

West 104th Street

BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

www.bloomingle.org

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MAY 2018

SPOTLIGHT

315 Riverside Dr.

Classic Deco Touches Highlight Building

By Gil Tauber

The block's newest building, 315 Riverside Drive, was completed in 1931. A project of A.C. & H.M. Realty, a family-owned firm that developed apartment buildings in Upper Manhattan from the 1900s on, the company had recently completed 320 Riverside Dr. when the Halls turned their attention to the south corner of the block in 1929.



The Once and Future 315 RSD

The site of the present 315 Riverside Drive was originally occupied by four houses numbered 314, 315, 316 and 317. They were comfortable dwellings, row houses rather than individually built town houses, but not quite as grand as the houses on the block to the north. Each was approximately 22 feet wide.

No. 314 was the northernmost of a row of four 4-story houses built in 1895 by the firm of Walker & Lawson. On completion, it was sold to Elizabeth Meyers. Her husband was Augustus Meyers, a prosperous dealer in bluestone, a material that was widely used for curbs and sidewalks. In 1900 they were living in 314 with their six children and two servants.

The 5-story row houses at 315, 316 and 317 were built in 1897 by Alonzo B. Kight (1864-1923), an architect and a builder. The hard-driving Kight was responsible for numerous row houses and apartment buildings on the Upper West Side, including Nos. 316 to 320 West 102nd Street. Edith L. Cooper acquired the original No. 315 Riverside Dr. within 18 months of its completion. In 1900, Cooper conducted a girls' school in the building, and lived there with three boarders and four servants. By 1905, Miss Cooper had married Sydney K. Hartman, an artist. Two years later the house was purchased by Celia R. Marcus, whose husband Joseph was president of The Public Bank. In 1910 they were living in the house with their four children, aged 7 to 21, and two servants.

No. 316 was the home of the actor Richard Mansfield (1857-1907) and his wife (and leading lady) Susan Hegeman Mansfield (1868-1940). Richard Mansfield had won international fame for his roles in Shakespeare plays, Gilbert & Sullivan operettas, and especially the dual title roles in Dr. Jekyll and Mister Hyde. Mrs. Mansfield announced her retirement from the stage in February 1898. Kight sold them the house in October, two months after the birth of their son.

In the deed to the Mansfield house, title is vested solely in Mrs. Mansfield, as was the case with most of the other homes of married couples that are mentioned here. The house was either purchased in the name of the wife or transferred to her soon afterward. This was probably done to protect the wife if the husband died first, in the event there were claims against the husband's estate. As it turned out, Richard Mansfield died in 1907, predeceasing his wife by 33 years.

continued on page 7

An Exotic Marketplace In Your Own Front Yard . . .

Sept. 29th Announced for Block Party



On September 29th, enjoy the sunshine, the breeze off the Hudson, and the company of more than 1,500 neighbors as you pursue the . . .

- bargain of a lifetime
- last pristine, second-hand copy of the first book that changed your life
- tastiest masterpiece ever baked in a neighbor's oven
- raffle winnings to make your dream come true
- knick-knack that will end hassles and start conversations
- live performance of the songs that you hum in the shower
- winning bid on gift certificates for local stores and restaurants
- winning bid on a neighbor's unused treasure
- opportunity to meet the intriguing person whom you see on the subway platform every day
- fun way to raise funds to keep our community safe, welcoming, and beautiful

In the comfort of our community, you can enjoy the pleasures of an exotic street market in a far-away land at the 29th Annual West 104th Street Yard Sale. While tapping your foot to live music performed by seasoned New York musicians, you can shop in more than 60 stalls bursting with treasures

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W 104 ST BLOCK ASSN FINANCIAL REPORT

April 2018

Opening Balance \$25,099.72

Income

Dues..... \$3050.00
 Other contribs. \$754.00
 T-shirts \$36.00
 Totes..... \$82.00
 Other \$311.00

Expenses

Total \$5028.54

Closing Balance (4/30/18) +24,334.13



Where on our block?

The first person to send Steve Zirinsky (Steve@Zirinskyarch.com) the correct location of this architectural detail will win one of the West 104th Street Block Association's new totes!



Jesse I Berger, MBA
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 The Lower-Stress BrokerSM



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

West 104th Street Block Association Board

President Steven Zirinsky	895 WEA	212.866.6732
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Bringing an Architect's Eye

Steve Zirinsky Is New President of Block Board

The Block Association's new president, Steve Zirinsky, is not a block newcomer. He and his wife Paula moved here in 2002 and he has been involved with and committed to our block community ever since. We can thank him for organizing the installation of our elegant streetlights, which he shepherded through city bureaucracy. He spearheaded the expansion of the tree gardens and continues to provide creative ideas and leadership to the board and residents.

Steve grew up in Great Neck, Long Island. Even in elementary school he was curious, and liked to arrange things, and figure out how they were put together. His interests sparked the high school vice principal to administer a special test, which helped him be admitted to Carnegie-Mellon University, where he earned a degree in architecture. He worked briefly in New Haven, but then came to New York. After a short stint on the East Side, he moved to the West Side, where he has been at home ever since. He was responsible for a new streetlight on Riverside and 94th St. when he was president of a co-op there. When he and his wife moved to our block, he got busy working on West 104th Street's lights. Soon the family expanded with the addition of Ethan, now 14.

Steve's architecture firm is in Long Island City, so he has a reverse



commute. His very first commission was a new warehouse in Brooklyn. He has worked on interesting projects—such as renovating the New York Road Runners Club—as well as what he dubs the “usual” mix of residential and commercial work. His interest in the streetscape stems from his notion that architecture doesn't stop at the building line...but is experienced everywhere.

His avocation is postage stamps, and his collection is vast. He specializes in canceled envelopes and island countries of the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean. He will travel internationally to further this passion. He still finds time for weekend runs, and has completed enough marathons (it is not his favorite distance). Steve is a

member of many associations involving architects, city regulations, and postage stamps. He has served on several mayoral committees organized through the Dept. of Buildings, and now sits on one that is developing the 2019 New York City Building Code.

He is passionate about our block and encourages every resident to become involved in some way to improve the sense of community that makes our block special. Feel free to contact him with your suggestions at Steve@zirinskyarch.com. And please read your newsletters and emails for more ideas from Steve.

YARD SALE

YARD SALE, continued from page 1

retrieved from the farthest reaches of your neighbors' forgotten closets. At the Silent Auction, you can place a bid on gift certificates donated by local merchants and restaurateurs, as well as valuable items donated by neighbors.

At the book tables, you can browse a large selection of novels, plays, poetry, history, biography, children's books, coffee-table volumes, cookbooks, atlases, dictionaries, single-volume scores, and other books and CDs in good condition. Or drop by the “What-A-Bargain” table to hunt down the two-dollar find that will make your life complete, and stop on the way at the Bake Sale to pick up a dessert for dinner.

Before the raffle drawing at the end of the day, don't forget to purchase a roll of tickets. The winning ticket entitles you to half the pot. (Last year's first-place ticket won \$1,825.) The second-place ticket earns you \$100; the third-place ticket, \$50.

Although the Yard Sale is weeks away, you can start to prepare today by . . .

- Considering the benefits of booking a space for a vendor stall where you can relieve apartment clutter by selling vintage treasures. After July 1, visit www.bloomingdale.org/vendor.htm. Or contact Gary Waskow at 212-932-9082 or waskowg@yahoo.com. Rates are \$50 for block residents and \$60 for non-block residents.
- Culling books from your shelves to donate to the Book Table
- Gathering items from your closets and shelves for donation to the Silent Auction or “What-A-Bargain”
- Deciding to volunteer to help set up, break down, or staff the tables for books, baked goods, bargains, refreshments, or the Silent Auction.

In the coming weeks, look for flyers with details on donating and participating. Most importantly, prepare for a great day of celebrating and supporting the neighborhood that we love.

Feeding the Trees



At the block association's request, Barlett Tree Experts fertilized the block's trees on April 4th. The fertilizer is custom-formulated to help correct nutrient deficiencies and improve tree health. It contains no phosphorus, and designed for use near sensitive waterways. The fertilizer is injected directly into the critical root zone of the trees and will be released gradually over the entire growing season.

COMMONLY REQUESTED COMPOUNDING IDEAS

- Boric Acid Suppositories
- Hydrocortisone Suppositories
- Ibuprofen Suppositories 100mg / 200mg
- Progesterone Suppositories
- Hyaluronic Suppositories for vaginal dryness
- Hormone Creams for men and women
- Pain Creams
- Nipple Ointment for breastfeeding
- Hydroquinone 6% Fading Cream
- T3 - T4 Thyroid Hormone Capsules
- Nitroglycerin .2% Ointment for Anal Fissure
- Nifedipine 2% Ointment
- Diltiazem 2% Ointment

***Topical Creams (in Lipoderm Base) for nausea, vomiting, pain, fever for adults and children
We can formulate or reduce dosages on commercially available tablets or capsules.
We can add different flavors to medication.
Customized Medication for your pets.

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Volunteer of the Year Has Long Resume of Helping Block

Bloomington Aging in Place Honors Teresa Elwert with 2018 Sands Award **By Lo-Yi Chan**

After a 10-hour flight returning to NYC from Hawaii recently, Teresa barely had time for a nap before leading her regular 8am Monday morning brisk walk in Central Park. Her fellow walkers were happy to have her back.



Well known for leading these walks and her many other volunteer activities, longtime West 104th Street resident Teresa Elwert was presented with the 2018 Sands Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service at BAiP's Volunteer Appreciation Day on April 8 at Hirsch Hall at the Anshe Chesed Synagogue.

The award is named for the late Herman Sands, one of BAiP's founders, and a New York City architect. Along with Teresa, BAiP also recognized one hundred and fifty other volunteers who make possible book clubs, a web site, soup groups, ping-pong, salons, tech squads, sing alongs, panel presentations, helping hands, and many other activities vital to older adults.

Teresa Elwert was born on Long Island and, as an infant, moved to Rutland, Vermont with her family. Her father was a consulting forester, taking care of Vermont's abundant woodlands. Her mother was a homemaker, taking care of her abundant family; Teresa was the third of six children. At the University of Vermont, she majored in theater and minored in French.

In 1974, Teresa came to NYC to start her career in the theater. She acted in off-off Broadway plays and summer stock, became a stage manager and finally a production manager. After three years, she left the entertainment world in 1988 to join Mercer, a global human resource consulting firm,

where she eventually worked in the new field of Knowledge Management (think Best Practices). After what she describes as 25 ever-exciting years at Mercer, Teresa retired in 2013.

Teresa's goal in retirement was to stay physically active and to meet new people. She was already a volunteer, having served as President of the West 104th Street Block Association, on her coop board, as a gardener in Riverside Park and as a tree counter for a NYC tree census. So with time on her hands and a goal in mind, Teresa approached the all-volunteer BAiP. It proved to be an excellent match.

Teresa describes her motive to volunteer as "enlightened self-interest." She has a passion for walking, so why not invite her fellow Westsiders to share her passion? Thus was born her five-days-a-week BAiP Brisk Walk. More than fifty walkers have signed up to follow Teresa in this and her other outings. Often a dozen will walk with her, sunny or snowing, for an hour in Central Park, followed by coffee and conversation at Whole Foods. Teresa has expanded her walks to include historic houses in all five boroughs, gardens in Westchester, outings for baseball in Staten Island and for tennis at the US Open and art walks around the city.

Teresa sees walking in groups as both a means to better health as well as a way to create a community of neighbors. This is the very essence of BAiP's mission, which is to help older adults lead vital, safe, connected and comfortable lives as their needs change. With the Sands Award, BAiP celebrated Teresa Elwert and the many BAiP volunteers for all that they do to achieve this mission. The neighborhood is in good hands.

Block Association Launches Effort Against Rats

As many neighbors have observed, our block has a rat problem. The Block Association has begun an effort to reduce unsecured garbage on the block and to plug a large nest in a tree garden on the south side.

The block began making requests of the Department of Health to inspect and address the problem in February. One was filed as recently as May 2nd. Meantime, block president Steve Zirinsky began working with the owner of 318 W 104th Street to change the building's garbage area. The cans sat uncovered under a metal cage which had a large opening in the back. Rats found the location so enticing, they decided to build an underground hotel in the tree bed in front of the building. Though the Department of Health came several times to put poison around the rat hole, the accessible garbage cans kept drawing the rats back.

Zirinsky was able to get 318 W 104th to fully enclose the garbage cans by adding a metal plate in back of the cage. While the free lunch is over for the rats, they have not departed from their hotel.

To address the problem, the block association has requested to Councilmember Helen Rosenthal's office to add us to a "rat priority" list given to the Department of Health. The recent water main repairs in that section of the block have likely destroyed the nest. The Block Association will continue to follow up on this issue.

In the meantime, the Block Association is asking for everyone's help. If you see rats, please note their location and call 311 to make a complaint. Then please forward the complaint number to a member of the Block Association.

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W104th: Home of Community Builders

By supporting the Block Association, you forge ties between our neighborhood and community catalysts...co-op boards...building owners...supers...Police, Sanitation, and Fire Departments... City, State, and Federal agencies...utilities... local merchants and restaurateurs ...sister block association and other community groups...and security services.

Working with these catalysts through the Block Association, you and your fellow members keep our block safe, clean, well-maintained, and nearly crime-free, while building community spirit. More specifically, you support efforts to:

- Fight local air and noise pollution
- Snag plastic bags blighting our trees
- Unclog gutters and eliminate flooding at street corners
- Wage war on rats and other pests
- Prune our trees
- Fill our tree beds with seasonal flowers
- Ensure crack-free, level sidewalks
- Monitor visiting film crews
- Facilitate traffic flow with well-placed street signs and well-timed traffic lights
- Facilitate information flow with our Newsletter, website, Block Bytes (email updates), and Twitter (@W104BA)
- Sponsor events including our Annual Yard Sale and 50/50 Raffle
- Preserve peaceful weekend mornings by ending daybreak garbage collection
- Speed the completion of maintenance projects by utilities and the City
- Arrange social/cultural outings with sister associations
- Ensure late-night security with abundant street lighting and guard service
- Promote and preserve our neighborhood history
- Help each of us to connect with the larger community

If you have not paid your dues for January-December 2018, please fill out the form on the back page and mail it in with your payment. Or return it to one of the representatives listed on the back page. Although we suggest a specific dues amount, please pay whatever is right for you, and please know that you are a partner in a joint enterprise: building a community.



315 Riverside Dr. continued from page 1

Kight's buyer for the corner house, No. 317, was Myles Tierney, who in 1900 was living there his wife, four adult children, a son-in-law, and three servants. Tierney had made a fortune as a builder and contractor. But now, at age 59 and one of the city's leading Catholic laymen, he was largely retired and mainly occupied with corporate directorships and his numerous charitable interests. He was, among other things, a trustee of Bellevue Hospital and a board member of the Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank. In 1900 Governor Theodore Roosevelt appointed him to a blue-ribbon State commission to investigate the conditions in New York City tenements. The commission's findings were the basis for the 1901 Tenement House Act—the so-called “New Law”—which imposed stricter requirements for light, air and sanitation on all future multifamily buildings in New York City.

Tierney moved to Montclair New Jersey in 1909. By the time Celia Marcus sold her row house in 1915, it was clear that all these houses, although less than 20 years old, would eventually give way to apartments. All three went through several more owners before being acquired by the Hall brothers in September 1929. A year later, Elizabeth Meyers sold them No. 314, thus completing the assemblage for the present 315 Riverside Drive.

A New Firm Gets the Job

In 1929, Boak & Paris was a relatively new firm, but its partners had solid architectural credentials. Russell M. Boak (1896-1981), the Bronx-born son of a postal clerk, attended Stuyvesant High School but dropped out after his first year. At 15, he went to work for Emery Roth (1871-1948), who was among the most important New York architects of the 20th century. Learning on the job, Boak worked his way up from junior draftsman to chief staff designer. In 1923 Roth made Boak an associate with a 25 percent share of the firm's profits. But Boak grew restless. Also, as explained by Annice Alt, author of *Boak & Paris / Boak & Raad: New York Architects* (2014), Boak probably saw little



Kight's 5-story row houses

chance of advancing to partner, since Roth was grooming his sons to over the firm. In 1927 Boak broke away from Roth, taking with him Hyman Paris (1894-1966).

Paris was born in Austria and little is known about his early architectural training. Based on drawings in the Roth archives, his work for the firm was mainly on apartment house interiors. He had joined Roth as early as 1919, but for several years prior to that he had worked in the office of Gaetan Ajello.

Boak & Paris quickly made a name for themselves as skilled designers of apartment houses. Their first building in Manhattan was 225 West 106th Street, erected in 1927-28 at the northeast corner of Broadway. They had designed several more projects in Manhattan and Brooklyn, including the celebrated 444 Central Park West, before Arlington C. Hall retained them to redesign the new 315 Riverside Drive.

Decorative Motifs in Cast Iron and Stone

Arlington C. Hall and his architects knew that 315 Riverside Drive would have to hold its own next to its taller neighbor to the south. (310 Riverside Drive was designed as an apartment hotel, theoretically a commercial building and therefore

not subject to the residential height limits. This loophole was eliminated by the 1929 Multiple Dwelling Law.)

No. 315 is an Art Deco tower, but less severely modern than 310. For example, its windows are sash rather than casement. Stylized floral motifs are used in the cast-stone ornaments and in wrought-iron window grills and balconettes. It also retains some other nods to classical tradition. Cast-stone band courses divide it into a 2-story base, a 14-story mid-section, and a 3-story top. The tall midsection emphasizes the building's verticality.

The most pleasing element is the building's brilliant use of brickwork. Standard bricks are set lengthwise, endwise and on edge to create a variety of patterns and textures. At the corner bays, the architects used a special rounded brick to create the effect of fluted piers rising the full height of the street wall. The three central bays on each façade have gently rounded spandrels—the areas between the top of one window and the sill of the window above—made of bricks laid vertically. All serve to emphasize the building's height.

After 315 Riverside Drive and another building, 22 Riverside, Boak & Paris designed four more projects for Hall, but none were residential. One of these, in 1932, was their most famous design, the Midtown Theatre—later renamed the Metro—at 2626 Broadway. It was designated a city landmark in 1989. Unfortunately, it has also been vacant since 2004. The second project, in 1935, was the reconstruction of a brownstone at 143 West 72nd St to house the offices of A.C. and H.W. Hall Realty Co. Today there is a yoga studio behind its Art Deco façade. The third project was a 2-story building at 37 East 50th Street, built in 1939 to house Howard Johnson's first restaurant in New York City, as well as the Johnson company's offices. It is still a restaurant today.

Do you love fresh fruits and vegetables (or wish you did)? Join our farm share group and get fresh delicious produce every week.



Get organic vegetables, eggs, and flowers and low-spray fruit straight from a Long Island farm every Wednesday at Anshe Chesed – 100th St. and West End Avenue. Join our CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) group and enjoy great produce from June to November.

First pick-up June 6th – don't delay

For info go to - <http://www.tuvharetzcsa.com/>

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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Computers repaired, maintained, viruses removed, junk mail controlled. Advice to repair or buy. I do Windows! Contact Greg Williams, block resident at 212.749.2398, 917.771.2929, or prosolutions@stny.rr.com,

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Professional writer & Faulkner finalist available for critiques, editing & as a writing tutor. Contact Pat at: 212-615-6927

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE PUBLICIZED FREE!

Publicize your neighborhood service (babysitting, dog walking, apartment cleaning, etc.) free in the newsletter and on our web site for one year, renewable. To submit an ad mail/deliver this information to Hanna Rubin 315 RSD or send to 104thstreetba@gmail.com

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:

347-723-1517

2018 2nd Quarter Dues:

Please allocate my contribution to:

Amount of check: _____

Security Beautification Social Newsletter Board Decision (Suggested amt: \$40/quarter or \$160/year)

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone _____

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

G. Waskow: 320 RSD, Apt. 8G

J. Howitt: 315 RSD, Apt. 8C