

West 104th Street

BLOCK ASSOCIATION

January 26, 2001

NEWSLETTER

Editor: Nancy Lian

Layout and Design: John Johnston

A Beaut' of a Challenge

Here's a lovely challenge I hope you'll find very attractive, even irresistible. Contribute toward the block association's 2001 beautification budget and an anonymous block resident will add \$500 to the pulchritudinous total. We need this extra money rather urgently this year because we'll be incurring these extraordinary expenses:

Metal tree guards for three new trees:	\$2,400
Tree guard repair:	\$1,000
Three large planters:	Cost unknown at press time

In addition, we have our usual beautification expenses of gorgeous summer flowers (\$450) and radiant spring bulbs (\$500).

While some of you do not care to contribute toward the cost of the security guard, I hope you will support your block association's beautification mandate by helping us succeed – brilliantly – with our 'good looks' challenge grant. Mark *Beautification* on the dues slip on the back page of the newsletter and the block's progress toward an even more comely appearance will be underway.

Teresa Elwert, president

On Tap for February

- Champagne brunch for consistent contributors to the block association
- Private tour of the Egyptian collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art led by the very knowledgeable and passionate Nancy Thompson

President: Teresa Elwert
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Rashomon on the Upper West Side

By Nancy Lian

You probably know *Rashomon* as a perennially popular subject, an adaptation of short stories of Ryunosuke Akutagawa and the 1959 film of Akira Kurosawa. The new stage production is directed by neighbor Tisa Chang, who has worked for more than five years with Fay Kanin to negotiate for the rights to stage the play. Tisa's adaptation will embody the Japanese artistic concepts of refined elegance (*miyabi*) and elegant simplicity (*sabi*) with a cast of 8 and live percussion. The story, set in 1000 A.D. in the Heian period, tells how a samurai and his wife encounter a bandit, by chance, in a bamboo forest. There is a killing and three different versions are given in court probing the questions of—What is truth, What is perception, What is illusion?

Rashomon will be presented by the Pan Asian Repertory from Feb. 13 to March 18 at its new home in the West End Theatre in the Church of St. Paul & St.



Scene from *Rashomon*

Andrew at the corner of 86th Street and West End Avenue. Plan to attend the performance of *Rashomon* on Sunday, March 11 at 2:30 p.m. sponsored by both the 104th St. and the 102-103rd St. Block Associations for the reduced price of \$30 per ticket. Seats are limited so reserve yours now by calling Marsha Tantleff at 932-9592. Tisa Chang and members of the cast will hold a special Q&A session for us following the performance. The other productions by the Pan Asian Repertory this season include *Legend of the White Snake*, ending January 27, and *18 Mighty Mountain*

(Continued on page 2)

(Rashomon continued)

Warriors from June 6 to 16. Call 212-505-5655 for more information, or log on to www.panasianrep.org.

Tisa Chang, daughter of the Consul General from Nationalist China, was raised in New York and attended Barnard College. After her active career as actress and dancer on Broadway, she founded the Pan Asian Repertory Theater to celebrate Asian American artistry. The group is regarded as the most influential pioneer of professional Asian American theatre in the US. Tisa specializes in intercultural productions and has introduced *Return of the Phoenix* (from the Peking Opera), *Ghashiram Kotwal* (Marathi play), *Cambodia Agonistes* (touring in Cairo and Johannesburg), *The Joy Luck Club*, among others.

Tisa has served on the National Endowment for the Arts, the NY State Council on the Arts, the USIA, and other public groups. She has earned many awards including one from New York in 1993 as a Cultural Pioneer, Barnard College Medal of Distinction in 1991. She and her son Auric live at 305 Riverside Drive.

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- Roll up windows and lock your car even if you're away for 'just a minute'
- Activate any theft deterrent device you may have
- Put packages or valuables out of sight
- CB radios, cellular phone, laptop computer and other expensive items invite theft
- Lock them in your trunk or take them with you
- Do not keep license, registration or title in your car
- Those items left in a car help thieves sell your car or impersonate you if challenged by police

Prevent Personal Theft

- Keep your wallet, purse, or other valuables with you at all times or locked in a drawer or closet
- Check the identity of any strangers who are in your office. Ask whom they are visiting and if you can help them find that person. If you are uncomfortable, inform security
- Be discreet and don't flash your money or jewelry
- Never leave your personal property unattended
- Secure all clasps on your handbag and never place your wallet in the rear pants pocket
- Be wary of persons who may drop articles in your path or spray liquids such as ketchup on your clothing



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Revisiting the Hidden Forest

Ned Barnard

Native Americans believe that the elder trees of all species have a wise and powerful spirit that lives in them. They say that when you walk among these elder trees and listen with your third ear, the heart, you can sense the presence and the wisdom of their spirit.

William Guion, Heartwood: Mediations on Southern Oaks, 1998

Once had a house in the country to which my wife and I and our children would retreat on weekends to enjoy peace and quiet. One of my favorite things to do at our country house was to take nature walks around the property with my younger children. We would investigate milkweed plants to see if we could find monarch butterfly caterpillars, look for fawns hiding in the high grass next to our pond, and pick tiny, wonderfully sweet wild strawberries in the meadow by the road.

Among the places we loved to visit most was an acre or two of old growth forest that had somehow been spared the axe a century and a half ago when most of the Hudson Valley was cut over to create farmland, orchards, and pastures. We called our tiny island of big trees "The Hidden Forest." It was a wet place with a seasonal pond that resonated with the calls of spring peepers in April. Probably it was the water that had saved the trees long ago. The land was too wet to till, too damp for pasture, so the farmers built stone walls around it and forgot about it.

Two or three times a year we would take sandwiches, a canteen, and my camera and head through the second growth thickets of gray birch and scrubby red oaks to The Hidden Forest. There we would marvel at long strips of curling bark on the trunks of shagbark hickories, at brilliant yellow spindles of coral fungi, at the tangled, stilt-like roots of red maples clinging to hummocks emerging from shallow pond water. We found red efts under fallen leaves, black snakes slithering among long strands of ground pine, tiny dwarf ginseng flowers, cinnamon ferns, and jack-in-the pulpits clustered by a rivulet. Once I almost stepped on a female woodcock sitting on her clutch of eggs. She remained motionless even as I held my camera six inches from her and fired my flash.

One spring not so long ago we set out once again for The Hidden Forest. It had been a dry fall and a snowless winter, but we still expected to find the pond brimming among the big old oaks, maples, and hickories. When we climbed the last stone wall and headed down into the bowl where the forest stood, we stopped in astonishment. The Hidden Forest was gone. Where the big trees had been, now there were only stumps, piles of discarded,

sawed-off limbs, and heaps of sawdust. Muddy ruts made by the spinning tires of a big truck slashed across what had once been the forest floor. We had always thought of The Hidden Forest as somehow belonging to us, but in fact it was on our neighbor's land, and she had sold the trees to loggers. The sun shown with an unnatural glare on desolate ground strewn with shriveled leaves. The pond had shrunk to little more than a stagnant puddle. No spring peepers broke the silence.

I won't say that the destruction of The Hidden Forest is why I sold our country place. There were other reasons. My wife died, our children had grown, and our house required upkeep but usually stood empty.

Once I retreated to the City, I began to look for compensation. I eyed the big trees in Riverside Park and Central Park with new appreciation. I realized that some of them are larger than any trees I had treasured in the country. I also discovered that I could identify only a few of them by name. I bought tree guides to help me become better acquainted. By naming the parks' trees as I encountered them, I somehow made them friends, part of my mental landscape, my property in a way. Eventually I began writing a guide to the City's trees for the Parks & Recreation Department. Our parks, botanical gardens, cemeteries, and natural areas contain an amazingly diverse mix of wild trees and cultivars, of natives and exotics, northerners and southerners that are not adequately covered in any single existing tree guidebook. As I explored parks in other boroughs and in the counties surrounding the City, I found to my delight that there are dozens of Hidden Forests in the City and in the surrounding suburbs no more than an hour's drive from my Upper Westside apartment. These are special and wonderful places that you can return to season after season without fear that they will be destroyed between visits. I will try to describe a few of them in subsequent articles. We are fortunate indeed to live in a City with so many protected sites where you can enjoy a touch of wildness and the balm that only big trees offer.



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Calendar of Selected Events

- 1/26 **Story Hour** for ages 6 and older, told by Christina Kover. NYPL, Bloomingdale Branch, 150 W 100 St., 4 pm. Call 222-8030 for more information.
- 1/30 **Books & Poetry Group** to discuss *Bailey's Cafe*, by Gloria Naylor. Bloomingdale Branch, NYPL 6 pm. Also at 2 pm there are free movies. Call to learn which will be shown. 150 W 100 St. Call 222-8030 for more information.
- 1/31 **Picture Book Hour** for ages 3 to 6, NYPL Bloomingdale Branch, 150 W 100 St., 4 pm. Call 222-8030.
- 2/4 **Baroque, Romantic, Impressionist and 20th Century Music** by The Broadway Bach Ensemble, Michael Tietz, Conductor. Music by Bach, Copland, Ravel and Schumann will be performed at the Advent Lutheran Church at Broadway and 93rd St. at 1:30 pm. Donations are welcome.
- 2/4 **Coro Cantico Nuevo presents A Romance with Christ.** 30 musicians perform music by Latin American composers with readings from the Song of Songs, Psalms and mystic writings of Santa Teresa of Avila and San Juan de la Cruz. Riverside Church, Christ Chapel, 3 pm. Free.
- 2/5 **Songs my Mother Taught Me, But not Really**, Rita Falbel, to hear, sing and study Jewish songs. 6 Mondays at Temple Ansche Chesed, 7:30-9 pm. Fee \$60 members, \$84 non-members. Call 865-0600 for more information.
- 2/9 **Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival** with Princess Owana Salazar, George & Keoki Kahumoku and Daniel Ho. Symphony Space, 3 pm. Call 864-1414 for more information.
- 2/10 **Points of the Compass Rose and other works**, by Mauricio Kagel, composer incorporating music theatre, expressionism, charm and wit, from Tango and Caribbean dance to European folk music. Columbia Miller Theater, 116th St. and Broadway, 8 pm. Tickets \$17. Call 854-7799 for more information.
- 2/11 **Consistent Contributors' Champagne Brunch**, Nicholas Roerich Museum, Riverside at 107th St., sponsored by the 104th St. Block Association. By invitation.
- 2/11 **Three Symphonic Works by Duke Ellington: three Black Kings, Black, Brown and Beige Suite, New World a-Comin** by the Riverside Festival Orch., Riverside Church Nave, 3 pm. Adults \$15, Senior & Students \$10. Call 870-6784.
- 2/14 **Love in the City: A Valentine's Day Special**, stories by Melissa Bank, Russell Banks and David Schickler, read by Live Keira Naughton and Robert Sean Leonard. Symphony Space, 8 pm. Call 864-1414 for more information, and other dates for Selected Shorts. From Jan. 31 to June 6.
- 2/17 **Absolute Mix**, Kristjan Jarvi, conductor, presents contemporary and jazz music with classical roots. Miller Theater, tickets \$17. Call 854-7799 for more information.
- 2/20 **Robert Parsons: The English Works**, VOX Vocal Ensemble, George Steele, conductor, Columbia St. Paul's Chapel, 8 pm. Tickets \$17. Call 854-7799.
- 2/21 **Robert Parsons: The Consort Music & Songs**, Robert Isaacs, countertenor, Grant Herreid, lute, Parthenia Viol Consort, Columbia Casa Italiana, 6 pm. Free. Call 854-7799.
- 2/22-24 **Face the Music and Dance**, Collaborations between composers and choreographers. David Neumann & Laurie Anderson, Allyson Green Dance & Paul Drescher, and more. Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. Tickets \$17. Call 864-1414 for more information.
- 2/23 **Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D Major and Symphony No. 6** by the New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra, Ming-Geng Hsin, Guest Conductor/Violinist. Ltrinity School, 101 W 91st St., 8 pm. \$10 at the door.
- 3/1 **Pierre Boulez** at Columbia. Find out the secrets behind the music and composers of the last century of Bartok, Debussy, Messiaen, Stravinsky and Boulez. Tickets \$10, Columbia Miller Theater, 8 pm. Call 854-7799 for more information.
- 3/3 **Classical Sitar Music from Pakistan** with Rais Khan, Symphony Space, 8 pm. Call 864-1414 for more information.
- 3/11 **Rashomon** by the Pan Asian Repertory directed by Tisa Chang. Special Theater Event sponsored by the 104th St. Block Association and the 102-103rd St. Block Association. West End Theater, 263 W. 86 St., 2:30 pm. (See related article in this issue)

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Pearls Chinese Restaurant

By Estelle Kattelton

Surely many of you have had some really delicious meals over the years at the Broadway Cottage Restaurant at 103rd St. Thanks to the rapid changes that are taking place above 96th St., many of the familiar local businesses - unable to carry the new exorbitant rents - are closing up shop and either quitting completely or moving elsewhere. I'm happy to say that Steve Tang, proprietor of Broadway Cottage, preferred to relocate in the neighborhood, to 796 Amsterdam Ave. at the corner of 99th St. (749-0300/749-8344). In this handsome new spot, the warm family feeling is still there, and as before, you'll be graciously received by Lin, the long-time manager, and my old favorite, Ping.

It isn't just the name that's been changed. They have a new menu category: *Shanghainese Cuisine* that boasts some really interesting dishes. Try one of the seafood creations—the Spicy Buffalo Carp with Bean Curd, or the Stewed Pork with Shanghai Cabbage (not spicy), Minced Jalapeno Pepper Sauteed Pork with Dried Bean Curd. Then there are the Noodle/Rice Cake soups, each one a meal in itself: Roast Duck Noodle Soup, Shrimp Dumpling Noodle Soup, Little Bit of Everything Noodle Soup, Shanghai Rice Cake Soup. A couple of cold appetizers I'm preparing to try soon are Bean Curd and Spicy Tripe with Pressed Mustard Greens, and Conch with Chili Sauce. Also, they serve a delicious array of Dim Sum for lunch, at very reasonable prices.

They've also added to their regular Chef's Special items: Tangerine Prawn, Shanghai Style; Norwegian Salmon Szechuan Style, and my favorite, Neptune's Nets - jumbo shrimp, scallops and fresh Norwegian Salmon sauteed in a wine sauce and served in a noodle basket! That's the cat's meow!

A Woman Meets Dog Story

Local resident Louise Bernikow has written a new book about her unexpected friendship with an abandoned brown boxer dog found in Riverside Park. Published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill (algonquin.com), *Bark if You Love Me* is available in local bookstores or through amazon.com, bn.com, and other online bookstores. The *San Antonio Express News* described the book as "Full of witty, artful writing. . . insightful, funny and often poignant." Woof!

Bits and Pieces

Do you shred your paper records? It's a good idea. If you put a whole receipt in the garbage, someone may retrieve it and use your credit card number, your social security number, or other identifying information to cause problems for you.

Youths Arrested in 105th St. Mugging

Two boys have been arrested and charged with assaulting a woman on 105th St. between West End and Riverside in the early evening of December 17. The prosecutor on the case is investigating the possibility that these two boys were responsible for other assaults the same evening on 105th St and on our block, as well as two muggings on our block in November. A hearing was scheduled for the youths in Family Court on January 22. The next newsletter will include an update on this story.

Guard's Cell Phone Service to Continue

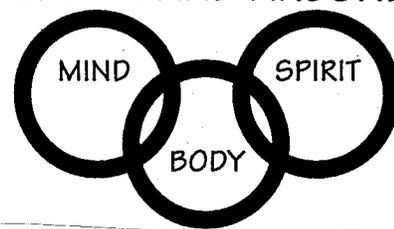
The block association will continue the security guard's cellular phone service until at least the end of February. While two boys have been arrested for a mugging on 105th St. and the service was instituted in early December in response to assaults on our block, the board feels there is still a need for the service. We'll re-evaluate the service in early March, looking to see if there's still a need for it and if its usage warrants the \$50 monthly charge.

How it works: the guard will escort you on to or off of the block any time during his shift (4:00 p.m. to midnight) when you call his cell phone in advance.

Special ways to use it: If you're walking to your parked car on Riverside Dr., the guard will watch over you. If you have guests leaving your apartment, the guard will escort them off the block.

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Annual Dues Are Now Payable

Block association dues for 2001 are now payable. The suggested amount — \$100 per household — has not been raised for eleven years despite rapidly rising expenses. Why? The board prefers to encourage every household on the block to contribute something, anything rather than raise the suggested amount. Since only about 50% of households contribute to the block association, there are clearly households on the block who for whatever reasons are not contributing. Every household benefits from the activities of the block association, and every household should contribute something toward its expenses. Whether you contribute \$10 or \$100 or more, you're helping create a strong and active community and doing yourself a world of good to boot!

December 2000 Treasurer's Report—Sid Herzfeld

OPENING BALANCE:	12/1/2000	\$13,262.54
INCOME:		
Dues	2,360.00	
Newsletter Ads	578.00	
Bank Interest	10.16	
TOTAL INCOME:	\$2,948.16	+2,948.16
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Guard Service	5,551.32	
Beautification	838.74	
Newsletter Production	371.00	
Tip to Security Guard	200.00	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$6,961.06	-6,961.06
CLOSING BALANCE:12/31/2000		\$ 9,249.64

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