

West 104th Street

SEPTEMBER 2022

BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

New and Improved

Several Riverside Park projects will restore and rebuild key elements.

By Gil Tauber



The promenade supports will be rebuilt.

Riverside Park and Riverside Drive were largely built in the 1880s and '90s, and the park was greatly expanded in the 1930s under the many-hatted commissioner Robert Moses. Nearly 90 years later, important elements of the Park will be rehabilitated or rebuilt in a series of projects either currently under way or poised to begin.

Rehabilitation of the W. 79th Street Rotunda Complex and Bridge over Amtrak. This project has been underway for about a year and is expected to be

Continued on page 5.

The Yard Sale: An Upper West Side Celebration



You will find bargains, live music, the Block Association's split-the-pot raffle and more on Saturday, October 1, when the West 104th Street Block Association holds its annual Yard Sale from 10 am to 5pm.

More than 60 vendors will line the block with quirky and unique finds: vintage treasures, children's toys, clothes, hand-crafted jewelry, and more. The Block Association also sponsors a Silent Auction featuring dozens of gift certificates to local restaurants and businesses, a Bake Table with homemade sweet and savory treats, and a Book Table with hundreds of novels, mysteries, memoirs, biographies and children's books. Plus there are the not-to-be missed What-A-Bargain Tables, with \$1 wonders, \$5 finds and \$20 white elephants. Everybody finds something they can't do without.

Plus there's entertainment. The Anderson Brothers Jazz Quartet kicks off the performances at 11:30 am. Then jazz guitarist Joe Giglio takes over at 1pm. And at 3pm, Shailah Edmonds gets going with her fantastic Motown covers.

It's an amazing event, a great vibe, and a chance to be with friends and neighbors at a truly unique West Side event. Come on by!

**Find out how to
donate to the Yard
Sale on page 6.**

IN THIS ISSUE

Riverside Park Projects.....p. 1
 Yard Sale Is Coming.....p. 1
 Block Financialsp. 2
 Neighborhood Wishesp. 2
 Rat Patrol Updatep. 6
 Donate to the Yard Salep. 6
 Broadway Bistrosp. 7
 Summer Soirees.....p. 7

Contributors to the September Issue:
 Hayley Elaszcz, Stephen Helman, Hanna Rubin (editor), Larry Stern,
 Gilbert Tauber, Steve Zirinsky. Newsletter designer: Brian Hajjar

WEST 104 BLOCK ASSN FINANCIAL REPORT

JULY 2022

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| OPENING BALANCE | \$38,692.08 |
| Income..... | 1680.45 |
| Dues & Rat Fund | 1680.45 |
| EXPENSES | 5307.48 |
| Guard Service | 4963.38 |
| Yard Sale..... | 244.00 |
| CLOSING BALANCE | \$35,065.05 |

Neighborhood Wishes: Keep It Clean

I have an “if you see something, say something” issue. Can we enlist dog owners to both be mindful of their own pets and also say something to other dog owners? I’ve been gardening along Riverside Drive (which is considered a part of Riverside Park) since 1989. I’ve gardened through crack vials, rats, poison ivy, plant theft, storm damage, jugs of urine, dead pets, bags of poop, everything imaginable (and unmentionable) thrown into the gardens. Which I deal with regularly. As a volunteer.

But the dog urine/poop situation is way out-of-hand and I need help from others. My particular plea is for dog walkers to curb their dogs *in the streets/gutters*, not against the fences surrounding plantings or inside gardens/tree pits. The new pedestrian safety bump out in the crosswalk on RSD/104th has

become a very popular spot for dogs to defecate and urinate. Perhaps they’re waiting for the light to change, but there’s room to go in the no parking spots. There’s room on the service road. There’s room in the 104th St. gutter

No building staff washes off this sidewalk, and it is filthy (unless there is major rainfall). The dog urine at the south end of the fenced area (the crosswalk at 104th St.) has killed plantings that I worked very hard to jolly into growing. Do people still recognize the meaning of the phrase «curb your dog»? Dogs can be trained. But the owners first need to be aware of the damage inflicted on things that exist for everyone’s enjoyment.

I’m begging--on behalf of the block’s volunteer gardeners and the neighborhood’s plants and trees --that dog walkers realize canine feces and urine kill plants, which decreases the beauty we all enjoy in our neighborhood. --Karen Gershenhorn

Best Copy & Shipping

2660 Broadway



(Btwn 101 & 102)

212-665-8523

212-665-7685

Email: bestcopy@nyc.rr.com

bestcopy101@gmail.com

website: www.bestcopyny.com

Copy · Print · Binding · Fax

Internet Café · Scan & PDF

Passport Photo · T-shirt Print

Business Cards · Color Poster · Newsletter

DVD Convert · Blue Print · Phone Bill · Booklets

WEST 104 BLOCK ASSN BOARD

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------|--------------|
| President Steven Zirinsky | 315 RSD | 212.866.6732 |
| VP Mary Jo Gennaro | 315 RSD | 917.547.9557 |
| Treasurer Mary Koval | 895 WEA | 917.969.1984 |
| Secretary Larry Stern | 315 RSD | 212.794.2288 |

MEMBERS

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Hayley Elaszcz | 314 W 104 | 440.231.1441 |
| Alex Grannis | 895 WEA | 212.316.1644 |
| Stephen Helman | 315 RSD | 917.853.8590 |
| Jennifer Jones | 315 RSD | 212.749.3865 |
| Peter Littlewood | 320 RSD | 612.501.6919 |
| 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 |
| Nancy Lian (ex officio) | 320 RSD | 212.316.6112 |



Serafina®

WEST 105

We are open

12-10pm Monday to Friday
11:30am-10pm Saturday & Sunday

Weekend brunch

11:30am-3:30pm

Private dining room available up to 70 people

Inquire at 212.301.0664

or email reservations@serafinawest105.com



2737 Broadway, corner of West 105th Street
serafinarestaurant.com @ [serafinanewyork](https://www.instagram.com/serafinanewyork)



HAPPY SUMMER BRUNCH

(ALL SUMMER)

EVERY

THURSDAY (11AM-4PM)

FRIDAY (11AM-4PM)

SATURDAY (9AM-4PM)

SUNDAY (9AM-4PM)

WWW.CAFEDUSOLEILNY.COM
(212) 316-5000

completed by the end of 2024. Most of the work will be in the rehabilitation of the historic three-level Rotunda complex, built from 1935 to 1937, which lies between the Henry Hudson Parkway and the River. The top level is the Parkway interchange, whose traffic circle and ramps will get new pavement, sidewalks, lighting and bike paths. Work at the pedestrian plaza level will include restoration of the fountain and Guastavino tile arches; upgraded restrooms; construction of a kitchen core and shell for a future concessionaire, and construction of Parks Department office space. At the lower level is a Parks Department garage, which will also undergo structural repairs and rehabilitation.

Where you pass under the Henry Hudson Parkway at 79th Street, you are on a bridge crossing over the Amtrak rail line. This bridge is also being rehabilitated. The more visible bridge carrying the Henry Hudson Parkway over 79th Street is not included in this project.

Renovation and Expansion of 79th Street Boat Basin. This is a joint project of the Department of Parks and the New York City Economic Development Corporation. The boat basin, like the Rotunda, was part of the Moses-era expansion of Riverside Park. For decades, it provided dockage at reasonable cost not only for transient boaters but for a community of year-round boat dwellers. Time, storms, and siltation have taken their toll on the facility, which was closed down in 2021. The proposed project will include dredging; strengthened protection against wave action and floating ice; and repair and expansion of docking facilities. However, one aspect of the project has provoked community opposition: and that is the design of the proposed dock house, which would be considerably larger than the existing structure and would be raised on columns one story above the adjacent pedestrian esplanade. Critics contend the building would be needlessly large and would block views of the water. Agency representatives argue that the building would contain important additional facilities and that it needs to be elevated to protect it from storm damage. Further revisions to the design are expected.

Reconstruction of the Drainage System North of 108th Street. Most neighborhood residents are aware of drainage problems within Riverside Park a few blocks to the north of us, including erosion of soil on steep slopes and pooling of water on the flat ground at the base of those slopes. In addition, along the west side of Riverside Drive, there are numerous areas of chronic puddling because of inadequate storm drainage, and a few places where underground water flows have caused sinkholes. Following a recent drainage study covering most of the park north of 72nd Street, the Department of Parks and Recreation is planning to reconstruct the drainage system within the park from about 108th Street northward to 116th Street, as well as portions of Riverside Drive. All of the proposed work will be east of the deck or promenade atop the Amtrak rail tunnel.

Reconstruction of Deck Over Amtrak Line Through Riverside Park. What many park users think of as the Riverside Park Promenade or Esplanade is actually a roof over a railroad, the Amtrak Empire Line. The rail line itself dates back to 1849-50. By the end of the 19th Century, after it had been absorbed into Cornelius Vanderbilt's New York Central System, the line had been expanded to four tracks. In 1936-37 it was roofed over as part of the Moses-era expansion of



The 79th Street rotunda overhaul is underway.



Riverside Park. Eighty-five years later, the steel-framed “overbuild” has severely deteriorated and needs to be rebuilt.

From the standpoint of the New York City Department of Transportation, which has jurisdiction over the reconstruction project, the overbuild consists of two bridges, one extending from 82nd to 94th Streets and the other from 98th to 124th Streets. The area around the 96th St. highway interchange, from 94th to 98th Streets, is a different structure type and is not included in this project.

While the project is essentially a replacement in kind, the designers will have some new issues to consider. The heavily used athletic fields west of the railroad did not exist prior to 1936-37. The project design will have to include measures to maintain public access to those facilities during construction. The designers will also have to provide access to the construction site, as well as onsite storage—known as laydown areas—for materials and equipment, while minimizing impact on park areas used by the public. According to Vin Barone, a spokesman for the New York City Department of Transportation, a contract for the engineering design of the project is scheduled to be let this fall.




Friendly Valet Cleaners



Quality Organic Cleaners

2725 Broadway (b/t 104 & 105 St)
212-666-8080
www.fvcleaners.com
License: 0927344



Rick Wohlfarth
rick@wohlfarth.com
Office 212.666.1600, x10
Cell 917.882.0815
Maine 207.729.9332
Fax 212.662.5865

890 WEST END AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10025
WOHLFARTH.COM

Rat Patrol Update

Several tactics help combat the rat problem

By Steve Zirinsky

We have managed to irritate the rats.

Generous block residents contributed \$5790 to a special fund the Block Association created to fight the rat infestation in the tree beds on the south side of West 104th Street. The Block Association has tapped this fund to invest in several tactics to deal with the problem.

Some buildings on the block now are using closed containers to hold garbage when leaving the curbside trash for the Department of Sanitation pickups. In several instances, the Block Association has purchased these containers for buildings. Some buildings also are putting the trash out only hours before pick up, which is another strategy.

As an experiment, the Block Association installed a wire-mesh covering in one tree pit, which was placed by Bartlett's, the company that also prunes the block's trees. The mesh covering is safe for the tree, and is covered with earth. However, the covering did not prove fully effective, so the Block Association has not installed it in other tree pits.

The Block Association also has retained the services of a private exterminator. We are now treating four tree pits on the south side of the block and most of the brownstones every week for a fee of \$300. This appears to be having some impact.

All hands are on deck trying to deal with this... hopefully the rats will get irritated enough to leave.

How to Donate and Help at the Yard Sale

Donate to the Book Sale

Share cookbooks, mysteries, novels, plays, poetry, histories, biographies, memoirs, children's books, and other books and CDs. Please pack your donation in bags marked "Yard Sale," and leave them with the 320 RSD doorman between September 15 and 29. (Please, no textbooks, journals, magazines, theses, LPs, or titles on baby care, computers, or self-help.)

Donate to 'What-a-Bargain'

Contribute to the amazing array of cool, quirky and useful finds, especially jewelry, knickknacks, kitchenware, toys, puzzles with all their pieces, unopened personal care products, used bicycles, and more! (We do not sell any type of clothing, computer equipment, coffee mugs, drinking glasses, etc.) To find out if your items are donate-able, and arrange a delivery time between September 15 and 29 at 309 West 104th Street, please contact Joyce Mann at joycemann2@gmail.com or 212-721-6341 or 516-238-4609.

Donate to the Silent Auction

Find a happy home for your neglected antiques, vintage collectibles, posters, photographs, paintings, theater tickets, household items in their original boxes, and services (piano lessons? Bread making?) Please contact Hanna Rubin at Hanna.Rubin@verizon.net or text 212-961-6606.

Donate to the Bake Sale

Share your best treats with your neighbors: cookies, cakes, pies, snacks, finger food, and other original creations at the block bake table. Please call Alex Grannis at 917-576-1750 to let her know what you plan to bring.

Donate Your Time

Do you have an hour? Lend a hand at the Silent Auction, "What-a-Bargain," Book Sale, Bake Sale, or set up and break down. Please contact Hanna Rubin at Hanna.Rubin@verizon.net or send a text to 212-961-6606.

See you at the Yard Sale on October 1!



Jesse I Berger, MBA
Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker
The Lower-Stress BrokerSM



1995 Broadway, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10023
646.505.6992 e-fax: 646.497.5145
JIBERGER@elliman.com
www.elliman.com

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

Get Your Ticket for the 50-50 Raffle!

Board members Larry Stern and Stephen Helman sell raffles for the Yard Sale's 50-50 raffle. The first place winner splits the pot with the Block Association. Last year's pot reached \$3782.



MARTIN BROTHERS
Wines & Spirits Inc.

INFO@MBVIN.COM
2781 BROADWAY • NEW YORK NY 10025
TEL 212.222.8218 • FAX 212.222.6545
WWW.MBVIN.COM

Broth, Beans and Beef on Broadway

New neighborhood eateries offer some diverse options

By Hayley Elszasz

I recently took a stroll down Broadway to speak with restaurant owners and staff about several diverse new cuisines on offer. While many block residents love neighborhood favorites like Serafina and Café du Soleil, a block or two further south brings you to more exotic choices.

Street Taco (at 102nd Street) is one of the newest additions to our stretch of Broadway. Opened in May 2022, Street Taco is part of a restaurant group that owns four restaurants and bars in Manhattan. In fact, there are two locations for Street Taco itself; the first is in Kips Bay. According to the host who I spoke with, the carne asada taco is the most popular dish, followed by the tuna tartar and the “gringo” (ground beef taco in a hard shell). There is also a vegan version of the gringo, which uses Beyond Meat. Tacos cost \$5-6 each.

The second newest restaurant is **Just Pho You** (at 101st Street), which opened in March. Taking over a space that used to be a Chinese restaurant, Just Pho You specializes in Vietnamese noodle soup. I met the owner, Wan Chen, who told me about her signature pho. This healthful soup is made using a medley of beef bone marrow and herbs that is cooked for over eight hours (\$18). Then, they add noodles and toppings like scallions, basil, bean sprouts, and lime. The owner of Just Pho You has been a foodie



From top left: Neighborhood bistro Cafe du Soleil; Just Pho You offers Vietnamese comfort food; Au Jus has savory Oklahoma barbeque; local favorite Serafina.



for her entire life; her father was a chef. This new restaurant also has a vegan-friendly pho option (\$14); appetizers like the grilled pork lettuce wraps (\$12); and Vietnamese coffee (served hot or cold).

While these two restaurants are new on the block, **Aangan** has been at 103rd Street for 15 years. Aangan features favorites from the Northwest of India, including chicken tikka masala, tandoori chicken, saag paneer, and naans. This neighborhood classic offers a discount for Columbia students; a takeout lunch special (\$9.95); and a lamb shank chef special dish. Entrees typically run from \$14-20.

Au Jus (99th Street and Broadway) is the only restaurant to focus on Oklahoma barbeque in all of New York City. However, it has two other locations: one in Harlem and one on the East Side. This family-friendly restaurant features live outdoor jazz performances from 7-9 PM

on Mondays and Fridays throughout the spring and summer. Their most popular dish is the pork ribs, which are cooked overnight in the oven. According to the member of staff I spoke with, people like to order the platters, which come with a main and two sides (like their three-cheese macaroni and cheese) for \$14-18.

I think we can all agree that we are lucky that we have such a range of delicious dining options available to us on Broadway!



Block Association Hosts Summer Gatherings at Ellington's

The Block Association has been hosting summer gatherings every third Tuesday at Ellington's in the Park. Sign up for Block Bytes on the Block Association website (www.bloomingdale.org) to get details on the next one.

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.

CLIMB YOUR FAMILY TREE
 Do you want to climb your family tree but just don't have time, or simply don't know where to begin? Let me do it for you. I have an all-access membership to Ancestry.com and am a member of the NY Genealogical & Biographical Society and the National Genealogical Society. I have been researching my family history for 15 years. Email bchaln87@gmail.com for a fee schedule.

MATHEMATICS TUTORING
 Former Bronx HS of Science teacher SAT, SHSAT, GRE, LSAT logic games Henry 212-666-0396

MEDICARE & AARP/UNITED HEALTH CARE MEDICARE PLANS. I am a BaiP member and licensed independent agent with the AARP/United Health Care Medicare plans. I am happy to help you understand Medicare and Medicare plan options (no cost). Please feel free to contact me at (cell) 914-419-5499 or (email) susanmschorphd@gmail.com.

QUICKBOOKS CONSULTANT/ PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER
 Accounting, business and personal finances, home and file organization. Contact Ellen Curtis at 212.749.2398, 607.829.5631, or EC4QBooks@aol.com.

PET SITTING
 Experienced, responsible, caring pet sitter. I take care of your pets like they are my own! Dogs, cats, small animals, birds, reptiles, fish. Very reasonable rates. Call Tova at 917-526-2862 or email tgetoff@gmail.com.

WRITER/EDITOR
 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, Hanna.Rubin@verizon.net. 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 (now via Zoom). 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. steve@zirinskyarch.com

Contribute to the Newsletter
 Interested in writing or photographing for the West 104th Street Block Association newsletter? Have suggestions about what to cover in the neighborhood? Want to share block news, suggest a profile, send a photo? Please send an email to Hanna.Rubin@verizon.net. Your ideas are welcome.

Check Your Junk Folder
 Did you sign up for Block Bytes but have not received it lately? Check your junk folder. It may end up there unless you add the email to your permissions list.

2022 4th Quarter Dues:

Please allocate my contribution to:

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 vice-president, Mary Jo Gennaro, 315 Riverside Dr., Apt. 7C, NY NY 10025 or leave with one of the following:

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

A. Grannis: 895 West End Ave.

G. Waskow: 320 RSD, Apt. 8G

H. Rubin: 315 RSD, Apt. 17C