

West 104th Street

JUNE 2024

BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

A Burst of Begonias

Vibrant and hardy, this summer's plantings can thrive in wind and shade.

On a bright May morning, the West 104th Street Block Association's Planting Committee turned out to supervise and assist at the planting of 400 red and pink Dragon Wing begonias in the block's tree gardens. Committee members Mary Jo Gennaro, Alex Grannis, Lynn Bender Max and Larry Stern joined workers from Cambridge, an urban landscaping firm, to help mulch and plant the block's tree beds and hanging planters. The Block Association plants 19 tree wells; that now includes 16 hanging planters. Block supers and volunteers help to keep the plants watered through the summer.



Clockwise from top left: Larry Stern; Lynn Max and Mary Jo Gennaro kick off the planting; the begonias were chosen because they have done well in past years and are reliably beautiful.



A Special Day

Mark your calendar--the Yard Sale is coming on September 21.



The West 104th Street Yard Sale, the Block Association's signature event, is planned for Saturday September 21. The block will fill with more than 60 vendors offering an array of great finds, quirky creations, must-have kitchenware and best-selling reads. There is live music, a bake table, a split-the-pot raffle (last year's winner took home \$2623.74) and more.

Block residents can sell their wares by renting a vendor space for \$65. Sign up now on the Block Association's website—www.bloomingdale.org. Spaces sell out fast. The BA also sponsors a book table, a Silent Auction with gift certificates donated by local restaurants and stores, and the celebrated What-a-Bargain tables with items for as little as \$1.

Keep an eye out for flyers with instructions on how to donate to the book table, Silent Auction and What-a-Bargain. Donations will be accepted after Labor Day. Want to lend a hand? Please email Mary Jo Gennaro (mjgennaro@gmail.com) with details about when you can volunteer. We also need help manning raffle tables in the run-up to the big day. Let Mary Jo know if you have availability to sell in the evenings or weekends before the Yard Sale.

What makes the Yard Sale so special? It's warm, it's welcoming, it's fun and there's nothing else quite like it. Consider it a little bit of Upper West Side magic. And you are part of what makes it that way. Come on by and say hi.

Inside This Issue

Interview with Anne Therese Gennari.....Page 3

Interview with Larnel "Big L" Peterson.....Page 7

IN THIS ISSUE

Summer Planting p. 1
 Yard Sale Annouced p. 1
 Block Financials p. 2
 Anne Therese Gennari Profile p. 3
 Spring Blooms Photo Essay p. 4
 Guard Interview p. 7
 Red-Tail Hawks p. 7

Contributors to the June Issue:

Hayley Elaszasz, Mary Jo Gennaro, Stephen Helman, Mary Koval, Joyce Mann, Lynn Bender Max, Hanna Rubin (editor), Larry Stern, Steve Zirinsky. Newsletter designer: Brian Hajjar. Advertising: Jennifer Jones.

WEST 104 BLOCK ASSN FINANCIAL REPORT

FIRST QUARTER FINANCIALS - 2024

OPENING BALANCE	\$22,928.10
INCOME.....	26,614.38
Dues	19,298.14
Newsletter Ads.....	1134.00
Contributions.....	6,105.00
Credits	77.24
EXPENSES	\$13,038.98
Guard Service	9,072.34
Printing Costs	813.06
Beautification-Tree	783.88
Rodent Control	838.34
Supples.....	328.19
Yard Sale Permits	676.26
Operating ExpAccounting	526.91
CLOSING BALANCE	\$36,513.50



Block Association Hosts Curbside Cafe

In the return of a block tradition, neighbors and BA board members gathered at sunset on May 6 to share drinks, nibbles and chat. The board was reelected at the annual meeting on May 16, which featured a presentation from The West Side Rag.

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 Elaszasz	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
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



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

A Fresh Take on Climate Change

Block resident Anne Therese Gennari has a new approach to going green

By Hayley Elszasz

Like the rest of the city, our block is feeling the effects of climate change in its own small ways: from the hotter than usual summers, to the lack of snow, to the very wet Septembers that have forced us to reschedule the block party, weather in our local environment is shifting. I talked to neighbor Anne Therese Gennari, TEDx speaker and author of *The Climate Optimist Handbook*, about what she is doing to help spark action in the face of this daunting challenge.



Gennari described growing up in her native Sweden always being attracted to nature, which eventually brought her to our park-rich corner of the city. While Gennari is planning to move soon to Massachusetts, she has loved her time on West 104th Street with her husband and baby. Although she started her career in marketing, the pandemic gave her an opportunity to reflect on what she wanted to do, which resulted in her current career as an author and speaker about “climate optimism”: the idea that adapting to climate change presents positive opportunities to reflect on our way of life and relationship to nature.

How did you first get involved in climate work? As I got into my teenage years, I became more and more aware of injustices in the world and climate change. And that just led me down a path of extreme anxiety and fear for the future. By the time I was in my early 20s, I was a full-blown ‘angry activist’ and just didn’t know what to do with all the emotions. And one day I was walking around the woods near my parents’ house, I said out loud to the trees around me, ‘I’m here to speak for you; I’ll find a way to give you a voice.’

I had chosen a path in marketing, but always with the intention to use those skills to do good. But it wasn’t until the pandemic hit that I gave myself a chance to really reflect on what I actually wanted to do. That’s when I became honest with myself and the fact that I always wanted to be a writer and speaker. I’ve learned so much this past decade of my own journey from releasing a lot of the stress and anxiety I’ve been holding on to and healing myself. I thought this must be able to be applied to our climate work and our whole philosophy around change.

How did you come to be a “climate optimist”? The reason I homed in on climate optimism is because I had an awakening in my early 20s, which I speak about in my book, and I have a TED Talk for anyone who wants to see it. But it was a turning point for me where I realized I can do this work in a way that I can inspire people instead of trying to push them with my anger and resentment. So what I do is help people shift the narrative on the conversations around climate change so that we can feel inspired and motivated to take action instead of pushed or backed into a corner of despair.

What advice would you give to people who have trouble feeling optimistic in the face of these challenges? That is completely valid. I have those moments almost daily where I’m like, ‘This is not going to ever happen. We’re way too far in the wrong direction.’ So for me, it’s been defining optimism and the role it ought to play in our work. There’s a lot of misunderstanding around climate optimism. Some people think

it’s just wishful thinking. So for me, optimism is not something you just choose. It’s something you create and nurture daily. I call it being an optimist in action, meaning that it’s by participating and doing what you can that you actually give yourself reasons for believing. It’s a practice.

Are there ways you think our block could be more involved in climate action?

First of all, there’s so much opportunity in cities in general. And it’s easy to feel like New York is a big city, but it starts in communities. I think educating ourselves in our buildings on how can we be smarter with our laundry, something as simple as hand drying your clothes. If you have the space for it that really significantly reduces your energy use. We have composting in our building. Recycling—although not everything gets recycled—is one of those entry-level things that helps us feel a little bit better.

I think it might be worth exploring having meetups where people can ask questions and talk and share. There’s so many knowledgeable people on this block. I’m sure so many people have a lot of questions that they don’t even know to ask or don’t feel comfortable asking. So maybe it’s worth having a block meeting where people can just come and we can share openly about what are some challenges we’re facing. And we can share tips on how to start reducing our footprints in our homes.

I love the idea of having meet-ups to talk more about this. Thank you so much! Where can we learn more? *The Climate Optimist Handbook* is available for purchase online; it also just came out as an audiobook. You can find more of my work at <https://www.theclimateoptimist.com/>.



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.

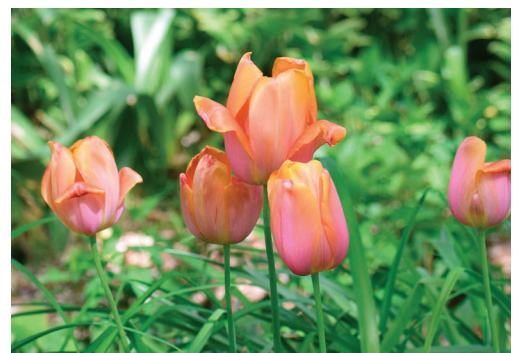
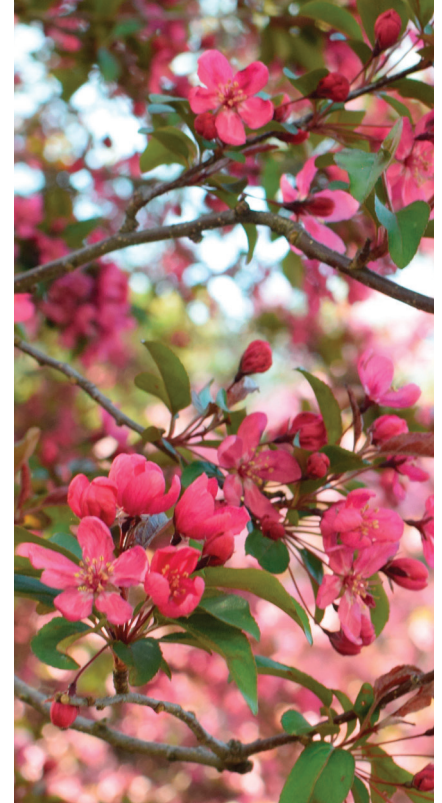
MARTIN BROTHERS
Wines & Spirits Inc.

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

Lush Life

A rainy spring yielded a wealth of blooms and green spaces in the park and the Bloomingdale neighborhood as it lived up to its Dutch name--"vale of flowers."

Photos by Mary Jo Gennaro, Stephen Helman and Larry Stern





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

Keeping a Close Watch

Checking in with block guard Larnel "Big L" Peterson

By Joyce Mann

An already beloved presence on the block, Larnel "Big L" Peterson shared some thoughts with the newsletter as he celebrates his first anniversary on West 104th Street patrol.

Compared to other security guard jobs you have had in the past, how does this compare? Is it harder or easier? Nothing in life is easy—that's just part of life. My job is to make everyone feel okay, because everyone wants to feel safe, but it takes time for people to get comfortable and feel that they know you—two to four months usually.

People come and go pretty regularly. The 7 -8 -9 o'clock people coming home from work and the people who walk their dogs, I know them all. I know the people by their dogs and when they walk them. I say "hi" to everyone and pretty soon they know me pretty well.

How long does it take you to get here? I take the number 6 bus to 145th Steet, then the number 5 right here. Takes 45 minutes to an hour because the busses aren't always on time.

What are some of the best parts of your job? People are always feeding me. Candy, tea, water, coffee, even pizza. Everyone is so sweet and kind, so I take it even if I don't really want it or need it.



Peterson and a fan

The little kids tickle me. They are funny and very smart. And the parents are very strict with them which is very good.

What is the hardest part of your job, other than the weather, I assume?

Sometimes you get a homeless person or someone who wants to sit on the steps and I tell them "Move on—no sitting or stopping on this block. You got to go..." They aren't dangerous, sometimes just drunk, but you gotta tell them to keep moving right away. Not on my block!

How would you describe the people on the block in general?

Nice, sweet and kind. The most important thing is to respect everyone and people here do respect one another and that's not how it is in my neighborhood or other neighborhoods. People here have it pretty comfortable and they are very smart and that makes it easier."

Have you ever been scared? No, but twice ambulances had to come because people were very sick and that was sad.

Big L, what do you do when you have time off at home? I sleep a lot, like an old man. I pay my bills, do what I have to do. Then I watch TV—cowboys and army shows and of course my Yankees

The New Neighbors Built a Home... And Are Raising a Family

A pair of red-tail hawks started nesting in March in a tree on the park side of Riverside Drive and 102nd Street. Then came the hawklets.

PHOTOS BY PETER LITTLEWOOD



W.

WOHLFARTH
& ASSOCIATES, INC.
REAL ESTATE

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

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

BABYSITTING

Responsible, experienced 29-year-old block resident available for babysitting during the evenings and weekends. Please contact Hayley by text or call (440-231-1441).

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.

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.

2024 2nd Quarter Dues:

Please allocate my contribution to:

Security Beautification Social Newsletter Board Decision (Suggested amt: \$43.75/quarter or \$175/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

G. Waskow: 320 RSD, Apt. 8G

A. Grannis: 895 West End Ave.

H. Rubin: 315 RSD, Apt. 17C