As Reserves Dwindle, We Reach Out for New Members

By David L. Reich

In April of this year and again in July, members of the Board of your Block Association set up a table alongside our new banner in one of our apartment building lobbies to recruit new members. First we visited 310 Riverside Drive and then 885 West End Avenue. In addition to publicizing our activities, the main reason was one of simple economics: our expenses have been outstripping our income for the past several years. To continue our services to the community, we need a higher level of participation.

There are about 2000 households in our district. Of them, only about 15% make a personal contribution to the Block Association in a year. The suggested amount is $25 a quarter, easily donated with the envelope included in each copy of this Newsletter. Some are able to give that amount, a few are exceptionally generous and some give occasionally or not at all.

In addition to the individual contributions, we also receive donations from the co-op boards or owners of buildings in the district. These amounts range from $4 to $15 per unit per year from the larger apartment houses which choose to make a contribution. Others do not. Some of the smaller buildings make larger per-unit contributions but many of the non-resident landlords donate nothing to the Block Association.

On the expense side, the street security guard represents about 90% of our annual budget. The reserve funds in our account arose from a period when our previous security company ceased providing its services for several months as the result of a dispute which was eventually settled to our satisfac-

This year’s Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the Marseilles, 230 W. 103rd Street. The subject and speakers will be announced by flyer in the weeks just before the meeting. Pencil in the date and time NOW!

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Editor’s note: Elizabeth Kaiden lives on W. 102nd St. with her husband and two young children. A freelance drama critic before moving to this neighborhood, she will soon open a nearby daycare center in response to a need she encountered when her first child was born. This article is an outgrowth of her preparation for her new business.

Seeking Options for Work and Child Care

By Elizabeth Kaiden

Julie Siegmund and Steve Friedman both work from home: she designs jewelry and he is a musician and systems engineer. Three years ago, when their son Matthew was one and a half, they put him in Mudpies, a small daycare on 97th Street. [Daycares take infants and toddlers; preschools take children from two to five years old.]

“We needed Matthew out of the house. We wanted flexibility, not a full-time schedule. We wanted a fun, safe, home-like environment with kids of different ages. We went; we liked what we saw; we signed him up.”

Their daughter Rebecca came along three years later, and Julie and Steve were excited about having the two children together. Then they learned...
Block Association Teams Collect Environmental Data

By David L. Reich

In cooperation with the ComNET™ (Computerized Neighborhood Environment Tracking) project of the Fund for the City of New York (FCNY), your Block Association joined with the W. 104th St. Block Association to collect data on street-level problems in our neighborhood.

Cynthia Doty, Kathy Ralph and David Reich and three residents of the St. Luke’s House (Jimmy, Philip and Greg) were joined by three neighbors from W. 104th Street at a training session on June 24th in the Master Apartments lobby.

Barbara Cohn, a vice president at FCNY, led off with an overview of ComNET™. The program was developed so that government officials could find out about the priorities for fixing street-level problems from the people who live in the neighborhoods. Several schools and community groups in New York City are already participating. The program is also being used in other cities in the US.

Joyce Klemperer, also from FCNY, went into the details of data collection. On the basis of earlier discussions, the routes of our survey had been mapped out and entered into the computers. About 300 categories of problems such as sidewalk trip hazards, potholes, and damaged tree guards were also programmed into the computers.

Did you know that a bollard is a short metal post embedded in the sidewalk to protect a fire hydrant from damage by errant parkers? Did you know that ponding is the term to describe water near the curb that doesn’t drain away after it rains? Or that the hole in the street through which rainwater should drain away is a catch basin? We quickly learned the nomenclature and then heard from an FCNY technical representative on the procedures to be followed in using the hand-held computers supplied by FCNY for the survey.

Then it was out on the street in three teams covering W. 102nd, 103rd and 104th Streets from the Riverside Drive service road to Broadway and West End Avenue and the service road between those streets. The idea was to precisely record the problems we found by type and location. We traded off the responsibilities of spotting, categorizing and recording the problems and occasionally took a photo of the problem area with the camera in the computer.

The team on W. 103rd Street encountered some kids while doing the survey. At first it looked as if the kids might interfere with the data collection but soon they were asking questions and offering to help. Environmentalists in the making!

After two hours, the teams returned to our training location to upload the data into FCNY’s laptop. There had been many more problems to record than we expected so parts of our routes had not been completed. We scheduled an additional session on the street to finish the survey two days later. When that was done, Cynthia returned all the computers to FCNY headquarters downtown where the final data were uploaded.

The remaining process involves updating the data to correct errors or to reflect changes that occurred after the survey. Perhaps it was just coincidence, but several of the broken and hazardous sidewalks that we recorded have already been fixed even though we have not yet put our data to use. Once the data are confirmed, we will be able to produce reports to alert appropriate New York City agencies to the problems that need repair in our neighborhood.

If you are interested in participating in the follow-up to this survey or in future surveys, please contact Cynthia Doty at cldoty@aol.ocm or (212) 749-4085.

County Fair on the Upper West Side

Under the sponsorship of the City of New York Parks & Recreation Department, a “County Fair” is coming to the plaza in front of the pier in Riverside Park South on Sunday, September 19.

The park stretches along the Hudson River from 65th Street to 72nd Street. The M5 bus on Riverside Drive stops near W. 72nd Street southbound and northbound. From there it is an easy stroll into the park at about W. 70th Street.

Activities will include rides, food, pony rides, a petting zoo and live country music. The fair will be in operation from noon to 6:00 p.m.

The West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association Newsletter

Published four times a year. David L. Reich, editor. Comments and questions related to the Association or Newsletter are welcomed. Send US Mail to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1940, New York, NY 10025 or email to dlreich@earthlink.net. Phone messages may be left at (212) 866-5769 or faxes may be directed to (212) 866-5916. Recent issues of the Newsletter may be seen at //www.bloomingdale.org/newsletter102-103.htm
Fire Department Memorial Service to be Held at Fireman’s Monument

The 92nd Annual Memorial Service for deceased members of the Department will be held at the Fireman’s Monument, 100th Street and Riverside Drive, on Wednesday, October 13, 2004, at 11 a.m.

This ceremony, which was cancelled in 2001 in the wake of the September 11 attacks and was held at Madison Square Garden in 2002, has long been a tradition in our neighborhood. Large numbers of Fire Department personnel in dress uniforms march with bagpipe bands on Riverside Drive to the monument for wreath-laying and brief speeches.

According to the Fire Department’s website, The Fireman’s Monument was built at the suggestion of the right Reverend Henry C. Potter, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of New York on the occasion of the funeral of Deputy Chief Charles W. Kruger. Chief Kruger was killed in the line of duty in 1908 while battling a fire in Lower Manhattan. Resting on a high foundation, the memorial is flanked by two marble sculptures symbolizing duty and sacrifice. The inscription on the easterly side of the monument reads: “To the men of the Fire Department of the City of New York who died at the call of duty, soldiers in a war that never ends, This memorial is dedicated by the people of a grateful city.” The monument was completed in 1913.

The public is invited to observe the marchers on Riverside Drive and the ceremonies at the monument.

Nearby Farmers’ Markets Offer Tasty Produce

A recent poll reported that 85% of us don’t eat the recommended amount of produce. Perhaps the reason is that much of the produce available in stores is not that fresh or tasty.

Here on the Upper West Side it’s a gamble to find really good produce. However, two farmers’ markets currently in operation in our extended neighborhood can improve your odds.

The closer market is on W. 97th St. stretching west of Columbus Avenue. It is open on Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., all year, with 13 stands recently in operation. Local produce is seasonal, so at the end of August they were displaying peaches, pears, plums and several varieties of apples. Tomatoes, common and heirloom, and corn were big draws among vegetables. A turkey farmer offered samples of cooked sausage. There were two bakers and two dairies had small stands with yogurts and goat cheese.

The other market is on the east side of Broadway between W. 114th and W. 115th Streets. It operates Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., all year, and on

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Wuorinen’s *Haroun* Set for City Opera World Premiere


Now, Charles Wuorinen, a district resident, has composed an opera based on this story with a libretto adapted by the British poet James Fenton. It will have its world premiere at the New York City Opera under the direction of Mark Lamos on the afternoon of Sunday, October 31. *Haroun* is scheduled to run for another four performances in November.

Wuorinen was born in New York City, went to Columbia University and has lived on West End Avenue since 1968. He started composing at the age of five. At sixteen he received the New York Philharmonic’s Young Composer Award. Another sixteen years later he became the youngest person to receive the Pulitzer Prize for music when, in 1970, it was awarded for his electronic composition, *Time’s Encomium*.

Rushdie’s story is described on the City Opera’s website: “It is a powerful tribute to the importance of free speech and independent thought, and it is also a magical tale about the love between a parent and his child.” Librettist James Fenton, who happens to be a friend of Rushdie, recounts (also on the website), “When I was contacted and asked if I would write a libretto based on *Haroun*, I was not at all surprised that a composer should wish to set this book, for I had already thought what a good musical it would make. Indeed there is music, and there is poetry, already in the story, and I have tried to incorporate all or most of it....”

Proposal Offered to Assist At-Risk Residents

By Murrey Targownik

The New York City Fire Department (“NYFD”) maintains a Critical Information Dispatch System (“CIDS”) to assist in fighting fires. CIDS provides firefighters with necessary information regarding a building’s description, classification and any hazards the building may have. The system can also be used to store information regarding residents in a building who could not get out without assistance.

In our neighborhood, some buildings, for example, those managed by Greenthal Management, currently maintain such a list and the lobby personnel of the building can give the list to the NYFD upon their arrival. However, buildings that do not have 24-hour lobby personnel may leave any at-risk residents at a greater danger.

Your Block Association would like to help these residents by acting as liaison between our neighborhood and the NYFD. We suggest that each building’s co-op board, tenant’s organization or management group prepare a list that specifies which apartments have tenants that need assistance. The list should be sent to the Block Association, Attention: Emergency Preparedness. Please identify a building contact for updates to the list. We will arrange for the NYFD to store that information in CIDS and will request and send updated information at regular intervals to the NYFD.

Haroun, Wuorinen’s second opera, takes its place alongside more than 200 pieces for orchestras and bands, chamber groups, solo instruments, electronics and voice in Wuorinen’s prodigious canon. Once the new listener accepts the departure from traditional melodic practice, there is astonishment and delight to be had in the kaleidoscope of rhythms, tonal juxtapositions and instrumentations.

This is music that demands attention and rewards it with revelations. Wuorinen scoffed at advertising of the New York Philharmonic inviting harried office workers to come to a concert to relax. “If they want to relax they should go to a spa or a bar,” he said. He described playing his music for third graders in a public school. “They loved it and wanted more, more,” he said. “No one had told them it was difficult, so it wasn’t.”
Seeking Options for Work and Child Care

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that Matthew would be the oldest child there by two years (the ages of the children vary from year to year). They signed up Rebecca and looked around for something else. It turned out to be Basic Trust on W. 99th St.

These are two of the most highly regarded daycares in the neighborhood. Both Joan Cosellin of Mudpies and Peggy Sradnick of Basic Trust are the kind of people parents rave about for years after their children move on. Both programs are almost always full and almost always have waiting lists, as do many others.

They are also expensive. Full-time daycare can cost more than $20,000 a year at Basic Trust. That covers 50 weeks a year, though, and most parents end up concluding that is the price of living in New York City. Still, it is a struggle for many.

Nancy Kolben is the director of Child Care Inc., a not-for-profit organization that provides information and support to childcare providers and childcare seekers. A long-time resident of West 115th Street, Ms. Kolben says: “Our parent counselors are reporting that 60% of their calls come from parents of children under the age of three. These parents are often looking for center-based care, and they are calling because they can’t afford care. The Upper West Side was one of the first places in New York to develop childcare in the 1970s and 80s. The challenge has been to keep these services affordable for families.”

This problem has increased as rental costs have risen. Centers have struggled to stay afloat; fewer exist now than 20 years ago. Those that have held on have raised their prices to make ends meet. They can do that partly because the supply shortage has led to an increase in demand for those that continue to operate.

According to Amy Flynn, director of the Bank Street Family Center, “What I have seen change over the years is that now there is a larger need for parents to have childcare outside their homes. We turn people away every year. There are plenty of preschools and programs for 3-4 year olds, but not nearly enough for infants and toddlers, especially infants. There are simply not enough spaces.”

The Bank Street Family Center was established to serve members of its own community. Originally, that meant a handful of staff children and a majority from the neighborhood. Ms. Flynn notes that the staff now use about half the spots: “Bank Street is primarily an institution of women and over the years the staff has gotten younger. Now, a lot of our community is parents of young children.”

Child Care Inc. offered the following information about programs in the 10025 zip code: there are 88 family childcare centers with a capacity of 528 children, 38 group family childcare programs with a capacity of 380, and 12 community-based pre-K programs with a capacity of 620. That makes for a total capacity of about 1530. In comparison, the number of children under five years old recorded by the 2000 Census in the same area was about 4400.

The growth in demand for daycare can be attributed to several factors: women returning to the workforce when their children are younger, more homes with two working parents, more people working from home, as well as the close of centers launched in the 1970s and 80s.

Peggy Sradnick of Basic Trust adds: “It goes in waves. You started hearing that daycare centers were dangerous..."
A Neighbor’s Efforts Pay Off for a Quieter Night

This is a story with a happy ending.

Early in June, a change occurred in the trash collection schedule at West End Studios, a hotel at 850 West End Avenue. The hotel had changed their private carter and the new one, Five Star Carting, began picking up the trash with a very noisy truck between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m. twice a week. What to do?

Long-time resident Laura Hanrahan tried the usual routes. She called 311 and filed a complaint with the City’s Department of Environmental Protection. She contacted the managements of the hotel and the carting company. Local elected officials were contacted to help resolve the problem. Then she sent an email to the Mayor’s Office and copied other agencies. Carolyn Loomis, in the Mayor’s Office replied.

Laura picks up the story: “From there I received follow-up phone calls from the DEP until, at last report, the inspectors had gone out to Five Star’s home base in Maspeth, cited them on some other violations, and asked them to change their schedule for West End Ave. I guess it worked because on Monday night (not Tuesday morning!) at 10:44 p.m., the truck arrived for the trash removal. Last night, Thursday, the pickup was at 10:57 p.m.” Persistence appears to have paid off. Laura hopes the new schedule will be maintained so the neighbors around West End Ave. and W. 102nd St. can sleep a bit easier.
Seeking Options for Work and Child Care

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and people began to hire nannies. Then there were all those nanny-cam scares and people started looking for centers again.”

This is not an easy decision for many, nor is going back to work. When I had my first child, I wanted a place where I could interact with other working adults, without leaving my baby behind. I also needed a flexible schedule that could adjust as my freelance workload varied. I found nothing, so I took matters into my own hands.

I am starting a new childcare center for the neighborhood: Two Rooms will open late in the fall at W. 94th St. and Amsterdam Ave. It offers daycare with a twist – a Parents’ Center for parents who work freelance, outfitted with a full complement of office resources, and drop-in usage.

Most of the neighborhood programs offer full-day care. Some allow parents to sign on for fewer than five days, or for shorter days. Many offer flexibility off the record.

In almost all cases, there is general consensus among both daycare directors and parents about what makes a good center. Look first at the staff. If they appear to enjoy what they do, if they are not saddled with too many children, if they are knowledgeable and professional, if they are fully engaged, chances are you will get good care.

Then, look at the facilities and the community. Is there regular use of a pleasant outdoor space in close proximity? Do the children have enough room to move around and play? Do they interact with each other? Is the atmosphere relaxed?

Peggy Sradnick adds one additional piece of advice: Make sure a daycare center for infants and toddlers is not trying to be a school. “Rather than seeing the inherent value of children and childhood,” she says, “daycare is trying to compete with the schools. They start doing curriculums for babies. What happens organically for babies in terms of attachment and exposure to life is enough. Daycare should do a little school, but also a little family, a little neighborhood, a little backyard.”

King and Queen Coming to W. 103rd Street

As part of the outdoor exhibition “Tom Otterness on Broadway,” two of the sculptor’s large bronze statues, “King” and “Queen,” will take up residence on the Broadway Mall at W. 103rd Street from September 20 through November 22.

The statues will stand about six feet tall and will be easily accessible. Each figure has a moneybag head blazoned with a dollar sign, carrying out a familiar Otterness motif. The King, bulging in his vest, wears a bow tie. The Queen wears a large necklace and carries an oversized penny as an emblem of her realm.

In all, 25 sculptures will be installed in the Malls from W. 60th Street to W. 168th Street at 21 locations all sponsored by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, The Broadway Mall Association and Marlborough Gallery.

Otterness, whose studio is in DUMBO in Brooklyn, has many public pieces in Manhattan at locations including the A/C/E/L subway station platforms at 14th Street and Eighth Avenue, the Hilton Times Square hotel and the Nelson Rockefeller State Park in Battery Park City.
On Broadway

Openings and Closings: ✪ ✪ The Metro movie theater on the east side of Broadway between W. 99th and W. 100th Streets has closed again. The theater and the building just to the north (2628) may be in line to be developed together since they appear to be controlled by the same person. Community Board 7 had no information as to what may be planned at that site. ✪ ✪ The variety store on the northeast corner of Broadway and W. 101st St. has closed after a tenure of barely a year. The replacement is a men’s clothing store called Runway, operated by the former owner of Fow-ad, the discount clothing store that had long occupied the southeast corner of Broadway at W. 96th St. until it was replaced by a Washington Mutual bank. Adam, the owner, said that high rents had forced him first into a small store in part of the original Fow-ad space and then to this even smaller space further uptown. ✪ ✪ On the southeast corner of W. 108th St. and Broadway, Cannon’s Pub has closed after almost 70 years in operation. The family has sold the building, responding to the pressures of vanishing clientele and rising real estate values. ✪ ✪ Renovation of the large commercial space at the northwest corner of Broadway and W. 97th St., the former Wiz store, continues. Eckerd Drugs is expected to open in 14,000 square feet of space on two floors in November according to John Genovese, the real estate director for the company. Genovese Drugs was originally a family-run company headquartered on Long Island until it was merged into Eckerd five years ago. ✪ ✪ The former Josh’s Place on the west side of Broadway (2665) between W. 101st and W. 102nd St. has been vacant for about nine months. Now the space that once housed a kosher restaurant is being renovated. A new kitchen and other amenities are being built and the new occupant will be a French restaurant (according to one of the carpenters). ✪ ✪ For the record, shortly after our June issue went to press with a dire article on the fate of Suba Pharmacy (northwest corner of W. 104th St. and Broadway), 4000 signatures on petitions and the backing out of the replacement tenant (a bank) combined to give Mr. Suba the lease on life (8 years, at least) he was seeking. A follow-up celebration included goodies donated by Silver Moon Bakery, located on the northeast corner of Broadway and W. 105th St.

Going Down, Going Up: ✪ ✪ In late July, a strange machine landed in front of Gristedes on the west side of Broadway between W. 99th St. and W. 100th St. and began drilling into the sidewalk. Aliens? Oil prospectors? No, it was a company taking rock samples to a depth of about 35 feet for an unidentified client. The crew later did the same probing near the boarded-up building at 254 W. 100th St. on the south side of the street west of Broadway and also around the block on the north side of W. 99th St. These locations are all adjacent to property controlled by John Catsimatidis, the CEO of the company that owns Gristedes. The work seems to be in preparation for construction of a large building on the site. The store on Broadway is expected to close this fall. The nail salon just south of Gristedes on Broadway closed in August. ✪ ✪ At a public meeting in July, Bill Scott, the Deputy VP of Institutional Real Estate for Columbia University said that negotiations to lease space to a major supermarket in the faculty residence on Broadway at W. 103rd St. should be concluded in a few months. (The director of store development at C-Town said in a phone interview that they were not involved.) Of the other two retail spaces, one will go to a non-profit venture.

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Thank You, Members!

To all of our contributors, heartfelt thanks. Your donations keep the Block Association going and the guard on the street. Names of those who are “paid up” through the previous quarter (approximately) appear below; please let us know of errors. We ask that you please fill out the envelope stub completely (including your apartment number) and legibly when making your contribution (the stubs are the basis of our record-keeping) and indicate if you prefer anonymity.


Landlords/Co-ops: 235 W. 102 St., 240 W. 102 St., 247 W. 102 St., 249 W. 102 St., 315 W. 102 St., 250 W. 103 St., 308 W. 103 St., 309 W. 103 St., 317-319 W. 103 St., 855 West End Ave., 875 West End Ave., 878 West End Ave., 299 Riverside Dr., 300 Riverside Dr., 310 Riverside Dr.

Commercial: Bellov, Kay French Cleaners, Klara Madlin Real Estate, Mamma Mexico, Pan Asian Rep, Perez, Sorkin, Stoudenheimer, Wohlforth & Associates

Reserves Dwindle, BA Reaches Out

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...tion. That reserve has been dropping by about $3000 each year for the past three years and now stands at less than a three month cushion. While contributions come in from individuals throughout the year, the amounts from co-ops and landlords are less regular. We need a reserve to keep paying our bills while we encourage these organizations to support our activities.

It should be noted that our other major expense is the printing of the Newsletter and the contribution envelopes. With the increase in Newsletter pages, the support of our advertisers has been covering these costs.

In the coming months, the Block Association will seek to meet more of our neighbors at our table in lobbies and on sunny sidewalks. Please look for us, stop by, say hello, and JOIN!

Meanwhile, check the list at the left. If your name is not there, fill out your envelope and send in your check right away. If your landlord or co-op is not listed, let them know that you value our services. Ask your neighbors and your building to join the ranks of the contributors!

Farmers’ Markets

Continued from Page 3

Sundays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., July through December. Recently there were nine stands, mostly from upstate New York, carrying apples, berries, corn, tomatoes and other vegetables, herbs and flowers. Jams, baked goods and some dairy products were available as well.

As might be expected, some prices are higher than in chain supermarkets but for the many shoppers, the quality was worth it.