

West 104th Street

SEPTEMBER 2024

BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

The Rise and Rise of Riverside Pickleball

The park's courts, recently upgraded, draw players of all skill levels

By Josh Raff



As a former competitive tennis player, I was introduced to pickleball with a spoonful of cynicism. Before I'd seen it, I knew the stereotypes: the simplicity of the game, its image of drawing older players, the ease of the learning curve, the grating sound of the ball, etc. While the tennis purists may endlessly refuse to bend the knee – so to speak – to the epic growth and ubiquity that is pickleball, their preconceptions are entirely to their detriment. I'm fortunate to have remained open-minded.

Recently, I sat down with West 104th Street resident Daniel Jenkins, a well-regarded Broadway actor and a key figure in the creation and evolution of Riverside Pickleball (RSP PB) - located on 110th St and lower Riverside Park. For more information about pickleball events in the park and elsewhere, please log on to www.teamreach.com and download the app. Enter the RSP PB code: : RiversidePark.

How did your interest in PB start?

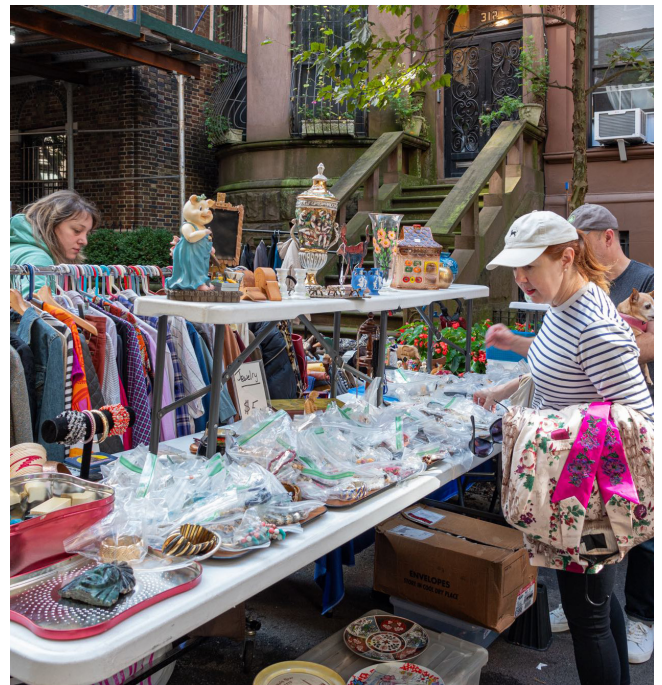
DJ: A little after the pandemic, I was in Central Park and met a lovely octogenarian wielding a foreign-looking paddle. I asked about it and she introduced me to pickleball. I fell in love and started playing a few times per week.

How did that lead to your involvement at RSP PB?

DJ: I received a portable net as a birthday gift and went down to
continued on page 4

The Yard Sale Is Coming on Sept. 21!

...And you can make it the best ever



On Saturday September 21 the block will transform from a quiet neighborhood sidestreet into a festive celebration for the Block Association's annual block party. There will be 60-plus vendors, live music, a bake table crammed with treats, a Silent Auction, book tables stacked with great finds, and the now famous split-the-pot raffle. Last year's winner took home \$2623.74.

The Yard Sale depends on the many donors, bakers and volunteers who help the Block Association before, during and after the big day. Please help us make this year's event a success.

Donate to the Book Sale: We need novels, plays, poetry, non-fiction including memoirs and history, cookbooks, children's book and current travel books.

continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

Pickleball in the Parkp. 1
 Yard Sale Is Coming.....p. 1
 Block Financials.....p. 2
 Volunteer for Raffle.....p. 3
 Phyllis Sperling Tribute.....p. 5
 Lotus Garden.....p. 5
 Architectural Details Quiz.....p. 7

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Now in bloom at the Lotus Garden, see page 5.

WEST 104 BLOCK ASSN FINANCIAL REPORT

2ND QUARTER 2024 FINANCIALS

Opening Balance	\$20,272.82
Income	\$4,525.96
Dues	\$2,324.76
Merchandise.....	\$70.00
Activities.....	\$1,004.00
Yard Sale Tables	\$663.22
Contributions	\$275.00
Credits	\$188.98

Expenses	\$22,200.20
Guard Service	\$10,603.53
Printing Costs	\$935.13
Beautification.....	\$8,568.46
Tips	\$120.00
Activities.....	\$1,187.39
Yard Sale-Permits	\$25.00
Operating Exp/Acct	\$760.69

WEST 104 BLOCK ASSN BOARD

West104blockassociation@gmail.com

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Can You Help Out At the Raffle Table?



The split-the-pot raffle drawing is the high point of every Yard Sale. The winner takes half of the money earned by the West 104th Street Block Association's raffle ticket sales. In the days and weeks leading up to the Yard Sale, Block Association board members and a cadre of dedicated volunteers sit at the top of the block selling tickets and sharing information about the upcoming event.

Will you help us build the pot? Can you cover a two-hour shift one evening or weekend day before the Yard Sale? Please contact Mary Koval at mtkoyal@aol.com if you have availability.

continued from page 1

Yard Sale



Two and four-legged browsers at last year's event.

Please drop off your donations between September 6 and September 16 with the doorman at 320 Riverside Drive in sturdy bags marked "Yard Sale."

Donate to What-a-Bargain: Please contribute costume jewelry, toys, bric-a-brac, ceramics/pottery, musical instruments, bicycles, complete games and puzzles. To donate, first contact Joyce Mann

by email (joycemann2@gmail.com) or phone (516-238-4609) to determine whether your donations are saleable and to arrange a dropoff between September 6 and September 19.

Donate to the Silent Auction: We would like antiques in good condition, collectibles, art work, framed posters and photos, fine jewelry, theater and concert tickets, household gadgets in their original boxes and services (ex. Bread baking lessons). Please contact Hanna Rubin via email at Hanna.Rubin@verizon.net by September 18 to arrange a dropoff.

Donate to the Bake Sale: Share your best treats with your neighbors—cookies, cakes, pies, snacks, finger food and other original creations. Please call Lynn Max (917-355-7771) or Alex Grannis (917-576-1750) to let them know what you plan to bring.

Donate Your Time: Do you have an hour? Lend a hand at the Book Sale, Bake Sale, Silent Auction, What-a-Bargain or help us set up or break down. Please contact Mary Jo Gennaro to volunteer at mjgennaro@gmail.com.



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The Rise and Rise of Riverside Pickleball

continued from page 1

the park with my son one day to find space down there on the concrete. We met an amazing woman named Margaret Bracken who happened to be scouting out what was then tagged as a “Derelict Use Area” between the skate park and the basketball courts. She was able to secure funding from the Mayor’s Office to fix up that space, and, given the growing popularity of pickleball, decided that should be the exclusive use of the area. From there I was quick to get involved.

What is special about RSP PB?

DJ: It’s an unbelievable community that has sprouted up. The 5 regulation courts were recently resurfaced, and they look beautiful. We have paddles, balls, social events, tournaments, and clinics for newcomers. We get players of all skill levels. The culture is friendly and welcoming. Everything is entirely free. We just want people to come out and have a great time. In my 40 years on the Upper West Side, I have never seen anything build community this fast.

It sounds idyllic. Are there any issues?

DJ: Sure. We get complaints from time to time about the queue and the process, and people come in flaunting their own rules...

We know we can’t make everyone happy, but the unofficial steering committee is always listening to the players and adjusting. There are no leaders. There are just volunteers.

If I want to play down there, what are my options?

DJ: You can always just show up. Even first timers. Bring your own equipment. We have a comprehensive system for getting everyone on court who wants to play. If you wish to be on the pulse about upcoming events, clinics, etc., you can download Team Reach App and find us there.

Is there anything else to note?

DJ: While everything is free, we do accept donations (Venmo @rsp110). And—this is important not only for us but everyone who visits Riverside Park—we have a petition going around to renovate the bathrooms on 108th St. It would be great to get that word out as well. <https://action-network.org/petitions/restroom-renewal-in-riverside-park-at-108th-street>

Thank you, Daniel. I’ll look out for you on the courts.

DJ: I’ll be there!



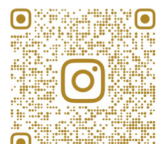
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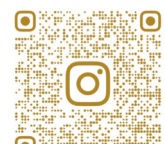
Let us host your next special event

celebrate your birthday, anniversary, or any other special occasion with us



scan to view our menu

Ask us about catering!



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In Memorium: Phyllis Sperling 1944-2024



The block and neighborhood have lost a treasured friend. Phyllis Sperling died September 1, 2024 from liver cancer. She and her husband Herman Sands moved to 315 Riverside Drive as they were wrapping up their careers as architects and professors at Architecture at City Tech (CUNY). Sperling served for some years as Dean of the School of Technology and Design there.

Sperling joined the Block Association board in 2008 and served on it until 2014. During that time, she and her husband also were co-founders of Bloomingdale Aging in Place (BAiP). She acted as board chair and president in 2015. This thriving neighborhood charity aims to connect and support seniors so they can continue to live in the community. Sperling devoted much energy and effort to seeing the organization prosper and expand. Today it serves 1565 active members living between West 96th Street and West 110th Street between Riverside Drive and Central Park West.

Sperling established the BAiP Herman Sands Annual Award in her husband's honor after his death in 2013. With Candy Dato, she was BAiP activities co-chair, creating many ways for BAiP members to learn, grow and celebrate together. She will be sorely missed.



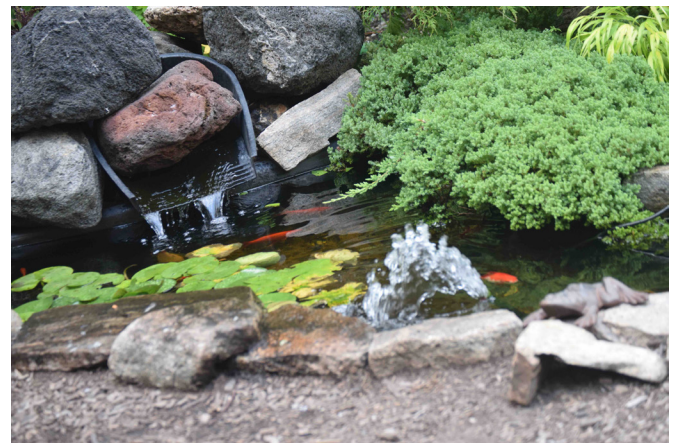
Come Visit the Lotus Garden


Tucked away down a sidestreet and up a staircase is a secret garden. The Lotus Garden, located on West 97th Street (above the parking garage, between Broadway and West End Avenue), is open to the general public every Sunday during the gardening season (April to November) from 1 to 4pm. For more information, visit the garden Facebook page (The Lotus Garden), Instagram (lotusgardennyc), or website (<https://thelotusgarden.org/>). Or track down block resident Karen Gershenhorn while she's out gardening in Riverside Park.

If you would like to become a keyholder, information is available on the website. Community keyholders are welcome to visit 7 days a week during daylight hours.

The Lotus Gardeners look forward to seeing you!

Photos by Stephen Helman



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Details, Details

The Bloomingdale neighborhood has many iconic buildings from the Art Nouveau and Art Deco eras.

Can you identify where these architectural details can be found? The first person to send the correct answer to the newsletter (email Hanna.Rubin@verizon.net) will win one of the Block Association's signature tote bags.

Photos by Stephen Helman



NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

BABYSITTING

Experienced and eager block resident looking to babysit days, nights, and weekends. I'm a lifelong Upper West Sider and rising University of Michigan Senior. Looking forward to connecting, and please reach me on my cell at 917-834-3603.

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.

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Pat Gallant Weich: www.patgallant.com

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. 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

SAVE THE DATE!

Bloomington Bites returns on Nov. 7
Details to be announced.

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 3rd Quarter Dues:

Please allocate my contribution to:

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

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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 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