

W75BA NEWS

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

Open Forum

**Guests: Karen Orange, Crime Prevention Officer, 20th Precinct
Linda Rosenthal, New York State Assembly**

WHEN: Thursday, May 25, 7:00 P.M.

WHERE: West End Collegiate Church

**245 West 77th Street off West End Avenue
(entrance through the porch)**

Don't miss this opportunity to meet Karen Orange, Crime Prevention Officer from the 20th Precinct. Officer Orange will have the latest info on crime, safety, identity theft, and the many community programs sponsored by NYPD.

We have also invited "our man in Albany," Linda Rosenthal, Democrat, elected in February to serve an eight-month term until the general election in November. Linda is the voice of the Upper West Side on affordable housing, rent control, and various programs designed to assist senior New Yorkers. For some of us, Albany is the jungle up there. Perhaps Linda can explain it.

Come with your questions for both our guests.

And come prepared to tell a story about West 75th Street. We have a long-range project in mind: the publication of the history and lore of our street, Riverside Drive to Central Park West. Ideally, there will be stories about every building—we have some beauties—and we urge anyone with spare time and good Internet skills to contribute.

Finally, be prepared to air your views on overflow crowds from the Beacon Theater, traffic clogged by school and tour busses, noise from neighborhood bars and hangouts, newspaper boxes, new construction close to home, late night deliveries, closing the ramp off the West Side Highway, trash pickups,

sidewalk planting, and badly trained dogs and owners.

Save the date, and note that we will begin promptly at 7 o'clock. Fruit and cookies will be welcomed—not too sticky, please.

Literacy and Community

On March 9, 22 members and friends came for a double-header. We were introduced to Literacy Partners, a praiseworthy organization that teaches reading and writing skills to adults. Many are Hispanics trying to raise their children and get ahead in NYC; others are folks who just left school much too early. Teachers and tutors at LP are well trained under guidelines from the Board of Ed, and students are motivated to learn and make good progress. Our member Dorothy Greenberg has been a tutor in English as a second language for years; she assured us that instructors and pupils have wonderful working relationships. The complete LP program provides a NYS High School Equivalency Diploma.

Helen Rosenthal, a vice president of Community Board 7, outlined the many areas of city life over which the Community Boards have influence. However, the boards are mainly advisory and report to the City Planning Board, the City Council, and the Mayor's Office. In the future CB7 hopes to be more proactive and extend its decision-making powers.

Helen wrote that she and Penny Ryan, District Manager for CB7, will act on our concerns by following up with the city on replacing dead trees, speaking to the Manhattan Day School about standing school busses, and alerting DOT about honking on the Columbus-Amsterdam block during the morning hours.

Gale Brewer's Upper West Side Town Hall

The auditorium at the New-York Historical Society filled up on the evening of April 10, when Gale introduced Captain Keith Spadaro, newly appointed chief of the 20th Precinct; Betsy Gottbaum, Public Advocate; Tom Fitzgerald of the Sanitation Department; Charles Simon of CB7; Borough President Scott Stringer; Congressman Jerry Nadler; and Park Commissioner Adrian Benepe. Several school principals, leaders of citizens' groups, and a number of concerned citizens all had their say. Zoning, parking in bus stops, Yankee Stadium, rents, lines at the post office, helicopter traffic, grass in the playgrounds, doggie doo, affordable housing, and studio space for artists were all debated. Particularly eloquent was Mr. Fitzgerald from Sanitation on the complexities of moving garbage from truck to barge across the pedestrian lanes of the Hudson River Park at 59th Street. Disposing of 50,000 tons a day from Manhattan

alone is not a simple affair. (P.S.: A notice of this very interesting meeting was posted on our bulletin board for three weeks, but we didn't see anyone from W75.)

Bringing the Bloom Back to W75

The 200 and 300 blocks are gearing up to renovate our 42 tree beds, and we will be asking for serious pledges from one and all. The plan includes setting up cobblestones around each empty bed to create a basin for the rich soil that will support plants and ivy. They don't create a high barrier, but stones are plentiful and a lot less expensive than metal tree guards (although tree guards are not out of the question). And we will encourage people to maintain their own beds by watering, weeding, and training dog owners to curb their animals.

But for the very hard physical labor of laying stones and trucking in dirt, compost, and beautiful plants that will thrive here, we will engage a young, energetic landscape gardener. Renters, owners, agents, landlords, and local businesses will all be asked to contribute. Other blocks have raised thousands—we

can do it too. Our goal is \$7500.00. West 75th Street can become a garden district, refreshing to both the spirit and the property values!

In Memoriam

In February we lost Marvin Gewirtz, a long-time resident of #250, and always a concerned member of W75BA. Our condolences to his wife Michelle Boston and to his family.

Plantathon Sunday June 4

A street fair sponsored by the West Side Federation of Block Associations and the Broadway Mall Association on Sunday June 4 will run from 11:00 to 6:00, rain or shine, and feature crafts, eats, and free entertainment. The Broadway block at 73rd Street will be devoted to house plants and shrubs, and the fair will extend all the way to 86th Street. Our old friend Luke, who sang for our street party last July, promised to show up.

Footnotes

The cherry trees in Riverside Park are in full bloom, as are the magnolia trees and daffodils in Central Park. Don't miss the cute dinosaur in the Broadway mall at 78th Street. Does anyone know what will replace Gristede's and Fishs Eddy and Mama Goo? Keep watching.

—Dorothy Greenberg

The Rats Are Running

We've seen them frequently, scuttling around toward midnight. The first defense is metal or heavy plastic

garbage cans with tight lids. And since rats need water, check for dripping faucets, leaking hoses, and standing puddles. Then call 311 or the Department of Health. 311 gets 45,000 calls a day, but all are forwarded to the right city agency 24/7, in 170 languages.



The San Remo

At the eastern border of the W75BA on Central Park West stands the San Remo, one of the city's most beautiful and prestigious apartment buildings. Begun in 1929, architect Emery Roth's 27-story building was the first such twin-towered design in the city. It created light-filled, airy apartments, many with rooms of different ceiling heights; all units had fireplaces. Despite its grandeur, the San Remo remained 25 percent unoccupied a year after it opened during the Depression, and it fell into bankruptcy.

It has recovered very, very well. In 1986, in *Mansions In The Clouds, The Skyscraper Palazzi of Emery Roth*, Steven Rutenbaum wrote "the San Remo's two towers convey a lyrical, uplifting feeling, similar to the religious aura of a medieval cathedral... What lies within are sumptuous quarters for those who aspire to live like old-world nobility in new-world, high-rise glamour."

—Mary Ratcliffe

Keep up with your block association

Watch the W75BA bulletin board, next to the laundromat just west of Broadway, for W75BA news, plans, events.

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

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

DUES: \$10/YEAR

Mail application with check to
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