



Nightmare Continues For Some Residents On W. 103rd Street

By David L. Reich

Scaffolding is common on the Upper West Side but the Stop Work Orders on the door at 315 W. 103rd St. attest to something very different. While the work, to add two stories on top of the existing four and a six-story extension in the rear, was going on, the building was occupied.

In early 2009, the new owner, Jacob Avid, obtained a construction permit from the Department of Buildings by stating that the building was vacant though it had, and still has, several rent-regulated tenants. DOB halted the work in July 2009, but not before partial completion of the rear extension that impedes access of half the apartments to light and air. The construction also caused leaks and water damage in adjoining brownstones. DOB violations remain unresolved and thousands of dollars of fines are unpaid. One tenant, Mark Danna, reports that some apartments are being rented to tourists.

Tenants and other block residents, who want the building restored to its unmodified condition, have found Borough President Stringer's and Assemblymember O'Donnell's staff helpful but not Councilmember Dickens's.

Avid, in a phone interview, said he was contesting the fines and expects to continue work when DOB grants a permit. The project and the residents appear to be stalemated. To learn more, visit tinyurl.com/uwsconstruction.

The West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association

NEWSLETTER

Magic Wand Changes Hands, Halloween Enchantment Ensues

By Doug Rich

Sometimes, when something's been done in a certain way by a certain person for a long time, introducing change can invite all manner of chaos. But some kinds of mayhem are a good thing. For instance, the decision to close off W. 102nd St. between Riverside Dr. and West End Ave. for the annual Halloween Parade and Party two years ago, resulted in all sorts of magic. From the very first, the crowd made good use of the extra space to spread out. One at a time, the owners of the townhouses on the block got on board and began to adorn their stoops with pumpkins, ghostly spider webs, and eerie surprises. This year the enthusiasm spread further: at 308 W 103rd St., resident Alan Smith organized decorations and candy distribution.

Change in leadership yielded great results this year as well. Hedy Campbell, who efficaciously coordinated the event for the past twenty-odd years, successfully handed off her expertise and enthusiasm to Marc Reiner and me. Her strong leadership, guidance, and infinite wisdom made the transition seamless. At 6 o'clock sharp, on a crisp Halloween evening, Marc, dressed as a young Bruce Springsteen, kicked off the parade, leading more than 200 kids around the block to a finale of trick-or-treat bags, refreshments, and entertainment.

Many thanks to the numerous people who helped make the event a success.

Officers Pam White and Vincent Durante, 24th Precinct Community Affairs, supplied the police barriers and permission to close the street. The residents and staff of St. Luke's Addiction Institute provided tables, warmed cider, helped put up our banner, and assisted with cleanup. We thank them for their ongoing cooperation and contributions to the neighborhood. Sax Freymann carved a fantastic pumpkin for display on the refreshment table, which was groaning with treats donated by bakers Deborah Lott and Chris Kronish and many other thoughtful neighbors. Janet Harvilchuck delighted the littlest guests with not-too-spooky story time. Jill Chase commanded the refreshments table and the donations pumpkin.

As she has for many years, Cherie Tredanari again donated apples for the trick-or-treat bags. Marc Reiner donated tiny toys, and many neighborhood residents donated pounds and pounds

Continued on Page 4

BLOCK ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Regular Block Association meetings are held twelve times a year, usually on the second Tuesday of every month.

TIME: 8:00 p.m.
PLACE: 306 W. 102nd St.

The next three meetings are scheduled for Dec. 14, Jan. 11, and Feb. 8.

Smoke Offers Brunch, Dinner and All That Jazz

By Hedy Campbell

Not long ago, I noticed overflow crowds standing around in front of **Smoke**. I even heard strains of lively jazz on spring evenings when the front windows were open. But somehow it hadn't dawned on me that the club, on the west side of Broadway between W. 105th and W. 106th Sts., had evolved into such a swanky, swinging, swell destination. Known for some thirty years as a spot for highly regarded jazz (until 1998 the club was known as Augie's), Smoke now also lures music lovers with the original bar that runs the entire length of the room, velvet banquettes, white tablecloths, and excellent American bistro-style food.

Perhaps I hadn't paid attention to Smoke because I have an aversion to paying a cover charge. In fact, the only time there's a \$30 per-person fee on the bill is on Friday and Saturday nights. A \$20 per-person food and drink minimum is in effect on other nights such as at the 7 and 9 p.m. dinner seatings, when a two-course \$29.95 prix fixe dinner is offered. There is no cover or minimum at the weekend jazz brunches. If the food and atmosphere compel but you don't prefer a side of live music, swing in for a late lunch or early supper.

We opted to see what Smoke had to offer for brunch one Sunday. On being

seated, our first task was to figure out whose portrait hangs above the bar. While nibbling an extremely delectable array of breakfast breads that included a chocolate-dipped waffle and something wonderfully crispy and cinnamon-spiced, we came up with the answer: Etta James. A three-piece combo set up as we sipped our tea and coffee, served in pots that remained on the table. The music began and our entrées arrived soon (but not too soon) thereafter.

My pressed Cuban sandwich was expertly prepared. Another's omelet with Cheddar, bacon, and tomatoes was equally fine. The potatoes that came alongside were worth every carbolic-calorie. Two in our party ordered eggs Benedict, one traditional, one Spanish version, distinguished by the swap of Canadian bacon and English muffin for a not-excessively spicy hash of chorizo and fingerling potatoes. The oven-baked French toast with caramelized bananas Foster sauce at the next table looked appealing as well.

We all agreed that the portion size was just right: not so large as to induce sloth for the rest of the day but enough to satisfy. Although dessert was available (\$8-\$9), we all declined. Salads and other egg dishes and sandwiches round out the menu. The brunch entrées

Continued on Page 4

Buca: A New Italian Just Down the Street

By Terence Hanrahan

Neighborhood residents have a fine new option in the Italian category: **Buca**, a trattoria that opened recently on the north side of W. 103rd St. near Amsterdam Ave. in the space that once housed Backyard Chicken and then Casablanca. Although the specialty is brick-oven pizza, the menu includes interesting choices in addition to really good pie. My son and I started off with a prosciutto and mozzarella panino and an order of meatballs, three served in

a tasty red sauce that was so good we mopped it up with the remains of the panino bread. Starters range in price from \$6 to \$8.

When the last drop of sauce was gone, our pizza arrived. Twelve inches across and cut into four slices, it was just right for the two of us. We'd chosen the Boscaiola, one of the dozen options offered (\$9 to \$11). Many are vegetarian; ours, topped with sausage, mushrooms,

Continued on Page 4

The West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association

Newsletter

Published four times each year. **Hedy Campbell** and **David L. Reich**, co-editors. Comments and questions related to the Association or Newsletter are welcomed. Letters should be addressed to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1940, New York, NY 10025. Send email to info@w102-103blockassn.org. Phone messages may be left at (212) 866-5769. Recent issues of the Newsletter are available online at bloomingdale.org/newsletter102-103.htm

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.

Street Guard

Your contributions to the Block Association provide funding for our street guard, Rafael Hernandez, who makes rounds from 5 p.m. to midnight, Sunday – Thursday and from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m., Friday and Saturday. He can be reached, while on duty, at (646) 772-2240 to report security issues or to request his assistance on the street.

Speaking of Art: Susan Dessel, from Concept to Creation

By Marlene Lee

Headless, hospital-gowned patients lean against walls and sprawl on the floor. They are of different races, suffering from various conditions, all of them dangling arms and legs constructed of elastic bandages.

I am visiting with Susan Dessel, neighborhood resident and conceptual artist, at her recent installation in a storefront on W. 37th St. As we sit and talk, she motions passers-by inside. "It's a very different experience than showing in a gallery," she says. "Galleries are destinations. But this is a drop-in space. Most people on the street don't expect the installation to be here. Their reaction is fresh. They're surprised." The garment district materials (cotton and elastic, after all) are used for an unexpected purpose. (One visitor asked seriously if she was showing a new line of clothing.) The emotional power of the figures pulls people in from the street. A vase of fresh flowers rests at the feet of two patients, a poignant reminder of hope and optimism.

Since leaving her career in corporate America several years ago to become a full-time artist, Susan Dessel has not only mounted exhibits and installations, she's also earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in studio art from Hunter College and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Brooklyn College.

"My advisor at Hunter told me I should be a full-time, not a part-time student," Dessel says, "I came to art late. At his suggestion, I decided to work with young people [typical college students] who were committed to developing their talent. I didn't want to be considered a hobbyist so I needed credentials."

At Hunter, she worked with ceramics, painting, drawing, and sculpture, experimenting with forms and materials. She still does. The human figures

sitting and collapsing around us are constructed with chicken wire, cotton fabric, elastic bandages, and hospital gowns. They sit on rubber mats on the floor. The piece is titled "Optimists."

"My work is process-oriented," she says. "I really get into the making of it. While working, I'm not thinking, 'What will this look like?' Materials dictate the forms."

The figures grew from her experience of her father's nursing home and stories from Hurricane Katrina. During trips to see her dad, Dessel observed many of the residents lined up in hallways seemingly waiting for visitors who never came. She could not forget that painful vision: vulnerable residents without friends or advocates. After Katrina, there were reports about a New Orleans nursing home in which all of the residents had died before the arrival of emergency workers. All the suffering had inspired this installation.

"Optimists," now closed, was housed in a space managed by chashama, a non-profit founded by Anita Durst, where Dessel, after having her application accepted, paid a modest rent for the two-week exhibit. Like other unused spaces in Durst-owned buildings, it is donated by the real-estate family for interactive art and performance projects. (She also received a Puffin Foundation grant in support of the installation.)

Has the artist left her co-op and moved into a refuge for the ill and the compromised? No, she is working

out her hope that displaying these vulnerable bodies will make viewers more sensitive to injustices and pain. Dessel wants these visitors to feel and to act. She provided stamped postcards to be addressed to

legislators indicating support or opposition to recently enacted health care law. Dessel hopes citizens will express their opinions to elected representatives. Many viewers of "Optimists" have done just that.

This summer, Dessel exhibited another piece, this time in Armenia, where she had accepted a six-week residency from the Arts and Cultural Studies Laboratory in Yerevan. She was attracted to the residency, she explains, because of her Jewish heritage. She had read about a Medieval Jewish cemetery recently discovered in Armenia and began researching Eastern European Jewish women in the Middle Ages. "I learned that it was common in Jewish marriage contracts for wives to promise their husbands to nurse babies for two years. Infant mortality was high. In cases where nursing was unsuccessful, wet nurses were hired, often Christians."

Working in Yerevan, she used local clay in hand-made rubber molds to create 365 small pairs of female torsos back to back, the women's breasts exposed. On one side she painted a gold leaf Jewish star; on the other, an Armenian Christian kachkar cross. She titled the work "nothers," a word that, for me, evoked "mothers" but which, for her, refers to cooperation between members of "the other." Former outsiders, she reminds us, can think about their responsibility to be more inclusive.

Installed in a downtown Yerevan

Continued on Page 4

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Speaking of Art: Susan Dessel, From Concept to Creation

Continued from Page 3

gallery, the double-sided torsos were suspended overhead in twelve rows representing the 24 months of nursing. Viewers walked under and around the exhibit. "I worked four weeks, night and day, on those 365 torsos," Dessel said. Though produced from molds, each was given an individualizing characteristic. Dessel often works with multiples that she modifies to express her respect for the individual in the crowd.

Most of Dessel's work is not beautiful or comforting so she doesn't expect it to appear soon in a collector's living room. A few years ago she was asked by a curator to create a site-specific piece for the small, grassy space behind a gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. She fashioned twelve life-sized corpses of men, women, and children, wrapped

in tarpaulins and EMS blankets that evoked images from Iraq and New Orleans. The piece was called "Our Backyard: A Cautionary Tale." It was intended, she said, to bring the issue of hidden civilian casualties in war and disasters very close to home.

Two years later, the enterprising manager of a gallery on Long Beach Island in New Jersey invited her to display the work as part of a larger exhibit. After it was installed, but before the show opened, a member of the community complained that the work was unsuitable for children. A compromise was reached: her installation was walled off from the other pieces behind portable curtains, with a sign warning that it could be disturbing. Though she didn't approve of the censorship that was exactly the point she wanted to make.

Smoke Offers Brunch, Dinner and All That Jazz

Continued from Page 2

range in price from \$10 to \$14.

The two-course prix fixe dinner menu includes a variety of appetizers and main courses. Salads, soups, pizza, and wild-mushroom ravioli are among the starters (\$9 to \$14 if ordered à la carte). Burgers, chicken (coq au vin or citrus roasted), salmon, ribs, steak, and pasta currently comprise the list of entrées (\$16 to \$28). Desserts are prepared on the premises (\$9). There are also bar food menus (those dining alone when the music's playing will be seated at the bar) and late-night menus that include many of the same items on the brunch/lunch and dinner menus.

Smoke is located at 2751 Broadway. For reservations, which are recommended, especially on weekends, telephone (212) 864-6662 or go to the website: smokejazz.com. Wine and liquor are served; credit cards are accepted; home delivery is available at dinnertime.

Buca: A New Italian Just Down the Street

Continued from Page 2

tomato sauce, mozzarella, gorgonzola, and roasted vegetables, was not. One evening, my wife and I enjoyed the Salute, whole wheat dough topped with tomato sauce, mozzarella, and roasted vegetables. On our next visit, we'll try the homemade gnocchi in tomato sauce, the eggplant parmigiana, or one of the baked pasta dishes. Red wine is available, but we stayed with water and the bill for the two of us came to under \$20.

On a recent weekend at dinnertime, only two empty seats remained out of the possible 24. The grilled salmon special looked appealing, as did the pizza Salumeria, which was topped with Italian meats. The whitewashed walls and low lighting, coupled with soft music that included Italian pop stars covering hits made famous by Bob Marley and Coldplay, was intriguing. Buca is at 201 W. 103rd St; telephone (212) 531-8730; cash only; delivery is available.

It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like the Solstice!

Halloween has come and gone. We've set the clocks back and stuffed ourselves with turkey. We're busy wrapping gifts, frying latkes, and hanging ornaments. It's time to celebrate the winter solstice with songs!

Come join us on the darkest day of the year (Tuesday, December 21) to brave the cold, stroll our streets, and serenade residents and passersby alike. Meet Anthony Bello, choirmaster par excellence, at 7 p.m. in the lobby of 865 West End Ave. Bring your hats, mufflers, and mittens, and maybe a flashlight, sleigh bell, or tambourine. Song books filled with traditional seasonal favorites are provided. Afterward, thanks to Mitchell Stein and the board of the Master Apartments, we'll warm up with cider and snacks in the lobby at 310 Riverside Dr. If you're a regular, welcome back. If you've never participated before, come join us for an exceptional infusion of camaraderie. All are welcome. For more information, contact Hedy Campbell at info@w102-103blockassn.org or call her at (212) 865-8524.

Halloween Enchantment Ensues as Magic Wand Changes Hands

Continued from Page 1

of yummy candy. Marc's family and I packed more than 200 trick-or-treat bags for distribution by board member Cynthia Doty, et al. Marty Toub and Terence Hanrahan photographed all the fun. Ginger Lief, Marlene Lee, and Alan Cary handled publicity and Stacey Lauren organized the many contributors. Lastly, thanks to the generous neighbors who put a dollar or ten in the pumpkin to help the Block Association.

There was a great crowd enjoying the party this year. We look forward to seeing you all next year at the same place, same time, same Block Association.



Halloween 2010

Photographs by Terence Hanrahan, Marty Toub, and David Reich; pumpkin by Sax Freymann; story reading by (pirate) Janet Harvilchuck; goodies dispensed and donations received by Jill Chase.



Law and Order: Some Hours With Police on Our Streets

By Molly Sugarman

Editor's note: From 4 to 8:30 p.m. on Nov. 19, the author went on a ride-along with officers from the 24th Precinct. The program is open to everyone. Contact Ofc. Vincent Durante, at (212)678-1803 or vincent.durante@nypd.org for information.

Cops in the 24th Precinct deal with a whole spectrum of people. Mostly they deal with paperwork, a mountain of the stuff that is surprising in this technological age, a mountain that delays and impedes them in the performance of their duties. One doesn't want them to hurry it along. That paperwork holds people's futures, from who is at fault in a car accident to whether the charge is misdemeanor or felony.

The paperwork begins before the car even starts, as officers note the condition and contents of the vehicle they've been assigned. The paperwork multiplies at the first call: Shoplifting at a Duane Reade on Columbus Ave. The Columbus Square stores between W. 97th and W. 100th Sts. promise an uptick in work for the officers, although no uptick in personnel.

Four days after its opening, Duane Reade is visited by a youngish white man, a local boy from the neighborhood. He stuffs pricey personal care items into his oversize jacket and is spotted. The security guard attempts to stop him; an altercation ensues on the sidewalk outside the store.

The guard suffers a bloody cut and scrapes. The suspect, arms cuffed behind him, has the ruddy glow and bright-eyed look of a drug user. Indeed, the officers tell me, most shoplifters are looking for a fix. They take the loot to some street corner, hair salon, or bodega. The thief gets five cents on the dollar and his next hit; the purchaser gets a "bargain." Because of the injury, the shoplifting is now felony robbery. The upgrade also brings to the scene

an enormous number of cops, in plain clothes and in uniform, milling about before going back to their duties.

Except the cops with whom I was riding. It's their arrest, their trip to booking, which starts with a return to the station house, then a possible trip to the hospital, then down to Central Booking, where long lines await them. The new retina-scanning process is causing backlogs. The hospital trip, I was told later, was engendered by the fact that "Most of [the shoplifters] are down on their luck with the health system." The paperwork begins to reproduce like rabbits: more forms, more copies, more numbers, and codes.

Another shoplifting call. The shop owner waits outside, shooing the officers down the street to catch the tall white man with a bad attitude, wearing a mask except over his eyes. Next in sight, a store employee running full tilt after the tall man with a balaclava pulled part way down his face. The suspect is walking fast, drinking a cup of coffee, and miffed at the furor. He was, he said, a former FBI agent; here from California to investigate the murder of his mother; a current FBI agent; confused because the shop in question had been owned by Republicans when he was last here; fully aware of how the police were programmed; and recognized their "download" (as in application programs). If he is an FBI agent, we all need to be very afraid. As a crowd of plain clothes police gathers again, his backpack is searched. The store owner acknowledges that the suspect had been rude but didn't take anything. To get an apology, he'd called out five plainclothes cops and a squad car. Modest paperwork, completed as the squad car continues its patrol.

A woman at Meridiana Restaurant on Broadway and W. 105th St. creates a ruckus. She's eaten, had a few drinks but has no money. She becomes un-

ruly when asked to pay, scaring nearby diners. The cops can't get the money either but for \$43, the owner isn't taking the time for court. The well-dressed woman runs away, wiping tears from her face with a glittery black scarf. More paperwork.

Lights, no siren, to W. 91st St. and Columbus Ave., where a car backing up along the curb has slightly injured a child and his mother who were in the crosswalk. Most threatening was the behavior of the car's passenger (the driver was concerned about the child and cooperative). The passenger loudly and incessantly berated a dog-walker who offered his eye-witness account of the incident. Injuries: Minor but transported by paramedics. Officer helps driver back his car up properly so he can jump-start a friend's car. The driver had been trying to do a good deed. The paperwork takes about an hour; the officers lose their time-slot for dinner.

Other events:

- Officers respond when a 73-year-old woman falls and bloodies her nose. Ambulance comes. Officer checks if she had anyone to take care of her.
- A shop owner is not visible in her usual place; officers check back to make sure she is all right.
- Young pedestrian stopped because of a brown-bagged container. Empty, the culprit said, but proudly shows his driver's license: 21 yesterday. If he dumps his trash, he's legal.
- Repeated radio calls about a young black man exposing himself to a woman at Riverside Dr. and W. 96th St.
- Radio call: W. 77th St. and Broadway attempted sexual assault.
- Pedestrian injured at W. 101st St. and Broadway.

By 8 p.m., no cars are available to take a call about a violent female in a building on W. 104th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave.

Maybe they're all doing paperwork.

Updates >>> News Updates >>> News Updates >>> News

Subway Elevators Installed

The first-ever elevators at the W. 96th St. and Broadway station of the 1, 2, and 3 lines began operation on Nov. 9, effectively completing the multi-year renovation project. There is one elevator connecting the northern end of each platform with the street-level entrance building so they can also be used to change platforms. For those who can use the stairs, access between the uptown and downtown platforms continues to be available through the old pedestrian tunnel below the track level. The W. 94th St. entrances to the station on Broadway have been refurbished but otherwise provide the same access to the subway as before the work began.

West End Ave. Landmarking

On Nov. 16, the City's Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to continue the process through which several small and scattered historic districts along and near West End Ave. from W. 70th St. to W. 108th St. could be extended to a single historic district. This new district, between Riverside Dr. and Broadway, would include almost 800 buildings while excluding many newer buildings on Broadway. Public hearings on this proposal will likely be held in 2011. The West End Preservation Society has led the effort for LPC recognition along with Landmark West! whose website, landmarkwest.org, is a source of further information.

Con Ed Oil Leak Repaired

Once again a section of the high voltage power line that starts in Yonkers and runs under West End Ave. to the downtown distribution center sprang an oil leak. Workers dug up a section of the eastside parking lane between W. 104th and W. 105th Sts. going down about six feet to encase the leaking pipe in a steel cover, which was then welded to the section that was still in good shape. The trench was then filled in with packed sand to insure good support of the oil-filled pipe that carries the high voltage line. A supervisor at the site said the pipes are old but these oil leaks sometimes result from improper refill by other utilities.

Bloomingtondale Aging in Place Meetings, Activities Attract Many in Neighborhood

In the past two months, a wide range of activities sponsored by Bloomingtondale Aging in Place have brought people, young and old, together to learn, benefit, and enjoy. Two panel discussions had experts talking and answering questions on difficult topics: how to recognize and respond to the need for help in oneself or one's friends and how to deal with chronic pain. A free flu shot event, supported by St. Luke's Hospital, drew more than 60 people who benefitted from this important vaccination. These activities were all held at the Marseilles Residence through the

generosity of the West Side Federation of Senior and Supportive Housing.

A one-woman performance about the life of Willa Cather at the Bloomingtondale Library was the destination of another group of neighbors. A "Dinner in the Neighborhood" at Sura was planned for Nov. 29 as we went to press. In the next few weeks there will be visits to El Museo del Barrio (Dec. 8) and a vocal and instrumental concert (Dec. 11). Don't miss the year-end party with music and refreshments on Dec. 9. For more information visit the BAiP website at bloominplace.org.

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Alternate Side Parking Exceptions for 2011

Editor's note: the map of our area showing where the various Alternate Side Parking rules apply is now available, with the exception list, on our website: w102-103blockassn.org.

Jan. 1, Sat: New Year's Day
 Jan. 17, Mon: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
 Feb. 3, Thu: Asian Lunar New Year
 Feb. 12, Sat: Lincoln's Birthday
 Feb. 21, Mon: Washington's Birthday/ Presidents' Day
 Mar. 9, Wed: Ash Wednesday
 Mar. 20, Sun: Purim
 Apr. 19-20, Tue-Wed: Passover, 1st, 2nd days
 Apr. 21, Thu: Holy Thursday (Orthodox)
 Apr. 21, Thu: Holy Thursday
 Apr. 22, Fri: Good Friday
 Apr. 22, Fri: Good Friday (Orthodox)
 Apr. 25-26, Mon-Tue: Passover, 7th, 8th days
 May 30, Mon: Memorial Day
 June 2, Thu: Solemnity of the Ascension
 June 8-9, Wed-Thu: Shavuot (2 days)
 July 4, Mon: Independence Day
 Aug. 15, Mon: Feast of the Assumption
 Aug. 30-Sep. 1, Tue-Thu: Idul-Fitr
 Sep. 5, Mon: Labor Day
 Sep. 29-30, Thu-Fri: Rosh Hashanah
 Oct. 8, Sat: Yom Kippur
 Oct. 10, Mon: Columbus Day
 Oct. 13-14, Thu-Fri: Succoth (2 days)
 Oct. 20, Thu: Shemini Atzereth
 Oct. 21, Fri: Simchas Torah
 Oct. 26, Wed: Diwali
 Nov. 1, Tue: All Saints' Day
 Nov. 6-8, Sun-Tue: Idul-Adha
 Nov. 8, Tue: Election Day
 Nov. 11, Fri: Veterans' Day
 Nov. 24, Thu: Thanksgiving Day
 Dec. 8, Thu: Immaculate Conception
 Dec. 25, Sun: Christmas Day
 Dec. 26, Mon: Christmas Day (Obsrv.)

New Manager and Many Activities at Bloomingdale Library

Our local public library, the Bloomingdale branch at 150 W. 100th St. between Amsterdam and Columbus Aves., has a new manager and lots to do in addition to using the books, CDs, DVDs, newspapers, magazines, and computers that you would expect.

The new manager is Rebecca Donsky, who may still answer to "Rebecca Dash," since she was just recently married. Next time you visit the branch, stop by her office to say hello. Among the activities are toddler story times every Tuesday morning, a teen and tween advisory group every Tuesday afternoon, an exercise session for older adults every Wednesday afternoon, and computer and board games for the 10-18 set also on Wednesday afternoons. Special seasonal events include two related to Chanukah on Dec. 6 and 13.

For more information about future events, visit the library or its website: nypl.org/locations/bloomingdale.

Shelters Seek Holiday Gifts for Parents, Kids, Other Residents

For the tenth year in a row, the Block Association will join the U. S. Department of Justice's New York office in their holiday toy and gift party for the victims of domestic violence who live at the Henry Street Settlement shelter. Over the years, hundreds of toys, books, and small gifts, both new and gently used, have been donated, collected, wrapped, and delivered through this annual project. A wrapping party is held at DOJ with delivery of the gifts by Santa and Mrs. Claus at the shelter.

Gifts are also collected for the men at the Doe Fund's Ready, Willing and Able shelter. They are the folks you see in blue coveralls keeping Broadway clean throughout the year.

To donate to the Henry Street Settlement or the Doe Fund shelter, please leave your gift at the lobby desk at 305 Riverside Dr. for Camille or call (646) 345-5209 to arrange for them to be picked up.



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On Broadway

Openings and Closings: ♦♦Years ago it was Chinese restaurants and then Thai places became all the rage. Now burger joints are sprouting everywhere on Broadway. W. 84th St. has **5 Napkin Burger**, W. 91st St. has **Big Daddy's**, **Mel's Burger Bar** is relatively new near W. 111th St., and now the west side of Broadway next to **Chipotle** near W. 110th St. is about to become home to a **Five Guys Burgers & Fries**. ♦♦Speaking of sprouting, the Halloween season has become the time when goblins, ghouls, and pop-up stores rise from the crypt (or wherever it is that they store all those costumes and pipe racks) to live among us. In our immediate neighborhood we had **Ricky's** for a couple of weeks in the Broadway space between W. 96th and W. 97th Sts. that had been a health food store. When the light of Nov. 1st was dawning over Broadway, they were gone with the vampires. Further uptown, in Ariel West, next door to the new **Urban Outfitters**, hand-lettered signs announced that a "Sample Sale" would be opening

for a few weeks. Then, late one night, when the shop was first being stocked, a manager came running out to the curb, very agitated, asking the crew if anyone had a cut finger. One can only imagine what he had found on the newly arrived suits and shirts. Perhaps that was an indication of what was to come next: the "sample sale" closed and from its remains there arose another Halloween costume store. This one showed more human characteristics by living on past Halloween with a brief 50% off sale. And finally, in the large space next to **Starbucks** on Broadway at W. 103rd St. that has been vacant ever since **Planet Kids** moved out, one more costume store showed up overnight, displayed its wares for just a few weeks, and was gone. Now the space has been occupied again, this time as a toy store. The ghosts and goblins weren't all that scary, but the economic reality that brings in these pop-up stores instead of permanent Mom-and-Pop stores surely is. ♦♦Perhaps this column needs an In Resurrection heading. Three recent ex-

amples: the "sample sale" in the vacant Ariel West retail space that was displaced by the Halloween store is now back with a stock of coats and other items. **Runway**, the low-price men's clothing store on the northeast corner of Broadway and W. 100th St. had emptied overnight but now is back "under new management" according to the guy setting up the merchandise. And a block south, next to the old Metro Theater, it appears that **Rootchi**, the women's clothing store is back in its previous spot. That's what the hand-lettered sign on the door proclaims though the very large Orsid Realty "For Rent" sign is still propped up in the corner of the window. ♦♦Just one block from Broadway, an **Associated MegaStore** has opened on the east side of Amsterdam Ave. between W. 99th and W. 100th Sts. in the large basement area. The ground floor entrance space contains a small café. The cramped **Associated Supermarket** just two blocks south on Amsterdam Ave. at W. 97th St. will apparently continue in business.

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Charter School Proposed in W. 105th St. Building

Perhaps you've seen the ad at the uptown M104 bus stop on Broadway at W. 101st St.: the Success Charter Network, which currently operates seven schools in Harlem and the Bronx, is seeking to open its eighth school, Upper West Success Academy, nearby. The plan, currently making its way through the review and approval process, is to locate the K-8 school within P.S. 145, on the southeast corner of W. 105th St. and Amsterdam Ave. In its first year, 193 kindergarteners and first graders would be admitted; ultimately, enrollment would go through eighth grade. Details about information sessions and links to recent press coverage are available at upperwestsuccess.org.

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