord and press them to pitch in. Let's keep our community safe and vibrant!

To join the Block Association and/or donate to it, go to w102-103blockassn.org or use the QR code above. Thank you!



Join Us

www.w102-103blockassn.org

The Newsletter Index Is Here!

WE'RE SO PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE that our newly created index is now available at our website. Huge thanks to neighbor Avery Hudson, who has put enormous effort into creating a well-functioning, comprehensive index of our newsletter archive. The index is not yet complete, but rather than wait till he's had the chance to complete the work on every one of the issues we've published in the 50 years we've existed, we can start using it while it's in progress. The current version covers newsletters printed from 2016 to the present. If you're interested in finding out which restaurants we've reviewed, or want to look up a reference to a building, a person, or a store on Broadway, you now can. Find the index in the Resources tab at our website (w102-103blockassn.org). If you have comments or suggestions—or just want to say thanks—you can email Avery at index@w102-103blockassn.org.

THE WEST 102ND & 103RD STREETS BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

info@w102-103blockassn.org

Hedy Campbell, editor; Amy Edelman, copy editor; Ariana Koblitz, designer; Terence Hanrahan, advertising manager; Avery Hudson, indexer. 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 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 assistance, call or text (347) 215-0453.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Solstice Caroling

Wed., Dec. 21, 7 p.m.
(see page 1)

Spring Newsletter

Early March

Annual Meeting

Tues., Mar. 21—tentative

Block Party

Mid-May

(see "Help Wanted," right)

Tree-Well Planting

Late May

(see "Help Wanted," right)

Help Wanted

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE MEMBERS/CONSULTANTS:

We were happy to reinstitute guard service following a long pandemic pause. But now we're in danger of having to cancel it again because of lack of funds. Contributions haven't rebounded to their pre-pandemic levels. We need someone who can invest some time and energy in helping us recover. If you don't want to join the committee but have fundraising expertise and would consider consulting with us, that would help, too!

SPRING BLOCK PARTY VOLUNTEERS:

The pandemic required us to cancel our last three block parties. We'd very much like to sponsor one this spring. In order to do that, we need several volunteers to help in advance of the event, processing vendor agreements, managing publicity, and placing flyers on cars so they know of the upcoming parking prohibition. On the day of the event, we'll need help with various functions such as set-up, staffing, and clean-up. Without additional, committed helpers, we're very sorry to admit that we just can't pull off an event of this scope.

SPRING TREE-WELL-PLANTING COORDINATOR:

The board member who had been doing a most excellent job with this expects to be out of town this spring. Hosting this event has a direct impact on what our blocks look like over the summer. We can pass along all sorts

of information from years past, so you wouldn't be starting from scratch, and have allocated a small budget to fund the purchase of plants and other supplies, but we need someone to pull the strings together.

DATABASE MANAGER:

We need someone to ride herd on our database. We actually have three different databases, and integrating them into a single, cogent entity is a priority. The time commitment to maintain the database on an ongoing basis as people change email addresses, move away, and so forth. is fairly small.

Please write info@w102-103blockassn.org to volunteer for any of these opportunities.

Updates

Open Street

AS REPORTED in the Fall Newsletter, the street-improvement-plan construction by NYC-DOT on the W. 103rd St. Open Street between Broadway and Riverside Dr. was to begin in late October. Weather and contractor delays foiled that plan; then a water main and sewer line broke in November on the Broadway block. As of press time, no new date for the resumption of construction has been set.

Guard Service

THE BOARD IS PERFORMING its annual review of the security-guard service and is soliciting comments and ideas regarding the current level of service. We'd also like to hear from anyone who has prior experience contracting with, working with, or managing security personnel, as we could use your expertise going forward. Please send your comments to security@w102-103blockassn.org or call Bob at (212) 662-4046 and leave a message.

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 if you'd like to attend.

Dec. 13
Jan. 10
Feb. 14

From Our Readers

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

Who Knew?

Who knew that Open Streets was initiated when many of our neighbors fled the city because of the pandemic, when people were dying and our essential workers were giving their time to care for all of us?

Open Streets, a great idea for closing streets in under-served communities that lack open spaces.

Who knew that Open Streets was coming to W. 103rd, a narrow tree-lined street, next to one of the most beautiful parks in the city?

Who knew that Open Streets would remove 20 to 30 street parking spaces needed by neighborhood residents who cannot afford expensive local garages?

Who knew that when the West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association polled our neighbors, only 22% of their tiny sample favored Open Streets?

Who knew that our Community Board would vote on Open Streets for W. 103rd at an English-language-only Zoom meeting?

Who knew that our neighbor Peter Frishauf was on a dedicated multi-year campaign to make W. 103rd a permanent limited access street with reduced parking?

Not many.

But now, as our UWS neighbors are becoming aware of what's happening, hundreds are signing Upper West Siders for Street Parking petitions, to stop the removal of parking places.

Maxine DeSeta, Amy Rabbit, Enes Radoncic, and Herb Alter, UWS.for.Parking@gmail.com

[Editor's Note: In the survey conducted by the Block Association in September/October 2021, 22% represents the number of residents who opposed the Open Streets plan, not the number who favored it.]

Peter Frishauf Responds:

To Maxine, Amy, Enes, and Herb:

I am truly sorry you are unhappy with the NYC-DOT's plan to improve three blocks of our Open Street with some 30 planters overflowing with greenery; extended curbs to make crossing street intersections safer for walkers; and accessible, protected outdoor space for residents of the Marseilles at Broadway.

Well before DOT created this plan, thousands of people provided feedback over three years to the proposed improvements. Informational flyers in Spanish and English were distributed. Comments and reactions were solicited at dozens of events and interviews on the street. Numerous issues of this very newsletter contained information and articles about the proposals. An extensive survey was conducted by the Block Association (w102-103blockassn.org/open-streets-w-103rd-street.html)—I had nothing to do with creating the survey. Finally, DOT's plan was the subject of two well-attended and publicized meetings at Community Board 7. And approved, 38–1.

Your letter contains a few errors you should be aware of: The more than 100 miles of approved Open Streets exist in many communities, not just those "underserved." You state that "only 22%" of the Block Association's survey were in favor of Open Street. The opposite is true: Actually, 78% were in favor with "high" or "moderate" positives, while the 22% were those with a low opinion of the Open Street. You state the plan will remove "20 to 30" parking spaces; DOT states this number is 13, as shown in the specification/drawing signed by the city's chief engineer.

Finally, I am not on a campaign against parking: I support residential parking permits, I own a car, and for many years before I could afford a garage, I used street parking. I believe we need to look at the benefits of the Open Street for these three blocks.

Residents of the Marseilles—many of whom use walkers, motorized scooters, and wheelchairs to get about—will have a permanent parklet that wraps around the corner right outside their door. This beautiful outdoor space will be shared by Marseilles residents, the children attending the nonprofit Purple Circle Early Childhood Education Center—and neighbors.

We all benefit from slowing traffic speed on W. 103rd St. from the citywide 25 MPH speed limit to 5 MPH so that it can be shared safely with walkers (with or without dogs), those in wheelchairs, and bicyclists. Safety for walkers and bicyclists is an urgent priority: Approximately 43,000 New Yorkers are injured and more than 200 are killed each year in traffic crashes (so far, 220 were killed between January and mid-November of this year, according to NYC-DOT). Being struck by a vehicle is the leading cause of injury-related death for children under 14, and the second leading cause for seniors. The street design approved by CB7 that slows traffic and prioritizes safety for walkers has been proven to reduce this carnage in New York—and all over the world.

Change means adjustment. Here's hoping that by replacing metal barricades with beautiful planters, and improving safety at intersections, along with other traffic-calming and attractive features, everyone will come to appreciate and enjoy the benefits of this improvement in our vibrant community.

Peter Frishauf
Volunteer Coordinator
Park to Park 103
Parktopark103.nyc
parktopark103@gmail.com

Halloween Rides Again!

By MARY CHESTARO COSS

WHAT A GREAT HALLOWEEN PARADE and party we had this year! I want to thank everyone who volunteered to help plan, decorate, set up, and break down the event.

BIG THANKS to Bob Aaronson, Peter Frishauf and KC Rice, April Oh from Street Plans, Maria Schwab (our new neighbor on W. 103rd St.), and Connor Stewart and Ibrahim Danso for all the planning and decorating support. Thank you to Amy Edelman, Terence Hanrahan, Cynthia Doty, and Sue Maderer for setting up and managing the Block Association table.

Thanks to my neighbor Jill Chase for supplying homemade baked goods. Thanks to Gay Haubner, who doesn't even live in our territory, for jumping in to make sure Spooky Storytime lived on.

Special thanks to my personal friends who donated their talent to perform for our neighborhood kids: Anthony and Ken, the talented balloon artists; Olivia Rubbo, from Mind Body Music; and stilt walker Max *and all the bubbles!*

Both my husband, Will, and I appreciate the collaborative effort to pull off another great event!

Until next time...



Photos: Will Coss

Barking Day, 2022: W. 103rd Goes to the Dogs

By ODETTE VENEZIANO

THE FIRST CHILLY DAY of winter on the W. 103rd St. Open Street was no match for the warm hearts and joy that came to our block between Broadway and West End Ave. just before Thanksgiving.

Many activities were enjoyed by the four-legged set and the two-legged friends who love them, but the Animal Care Center (nycacc.org) adoption van and staff stole the show. By day's

end, there were 15 adoptions (13 cats and two dogs), a load of donations of toys, pet food, and funding for this most caring organization. And several people volunteered their services at the ACC Manhattan shelter in East Harlem. Big thanks to our generous neighbors and everyone who helped make this happen. The pictures tell it all.



Odette Veneziano, professional photographer and Park to Park 103 volunteer, took portraits of beloved pets. Contact her at odettev@me.com. Photo: Peter Frishauf



Photos: Odette Veneziano



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On Broadway

By KEITH TAURO

OPEN

- **Kyuramen**, the new ramen spot on the west side of Broadway between W. 107th and W. 108th Sts., is now open for lunch and dinner, seven days a week.
- **Broadway Taekwondo Martial Arts** is a new martial-arts studio on the east side of Broadway between W. 105th and W. 106th Sts. It is on the second floor, on the same block as Silver Moon Bakery.
- **Wingstop**, the counter-service chicken-wing chain, recently opened a branch just north of Schatzie's, on the west side of Broadway between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts.

Just Pho You: Passion in a Pot

By DAYLE VANDER SANDE

HAVE YOU EVER HAD a secret find that you don't want the whole world to know about but that you're busting to share with everyone you encounter? For me, that would be the new Vietnamese restaurant Just Pho You, on the east side of Broadway between W. 100th and W. 101st Sts. Here is a five-star-quality restaurant masquerading as a neighborhood place that is sure to become my go-to for dining out with friends and guests.

Pho is a Vietnamese broth rich in flavors that is considered an art form to concoct. Proprietor Wan Chen spent years researching and perfecting her recipe to achieve her complex, full-bodied signature broth, comprising beef bone marrow or chicken broth (or mushroom-based broth for vegetarians) and infused with herbs that leaves your tummy singing.

Born in the Guangxi region of China—an area renowned for its fine, diverse gastronomy—Chen emigrated to Boston at age 11. Eventually, through her boyfriend's family, she learned the character of authentic

CHANGES

- **One Medical**, the primary-care provider with locations across the city, appears to finally be setting up on the west side of Broadway between W. 99th and W. 100th Sts.
- **Isaac ScissorHands** barber shop has moved to the north side of W. 100th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave.
- **Dunkin' Donuts/Baskin Robbins** appears to be taking over the spot formerly occupied by 16 Handles, on the northeast corner of Broadway and W. 98th St.
- **Wolfnights**, the gourmet-wrap/bowl place on the west side of Broadway between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts., has moved to evening-only hours (5 p.m. to midnight, seven days a week).

Vietnamese cuisine, which she felt was largely lacking in the States, even here in New York City. Her lifelong dream of opening a restaurant now had a clear mission.

Though the pandemic delayed her ability to find a place to start up, fortunately for us, her long search across the city led her back here, her own neighborhood, where her new restaurant is helping make Bloomingdale a banqueting destination and, dare I say, elevating our stature.

The menu is rather small, yet you should find something just to your liking, and if you have certain restrictions, accommodations will be made. I tried the Signature Pho-Grand (\$19), which is a beef bone broth, with the choice of various cuts of beef: beef eye round, brisket, flank, tenderloin, or meatballs. Since it was not my carb day, I asked for the dish without noodles. (Next time, I'll schedule better!) Scallion, onion, cilantro, bean sprouts, Thai basil, lime, and jalapeño are served on the side so as not to reduce the temperature of the broth.

As for appetizers, I tried the
(continued on next page)

CLOSED

- **Cascabel Taqueria**, the taco restaurant on the southwest corner of Broadway and W. 108th St., is closed.
- **Café Viva**, the longtime pizza, pasta, and subs place on the east side of Broadway between W. 97th and W. 98th Sts., has shut.

HEALING ARTS

Lauren Stahl

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9PM

(continued from previous page)

Just Pho You

Lemongrass Chicken Wings (\$8), which were the best wings I have ever had, bar none! Even if you do not like lemongrass, its inclusion is delicate and merely lends a depth to the garlicky, buttery flavor. My dining partner was overjoyed by the pork banh mi sandwich (\$13), which was large enough for two meals. The meat is choice; the pork liver pâté has a foie-gras taste, and the pickled vegetables make it light and refreshing. And, happily, the quality bread comes from the Silver Moon Bakery just up the street.

There are several vegetarian and vegan options as well, including Signature Pho—Vegetarian (\$15); Fried Tofu with Vegan Sauce (\$15); and tofu banh mi (\$12). There is also a kids' menu.

Prices range from \$7 to \$16 for appetizers; and \$15 to \$19 for entrees. Monday to Friday there are lunch

specials 12–3 p.m., and dine-in happy hour is 3–6 p.m., with reduced prices for their select wine and beer choices. Try their Vietnamese coffee, hot or iced, too!

The Best Way To Enjoy

JPY Pho

Our signature pho is made with a concentrated, rich beef bone marrow broth infused with herbs.

Before garnishing, taste the broth to enjoy the richness and complexity of flavors:

- ➡ Add bean sprouts in small amounts, since they will dilute and cool the broth. (Cooked bean sprouts available upon request)
- ➡ De-stem Thai basil leaves and add to the broth.
- ➡ Squeeze in lime, to your preference.
- ➡ Dip the meat in your choice of sriracha and hoisin sauce as needed.

Happy slurping!

Advice on the best way to enjoy pho.

Photo: Dayle Vander Sande

Chen's love of fine food, unstoppable drive, and keen business acumen have resulted in a dream come true, one that she loves to share. Her customers' approval is her greatest reward, and she will aim to make your dining experience a memorable delight.

When not in the kitchen or serving

patrons, Chen dedicates her energies to the Public Safety Patrol (of which she is president), a civilian organization established last year in response to the rise in hate crimes toward Asians (publicsafetypatrol.org). With the immense passion and devotion that produces such fine delectation, there should be no doubt left in your mind that this restaurant is Just Pho You!

Just Pho You: 2656 Broadway (between W. 100th and W. 101st Sts.); justphoyounyc.com; (646) 822-5178 or (646) 822-5177. Open daily, 12–9 p.m.



Photo: Peter Frishauf

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It's Not Too Late to Travel into the Past

ON OCT. 11, THE BLOCK ASSOCIATION hosted Anthony Bellov's entertaining and informative lecture "Up the Bloomingdale Road." In his Zoom presentation, Anthony, whose vast knowledge of neighborhood history, architecture, and myriad other arcane topics never fails to impress, traced the evolution of the Bloomingdale Road both geographically and through time. Anecdotes, archival maps, photographs, and other visuals complemented his fascinating remarks. In just under an hour, we learned more about how the early thoroughfare shaped our neighborhood than we could imagine.

A link to the video of Anthony's

BAiP Presents: December Event

BLOOMINGDALE AGING IN PLACE (BAiP) is offering the following Zoom presentation on Thurs., Dec. 15, at 4 p.m.:

Linda Seidel, PhD,

Hanna Holborn Gray Professor Emerita Medieval and Northern Renaissance Art University of Chicago and leader of the BAiP Picturing an Exhibition groups, on "Starry Nights and Moonlit Skies: Painting After Dark"

To attend this presentation and/or to take advantage of the many different BAiP-sponsored activities (including exercise, art, and discussion groups, and more), become a member! Go to bloomingplace.org

talk is on the home page of the Block Association website (w102-103blockassn.org).

If you want to dive even more deeply into the topic, visit the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group's website. Pam Tice, former executive director of the Hostelling International property at Amsterdam Ave. and W. 104th St., wrote a comprehensive article about the historic Bloomingdale Road route: upperwestsidehistory.org/blogs/march-30th-2021.

Be a Good Neighbor

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE that anyone who lives on our blocks needs to be reminded that since there are a lot of us living in relatively close quarters, our individual acts carry a lot of weight. But it seems like the occasional refresher course can't hurt.

- Top on everyone's list: Pick up after your dog!
- Move your car according to the alternate-side schedule. When cars aren't moved, the street sweeper can't come through and do its job. The rats love it when that happens.
- Snow is coming: Every building has a snow-removal responsibility to take seriously. It contributes to the well-being—or peril—of every single person who is trying to navigate the sidewalk.

If you have a point to add, please write editor@w102-103blockassn.org.

Donation Opportunities:

Give to a Child in Need

One of our residents and a former board member has a long history with the Department of Justice's annual toy drive and has asked us for our support. We're happy to give it and hope you will be as well. Please donate new or gently used toys and items for children residing in a women's shelter. Items should cost no more than \$20 and be suitable for children up to the age of 16. Donations of gift-wrapping paper are also welcome. Items can be marked for "Camille" and dropped off at 305 Riverside Dr. between now and Tues., Dec. 13. There will be a gift-wrapping party on Wed., Dec. 14, and anyone who would like to join is welcome. If you have any questions, please feel free to call (646) 345-5209 and leave a message.

Donate Items for Asylum Seekers

The St. Francis Thrift Store at Amsterdam and W. 97th St. is collecting winter clothing and shoes for all ages, backpacks, toiletries, first-aid supplies, over-the-counter pediatric medications, and sanitary supplies for the many families that were bused up here from Texas over the past few months. You can bring your items (please, nothing broken, torn, or stained), labeled for the "asylum seekers," to the thrift store's doorway on the south side of W. 97th St. between Amsterdam Ave. and Broadway, Wed.–Sun., 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The thrift store then offers these items free of charge to asylum seekers from all over the city.

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Our 2022 Zero-Waste Gift Guide

By SHARON WASKOW,
IT'S EASY BEING GREEN

LOOKING FOR PLANET-FRIENDLY GIFT IDEAS for the holidays and special occasions? Look no further. Here is our updated guide for gifts that won't hurt the planet and hopefully will bring a smile to the receiver. *How do we produce zero waste? Aim to send nothing to a landfill, reduce what we need, reuse as much as we can, send little to be recycled, and compost what we cannot.*

Give gift certificates for experiences instead of things. Some local options include:

- Sessions for adults and children at Skill Mill NYC (skillmillnyc.com) at 949 Amsterdam Ave., between W. 106th and W. 107th Sts. Adults can learn 3D design, how to prototype an idea, and more. Kids' offerings include STEM classes and camps to learn engineering with paper and cardboard and other hands-on projects.
- Online baking classes with Silver Moon Bakery owner Judith Norell: silvermoonbakery.com
- Robotics, anyone? Gift children and grandchildren sessions at Robofun (robofun.org), 2672 Broadway, Loft A (between W. 101st and W. 102nd Sts.), (212) 245-0444.
- Music lessons at Bloomingdale School of Music (bsmny.org), 323 W. 108th St. (between Riverside Dr. and Broadway)
- Dance classes for all ages at Bridge for Dance (bridgefordance.com), 2726 Broadway, third floor (between W. 104th and W. 105th Sts.)

Offer to share your time/skills and expertise. These suggestions involve little or no money and no waste!

- Help someone declutter and organize a closet.
- Share a skill you have: cooking, knitting, drawing, computer expertise, and so forth.
- Offer to babysit for a series of parents' nights out.
- Know how to fix things, hang pictures, mend? Offer your help.

Make a donation in honor of someone to a charity of their choice. Some worthy local nonprofits include:

- West Side Campaign Against Hunger (wascah.org)
- City Harvest (cityharvest.org)
- Riverside Park Conservancy (riversideparknyc.org)
- NYC Audubon (nycaudubon.org)
- GrowNYC (grownyc.org)

Give books about the climate crisis and a zero-waste lifestyle. Consult "The Year You Finally Read About Climate Change" from *The New York Times* (nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/climate-change-books.html) and the book list from the Green Dreamer podcast (greendreamer.com/journal/zero-waste-lifestyle-books) on how to follow a zero-waste lifestyle.

Give subscriptions to music services such as Spotify, Apple Music, or Amazon Music; or to Audible, for access to audiobooks and podcasts.

For kids young and older: Look for plastic-free toys from companies such as Plan Toys (plantoys.com), Green

Toys (greentoys.com), Begin Again Toys (beginagain.toys). Cultivate older children's interest in nature with pairings of binoculars and print guides to birds or trees; gardening tools and native plant seed; or cameras and family hikes.

For fashionistas on your list: Hunt for designer treasures in Michael's, at 1125 Madison Ave. (between E. 84th and E. 85th Sts.), a consignment store with zero-waste messages in their windows. Or try Ina, at 207 W. 18th St. (between Seventh and Eighth Aves.), for an eclectic mix. Our local Housing Works, at 2569 Broadway (between W. 96th and W. 97th Sts.), is a good source for used goods and clothes, too.

A note on wrapping gifts: Everyone likes to untie a ribbon and open a present picked out for them. Save wrapping paper and ribbon and reuse for new gifts. Or wrap creatively with paper/cloth you have on hand (newspaper/paper bags/ cloth/twine). Remember: Bows with stickum, foil wrapping paper, and paper with texture do not break down in landfill. These are generally the rolls you buy in threes at convenience stores.

Best wishes from It's Easy Being Green for a healthy, sustainable, and safe holiday!

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 NYC environmental information and tips for a greener lifestyle (itseasybeinggreen.org).

JAMES PEREZ

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Meet Your Talented Neighbors

By JULIA C. SPRING

DEB RABBAI

The improvised musical-comedy award show *Broadway's Next Hit Musical* returns on Sun., Jan. 15, 9:30 p.m., at Studio 54 (254 W. 54th St.). The first act features Phony Award—nominated songs based on audience suggestions. The second is an improv musical based on the winning song chosen by the audience. The cast features some of the best New York improvisers, including Deb. Tickets and info: 54below.com or broadwaysnexthitmusical.com

ANTHONY BELLOV

Anthony's first talk at the Salmagundi Club, the oldest surviving mansion on Fifth Ave., was a success this past October. He has now been asked to be the building detective/domestic archaeologist and give two more talks on its history, based on the many physical and archival discoveries about its incarnations and the families who lived there. Part One, the pre-Salmagundi history of the area, the building, and its architecture is now at youtu.be/cI_GEOU-m7w. Part Two examines the sumptuous parlor floor and the main bedrooms. It will be presented on Tues., Jan. 27, 6:30 p.m. Tickets, free to the public, will go fast. Go to salmagundi.org or call (212) 255-7740. Both Parts 2 and 3 (topic TBD) will also be uploaded to YouTube. In conjunction with the exhibit, Anthony's photos of the building and some surprising architectural details will be mounted from Mon., Jan. 16, to Mon., Jan. 30. The club is always free to the public during regular admission hours.

susan c. dessel

Her new piece, *Ha Lamaot (The Whys)*, will be seen for the first time in the group exhibit *Tzedek Boxes*, which will be open from Thurs., Jan. 19, to Thurs., May 18, at the Backman Gallery in the Heller Museum, 1 W. 4th St., (212) 824-2218. The Tzedek box is a new

ceremonial object, part of a ritual aimed at encouraging exercise of the Jewish call for justice. When a meaningful act of social justice is completed, the individual writes a diary entry about it and puts it in a Tzedek box. Once a year, on Yom HaTzedek, the individual opens the box to reflect on what has been and what still needs doing to build a more just world.

Note that if you visit the exhibit above on Jan. 26 for the 5–7 p.m. opening, you can then attend the launch party below at 7 p.m.—they are about four blocks apart on 4th St.

MARK WISH AND ELIZABETH COFFEY

Two print runs of their *Coolest American Stories* 2022 have sold out, and now *Coolest American Stories* 2023 is being launched at the KGB Bar, 85 E. 4th St., Thurs., Jan. 26, 7 p.m. You may preorder at Barnes & Noble or Amazon. Info at coolestamericanstories.com, including how to submit to the probable 2024 edition, starting in Jan. 2023.

MARY JO PAGANO

The Chamber Music Center of New York, which Mary Jo founded and directs, will present a free orchestra concert by its youth and teen musicians on Sat., Jan. 28, 7 p.m., at Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St., right at Lincoln Center. Works by Haydn, Gluck, and more. For more information: chambermusiccenter.org

DAYLE VANDER SANDE AND ANTHONY BELLOV

The Bond Street Euterpean Singing Society presents a gala concert, *Love in the Parlors*, of lush, romantic vocal music performed in the Merchant's House Museum's elegant Greek Revival double parlor on Valentine's Day, Tues., Feb. 14, 7 p.m. The ensemble, including Dayle and Anthony, performs rarely heard gems by the world's greatest 19th-century

composers, including Schumann, Rossini, Tchaikovsky, Amy Beach, and Johann Strauss II. The concert has been chosen by *TimeOut NY* as a top pick for Valentine's Day. More info and tickets are at merchantshouse.org.

LINDA SEIDEL

Linda's new book, *Vincent's Arles: As It Is and as It Was*, follows Van Gogh through the southern French town of Arles, where he lived during the winter of 1888 and the spring of 1889. The reader is led past sites he portrayed on countless canvases and in many letters. A blend of art, history, and travel, the book is available in March from its publisher, the University of Chicago Press (press.uchicago.edu/index.html), Barnes & Noble, and Amazon.

NEW PLAZA CINEMA

has moved to CUNY's Macaulay Honors College, 35 W. 67th St. For current features, showtimes, and other details: newplazacinema.org

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