

W75BA NEWS

WEST 75TH STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION ■ AMSTERDAM AVENUE TO RIVERSIDE DRIVE

Fifth Annual Holiday Party

Monday, December 12, 7:30 P.M.

Beacon Hotel

Contribution, one-time-only: \$10*

(And please bring a tempting dessert to share)



A holiday appeal from W75BA

HELP! The Beacon Hotel has renovated the party room we like so much and has charged us \$300 plus tax for December 12 (claiming expenses for union help in setting up and clearing up). But as Martha Faibisoff declared, "So what. They've given it to us free for years." Although we feel the charge is high, there is no other nearby venue we can really enjoy. *We are therefore asking for a party contribution of \$10 to cover this unexpected one-time cost.

As we approach year's end, your block association really needs your support *now*, so we are asking all members to pay their 2006 dues on December 12. (Please mail them with the coupon if you're not going to join us then.)

Your dues cover our meager expenses and enable us to support the Doe Fund, City Harvest, Meals On Wheels, and other groups whose programs benefit our community. In return for your \$20 on December 12 (dues plus party contribution), you'll enjoy W75BA's convivial holiday party, ensure the financial health of your

block association, and help charities that serve our West Side well. We are also reaching out to building owners and co-op boards for larger contributions.

Over the past decade, W75BA has enhanced the quality of life on our street through social events where we've made new friends, with beautification activities, and by promoting an awareness of NYC services and the vibrant community that is all around us. Help us now to continue and to grow.

And please bring a tempting dessert on December 12. We'll supply the coffee and entertainment.

"Do not self-evacuate"

This was the message from the MTA concerning safety on the subway, at our October 27 meeting at the West End Collegiate Church. A team of five experts reminded us that in case of emergency of any kind riders will be safer on the train than risking the third rail in a tunnel. Conductors are trained frequently, we were told (this was disputed from the floor) and can rapidly summon teams of transit police, firefighters and FEMA workers. Fire extinguishers on the

trains had been tried in the past, they said, but were dangerously abused by riders. We were reassured that doors between cars are not locked, and that the TA always knows the location of every train and is very quick to pick up anything unusual and shut down the whole system if necessary.

Cameras in the stations and in the cars are under consideration, as are platform announcements of the next train arrival. Subway maps are available at every token booth, along with the TA customer service number: (718) 330-1234.

As for surface transportation, new and customized busses are always in the works, but even the TA cannot guarantee that the schedule is followed or that riders will be courteous. (Drivers cannot order passengers to give up their seats.)

Our speakers are not involved in MTA budgets and could not comment on the free and half-fares promised for the holidays. They were Alissa Kosowsky from TA community relations, and four senior TA and NYPD fire and safety officers.

Of the 125 people who received newsletters announcing this meeting,
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Somerindyke House on Bloomingdale Road near 75th Street



Interior of Somerindyke House, in which Louis Philippe (later king of the French) taught school.

Did you know....?

The story was that the exiled Louis-Philippe taught school, along with his brothers, in the Somerindyke House on Bloomingdale Road (now Broadway) in the late 1700s. Later authorities called the story a myth, saying that the three noblemen counted on their friend Gouverneur Morris to pay their way in this country. After Napoleon's abdication and the restoration of the monarchy, Louis-Philippe returned home and later became France's last king (1830–1848).

—Mary Ratcliffe

“Don't self-evacuate”

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only 12 attended. The rest missed out on a very instructive evening (and the cider and donuts from West Side Market!).

It was reassuring to hear that our nightmarish vision of being trapped in a subway tunnel is somewhat exaggerated.

Street vendors revisited

An October 24 meeting of the 20th Precinct Community Council was devoted to the Department of Consumer Affairs and its activities. The DCA exists to oversee and license 55 types of businesses that deal directly with the public and basically keep them honest. Arcades, discos, garages, horse-drawn cabs, laundries, locksmiths, newsstands, sidewalk cafes, tow trucks and vendors are just a few. The DCA can inspect businesses, issue warnings, impose fines, padlock stores, and eventually have repeat offenders arrested. The rules for space occupied by sidewalk cafés are very strict.

As for sidewalk vendors, the city and state have created a patchwork of rules and a number of types of licenses. There are certain vendors, protected by the first amendment, who do not need to be licensed. Disabled veterans are given preference when licenses are given out. General vendors are also licensed, as are food

vendors. Each type has numerous restrictions on when, where, and how many may set up stands on each block. According to DCA, the vendors know the rules better than the agency or the cops. But a letter from Deputy Inspector James Murtagh of the 20th “ensures that all vendors in the precinct are licensed and operate within their guidelines.” The culprit on Broadway is the unlicensed book vendor at 73rd Street, who persistently exceeds the number of display tables permitted and has been arrested frequently, only to return to his sidewalk location within a very few days.

A summary of the rules governing vendors is available from Joan. As for the Christmas tree vendors, they are licensed by the Department of Transportation, also with many restrictions.

More trees, please

We have approached Community Board 7 for applications for new trees to fill the empty pit at #241 and the dead plane tree in front of #252, and are asking the building owners to make the applications as well. The city plants young trees spring and fall, and they may take a year to get around to our block. But nothing ventured, nothing gained.

We noticed that the four 25-year-old oak trees at #235 have matured sufficiently to produce acorns. Will squirrels be far behind? Notice, too, the attractive new art deco guards protecting newly planted young trees at #33RSD.

A passing...

We are sorry to report the death of Murray Fiderer, a long-time resident of #304. We'll miss his unfailing good humor.

WEST 75TH STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION AMSTERDAM AVENUE TO RIVERSIDE DRIVE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

DUES: \$10/YEAR

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

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