

West 104th Street

BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

May 2017

SPOTLIGHT

Bringing *Oslo* to Broadway

Actor Dan Jenkins on Staging, Accents and Playing a Real Person

Daniel Jenkins, a 23-year resident of 309 West 104th Street, is currently featured in the ensemble of *Oslo*, the critically acclaimed, TONY-nominated play by J.T. Rogers about the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian peace accords. The play goes behind the scenes to explore the roles that Terje Rod Larsen, a social scientist, and his wife Mona Juul, a career diplomat, played in unofficially bringing the negotiations about. The play recently transferred to Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theater from the Mitzi E. Newhouse, officially moving to Broadway in the process. The production is currently scheduled to run through June 18. Joyce Mann interviewed Jenkins, who has been nominated for Tony and Drama Desk awards for his performance in *Big River*, about the challenges of restaging the play.

Did you know much about the Oslo accords before being cast in the play? Did you do any research?

I knew almost nothing. We did a good amount of research as a company—a lot of time around the table digging into the history. Terje Rod Larsen was around, too, and came to talk to us, as did another character's

continued on page 3

Dues Reminder

If you have not yet paid your dues, act now to support our programs including...

- Security guard on patrol daily from 4:00 pm to 12:00 am
- 40% discounts on fees at a local garage – an unbeatable bargain
- Block beautification, including tree garden painting and spring and summer plantings
- West 104th Street Newsletter and our newly redesigned website (www.west104blockassociation.com) – packed with local news and perspectives unavailable from any other source.



Paul Vukdedovic preps a tree guard for painting.

To learn more about our benefits—including our local garage discounts—log onto our website (www.west104blockassociation.com), where you can pay your dues using PayPal. If you prefer, you can simply fill out the dues slip on the back of this newsletter. All amounts are helpful and appreciated.

Save the Date! The 28th Annual Yard Sale Is Coming

Last month, you welcomed the harbingers of spring: moderate temperatures, blooming flowers, song birds, river breezes, budding trees, and early morning sunshine. In the coming weeks, you can expect the harbingers of the Twenty-eighth Annual West 104th Street Yard Sale: a flock of colorful flyers soliciting donations for the Bake Sale, Book Sale, Silent Auction, and “What-A-Bargain,” as well as offering the opportunity to rent a of ten-foot vendor space at the event, which takes place on **October 14**.

Some veterans of past Yard Sales are already contemplating new and exciting creations for the Bake Sale: cookies, cakes, pies, snacks, and finger foods. Others have begun to cull their collections for cookbooks, mysteries, novels, plays, poetry collections, histories, biographies, memoirs, art volumes, atlases, dictionaries, and other intellectual nourishment for the hungry readers who crowd the tables at the Book Sale.

Some neighbors are itemizing their neglected antiques, vintage collectibles, artwork, and good-as-new items that would provide the thrill of acquisition to the bidders at the Silent Auction. Others are searching their drawers and closets for used kitchenware, jewelry, toys, embroidery kits, unopened personal care products, and other knick-knacks to offer the foragers who eagerly dig through the clutter at the “What-A-Bargain” table.

A brigade of residents are poised for the announcement that launches the charge for the limited number of ten-foot vendor spaces, where they can sell treasures retrieved from the darkest corners of their closets. In addition to relieving home clutter and pocketing some cash, they look forward to sharing laughs with neighbors and making new friends.

All block residents, of course, can heed the call to join forces with neighbors and to transform West 104th Street between Riverside Drive and West End Avenue into a bargain hunter's paradise. In addition to setting up and breaking down displays, they can apply the special talents required to hawk raffle tickets, to facilitate live performances by seasoned New York musicians, and to sell baked goods, books, and a variety of merchandise.

Watch your doorsteps for colorful flyers. Details will arrive, as sure as the robins of spring.

In This Issue

Yard Sale: Save the Date	p. 1
Spotlight: Olso.....	p. 1
Block Financials	p. 2
Annual Member Meeting	p. 5
Landmark West! Special Offer	p. 5
New Board Member Alex Bell	p. 5
Community Corner	p. 6
Gwyneth Hotaling Tribute.....	p. 6
Changes for W. 104th St. Intersection	p. 7

Contributors to the May Issue:

Jesse Berger, Barbara Boynton, Miriam Duhan, Mary Koval,
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Larry Stern, Steve Zirinsky



Where on our block?
The first person to
send Mary Koval
(mtkoyal@aol.com)
the correct location
of this architectural
detail will win one of
the West 104th Street
Block Association's
new totes!



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We fully support Fair Housing, both in the spirit and the letter of the law.

W 104 ST BLOCK ASSN FINANCIAL REPORT

April 2017

Opening Balance \$28,239.74

Income

Dues	995.00
Tote Bags	140.00
Caps	150.00
Total	+1285.00

Expenses

Guard service	4603.15
Beautification	5721.47
Caps	327.50
Website Fees	194.95
Total	-3,522.32

Closing Balance (4/30/17) +18,837.33

West 104th Street Block Association Board

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VP Gary Waskow	320 RSD	212.932.9082
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Secretary Larry Stern	315 RSD	212.794.2288

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Alexandra Bell	304 W 104	
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Nancy Lian	320 RSD	212.316.6112
Joyce Mann	309 W 104	212.721.6341
Martin Mann	309 W 104	212.721.6341
Lynn Max	315 RSD	212.666.3129
Hanna Rubin	315 RSD	212.865.4579
Steven Zirinsky	315 RSD	212.866.6732
Emeritus Sid Herzfeld	895 WEA	212.749.0085

OSLO SPOTLIGHT, continued from page 1

real counterpart, Joel Singer.

You play two roles—a Swedish diplomat and an Israeli professor. When preparing to play a real person, does your methodology as an actor change? Did anyone in the cast make contact with their counterparts?

I don't think my methodology changes; I think I am just a bit more sensitive to what is respectful. There were a couple of people who reached out to their real counterparts. I mentioned that Terje was around, but his wife, Mona, was not and is actually quite shy about all of this. I have one character who has passed away and one who's alive, but is very busy with international affairs, and I decided not to reach out to him. Also, while I find that research is good to do, the circumstances within the play are more useful to me as a performer than trying to re-create someone's persona.

How did you and other cast members master the various accents required?

We are very fortunate to have the remarkable voice teacher Liz Smith as our leader in all things accent. There's also a cast member who happens to be Norwegian, so that's pretty fortunate, too!

Many of the actors sit off-stage, but in full view of the audience, during much of the play. Was that the playwright's choice or the director's?

The director chose that approach. It gives a sense of watching or being watched throughout. I think different audiences take different



Peace seekers: Daniel Oreskes, Anthony Azizi, Dariush Kashani, and Daniel Jenkins. Right: Oreskes and Jenkins.



PHOTOS COURTESY T. CHARLES ENICKSON; COURTESY LCT

ideas about that with them, which is just fine!

What is the difference between playing on a thrust stage like the Beaumont vs. a traditional Broadway proscenium arch space? Would Oslo have changed much had it been done on a traditional stage, do you think?

The Beaumont feels like the perfect space for this play. The sense of sharing and being "watched" by a community really adds to the public/private conversation that was being had about the issues. Many people in the audience feel strongly about the people and issues raised, and they are included in this space in a way that they couldn't be in a proscenium.

As an actor, what do you do internally during that time of sitting and watching?

I think my favorite thing to do onstage is to listen. How that is done is different for every actor. For me, it is a challenge that I truly enjoy. The character's internal life is simply there, and my job is just to listen.

One of your roles requires a wig and there is at least one very quick costume change. Do you have dressers to help you backstage?

At one point I have three people working with me to do a complete costume change in about eight seconds! It's one of my favorite parts of the show!

As an actor, what adjustments did you need to make in playing on a much larger stage and bigger auditorium?

It's a glorious space. It really feels much more "Greek". And the ideas and stakes of the play allow for that adjustment. The space likes passionate expression, and as an actor it is an adjustment, but a joyous one, to fill the space with that passion.

What are the hardest scenes to perform in the play, in your opinion?

They all have their challenges, but I don't think there is a particular scene that is "hard." I think the calibration of scene-to-scene temperature is the challenging part of the piece — how to keep the audience engaged, but not fatigued, by the crazy twists and turns in the story.

What do you hope people take away from the play?

I hope they enjoy their time there (the play's very funny, I think!), and then ponder how people on diametrically opposed sides of an issue (sound familiar?) might find a way to come together and share a dialogue.

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Annual Member Meeting Features Landmark West! Presentation

West 104th Street Block Association's annual Member Meeting was held on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at 7pm in the Marseilles Community Room. Block residents and board members gathered to hear reports on the block's financials, activities, and neighborhood concerns.

The block association invited Kate Wood, president of Landmark West, to present an update on Upper West Side historic preservation issues. She gave a rundown on how the preservation movement got started in the area, and flagged several current sites that are vulnerable to large-scale development in the near future. Wood was joined by Nina Harkrader, an author and architectural historian. Harkrader took the audience through a fascinating presenta-



Landmark West! president Kate Wood, at right, addressing the annual members meeting.

tion on the block's buildings and development history. Attendees learned about homes that preceded the block's remaining brownstones and "French" flats, the changes that came with expanding public transportation, and some of interesting period details on the block, including that it boasts two different types of brownstones—Romanesque style and Renaissance style.

After the meeting, attendees had refreshments and got a preview of the block association's new tote bags for purchase. Many thanks to Kate Wood and Nina Harkrader for their presentation, Hanna Rubin who coordinated it and special thanks to Maria Chiluisa, manager of the Marseilles Building, for use of their community room.

Special Landmark West! Offer

West 104th Street block association members have been invited by Landmark West to join at a special reduced rate! Block residents can become a Steward-level member for just \$25 (usually \$50) and receive members' discounts on all LW! public programs and events. Steward-level members are added to an email list that gives them a first look at upcoming activities and LW! updates on important advocacy announce-

ments on development across the UWS.

To take advantage of this offer, go to www.landmark-west.org/membership. Click "Steward" and type the code "104Neighbor" in the "Designate your donation" box. Or write "104Neighbor" in the memo of your check and mail it to: LANDMARK WEST! 45 W. 67th Street, New York, NY 10023.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Welcome New Board Member Alexandra Bell



Alex Bell, who recently moved into 304 West 104th Street, has joined the block association board. A Seattle resident before moving to New York in February, Alex liked our neighborhood's community spirit and attended the block association's February Annual Member Meeting. After expressing her interest in the block association, she came to a board meeting and signed on.

Alex grew up in Issaquah, a Seattle suburb. She earned her BA in economics at Western Washington University, where she became interested in health care administration. She subsequently received a MBA in Health Care Management. Alex currently

works for a company specializing in healthcare analytics.

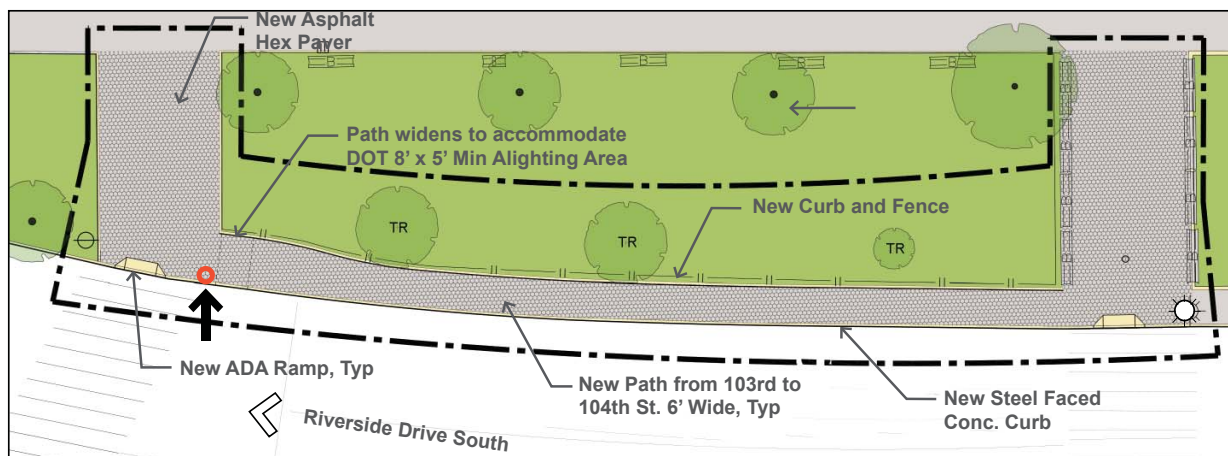
Alex is no stranger to community and volunteer activities. When she lived in Colorado for a short time, she was involved in hippotherapy, a therapeutic treatment that encourages disabled children to ride horses to build strength and balance. She also volunteered at the local food bank in college and taught children the importance of maintaining the creeks for the salmon rush.

After visiting New York City in 2015, she realized this was a place she wanted to live. Since her job is flexible, she took the plunge and made the cross-country trip to our neighborhood. Alex and her cat have been very happy here since moving and she is looking forward to working on the board and getting more involved in our neighborhood activities.

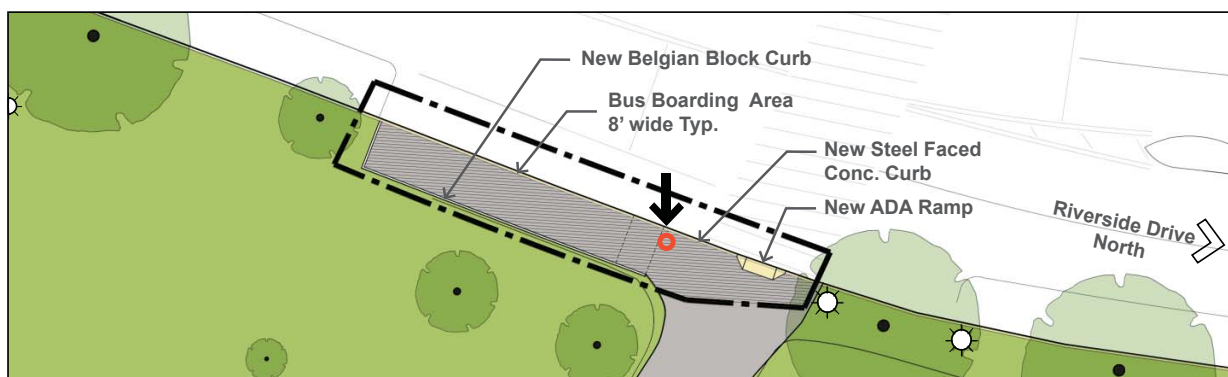
Please join us in welcoming Alex Bell!

Riverside Drive Improvements

Parks Department and MTA plan West 104th St. intersection tweaks.



DRAWING COURTESY OF THE NYC PARKS DEPT.



The Parks Department has received federal funding to increase pedestrian safety and approaches at the bus stops, along with new ADA compliant bus access. What does this mean for us?

The downtown M5 stop at 104 Street will be moved to 103 Street. This way the bus will not interfere with the crosswalk; this change is shown in the schematic drawing above.

Many years ago, the downtown bus stop was at 103 Street, like the uptown stop. Subsequently, it was subsequently moved to 104. Perhaps one of our readers can enlighten us as to when and why this happened?

The Metropolitan Transit Authority generally prefers having bus stops

three blocks apart, and moving the downtown stop back to West 103rd Street would fit this requirement nicely.

Improvements will also be made so when passengers get off the bus, they will not step on mud or hard-trodden earth, but pavement. Further, the large buffer that separates the service road from the northbound drive will have the diagonal striping removed and replaced with a raised safety island with proper buffers.

The median strip, separately the northbound and southbound traffic, will not to be improved as part of this contract. The work is to commence early next year.



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Tree Guard Painting, New Plantings Beautify Block

With the help of block members' annual dues, the block association has undertaken a new beautification effort, and residents should see results by the end of May.

All tree guards on the block and on the corners of West End Ave. and Riverside Drive are being stripped, primed, and painted. The trees underwent a deep fertilization by Bartlett Tree, Inc. early in the year and all trees were inspected and deemed healthy.

Also in May, Urban Explorations should plant the block's summer flowers. You will see a bit of variety from the previous years as the block's Garden Committee worked with Nilsa Martinez of Urban Explorations to create variety. The committee is testing some new combinations to see how they fare in our block's micro-climate. Many thanks to our Garden Committee for their hard work, members include Lynn Max, Larry Stern, Mary Jo Gennaro, and Alex Grannis.

Traffic Problems Flagged

Many of our residents have expressed safety concerns to the block association regarding two traffic issues. Several have pointed out that cars speed up 104th Street to make the light on West End Ave. Also noted are the increasing number of illegal left turns from the 104-service road onto Riverside Drive. Both issues present a safety hazard to pedestrians and other vehicles.

We have contacted the traffic sergeant at the 24th Precinct and

recommended cameras and/or patrols to curtail these illegal and unsafe activities. Thanks to our residents for taking the time to express your concerns and we will keep you posted on any action taken by the traffic division.

Neighborhood Crime Update

Our block security guard, Osbourne Thomas, has reported no incidents in the last three months. The 24th Precinct has updated the block association, noting local cell phone robberies, mostly at the 96th Street subway station. The precinct also reports that identify theft is on the rise and the precinct is still plagued with theft from mailboxes. The criminals look for checks, "whitewash" the payable line and fill in their own names. The police suggested using a Uniball 207 pen which does not wash out and depositing your mail at the local post office rather than mailboxes. It was reported that there is an uptick of bicycle thefts on Columbus Avenue from 97th – 100th Streets. Be sure to have your bike registered!

The precinct also announced that the current Commander, Captain William Burke, has taken an early retirement. In the interim, Deputy Inspector Michael Falcon, former commander of the 20th Precinct will take over command until they find a replacement. DI Falcon is well-versed in the issues of the 24th Precinct.

by Mary Koval, West 104th Street Block Association President

Gwyneth Hotaling, 1942-2017




A Remembrance by Miriam Duhan

When my neighbor Gwyneth Hotaling, an occupational therapist, learned that I was planning a late-life change of career to occupational therapy, she invited me to dinner with 8 or 10 pediatric occupational therapists who got together to talk about puzzling or difficult cases.

This was no pot luck. Gwyneth made a three-course dinner. For a book club meeting to discuss Dickens' *Great Expectations*, she provided an English High Tea; for Faulkner it was a southern feast. Every Christmas she baked a dozen different kinds of cookies, distributing them to everyone she knew, and decorated the door to her apartment with a larger-than-life Santa Claus she had painted. When she took a course in book-making, she gave me one of her beautiful handmade books. I suspect that I was not the only one who received one. Juliet Walker, Gwyneth's daughter, also a block resident, said that Gwyneth was "driven to be of service." Three-course meals, cookies and scones, handmade books, work with children, mentoring of new practitioners—Gwyneth offered her knowledge and experience generously.

A resident of our block for almost 30 years, Gwyneth Hotaling was born in Lockport New York in 1942. She studied Ceramics at Alfred University and after teaching art in elementary schools and running a Head Start program, she came to New York City to study Occupational Therapy at Columbia Presbyterian, married Bob Resnick and moved to 309 W 104th. She died at home on February 28. Gwyneth will be missed by friends and family.



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BLOOMINGDALE AGING IN PLACE (BaiP) Bloominplace.org

BAiP is an intergenerational volunteer network of neighbors working to help older residents to continue living at home safely and comfortably. BAiP sponsors social and cultural activities, provides educational tools, and a helping hand for those in need through its **Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N)** program.

The latter takes the form of providing help going places, running errands, light shopping, accompaniment at home or outdoors, and information. If you want to contact N2N for this kind of assistance, or to talk about volunteering, e-mail: **N2N@bloominplace.org**, or call: 212.842.8831 to leave a message with your contact information. Either way, a BAiP member will respond promptly.

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For our records: Your name and mailing address

For publication: Your name, contact method (phone or email address), description of your service.

The block association board meets once a month.

We enjoy having residents attend the meetings.

Please let us know if you would like to attend one and we will send you an invitation.

104thstreetba@gmail.com

Call for Safe Escort Home With Block Guard

If you're ever coming home at night and you'd like to have an escort, please don't hesitate to call Osbourne Thomas, our security guard. He has a special phone for these times, and he will come to meet you either on West End Avenue or Riverside Drive and walk with you to your home.

Security Guard Phone Number:

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(For internal use only. The Block Assn. will not sell, exchange, or lend your e-mail address to any outside parties.)

Suggestions for the block: _____

Make checks payable to West 104th Street Block Association Inc.

Please send to our treasurer: Barbara Boynton: 905 WEA, #71, NY, NY 10025 or leave with one of the following:

M. Koval: 895 WEA, 6D

G. Waskow: 320 RSD, Apt. 8G

M. Mann: 309 W. 104, Apt 3A

J. Howitt: 315 RSD, Apt. 8C

A. Bell: 304 W. 104th PH.