

WEST MIDWOOD NEWS

Special Viral Edition



Volume 1

Number 4

April 22, 2020

Hard Facts (Especially)

by Hayden Saunier

Most everything we're taught
is wrong.

Especially fixed rules
about small engine

repair in adverse
marine conditions,

walking on ice,
and anything

to do with people.
Especially our own

strange selves.
And so the door

to the ordinary miracle
swings open.



Three generations making noise on Argyle Road
Photo by Eliot Solomon

Editor's Note

West Midwood Makes Some Noise!

Every evening at seven o'clock, West Midwood neighbors come out of our houses, stand on our porches and stoops, and make a lot of noise—ringing bells, banging on drums and pots and pans, rattling tambourines and maracas, blowing horns and whistles. We make noise, cheer and whoop in support of the healthcare workers and first responders, in recognition of all the essential workers who make it possible for us to take shelter in our homes—the delivery people, the sanitation workers, mail deliverers, grocery store stockers, transit workers and others who keep the wheels of society moving when we cannot.

That daily noise-making serves another purpose, too. It reminds us that there is a neighborhood, there is a world, and that there are people in it we care about. As Allidah Muller puts it, “I’ve been finding it a great excuse to greet each other, a way to acknowledge and ask, ‘I’m here! I made it through another strange quarantine day. How are you?’”

Each evening, there are more and more people joining in the cacophony, cheering, letting go of the tensions of the day, and checking in and waving to their neighbors. This nightly ritual seems to lift the darkness for a little while. My anthropologist husband noted that this is a deeply human response—to make a lot of noise to drive away the demons, banish the evil spirits. It seems to work: As we quiet down and say goodnight to our neighbors, I always feel a little lighter, happier, better able to face another weird day.

This week feels very different from the first weeks of the pandemic. The initial fear has subsided to a continuous low-grade anxiety. We have developed new routines to make it through the days, which seem to melt into each other and slide by. We all know people who have had, or are now fighting, the virus. We are all tired, but perhaps not quite as disoriented as we were in the beginning. With a surfeit of advice about the virus itself, exhortations to “use this time productively” and suggestions for self-improvement or entertainment, it can get pretty exhausting.

The other day, I read some really good advice: Rather than feeling vaguely guilty for not “using this opportunity to. . .” we should remember that the sole purpose of this exercise is to come out the other side, healthy and at least marginally sane. If we are better people, or wiser, or kinder, or we’ve written a great novel or learned something new, that is a wonderful benefit to be deeply grateful for, but it’s not the main thing. The main thing is to get through it. So, if we can help each other do that, I think that’s the only ‘should’ we need to pay attention to at the moment.

—Tori Rosen

PUZZLE

Did you know that many car brand names have a non-English meaning?

If you are considering naming a product that is to be marketed abroad, you had better consult a linguist, a philologist, or a professional brand naming service. Choosing the family name of the founder was one approach. Think: Bentley, Ford, Olds, Peugeot, and Porsche. Beware that if you are not careful, the result could be disastrous when the name you choose has meaning to non-English speakers. Consider the urban legend of the Chevy Nova, whose sales were alleged to have faltered in Spanish-speaking countries. The truth is that the word “nova” means the same thing in Spanish as in English; however, “no va,” with a space, means “it doesn’t go” in Spanish. Max, which means “greatest” (in Latin), may no longer be a good name for an airplane model after the recent tragedy involving the Boeing 737 MAX 8 model. Then there is the story about the Audi model Q3. Q3 sounds like the Spanish word “cutres,” which means “miserable.” Surprisingly, Corona beer sales actually improved during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Familiar car brand names have significant meaning in a language other than English. Here is a list of brand names and a list of meanings. How many names can you correctly match with their meaning?

Rating: 5, good; 10, excellent; 15, genius

List of Brand Names

1. Acura
2. Audi
3. Camry
4. Ferrari
5. Geely
6. Honda
7. Hyundai
8. Isuzu
9. Kia
10. Koenigsegg
11. Maserati
12. Mazda
13. Mitsubishi
14. Nissan
15. Saab
16. Subaru
17. Suzuki
18. Toyota
19. Volvo
20. Yamaha

List of Meanings

- A. Bell tree
- B. Blacksmith
- C. Crown
- D. Fertile rice paddies
- E. Fifty bells pealing in harmony and celebrations
- F. Holy cow
- G. I roll
- H. Japanese-made
- I. Listen
- J. Lucky
- K. Modernity
- L. Mountain+Blade
- M. Original Rice Paddy
- N. Precision
- O. Swedish Aeroplane Company, Ltd.
- P. Thanks
- Q. Three Diamonds
- R. To rise from Asia
- S. United
- T. Wisdom

In This Issue:

From the Editor	1
Poem: Hard Facts (Especially)	1
Puzzle	2
The Mad Gardener	3
West Midwood Cooks (and Bakes)	4
Brooklyn Sports	6
Backyard Fire Pits	6
Dream a Little	6
What’s Happening in Your Backyard	8
Research-in-ate Your Home	9
Artist’s Notebook	10
Financial Planner’s Perspective	11
Who You Gonna Call?	12
West Midwood Trivia	13



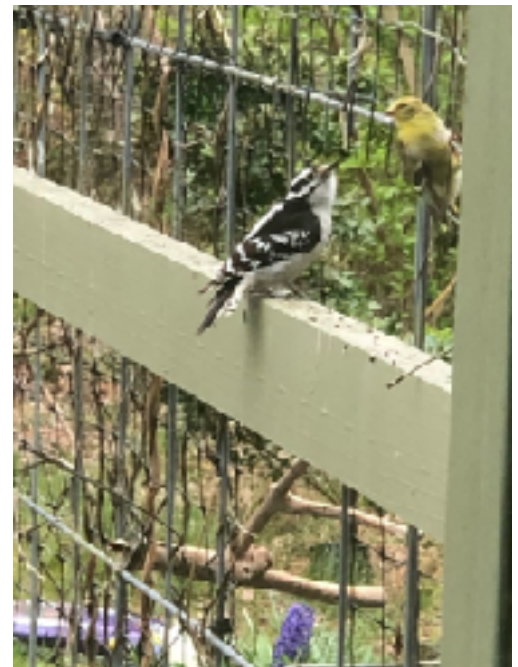
Photo: Barry Katz

West Midwood
 News Special
 Edition
 Vol 1, No. 4
 April 22, 2020
 © 2020 West
 Midwood
 Community
 Association
 Editor: Tori
 Rosen
 Copyeditors:
 Ellen Bilofsky,
 Kathy
 McDonald

Editor's note: Our gardening correspondent has absconded to the countryside, but continues to file his reports on this year's glorious spring

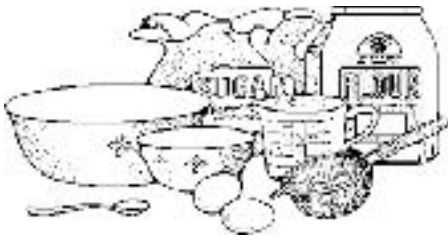


I wake up to watching all the creatures outdoors. It is very early spring here, and Chester chipmunk is the only mammal visible yet. But goldfinches have arrived in swarms. They arrive in large swarms, crowding onto my bird feeders. With several feeders set up, I have counted as many as 20 at one time! The male goldfinches are a very bright yellow, with black trim, while the female goldfinches are more subdued in color. No wonder they are a favorite backyard bird, across most of the United States. No hummingbirds or butterflies have yet appeared, but I am well-prepared for their arrival, which should be soon. I saw a female bluebird checking out one of the bluebird houses I have available. Hope springs eternal. But for this week, the news is all about goldfinches.



*(left) Goldfinches are usually prone to quick flight, but this little guy allowed me to get very close.
(above) A black-and-white downy woodpecker is saying bello to a female goldfinch.
All photos by Robert Brannon*

Let us know what's happening in your garden!
Take some pictures and share them here with your neighbors.
Send them to editor.WestMidwoodNews@gmail.com



West Midwood Cooks (and Bakes!) by Allidah Muller

One-Pot Chicken with Dates and Caramelized Lemon (serves 4 to 6)

This recipe comes from Alison Roman's newish cookbook, *Nothing Fancy*. For those unfamiliar with Roman, her recipes are simple and delicious, and also usually have a yummy little twist. She also writes for *The New York Times* and *Bon Appetit* if you want to seek out more of her recipes online. We made this chicken last week. Not only was it so easy, it was SO good.

Alison's intro to the recipe: "This one-pot oven cooked chicken is a true treasure. It's sweet and tangy, and a little spicy, and just downright special. It's got the kind of bold flavors you wouldn't expect from such few ingredients, which I guess is what makes it remarkable. But it's also a rather flexible dish, able to be made with a whole chicken or chicken parts (bone-in, skin-on thighs, if you please) for a more weeknight-friendly vibe. But what makes it really special is how it's cooked: first seared, breast side up, letting the legs and thighs brown and render, then lemons and shallots are fried in that fat, then water is added to provide adequate sauciness, cooking the chicken quickly yet gently. The lid is then removed so the top can finish browning. And then there you have, all at once, a chicken that is both nearly fall-apart tender and deeply golden brown on all sides. A chicken revelation!"

3½ to 4 pound chicken, or 3 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs or legs
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
4 Tbsp olive oil, divided
1 lemon, cut into thick slices crosswise, seeds removed
2 shallots, halved lengthwise
4-6 medjool dates (3 oz.) pitted
4 sprigs fresh thyme or oregano, plus more for serving
1 cup water
1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (if you don't like spice, you could reduce this significantly or leave it out altogether — I used 1 tsp Aleppo pepper flakes and that was spicy enough for us)
Flaky sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
2. Season the chicken all over with salt and pepper. Heat 2 Tbsp of the oil in a large (at least 8-quart)

Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Place the chicken in the pot breast side up, and using tongs or your hands (be careful!), press lightly to make sure the skin comes into even contact with the pot bottom. This is your chance to brown the legs and render that excess fat! It's rarely offered in whole-chicken recipes, so take advantage. (If using parts, just sear the chicken skin side down.)

3. Cook, without moving, until the chicken is nice and browned, 5 to 8 minutes. Seriously, no peeking! Nothing exciting will happen before 5 minutes, I promise you.
4. Add the lemon slices and shallot, maneuvering the chicken however you need to so that the slices come into contact with the bottom of the pot. Let everything sizzle in the chicken fat until lightly caramelized, about 2 minutes.
5. Add the dates, thyme, and water. Sprinkle the top of the chicken with the chili and place the lid on. Put the Dutch oven in the oven and roast until the dates are plump, the lemon is jammy, and the chicken is almost but not totally cooked through, about 20 to 25 minutes (it will look mostly cooked through and a little anemic from getting covered with the lid).
6. Remove the lid and drizzle the chicken with the remaining 2 Tbsp olive oil and continue to cook until the liquid has reduced by half and the top of the chicken is a lustrous, glistening golden-brown, another 20 to 30 minutes (depending on if you're using parts or whole bird).
7. Let the chicken rest in the Dutch oven for at least 10 minutes, then transfer to a cutting board and carve. Serve along with the shallot, lemon, and dates, with some more thyme and flaky sea salt sprinkled over.

Do Ahead: The chicken can be made a few hours ahead, then kept in the Dutch oven at room temperature. If you wish to reheat it before serving, pop it back into the oven without a lid for 10 to 15 minutes or so.

Extra Billowy Dutch Baby Pancake (serves 2 to 4)

I know I have been touting a lot of *Smitten Kitchen* recipes in this column recently, but I've just been loving Deb Perelman's recipes! Lately, we have had a hard time explaining to our nearly three-year-old that it isn't the weekend. (In his mind, there's "No school and no B

train on the weekend” —hence we’re in the middle of a VERY long weekend.) So in an effort to demarcate Saturday and Sunday, we’ve been cooking special breakfasts on the ‘real’ weekend, and we stumbled upon this easy yet dramatic recipe that is amazing for breakfast, but could also be fun for dinner. It would also be very easy to involve children in the mixing of ingredients, and the puffy cloud of pancake is highly appealing!

Deb’s recipe intro: “The two key things to keep in mind when aiming for Peak Billows in your puffy oven pancake are 1. Baking it long enough that the center sets too, getting a chance to slightly rumple, although it may not always. This usually involves setting the timer for the suggested time and checking back every 1 to 2 minutes after until it’s just right. 2. Having the right size pan for the batter yield. If there’s too little, the pancake will not have the same dramatic heights. The yield here is intended for one 12-inch round ovenproof skillet, two 9-inch round ovenproof skillets, the equivalent sized baking dishes, or even a 9x13-inch pan. If your pan is smaller, simply scale the recipe down. For (my) 2-quart oval casserole dish . . . I used 3/4 of this batter, i.e. 3 eggs, 6 tablespoons each flour and milk. Finally, I know people often balk at the amount of butter, and this uses less than some recipes, but it’s essential that there’s enough in the pan that the pancake can slide around and rumple over it; if there’s any even slight sticking, it will not.”

2 to 3 Tbsp unsalted butter
4 large eggs
½ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup milk (whole is ideal, but you can use less fat)
¼ tsp Kosher salt

If savory: Freshly ground black pepper, wilted spinach or sauteed greens, bacon or ham cheese, herbs or comte, herbs (for example, ham, gruyere, and chives)
If sweet: 1 tablespoon granulated sugar in batter, powdered sugar to finish, lemon juice, syrup, fresh berries, shaved chocolate, or chocolate sauce

Heat oven to 425 degrees F with one 12-inch round ovenproof skillet, two 9-inch round ovenproof skillets, the equivalent sized baking dishes inside.

In a large bowl, beat eggs thoroughly with a whisk or fork. Add salt and flour, whisk until lumps disappear. Add milk, whisking until smooth. If you know you’d like your pancake to end up sweet, you can add 1 tablespoon granulated sugar to the batter; if you know you’d like it to be savory, you can add freshly ground black pepper. But, you can also choose your own adventure when it comes out.

When oven and baking vessel are fully heated, (wear potholders), carefully remove skillet(s) or baking dish(es) from the oven. Melt butter inside and roll it around so it goes up the sides, too. If using one large dish, two-ish tablespoons is often sufficient; it’s best to use three tablespoons between two dishes, however.

Pour batter into buttered dish(es) and return it to the oven. Bake for 12 to 13 minutes to start, and then in additional 1 to 2 minute increments until the edges are deeply golden brown and the centers are just beginning to color. Have your finishes ready to go. Transfer to a cooling rack or trivet. I finish sweet pancakes with lemon juice and a good coating of powdered sugar, and savory pancakes with grated cheese, vegetables and/or ham or bacon, and fresh herbs. Eat immediately; these pancakes are best hot from the oven.

This recipe was contributed by Harriet Rhine:

Continental Tea Cake

Bake @ 350 degrees

1/2 cup butter (one stick)
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 cup sour cream (plain yogurt works)
2 cups sifted flour
1/4 teas. salt
1 teas. baking powder
1 teas. baking soda
1 teas. vanilla

1. Cream butter and sugar and beaten eggs.
2. Add baking soda and sour cream
3. Sift flour, baking powder, and salt together.
4. Add vanilla and flour mixture.
5. Fold everything together
6. Grease pan

Topping- (optional)

1 teas. cinnamon
1/4 cup sugar 1/4 cup nuts
Sprinkle topping on cake

Bake about 40-45 minutes



Brooklyn Sports Lives! *The WMF8*

By Argyle Art Rhine

Wherefore art thou, oh bowling leagues? Have all swimming pools been drained? Has Citifield joined Ebbets Field buried by a wrecking ball's bombardment? Is the N.Y. Times' most interesting Sports section article the one concerning FIFA officials accepting bribes to stage the World Cup in Qatar? *Quel dommage!*

What to do, what to do? Perhaps the TV has something to offer. Is there anything more boring than watching a golf tournament where you know the winner? Will SNY ever televise a game that the Mets lose? Whoa baby—here's Usain Bolt winning the 2008 Olympics 200 meter dash! 19.30 seconds of joy! And his espousal of social distancing was positively prescient.

We need to take our physical well-being to heart now more than ever. Tai chi, yoga, zumba, Pilates, ballet, weight training: it's all good. Here's a workout to get you started:

First: Stand facing East with feet a foot apart. Raise stiff arms from your side so they are parallel to the ground pointing North and South. Pause. Now bend your elbows inward until your fingertips touch your shoulders like epaulets. Pause. Now slowly straighten you arms so your fingertips are touching pointing to the sky. Pause. Now slowly lower them back so your fingertips touch your shoulders. Pause. Now straighten your elbows so your arms point straight out from your shoulders. Pause. Now lower them—slowly—so they touch the outside of your thighs. Rest. Repeat three more times.

Second: Point your arms toward the sky with elbows straight. Sway your arms gently back and forth. Put your left hand on your hip and point your right arm straight up to the sky. Now slowly bend your body to the left as you reach your right arm above your head and even a bit past your head with your elbow bent. Sway back to the upright position. Now put your right hand on your right hip, reach your left arm above you and sway your body and your arm to the right. Then return to the upright position. Now grab the back of your right wrist with your left hand (making an "O" overhead) and pull it gently to the left, bending your elbows. Then pull your left wrist with your right hand gently to the right. Repeat. Now pull your right wrist

with your left hand so your right forearm is touching the top of your head and the fingers of your right hand are touching your left ear. Now reverse your direction so your left hand touches your right ear. Repeat. Now bring your right forearm in front of your nose. With

your left hand, grasp the outside of your right elbow and slowly pull to the left so the inside of your right elbow touches your mouth (like when you sneeze) and your right hand touches the back of your neck. Reverse hands. Repeat.

Third: Stand erect facing East. Lunge with your left leg, bending your knee so it is directly above your foot but no further. Simultaneously, bend your

elbows 90 degrees with your forearms pointing up and as you lunge, pull your elbows backwards. Return to upright position, hands at sides. Now lunge with your right leg while you pull your elbows back. Repeat one more time for each leg.

Fourth: This is the toughest. Stand facing East with your straight arms pointing to the sky. Inhale deeply. Bend slowly at the waist—exhaling slowly as you bend—until your hands are hanging down towards your toes. [In a couple of weeks, you will be touching your toes.] Now stand halfway up as you inhale and place your hands on your knees. Your legs are straight and your back is straight. Now bend slowly at the waist—exhaling slowly as you bend—but this time hold on to your calves as you inch down your calves until you get to your ankles or your toes or however far you can go and pause at that point as you complete your exhale. Finally, stand back up as you raise your straight arms back to the original point pointing to the sky and then lower them gently to your side. Repeat three times.

Fifth: Stand straight. Hold your arms straight out in front of you. Kick your right leg with knee straight and try to kick your hands. [You will reach them in a couple of weeks.] Bring your right leg down quickly but with control. Now kick your left leg up and kick your hands. Repeat one more time with each leg. Please hold on to something solid with one hand as you kick your leg up to touch your other hand. I would also recommend reaching up overhead with the hand not holding on to something and bringing your swinging leg back a step before you swing that leg up and try to touch the free hand as you bring the free



and try to touch the free hand as you bring the free hand down to meet the swinging leg.

Sixth: Spread your legs about three feet with knees straight. Place your left hand on your left knee and then bend toward your left and down as you try to reach your left foot with your right hand. Keep your knee sort of straight but it doesn't have to be rigid. Now twist back up a bit past the upright position and then ease into the upright position. Pause. Now go to your right foot with your left hand as you keep your right hand on your right knee. Then back up to upright position after swaying a bit past the upright. Pause. Repeat for each side.

OK. Now jog gently gently in place for a few seconds (or more if you're comfortable with that). These exercises can be done each morning. In the next issue of West Midwood News, we will try some exercises on our back and then some new flexibility, stretching and strength exercises.

Now we need to get outside and move. Starting in front of my house on Argyle Road, I ran--well let's kindly call it a jog, oh OK, it was really more of a slog--

in a southerly direction on Argyle to Avenue H, turned left one block, turned left on Rugby to Glenwood, turned left one block back to Argyle, then South again on Argyle to H, but this time I turned right on H one block to Westminster, then right again and North one block to Glenwood, another right to Argyle and one more right back to the starting point. That distance is called The West Midwood Figure 8. It is exactly $13/15$ (0.867) of a mile. Each short block is $1/20$ of a mile and each long block is $1/6$ of a mile. Today I ran (jogged, slogged, walked) three WMF8s and one final Argyle-Rugby loop ($1/2$ a WMF8). My total distance was exactly three (3) miles. It took me 51 minutes including 6 water stops--each time I passed my house (I kept a water bottle on my porch). That is a pace of $3-1/2$ miles per hour. Back in 1979, I ran 26.2 miles in a time of 2 hours 55 minutes and 12 seconds; you can look it up on the Road Runners 1979 NYC Marathon website. That's a bit more than $6-1/2$ minutes per mile, around 9 miles per hour. Today I ran $3-1/2$ miles per hour. I am as proud of my accomplishment today as I am of running the marathon. Keep strong! *Mens sana in corpore sano!*

Backyard Fire Pits Are Illegal In New York City

By Eric Goldberg

Section 307 of the NYC Fire Code prohibits the use of backyard fire pits in all five boroughs of NYC. According to an FDNY spokesman, “[a]nything from an outdoor patio fireplace, fire pit, chimney and hearth are strictly prohibited and illegal to use in the City of New York.” The fire accessories—wood, charcoal and even gas—are considered open fires and are thus prohibited under Section 307 of the Fire Code. This is the case even though stores throughout NYC sell them—including Home Depot and Lowes. Portable outdoor barbecues used for cooking are exempted from this ban, provided certain rules are adhered to.

There are many obvious dangers to using fire pits. They result in thousands of burn cases each year, mostly to children and pets. In West Midwood, house fires are an especially significant threat since our houses are generally constructed of wood materials and are surrounded by large old trees. In fact, embers can easily burn off a fire pit and float on even the lightest breeze to nearby homes, trees or other combustible materials, igniting a fire that can quickly grow out of control. As many of us have witnessed over the years, a fire in one home often jumps to other nearby homes—making fire control in our area a grave concern.

Please learn before you burn and do not use open flames or fire pits around your homes. Not only are they prohibited under the Fire Code, but they are especially dangerous to children and to the old wooden houses throughout our community.

Dream a Little

One of these days, hopefully sooner rather than later, we'll be able to travel again, In the meantime, there are lots of lovely places to dream about. . .

Photos of Turkey by Tori



What's Happening in Your Yard?



Laura and Howard Givner report: "Our pear tree survived the stormy weather on April 13. This picture was taken on April 14. The residents of 716 and 722 Argyle Road enjoy the view of this tree from their respective staircase windows."



Joan Greenberg sent us this lovely photo of the cherry tree in their back yard, in full glory. Joan took this picture from the third floor window of their house.



Inspirational photo? Trees going to church on Argyle and Glenwood. Photo by **Jan Castro**.



Bleeding hearts on Rugby Road.



This week, Peter Pan noticed that all the trees were blooming in West Midwood, and decided to clime the apple tree in **Tori, David and Sarah Rosen's** back yard. Where will he go next?



Allidah Muller spotted this squirrel noshing on a bagel while sitting on a garage roof.. Maybe this is West Midwood's answer to NYC's famous pizza rat?

What do you see in your yard?

Send your pictures, poems, essays and descriptions to editor. WestMidwoodNews@gmail.com and we'll publish them in future issues.

Menachem Huzarsky has chicken! They love pumpkin, and are seen here devouring the last of the fall decorations from the Rosen's house.



Parkin Doris Lee spotted this grackle building a nest.



Aren't the eggs beautiful?



Research-inate Your Home for Free

by Joe Enright

People will frequently approach me on the street and ask, "How can I research-inate my home?" My answer is simple: "I don't know you. Please stop following me." To cut down on these encounters, I hereby offer some guidance. Get started by using these FREE online tools (only the first two require creating an ID and Password to access):

- 1) The US Census of 1900 through 1940: <https://www.familysearch.org>
- 2) The Brooklyn Daily Eagle archive: <https://bklyn.newspapers.com>
- 3) NYC Tax Photos from 1940 and 1983: <https://bit.ly/2KhoClq>
- 4) Brooklyn Public Library's historical photos: <http://catalog.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/search>
- 5) The NY Public Library Digital Collection: <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/>
- 6) Green-Wood Cemetery burials at <https://bit.ly/3bnXZXP>
- 7) Google "Uppington's General Directory of Brooklyn" (available from 1900-1910).

Florence Manglani — Spring Flowers



By Jeff Ewing

As I write this, I admit that it's pretty hard now to think about anything other than the corona virus. But in thinking about all those unfortunate people who are losing their income because of the virus, I have to also think how fortunate those of us are who are collecting Social Security monthly payments, and that we have to be forever grateful to President Franklin Roosevelt and his administration, as well as the Congress at the time; Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law on August 14, 1935, becoming the first US President to approve federal assistance to the elderly. And I assume we all know that it's funded by a payroll tax—6.2% of earnings up to \$137,700 in 2020, from each of the employee and employer. (The self-employed pay the entire amount but then get to deduct their half from income on their tax return.)

Is Social Security in financial trouble? No, not really, at least not at present. Up until this year, the program collected more in payroll taxes than were paid out in benefits and administrative expenses. The excess over the years has been used to purchase Treasury bonds that are designated a Social Security "trust fund," and that fund currently contains about \$2.9 trillion (which continues to increase because the bonds earn interest.) Now that as of this year benefits have begun to exceed tax revenue, the current projection is that the trust fund assets will last until 2035. At that point, if nothing is changed benefits will need to decrease to about 80% of what they are today. There are some straightforward fixes to prevent any benefit reductions, which of course no one is focusing on right now. They include increasing the earnings

cutoff for payroll taxes and increasing the tax rate. I personally feel pretty confident that long before 2035 some fixes will be enacted.

How do you find out what your projected benefits are if you are not already collecting? If you have not created an online Social Security account yet just go to the website "ssa.gov" and you can set one up. The website gives you projected benefits at your full retirement age (which varies from age 65 to age 67 depending on when you were born), age 70 and age 62, which is the earliest age at which you can collect benefits. If you start collecting at age 62 your benefits are reduced to about 75% of your full retirement age benefit, and if you wait until age 70 they are increased to about 132% of the full retirement age benefit. They don't increase past age 70. If you do wait until age 70 to collect, the total benefits received will be greater starting in your early 80's. The benefits formula is based on your highest 35 years of earnings. The absolute maximum Social Security payment in 2020 at age 70 is \$3,790 per month.

There is an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) though it doesn't fully account for increases in medical costs. For 2020 the COLA was 1.6%, not a huge amount.

The Social Security payment system is complicated. There are benefits available to retirees and their spouses, divorced spouses, widowers, disabled workers, and children of retirees and disabled workers. It's not a bad idea to consult with a fiduciary financial planner certainly before you file, but maybe even earlier.



How are you doing, West Midwood? What are you doing, West Midwood?

Send us your drawings, pictures, doodles, ideas, stories or poems. We'll publish this every week or so, so that we can stay a bit more connected. Let us know about new babies, great recipes you've tried, good video games, bad jokes, naughty puppies, or goldfish that jumped out of their bowl—whatever is happening at your house while we are waiting out this awful pandemic.

Who You Gonna Call?

When you need help, it's important to call the right number. Here's a list of useful phone numbers with an explanation of when to call which number. It's not a bad idea to cut out this list and stick in on your refrigerator or by your phone.

911— The number to call for emergencies, such as fire, medical emergencies, accidents of any type, a crime in progress, violent behavior, or a person in trouble. Remember to stay on the line until the operator tells you it is okay to hang up. The operator will also ask you your location, so note the nearest house number and street address.

311—Call this number for non-emergencies such as noise complaints, animal control, air quality, blocked driveway, dangerous tree situation, or to find out where to get other information. For a complete list, see www.nyc.gov/311.

If you're unsure, call 911. The operator will either take your information or redirect you to 311. Remember to get a complaint number and write it down.

Our Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs):

P.O. Konstantin Rakmonov, **929-294-5260** Email is: konstantin.rakhmanov@nypd.org

P.O. David Yegros, **929-284-0625** Email is: david.yegros@nypd.org

The NCOs are usually on duty Tuesdays to Saturdays from noon to 6:30 p.m. (Sometimes they are unavailable because they have been pulled for training or special duty.) Former West Midwood president Linda Howell reports that she relies on the NCOs for quality-of-life issues, especially situations "where I do not have complete details, only secondhand reports of events. I feel comfortable giving them as much information as I can and asking them to check into the potential problem." Examples include gatherings at the dead ends, abandoned cars, chronic parking violations, and patterns of package theft from porches. You can also contact them if you feel a 911 or 311 call was not handled correctly. Note that while they will make every effort to assist, they may also be handling other more time-critical issues.

Community Board 14 (CB14), 718-859-6357

This office and its staff are a valuable resource that can be contacted for a myriad of situations. Call them to find out the status of a 311 complaint, why your recycling wasn't picked up, how you can get a tree planted in front of your home or a dead one removed, or what's going on with construction (or lack of it) at a specific location. They can also help you get in touch with the local representative for a specific city agency. This is by no means a complete list. If you're unsure of how to handle an issue, call them and ask. They are there to help.

Coronavirus Symptoms

Here are the CDC recommendations for what to do if you are experiencing symptoms of Covid-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

Call your doctor first, who will advise you as to what to do next. Most cases are mild, and can be treated at home. Do not go into your doctor's office without calling first, so that they can assure you get appropriate care without putting yourself or others at risk. If your symptoms are severe or you have difficulty breathing, call 911.

Did You Know?

West Midwood Trivia *By Joe Enright*

Why didn't Marlborough Road continue through West Midwood the way it runs along the Brighton line between Beverly and Foster?

Answer: Henry Meyer again. He realized his West South Midwood development would be much more pleasing than what T. B. Ackerman did in Ditmas Park West (walk along Marlborough Road between Beverly and Newkirk, then compare and contrast by walking down Rugby Road and enjoying the Courts and Glenwood cul-de-sac's and you'll realize the man's genius. Henry is not given enough credit. I tried to rectify that in my scintillating monograph at [https://argyleheights.blogspot.com/search/label/Let Us Now Praise Less-Than-Famous Men](https://argyleheights.blogspot.com/search/label/Let+Us+Now+Praise+Less-Than-Famous+Men)

Why are we called West Midwood if we're north of Midwood? *Answer:* Sigh. You're asking that again?

Originally the entire stretch from Flatbush to Coney Island Ave south of Foster was called "South Midwood" because Midwood was the original name for the Village that the Dutch created at Church Lane and Flatbush. If you doubt me, wander north of Church Avenue along Flatbush and you will encounter Midwood Street—the last living remnant of that earlier nomenclature. Our area was dubbed West South Midwood because we were at the western end of that development. But then enlightened forebears shortened the name because they thought: "Hey! We got a name with two directions in it! We should get rid of one of them but there's already a South Midwood neighborhood so I guess that leaves us with West Midwood." The joke is that the area south of Parkville had already been calling themselves West Midwood for two generations! But when that usage petered out as those environs got splintered by the crazy street grid there, we swooped in. BTW, McDonald was originally called Gravesend Road and Dahill was originally West Street because it formed the western border of Flatbush from the Green-Wood Cemetery to Foster. Then some Irish guy named Dahill got whacked by Kaiser's mutts in WWI and the rest is history...or geography. One or the other.



What Is West Midwood Online?

Want to ask folks in the neighborhood whether they have any recommendations for a plumber or roofer or such? Or maybe what local eateries or merchants they like? Perhaps you'd like to be in the know about issues affecting our area? Then join the West Midwood Online email discussion group, aka the listserv.

Send an email to joe@enright.com with your street address, name, and the email address that you want to use to post and receive messages. He will add you to the group and send you the simple instructions. There are presently over 200 email subscribers representing about 125 households.

To join you must be a permanent resident of West Midwood and agree not to post messages of a religious, political, or spam nature. Insulting or crude language can also lead to revocation of the ability to post. Finally, new and existing members can also request a daily recap.

For NYC Updates on Coronavirus

Social media and your best friend's brother-in-law who knows an epidemiologist are probably not the best sources of reliable information. Try these instead:

- Text COVID to 692-692 for alerts sent to your phone
- The CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- The NYC Department of Health: <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

WEST MIDWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018 - 2020

MARY BAKIJA	776 WESTMINSTER ROAD	marybakija@gmail.com
ALVIN BERK	735 ARGYLE ROAD	alvin_berk@verizon.net
LAURA CAMPBELL- LUI	1434 GLENWOOD RD	lauraclui@yahoo.com
MARILYN CUFF	725 RUGBY ROAD	artemis1947@hotmail.com
ANTHONY FINKEL	1435 GLENWOOD ROAD	anthonyjfinkel@gmail.com
JEFFREY EWING	776 WESTMINSTER ROAD	J.R.Ewing@verizon.net
ERIC GOLDBERG	12 WALDORF COURT	goldbergeric@yahoo.com
LINDA HOWELL	815 E. 12TH ST.	LHPT49@gmail.com
JOSEPH MISLOWACK	1315 GLENWOOD RD.	jmislowack@gmail.com
CHAUDRY MOHAMMED	672 WESTMINSTER RD	cnmohammad@gmail.com
ERIC NEWSUM	667 RUGBY RD.	ericnewsum@gmail.com
MELANIE OSER	639 MARLBOROUGH CT	meloser@hotmail.com
MELISSA SCOTT	784 RUGBY ROAD	meliscott@optonline.net
ROBERT SEIDEL	667 ARGYLE ROAD	info@loraleinyc.com
VIRGINIA WATERS	715 ARGYLE RD.	vwaters715@aol.com
MIKE WEISS	15 WALDORF COURT	m.a.weiss@verizon.net

