

West 104th Street

MARCH 2019

BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Striking a Chord for the Community

Inside Bloomingdale School of Music

By Jeff Howitt



Voice lesson with Jocelyn Medina

When you enter the stately brownstone at 323 West 108th Street and walk the halls of the Bloomingdale School of Music (BSM), expect to feel an urge to pull out the musical instrument languishing in your closet since your days in your high school marching band, college orchestra, or rocker buddy's garage band. Something in the air inspires you to explore your talent, to cultivate your appreciation of music, and to join in the camaraderie of music making.

Stepping into the waiting room, the aristocratic décor contrasts with a palpable spirit of community and inclusion. A fraying, faded tapestry covers the four walls and evokes the Gilded Age. Varnished furniture and period lighting fixtures amplify the genteel elegance of a bygone era. As students and instructors exchange greetings before adjourning to practice rooms for lessons, their smiles reveal a shared belief that encouragement and fun—rather than stark discipline—best motivate the hard work of mastering an instrument.

Of the 650 students registered for lessons in voice and more than twenty instruments, about 10% are under five years old; about 10% are adults; the balance are primary and secondary school age. Half are students of color.

On BSM's list of core values, the first is "Access." "There is music in everyone," the Annual Report declares. "Access to all our programs is regardless of the personal or financial circumstances of any student." Backing up these words, the school dedicates 14% of its operating budget to need-based financial aid and scholarships, granting half of the funds to families with annual incomes under \$30,000. In 2018, BSM awarded financial assistance to 101 of 103 applicants.

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Letter from the Block President

I have just completed one year as president of the Block Association—what have I learned?

I've learned that contributions come in many ways: Some people contribute financially, some people with time, and some people with enthusiasm. Some give a combination of all three. There is no right or wrong way to contribute. And I've learned that our collective contributions are what make this community—like any community—stronger. The more effort we individually contribute, the more we get out of our community as a whole.

So, think about that as you see the Block Association going about its tasks and hosting events this year and see where and what you can add to the mix. The more the merrier.

We have some questions we are asking the whole block: How can we get more kids involved in our block activities? Why can't we have a beer night—or at least a pot-luck supper? How come I see the same faces on the block association board at each meeting?

We welcome your ideas, your visiting our meetings, your participation in any way in our/your West 104th Street community. Please join us at the annual block meeting on March 19th (details below) and learn more about our plans.

Meanwhile, see you around the block!

— Steve Zirinsky

You Are Invited to the Annual Meeting!

Block residents are invited to the West 104th Street Block Association annual meeting on Tuesday, March 19 at 7pm in the Marseilles Common Room (230 West 103rd Street). It will feature a special presentation from the **Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group** on the architects of our block, including Boak & Paris and Gaetan Ajello. Light refreshments will be served.

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W 104 ST BLOCK ASSN FINANCIAL REPORT

January 2019

Opening Balance	16,695.50
Income	8880.35
Dues.....	8790.00
Newsletter ads.....	90.00
Expenses	2927.62
Guard service.....	2831.80
Newsletter.....	36.00
Printing	45.00
Yard Sale	14.82
Closing Balance	22,648.23

West 104th Street Block Association Board

President Steven Zirinsky	315 RSD	212.866.6732
VP Jeff Howitt	315 RSD	212.866.5569
Treasurer Barbara Boynton	905 WEA	212.864.1011
Secretary Larry Stern	315 RSD	212.794.2288

Members

Barbara Bryan	315 RSD	212.864.5663
Mary Jo Gennaro	315 RSD	
Alex Grannis	895 WEA	212.316.1644
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
Gary Waskow	320 RSD	212.932.9082
Emeritus Sid Herzfeld	895 WEA	212.749.0085



Striking a Chord for the Community

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As you leave the waiting room, climb the stairs, and pass a succession of practice rooms, you hear a variety of instruments playing and voices singing. In one studio, an advanced student masters a tricky passage, while in another a kindergartener discovers the joys of melody, rhythm, and harmony. Bringing the practice rooms to life, baby grand pianos—as well as selected percussion instruments, electronic equipment, and pedagogical paraphernalia—suggest the many options that BSM offers: advanced or introductory lessons for both children and adults seeking either a rigorous course of study or a more flexible approach to classical music, jazz or rock.

When students register for lessons, they find that the assignment of instructors depends on much more than schedule. After the school matches a student with a teacher based on learning style and preferences, it offers students affordable trial lessons to ensure a correct fit. Individual faculty members meet with students and parents to understand their objectives, to evaluate their challenge level and technical strengths, and to set goals. With the information gleaned at these sessions, the faculty designs programs tailored for the individual students. Faculty members draw on their experience not only as committed educators, but also as active musicians and performers. Over 85% hold advanced degrees in their fields.

BSM offers group classes for adults returning to music study and for all beginners; however, it regards interaction between a single student and a single teacher as the core experience of music education. As part of the training, it encourages students to compose, introducing music theory during lessons and offering focused classes for those seeking a deeper understanding. It sponsors a student composing project,

culminating in “A Night of World Premieres,” a performance where students present each other’s original works. To enhance the composition process, the New York Philharmonic Very Young Composer teaching artists collaborate with BSM teaching artists to offer three composition workshops in the fall.

Providing a wide range of opportunities for ensemble playing, BSM maintains a variety of chamber music groups, a rock band, a percussion ensemble, a jazz ensemble, and preparatory, intermediate, and advanced orchestras.

Through partner programs with local schools, Bloomingdale opens the door to high-quality, after-school instruction for students who do not have access to lessons at their elementary or high schools. BSM also partners with the Bloomingdale Family Program, a Headstart educational resource for children from low-income backgrounds.

If you are not quite ready to pick up an instrument, you can still enjoy BSM’s weekly series of free concerts featuring faculty-artists, students, and guests performing classical, jazz, rock, and world music. For more information on this series and all the above programs, please consult the Bloomingdale School of Music’s friendly and informative website, www.bsmny.org.



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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
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- Diltiazem 2% Ointment

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Ready to Bloom

Neighbors lend a hand to get spring tulip bulbs planted.

Neighbors gathered on December 1 to plant bulbs for springtime blossoms, led by the block association's planting committee—Mary Jo Gennaro, Lynn Max and Larry Stern. The block association had purchased 1500 “tulips on fire” bulbs; these should produce yellow and orange blooms with double petals when the warm weather returns, making a bright show in the tree beds up and down the block.



Mary Jo Gennaro and Larry Stern



The block planted 1500 bulbs



Board members Lynn Max, Mary Jo Gennaro and Alex Grannis



Steve Max prepares a tree bed for planting



Mary Jo scatters “tulips on fire” bulbs



Sophie and Theo help their mom, Rebecca, plant bulbs.

24th Precinct Makes Neighborhood Policing Effort

By Joyce Mann



Officers Celenza and Soto; the 24th Precinct is increasing outreach to the community.



As part of an effort to build better ties to the community, the 24th Police Precinct held the first of three Community Wide Council “Build the Block” meetings on February 20th at Congregation Bnai Jeshurun’s Community Hall on West 89th Street. These meetings are part of an ongoing neighborhood policing campaign that the New York City Police Department has been actively promoting.

The Council’s purpose is to meet as many 24th Precinct residents as possible to hear their complaints, compliments and concerns and to promote an ongoing relationship between the police and the community they serve. West 104th Street residents are in Sector A, which runs from 86th to 110th Streets from Broadway to Riverside Park. Sector B is the Columbus Square area and its meeting was on February 7th at St. Michael’s Church. Sector C is east of Broadway, from West 100th to West

110th Streets. That meeting will be held on March 18th at 6:30 at The School at Columbia University. Each sector has dedicated officers who will be assigned long-term to the neighborhood.

The meeting for our area was led by the designated Neighborhood Coordination Officers Michael Celenza (michael.Celenza@nypd.org) and Jovani Soto (jovani.Soto@nypd.org). They explained the Council’s mission: “to identify policing and public safety needs in our community.” While they investigate crimes when they are reported, primarily these officers are here to address our quality of life issues such as robberies, noise, parking problems and even dog waste.

At the February 20 session, the main concerns seemed to be the homeless shelters on West 94th and 95th Streets, whose residents often congregate on the front steps and can be intimidating. The officers said they are well aware of local “hot spots” like these and often park their police cars nearby. They meet with the staff that run the shelters and check in frequently. They also stated that they would now increase the frequency of these visits knowing there are community concerns.

Both officers stressed that there are no known gangs in the 24th Precinct, meaning no groups connected to national groups such as the Bloods and Crips. Apparently each housing development has its own “crew,” but the one set of violent criminals known to them have been arrested and long prison sentences are expected.

Both officers said that if anyone feels frightened or intimidated by someone’s actions at any point or see a crime in progress, they should call 911 immediately. The officers also noted that they could even adjust their hours and patrols if their presence is requested as a deterrent to repeat offenders during a specific time frame.

One participant raised the issue of dog waste on our streets. The officers urged a 311 call for every incident of someone not complying with the “Clean up after your dog” rules, or of unruly or rude dog owners who respond negatively when asked to comply with the rules. They can issue a summons if the incident escalates. However, the first call should be to 311 because so-called “quality of life” issues must be recorded to make an effective record of when and where these problems are occurring, making it easier for the police to follow up regularly.

The precinct also flagged a notice re: marijuana use. It is still illegal to smoke or possess any amount of marijuana in public view. You can be issued a summons if you possess up to 25 grams. Driving under the influence of marijuana is aggressively prosecuted.

There were also representatives from Safe Horizons, a New York City victim assistance program, and a Baptist youth ministry, both of whom offered their services and coordinate with the 24th Precinct.

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It's Easy Being Green...Think Global, Act Local

By Sharon Waskow

Many of us may feel overwhelmed by the current and future consequences of climate change. One option is to sink into despair and do nothing, another is to commit to making sustainable practices habitual. If you are having trouble adopting a “can do” mindset about climate change, think about the impossible things that have changed for the better in your lifetime...smoking in restaurants, passage of the Civil Rights Act, the election of an African American president and so on. Each of these things happened because attitudes and actions changed incrementally.

There are things you can do on a personal, building, and neighborhood level to reduce your impact on the environment. Here are some actions you can take right now. While some of these actions seem insignificant in the face of the systemic global problems we face, we have to start somewhere and small actions do add up.

10 things you can do about climate change

- **Limit consumption of meat.** Did you know that beef production contributes to climate change? This Scientific American article explains how: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/slideshow/the-greenhouse-hamburger/>.
- **Use your dishwasher.** A dishwasher consumes less water than hand washing dishes. Check out National Public Radio's blog The Salt on “To Save Water, Should You Wash Your Hands of Dishwashing?” for the down and dirty details.
- **Buy electricity from a renewable energy company.** In New York State you can choose your energy source and can switch to one that offers more renewable choice. ConEd's Power Your Way option outlines the choices on their website.
- **Carry a reusable water bottle/coffee mug.** This one is a cinch; read The Guardian's excellent story, “A Million Bottles a Minute,” and don't forget to watch the video.
- **Reduce/reuse/recycle.** It's the mantra of the Environmental Protec-

- tion Agency and it's easy—go to www.epa.gov/recycle and see what you can do starting today.
- **Recycling food waste.** Urge your building to join others in our area composting with the New York City program. Go to the NYC's Department of Sanitation website for information on joining or how to use other nearby composting options.
- **Walk more, drive less, use public transportation.** Read Curbed's report (ny.curbed.com) on why private cars are hastening the climate crisis in New York.
- **Hold onto your cell phones; update less frequently to newer models.** Who needs yet another tweak? It's wasteful and needless to upgrade with every new release, says BusinessInsider.com.
- **Make home more energy efficient:** Use LED light bulbs, replace or seal up drafty windows. The EPA's website has lots of simple suggestions that take only minutes to do.
- **Support companies that are committed to sustainable practices.** Companies with B Corp certification demonstrate that they subscribe to sustainable practices. This designation, pioneered by a global non-profit, is a good way to make sure the products you use put the planet first. Go to bcorporation.net for information.

This is not an exhaustive list. We encourage you, our neighbors, to try as many of these actions as you can. We welcome your input, questions, and inspirations on how to tackle the biggest issue we and future generations face.

A Tri-Bloomingdale group is being planned to increase awareness about the effects of climate change in New York City and to identify personal actions we can take. To find out more about what is being planned and how you may become involved, contact Itseasybeinggreen.uws@gmail.com. Young people in the neighborhood are especially invited to participate.

ON THE BLOCK



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

BLOCK NEWS

Con Ed Detects Stray Voltage On Street

What was the Con Ed red Emergency Truck doing parked on West 104 Street on February 12? And why were some of the tree pits cordoned off with yellow tape and green cones?

After a January 2004 accident in the East Village where a resident was electrocuted by stepping on a live Con Edison electric box carrying 57 volts, the utility now regularly scans the streets seven or eight times a year looking for stray voltage readings. And as a result the number of people experiencing electric shock has dramatically declined. Con Ed finds this procedure useful because it helps them resolve issues prior to their becoming major problems.

And that is what they found on West 104th Street on February 12. The truck detected 3 volts, not huge, but needing to be fixed right away before it got worse. Some of the tree guards were “hot” and so were cordoned off. The problem originated in 304 W 104 Street: the neutral wasn't connected any longer. Once this was fixed, the problem was solved.

Manhole Fixed With 311 Call

On January 27th, a Block Association Board member noticed that a manhole cover in the middle of West End Ave. and 104th St. was broken in several places and sinking below the surface of the street. A call was placed to 311 and the operator was told of the potential hazard to cars, bicycles and pedestrians. The 311 operator transferred the call to 911 and within 10 minutes a police cruiser came to inspect the manhole cover and within an hour, the broken manhole cover was replaced.

