

W75BA NEWS

WEST 75TH STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION ■ CENTRAL PARK WEST TO RIVERSIDE DRIVE



Get the Scoop on Changes in Albany from an Insider Thomas K. Duane, New York State Senator

Plus special guests from LANDMARK WEST!

Kate Wood, Executive Director: A Mission to Preserve
Rena Sichel Rosen: Keeping the Past for the Future

WHEN: Thursday, March 6, 7:00 P.M. Sharp

WHERE: West End Collegiate Church, 245 West 77th Street off West End

OUR OWN NEW YORK State Senator Thomas K. Duane is in a unique position to report on the first months of the Spitzer administration in Albany. Duane will also share with us his deep concerns about the welfare of his senior constituents and the quality of life on the Upper West Side.

Of all our local elected officials, Senator Duane is perhaps the least known to us, and we urge you all to attend, armed with questions about Medicare, traffic, zoning, safety, and the Legislature!

Special guests Kate Wood and Rena Sichel Rosen from LANDMARK WEST! will open the program with news about their preservation and education efforts.

The meeting start off with some discussion of plans for our future..

Future Plans—Help Wanted!

Recent e-mails indicate that although our donations to West Side organizations were approved, several of you believe that we should leave donations to individuals and use W75BA dollars to improve the block. Your thoughts are much appreciated; they indicate support for W75BA and concern for our quality of life.

We can do all of the following, if we have the motivation.

- Buy iron hoop tree guards.

- Hire workers to install rat-proof wire mesh under soil in the tree beds that will allow planting.
- Encourage landlords to install metal container sheds to hold trash cans before pick-up, like those at #121, #142, #150, and #315.
- Insist that landlords remove the paving over sidewalk level planters.
- Hire a landscape gardener to buy and plant seasonal flowers and bulbs in all of our 43 tree beds, or plant them ourselves.
- Hold major fundraisers such as auctions and fairs; and solicit landlords, managers, agents, renters and owners, plus merchants and banks in the area.

Other blocks have done all this, but only with a great deal of physical, organizational, and financial help from active members. We will need research, writing, working with Community Board 7, and confronting building owners. We will need committees.

Can W75 become a rat-free garden paradise? It's up to you. We will discuss this on March 8, and please bring all your opinions and ideas!

Meanwhile, we donated a total of \$850 to Meals on Wheels, Coalition for the Homeless, City Harvest, the Doe Fund, Riverside Park Fund, the Broadway Mall Association, and the Central Park Conservancy. We will always give some support to the very local groups that contribute to

our quality of life on the Upper West Side. As of this writing, we have just \$1,000 in our account in Washington Mutual.

Local Color

At the downtown corner of the Verdi Park triangle stands a tall, ornate post with five lighted globes supported by rams; heads, and ringed at eye level by cloven hoofs. Writing in *The New York Times* on



PHOTO: JOAN FRANKLIN

Luminaire at 72nd Street

January 20, Michael Pollak dubbed it "Animal Art" and explained that it's not just a lamp post but a "luminaire." Probably built between 1913 and 1935, it is thought to have once stood with a twin at the

entrance to the Fireman's Monument at 100th Street and Riverside Drive. When the two posts were taken down 30 years ago, one vanished; ours was put in storage and subsequently vandalized. Parks Commissioner Henry Stern, who always admired "animal art," had it restored, placed it on

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Local Color

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72nd Street, and got the MTA to pay for it. According to the Park Department's Arts and Antiquities Director, it commemorates nothing, but remains a unique decoration. We're lucky to have it, and it was our editor who prompted the story.



Beekman houses on West 74th Street

Another query of ours prompted Christopher Gray to write in the *Times* last August about the pathetic buildings at 231 and 233 West 74th Street, which are thought to be the earliest surviving works of William E.D. Stokes, builder of the Ansonia across the street. Gray noted the "architecturally alarming" inset porches on 231 and the delicate band of terra cotta seashells, whirlpools and bulls' eyes on 233. The buildings, along with 228 and 230 West 75th, are owned by the Beekman Estate, which denied any plans for the buildings, but "is waiting for the last 74th Street tenant to leave, when we will figure it out." Behind these buildings is a large, shaded

yard, perfect for a nice little café! Now there's an idea, come spring.

Condos at Apple Bank

On January 30 Vicki Sutton included us in an inspection tour of the Apple Bank building's new fifth floor condominiums. The apartments are large, irregular in shape, with two or three bedrooms and as many baths, a great many closets, very high ceilings and very tall windows. Right now, every bare wall, ceiling, bathroom, and kitchen is painted a dazzling white and there are no decorations. The cream of NY real estate was there, peering, knocking and sometimes frowning at the cupboard doors, marble sinks, and composition kitchen counter tops. But with considerable imagination and a lot of furniture, money, and art work, every condo could be made homey, if not exactly cozy. They are huge! As a nice touch, the palatial banking floor at Apple offered candlelight, soft piano music, wine and snacks.

Holiday Party on December 12

By now we've all recovered from our holiday wing-ding at the Council Senior Center. Everyone brought wonderful cakes, cookies, brownies, chocolates and sodas—the children fell on them and probably ingested more sugar in one night than they ever get at home!

David Kleinman, a longtime W75BA member, digital publisher,

performer, and organizer of musical events, introduced Ken, Jen, Allison, Heather and Kate, for an "American Folk Sampler", which included an ecumenical group of sing-along holiday numbers. Apparently this musical sextet doesn't sing together often, as their concert went on until the lights were dimmed.

New-York Historical Society

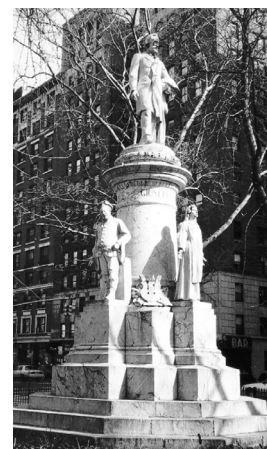
Yet another battle has been joined to protect the skyline of Central Park West, as N-YHS is threatening to build a 23-story glass tower either above or behind its present building. The Society was less than honest toward the community, we believe, during a rowdy meeting on February 1, and refused to give details, or even confirm that the tower would be built. West 76th Street and 77th Street groups are mobilizing, and LANDMARK WEST is deeply involved. Much as we love the Society and enjoy its presence in our neighborhood, we feel that a glass tower at that location would be wildly out of place.

Street Furniture

At a recent neighborhood meeting we learned that the city is contemplating the installation of a public toilet at 72nd Street and Broadway. So far, it's just a rumor, but keep an eye out.

Quiz

Can you identify the four operatic figures that surround the composer's statue in Verdi Park? (Answer in the next newsletter)



Verdi and who else?

WEST 75TH STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION CENTRAL PARK WEST TO RIVERSIDE DRIVE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____
Address _____
Telephone _____
E-mail _____
Date _____

DUES: \$15/YEAR

Mail application with check to
W75BA, 311 West 75th St, New York, NY 10023
For more information: (212) 799-4800

W75BA NEWS

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