

WEST MIDWOOD NEWS

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What's Up With the Plane Trees?

Our lovely canopy of plane trees comes with a yearly phenomenon that some find frustrating — the trees shed their bark, and this year, they have really shed a lot. Plane trees have very thin bark, and when the tree grows, the bark becomes too small, so it splits and falls, rather like a snake shedding its skin. This summer has been very

rainy, so the trees have grown a lot, and there is more bark falling than usual. It means more raking and sweeping, but it's also a sign that the trees are healthy and growing. Just enjoy the pretty patterns.

Life in West Midwood Returns to Something Almost Like “Normal”

Summer is over, the trees will soon change color, and we're quickly heading into Fall. We are in quite a different situation than a year ago, when no one was going anywhere, we were working from home or trying to figure out how to work at all, kids were 'distance learning,' restaurants were closed. We're not totally out of the woods yet, and we have to be grateful for vaccines and continue to mask indoors, but things are slowly returning to something approaching normal.

We'll have a block party in a couple of weeks, our almost-annual Yard Sale returns in October, and (Hurrah!) the 37th West Midwood Halloween Parade is scheduled for October 31.

Welcome to West Midwood!

The Stories Your House Could Tell:

By Joe Enright

726 Argyle Road

On Thanksgiving eve in 1905, the high and mighty of Flatbush gathered to celebrate the communities of wood frame houses created over the previous ten years, stretching for two miles from Prospect Park south to the LIRR tracks near Avenue H. Their meeting place was the opulent Midwood Club, on Flatbush Avenue near Clarendon Road (at the exact point where Brooklyn's oldest thoroughfare suddenly bends to the southeast, toward Jamaica Bay.)

Over oysters, salmon, pumpkin pie, coffee and cigars (the menu card featured a photo of the new Erasmus Hall building), speakers rose to urge improvements for Flatbush: the Brighton line was a mess; a new public hall was needed; a map should be printed showing Flatbush was no longer



1940 and today

“a primitive place of woods and wild animals;” and a law should be passed to “make it as easy for men to vote as it is to talk.” Not women, though. This was, after all, a males-only dinner. One speaker, however, had a much loftier desire. Edward Cragen of Marlborough Road opined, “If I had my way, I would make this a paradise for children, with all kinds of playgrounds. And I would make it a paradise of birds and flowers – flowers and birds all the time! – and everywhere there should be fragrance and song.” Judging from the fauna and flora that surround us and the feedback of generations of children



Continued on page 8

Editor's Note

What does it mean to live in a neighborhood?

We know we are lucky to live in West Midwood, with trees for shade, generous neighbors who watch out for our houses, bring in our garbage cans if we are away, trade recipes, recommendations for plumbers, carpenters or repair people, and who constitute an active hive-mind to help solve problems like ESCOs and insurance claims. We live in a rich web of people with a wide range of skills and experience and a willingness to share them.

But recently, I've realized that most of the time these interactions, though valuable, only scratch the surface. They give us a sense of being connected to people whom we actually know only slightly. There is perhaps a lot to be gained by diving just a little deeper.

I've been thinking about this because in the last couple of weeks, two of our long-time neighbors have died, and in both cases, I wish I had known them better and asked them a question or two. The two women, Mary Coe and Ellen Bilofsky, were completely different from each other, but in both cases, I wish I had known them better.

Mary Coe lived down the block, and often came by to look at and comment on the flowers in my garden. It was easy to make assumptions about her – all of which turned out to be wrong. When I spoke to her neighbors in order to write an obituary for this newsletter, I found that she had a long and fascinating history – and I wish I had been able to ask her about it myself. I don't think she would have minded; she might have dodged my questions, but it didn't occur to me to even ask.

Ellen Bilofsky was the copyeditor for the West Midwood News, and I knew her mostly through that partnership. I quickly learned that she was smart, and funny, and truly understood deadlines. She was also one of the best copyeditors I've ever worked with. I trusted her judgment on every editorial decision. While we worked on the newsletter, we talked about politics and causes, and commiserated when the world seemed to be going down the drain, but there are so many things I didn't know, and wish I had. She was, for example, a black belt in karate. Who knew?

No one ever really knows everything about anyone else – even close friends or family. But stopping for a second to chat with a neighbor, and perhaps asking a question while you still can, might surprise you, and make both their day and yours a little brighter.

— **Tori Rosen**

President's Message Fall 2021



Dear Neighbors,

We hope you are enjoying the remaining days of summer – likely with a little less unease and uncertainty as compared to last summer. The West Midwood Community Association is busy handling day to day requests and concerns of the community at large. Personally, I feel like I have spent much of my summer picking up after our London Plane trees. Count me in for shipping all of them back to Britain!

We have remained engaged on various topics with our neighboring associations, boards and community offices and appreciate your feedback on areas of concern and needed improvement. Our community is strongest when we act collectively towards our shared goals. In case you haven't yet heard, we are having a block party on Glenwood on Sunday Sept. 26 from 1 – 4:00 PM. It will be more of a streamlined event and we hope everyone can stop by to mingle and refresh themselves. See the flyer included in this newsletter for further info.

On a much sadder note, our neighborhood recently lost a tireless champion of community and civic engagement – Ellen Bilofsky of DeKoven Court. Ellen was committed to West Midwood and local affairs, and worked on many public concerns, campaigns for public office and elections. She may have knocked on your door to have a petition signed – always extremely knowledgeable and passionate about her cause or candidate. Ellen strongly believed we should all stay involved in our communities and hold our leaders accountable – a basic tenet of our democracy and freedom.

We will miss Ellen deeply and share sympathy and condolences with her partner David Newman.

—**Eric Goldberg**

In This Issue:

Life in West Midwood Returns	1	Artist's Notebook	14
What's Up With the Plane Trees?	1	Advertisements	15
Stories Your House Could Tell	1	What is West Midwood Online	15
Editor's Note	2	Neighborhood Businesses & Services	16
President's Message	2	WMCA Board of Directors	16
In Memoriam: Ellen Bilofsky	3	Yard Sale	17
West Midwood Cooks	4	Halloween Parade	17
Brooklyn Sports	5		
School News	6		
Neighborhood News	7		
In Memoriam - Mary E. Coe.	8		
West Midwood Bookshelf	11		
Puzzle	12		
Sign Spotting	13		
Who You Gonna Call	14		

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In Memoriam — Ellen Bilofsky 1951-2021

West Midwood remembers the life and deeply mourns the death of long-time Dekoven Court resident Ellen Bilofsky, who died August 18 after a months-long fight with brain cancer. Ellen was an active citizen, who took seriously her commitment to making the world a better place. Through countless acts of kindness, and tireless and productive work in support of many causes, she embodied what it means to be fully engaged in life and the world.

Everyone knew her in a specific context, and it is only in our collective remembering that we begin to get a fuller picture of what a remarkable person she was. In addition to her love for her life partner Dave Newman and their two children Jessie and Alex, Ellen was devoted to her friends, her neighborhood, her city, her nation and the broader world.

Her empathy and support for people who needed her, her ability to simply show up when her presence made a difference were legendary. She supported a drop-in center for mothers and small children, even after her own kids were too old to need one. She supported public education even when her own kids had headed off to college. In thousands of ways, large and small, she helped make things better.

Ellen was committed to helping build a fairer, more just society, and showed that commitment in concrete ways. She was an active participant, organizer, and leader in many movements for social justice, including early union organizing efforts at Oxford University Press, working with Office Workers Network (OWN), serving as editor of the Health Policy Advisory Center (Health/PAC) journal, participating in the fight for reproductive rights, leading parent associations in advocating for the preservation, expansion, and improvement of the public school system, and contributing to the field of blindness pedagogy as book editor for the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB).

Ellen's more recent work was advocacy for a national single payer universal health care and for the passage of the NYS Health Act. She was also a co-founder of South Central Brooklyn United for Progress. One friend and neighbor said of Ellen, "Standing or sitting next to her made me feel stronger and more hopeful. Her activism strengthened mine and motivated me to get others involved. Multiply this by

at least a thousand, I suspect, to get an idea of Ellen's positive impact on the world."

She will be missed.





West Midwood Cooks (and Bakes!) *by Allidah Muller*

Tomato Party

This recipe's name says it all: it's a festive gathering of different tomatoes prepared in different ways. It is a perennial favorite at our house, and I'm looking forward to making it as long as I can get good tomatoes at the farmers market. It also travels well for picnics and makes great leftovers, so I often double it.

A note from Ottolenghi: "Choose whatever tomato selection you can get; the one below is just a suggestion. And instead of Sardinian fregola (available at kalustyans.com), you can use Arab mograbiah (from Middle Eastern grocers) or Israeli couscous. Or just leave out the fregola and double the quantity of couscous."

Serves 4

- ¾ cup couscous
- salt
- olive oil
- ¾ cup boiling water
- 1 cup fregola
- 3 medium vine ripened tomatoes, quartered
- ¾ tsp brown sugar
- black pepper
- 1 tsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup yellow cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 Tbsp roughly chopped oregano
- 2 Tbsp roughly chopped mint
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 small green tomato, cut into thin wedges
- ¾ cup red cherry tomatoes, halved



Preheat the oven to 325°F. Put the couscous in a bowl with a pinch of salt and a drizzle of oil. Pour over the boiling water, stir and cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a plate. Set aside for 12 minutes, then remove the cover, separate the grains with a fork, and leave to cool.

Place the fregola in a pan of boiling salted water and simmer for 18 minutes, or until al dente. Drain in a colander and rinse under cold running water. Leave to dry completely.

Meanwhile, spread the quartered vine tomatoes over half of a large baking pan and sprinkle with the sugar and some salt and pepper. Drizzle the balsamic vinegar and some oil over the top. Place in the oven. After about 20 minutes, remove from the oven and increase the temperature to 400°F. On the empty side of the baking pan, spread the yellow tomatoes. Season them with salt and pepper and drizzle over some oil. Return to the oven and roast for 12 minutes. Remove the tomatoes and allow them to cool down.

Mix together the couscous and fregola in a large bowl. Add the herbs, garlic, cooked tomatoes with all their juices,

the green tomato and cherry tomatoes. Very gently mix together using your hands. Taste for seasoning: you might need to add salt, pepper, and some olive oil.

Atlantic Beach Pie

As we all know, the last (almost) 18 months have been incredibly hard for restaurants, and we've had to say goodbye to some true treasures. Crook's Corner in Chapel Hill, NC, where Bill Smith was the chef for 25 years, was one of them. This pie was one of his signature desserts, and was inspired by the lemon pies he ate as a kid at the beach in North Carolina. We made it this summer when we were at the beach in South Carolina with my family, and were reminded why it was so popular: it's super simple, yet incredibly flavorful, and a luxurious yet refreshing end to a summer meal.

For the crust:

- 1 ½ sleeves saltine (with salt) crackers
- 3 Tbsp granulated sugar
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, at room temperature

For the filling:

- 4 egg yolks
- 1 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- ½ cup freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice (or a mix of the two)
- Pinch of kosher salt
- Fresh whipped cream, lemon or lime zest and flaky sea salt, for garnish (optional, but highly recommended)

Make the crust: heat the oven to 350°F. Using a food processor, or your hands, pulse or crush the crackers finely. (Stop before all of the crackers turn to dust: it's okay if you have some little pieces.) Add sugar, then butter.

Pulse to combine or work the butter in with your hands until the crumbs hold together like dough. Press into and up the sides of a 9-inch pie pan. Freeze for 15 minutes, then bake for 1 to 15 minutes or until the crust gets a little color.

Make the filling: While the crust is cooling (it doesn't need to be cold), in a medium bowl, whisk egg yolks into condensed milk, then whisk in the lemon or lime juice (or both), and salt, making sure to combine them completely.

Pour into the shell, and bake for 14 to 16 minutes until the filling has set. Refrigerate until completely cold, 4 hours or up to overnight. Serve with fresh whipped cream, lemon or lime zest, and a sprinkling of flaky sea salt, if desired.

Note: We cut the pieces of pie first and then added the whipped cream, zest and sea salt just to make the presentation a little easier, but you can put all the whipped cream, zest and sea salt on top of the whole pie too - chef's choice!



Brooklyn Sports *Three Strikes Yer Out! (Part II)*

By Argyle Art Rhine

The following article is a continuation of “Three Strikes Yer Out” which appeared in the March, 2021 issue of West Midwood News. It is respectfully dedicated to Ellen Bilofsky and to Mary Coe, who inspire us to hold our heads high every single day.

Strike Three:

In October, 1957, the bells of our borough tolled as the wrecking ball reduced Ebbets Field to rubble. Brooklynites wept. Save some tears, Dodger fans; ground had not even been broken for the field of nightmares Walter O’Malley was constructing in Los Angeles.

Unlike the politicians of Brooklyn, the Mayor of Los Angeles promised O’Malley – owner of the team formerly known as “Our Bums” – 300 acres of land in the vicinity of Chavez Ravine.

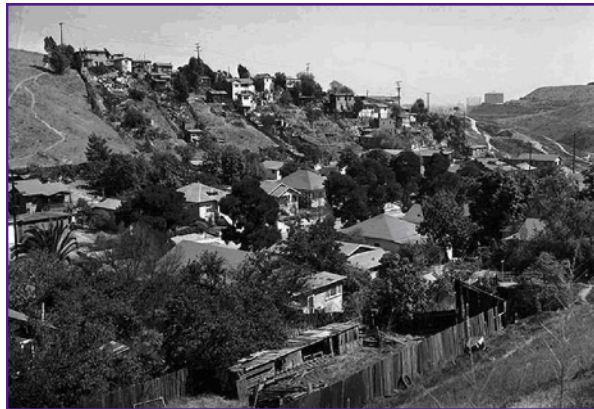
This was prime land. The impression given by the Mayor and O’Malley was that this was scrub land, with maybe a few shacks and squatters. That impression was false. It was a stable and long-established Mexican-American working-class community. The hundreds of families who lived in and around Chavez Ravine were not squatters; they were homeowners. O’Malley and the L.A. movers & shakers coveted that land.

The first step, they knew, was a nefarious government trick to extract land from owners’ hands: it is the law of Eminent Domain. Eminent Domain is the right of a government to expropriate private property for public use, with [ahem, minimal] compensation to the former owners. There is no question that the exercise of the doctrine of Eminent Domain requires that the expropriated property must be converted to public use. Robert Moses (hiss) used this technique to clear neighborhoods and build highways. But highways are public use. A baseball stadium and parking facilities to be owned and operated by a private corporation does not constitute public use. The Los Angeles Dodgers had a problem.

Norman Chandler, owner of the Los Angeles Times, his hand-picked Mayor, Norris Paulson, and their powerful allies worked out a solution.

The elite of Los Angeles began its quest for a baseball team in 1953 -- not knowing yet from where it would come – noting that the Boston Braves had profitably relocated West to Milwaukee. Norman Chandler gathered together a consortium of powerful businessmen and chose Norris Paulson as their Mayoral candidate to end the 4-term regime of the popular incumbent, Fletcher Bowron. Paulson was a non-entity with no political experience and, accordingly, was completely beholden to the consortium. In a run-off, Paulson, bolstered by publicity from the L.A. Times, ousted Bowron. The next step was to acquire the houses and land in the three communities of Palo Verde, La Loma and Bishop, located in a hilly area known as Chavez Ravine. These were Mexican-American communities whose upkeep – in terms of water mains, gas lines, electrical conduits – had been ignored by the City for decades.

As negotiations with O’Malley began in earnest, the consortium began the process of seizing the homes under the Eminent



*Before and After:
Chavez Ravine 1952 and 1962*



Domain doctrine, saying it was a perfect area for public housing, a legitimate public use, under the guise of urban renewal. Chandler and the consortium wanted this land, despite their strong opposition to public housing. An extremely contentious referendum a couple of years earlier had approved the City’s plan to take the land for the purpose of constructing public housing. This referendum had been supported by Bowron, which is why Chandler and the consortium hated him.

But in an ironic twist, despite their philosophical opposition, passage of the referendum provided the consortium a way to advance their own plans. The consortium needed this claim of public use in order to seize the land and houses.

Brooklyn Sports — *continued*

As for the roadblock – the purpose of the referendum, after all, was to provide public housing – they were very concerned, but thought they would be able to deal with the people’s demand for public housing after the eviction process was complete. What the consortium did not anticipate was the formation of peoples’ organizations which began a campaign for integrated, modern, affordable public housing. The consortium responded with a vicious counter-offensive which started with the unbelievable assertion that the targeted land was not fit for public housing given the squalor which, ironically, the City had willfully condoned for the lifetime of the homeowners.

This counter-intuitive strategy was derided by the public housing supporters, who recommended a new infrastructure to accompany the new housing. The L.A Times then began a Yellow Journalism campaign which made the Hearst Press proud. Anyone who supported public housing was red-baited, which made some people retreat and bankrupted the ones who had to defend themselves. The public housing organizations were decimated. The hard-fought referendum that had obtained public housing – supported by the City (under Bowron) just a few years ago -- was overturned in the State courts because the land was unusable for housing. However, the end of any public housing project now meant that there was no public use which justified the taking of people’s homes and land under the Eminent Domain doctrine. More litigation ensued, of course, and the State courts held that the now-abandoned intention to build public housing was indeed sufficient justification for the taking of the homes. In addition, the City, which held the right to erect public housing, could sell its right for new construction to a private owner. What a surprise! The judge who presided over this matter also took it upon himself to re-assess the value of the homes being seized. For example, the lead plaintiffs, Abrana and Manuel

Arechiga, whose home had been valued by an impartial assessor appointed by the City several years back at \$17,500, suddenly found that their home was only worth \$10,050. There had been no re-assessment; it was just that the judge found that the impartial assessor’s value had been too high. What a surprise!

The rights to the land were sold to O’Malley, but the litigation continued after he obtained the land. So, during four years of appeals, the new team in town, the Los Angeles Dodgers, had to play in the awkwardly configured Los Angeles Coliseum, a football stadium. Soon, however, the bulldozers left the homeowners in their wake and in 1962, the beautiful Dodger Stadium in Chavez Ravine was opened for business and continues to this day as the home of the current World Champions of baseball.

Eddie Stanky [see “Three Strikes Yer Out” introduction] may have changed into a better man; Al Campanis [see Strike Two] may have evolved in the other direction. Roberto Clemente [see Strike One] was always the same; he lived every day as a hero, including the day he died in a plane crash in 1973 bringing emergency relief supplies from Puerto Rico to earthquake-ravaged Nicaragua. Clemente had accompanied the flight to prevent the interference of Nicaragua’s dictator, Anastasio Somoza, who had seized the first three supply planes and diverted the contents to his family and cronies. O’Malley was also always the same. If you had a gun with two bullets and found yourself locked in a room with Hitler, Stalin and O’Malley, who would you shoot? Brooklynites and many former homeowners in Los Angeles would answer: shoot O’Malley twice!

School News—PS 217 by *Sherry Goldberg*



By the time this issue is out, school will have started (September 13, later than usual). As I write this, PS 217 is gearing up for the new school year, which is scheduled to be fully in person, distanced and masked for students and faculty/administration. First week of school activities include welcome breakfasts for parents by grade, with various speakers at each event to welcome everyone back to what is sure to be another nontraditional year.

There will be a General Parents Association (PA) meeting in September as well – all parents are invited and encouraged to join (likely by Zoom) and ideas of how to get involved in the school will be shared.

This year, there is going to be a focus from the PA on new approaches to fundraising, continuing our Cultural Connections within the school and community, garden

beautification, updating the outdated school website, family wellness and overall school and family equity. Of course, everything will need to be figured out in the context of health and safety of the school community.

After many years, the school administration has some changes and as the issue is going to print, there are openings for Assistant Principal for second grade and Assistant Principal for the younger students (pre-K, K and 1st grade). With change can come growth and opportunity, so hopefully by the next edition of West Midwood News we’ll be able to share updates here.

If you are a school family, considering becoming one or just want to see what goes on at our closest elementary school, please follow us on Facebook (PS 217 Colonel David Marcus School) and Instagram (ps217k).

Neighborhood News

What's Happening in Your Life? Let Us Know!

Let *West Midwood News* readers know about significant events in your life — a birth or a loss, a graduation, an engagement or a marriage, an anniversary, an honor or a promotion. *editor.WestMidwoodNews@gmail.com*.

Volunteers Needed!

We are planning to revive a neighborhood tradition that is both fun and really useful — The Yard Sale!! If your basement is overflowing with items that are just gathering dust at your house but would be really useful to someone else, this is the community event for you. But it can't happen without some busy hands to help organize it. Marilyn Cuff is once again coordinating the event, which will be October 3 (Rain date October 10), but she needs some help. She'd like to have a volunteer from each block help distribute flyers, collect registration fees, and generally help things run smoothly. If you have some time and energy to help your neighbors (and yourself!), please call Marilyn at 917-548-7799 to tell her you can help her out. Thanks!



Bowling News!

The Lost and Found team -- Rocco Agoglia, Eddie Doherty and Brooklyn Sports' columnist **Argyle Art Rhine** -- claimed their championship trophies at the Holy Spirit League awards dinner.

Happy 100th Birthday, Peggy Hume!

Happy Birthday to Margaret (Falvella) Hume who will be 100 years young on September 16th. Margaret, who goes by Peg as well as Peggy, was born and raised in the Bronx and moved to Brooklyn when she married her now late husband, Donald, in 1951. They bought their home at 686 Rugby Road in 1962, and raised their six children here. Peggy still resides there and she and the family lovingly refer to the home as 686. She also has ten grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Congratulations Peggy!



Photos courtesy of Mary Hume. Top: Peggy on Mother's Day 2021, Center: graduation from high school circa 1938' Left: Mary with Two of her great grandchildren.

Mary E. Coe 1940-2021

Mary Coe, a longtime resident of Argyle Road, died July 29 at the age of 81. She was a welcome and familiar sight throughout the neighborhood, often stopping on her daily walks to admire the flowers in neighbors' gardens, chatting with whoever was out and had a moment to stop for a bit of conversation.

Mary Elizabeth Coe was born in Washington, DC on March 10, 1940 to Charles and Rose M. Coe. Her parents had met in graduate school at the University of Chicago, where they were both studying economics. The family, including older brother Allan, lived in Montgomery, Maryland; her father was an economist and statistician at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They moved to

Brooklyn after the war. Mary attended a private school in Brooklyn through sixth grade, PS 217 for eighth and ninth grades, and graduated from Midwood High School. She received her B.A. degree in history from Reed College. After college, Mary returned to New York and lived in the Bronx for nearly two decades. She studied nursing during this period, and received her RN's license from New York State in 1972.

She returned to Argyle Road to help care for her ailing parents in the 1980's, and became sole owner of the family home after the death of her father in 1997. Mary is survived by her brother, Allan Coe, a retired micro-biologist, who lives in Palm Springs, California.

Memories of Mary by Norman Rosenberg

Editors Note: We asked Norman Rosenberg, who has known his neighbor Mary since childhood, to share his memories of her, and are grateful that he agreed to do so.

Mary Coe, who came to Argyle Road as a five-year-old child when her parents bought their house here in 1945, died on July 29 of a heart attack. She was 81. Always a friendly, warm person, she was known by many neighbors.

Mary attended private school through 6th grade and then went to P.S. 217 when it still went to 8th grade. After graduating from Midwood High School, she attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon, graduating with a degree in history.

Her maternal grandfather was Samuel Marcus, who had been born in Europe. In America, he became a skilled machinist. Until World War I the best quality dolls were imported from Germany; those dolls had eyes that opened and closed. When the war cut off the supply of dolls from Germany, Mary's grandfather began to manufacture those eyes. Eventually he had a factory in New Jersey where, besides the dolls' eyes, he manufactured the mechanism that caused dolls to cry when pressed. He gave Mary's parents the money to buy the house; the purchase price was \$10,000.

Her father was the son of an immigrant German baker and an American mother. The family moved around a number of times and was living in Birmingham, Alabama at the time of World War I. He told the story of how he and his brother fought their way to school in the morning and fought their way home in the afternoon. Their crime: they were German spies.

After college, Mary lived for almost twenty years in the Bronx. The apartment building had many immigrant families with young children, whom Mary began to tutor. She told the story of the little boy she would find sitting with his school books on the floor beside her door, waiting each afternoon for her to return home. She would take him inside and help him with his homework.

Fifty years and more later she was still receiving telephone calls from grateful adults who remembered the

great gifts she had given them when they needed help to learn to read and write.

As with the children, Mary went to the assistance of an elderly woman whom she met by chance. Some years ago, she met Shirley, who was over 90 and living alone nearby. Mary befriended her, stayed in contact, and would go shopping for her. This care continued until Shirley died several years later. Mary was marked by a generosity of spirit. During those years in the Bronx, she earned a nursing degree.

Mary was fond of children, plants and flowers, cats.

There are people in this neighborhood, now adults, who knew her since they were children because she would make it a point to learn their names, greet them, and take the time to talk with them. She had a friendly soft way. I would like to mention that two generations ago, her father, a warm and charming man, was regularly greeted by the children of Argyle Road. He was the sort of man that a child wanted to greet and be greeted by.

Mary's enclosed front porch was lined with plants that, under her care, thrived all year. Growing things was important to her.

She told the story of one of her childhood cats. Each morning, her parents, going to work, would walk to the Avenue H subway station accompanied by their cat. The cat would go with them as far as the corner of Rugby Road and Avenue H and then make its way home. Over time, he observed that they returned home at the same time each evening, so he took to returning to the corner at Rugby to wait for them to appear. The three would meet there and walk home together.

By the mid 1980's, with her parents' health in decline, Mary was spending more and more time here helping them; eventually she moved back.

In middle age she returned to the neighborhood she had known when she was young, but now with a completely changed cast of neighbors. It was from that time that she became the familiar figure that many of us came to know.

The Stories Your House Could Tell — Continued from page 1

reared here, I would venture to say that: 1) Mr. Cragen's wishes came true; and 2) his whiskey supply was probably cut off after he sat down.

In attendance were “the fathers” of Vanderveer Park (Henry Meyer), Ditmas Park (Louis Pounds), Beverly Square, Fiske Terrace & Westminster Road in West Midwood (T. B. Ackerson), and Midwood Park & West Midwood (John Corbin). Also celebrating was John Egolf, a 25-year-old branch manager with the Flatbush Trust Company who, two months earlier, had purchased a new home at 726 Argyle Road from the John R. Corbin Company. It was one of the seventy-odd homes erected here by “the master builder.”

Despite their relative wealth, John and Ruth Egolf were not immune from disease and injury. One of their daughters died in the spring of 1911 at the age of five after a brief illness, and another daughter passed away from spinal meningitis contracted at a summer camp. But three other children survived to enjoy the morning bird-songs here until 1919, when John and Ruth moved the family to New Jersey so John could take a more prestigious banking job.

The house then passed to the

MacIntosh family, who had been living only a short stroll away on Wellington Court. Walter Leaman MacIntosh was born in Provincetown, Cape Cod, in 1882 to a Scottish sea captain. He graduated with an engineering degree from Pratt Institute in 1901 and was employed by Consolidated Edison (and its forebear incarnations) for the rest of his life. In 1906 he married Mabel Thurber, a public school teacher, in a ceremony at the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of North Gowanus on 12th Street that the Brooklyn Standard Union described as “one of the largest in South Brooklyn.” But soon after the birth of their first child, Mabel passed away.

Two years later Walter married Anna Nordenholt, seven years his junior, and they bought a house at 24 Wellington Court, where Walter's second daughter was born. Anna apparently came with baggage in the form of her parents, George & Katherina Nordenholt, who would live with them in West Midwood for more than a decade.

Anna's father George Nordenholt was twelve in 1873, when he emigrated from Germany with his family. He became an exporter and amateur archaeologist who collected Mexican artifacts, and upon settling in Flatbush he became a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. In 1901, he and seven other men incorporated Almada Refineries, proposing to build the largest sugar refinery in Mexico with \$3.5 million of investor capital. In March 1911 while US troops moved to protect the border during the Mexican revolution against the corrupt dictator Porfirio Diaz, Nordenholt was seen visiting Diaz's finance minister, Jose Yves Limantour, at the Plaza Hotel. Limantour was then meeting with J.P. Morgan, whose interest was keen given the billions of American capital invested in Mexico. Although Nordenholt was described as “an intimate friend” of the Mexican VP, Ramon Corral, and was also friendly with Diaz and some of his military leaders, it appears Nordenholt never profited from his Mexico ventures and depended on his daughter for lodging thereafter, until January 1930, when he died at 726 Argyle Road of “a heart problem.”

In 1933, Walter, Anna, their three children and Anna's mother and sister relocated to Scarsdale. Walter died three years later during a trip to Chicago on behalf of Con Edison.

Walter sold the house to Philip H. Hardie, a mechanical engineer at Con Edison, and presumably an associate of MacIntosh. Born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1901, Hardie had been renting a house near Marine Park, and was an Alf Landon Republican active in the Young Men's Chamber of Commerce and soon thereafter the Brooklyn Civic Council. In their decade as West Midwood



Top to bottom: 726 Argyle in 1983, just before renovation began in 2021, Renovation underway, Getting there... Right: Today!



Stories Your House Could Tell — continued

residents, they were active in the community. Philip's wife Emily was a leading member of a church choral group and along with "Mrs. Ralph C. Jones" of 741 Westminster Rd, ran a bridge club that sometimes met in the Wells Presbyterian Church at Argyle & Glenwood Roads (Mrs. Hardie's and Mrs. Jones' first names were never identified in dozens of news articles referencing them). The Hardies had two children while they lived at 726 Argyle Road. They also had boarders: John A. Loehmer and his father. John enlisted in the US Army in 1942 at the age of 21 and served in the 5th Army Air Force. In March 1944, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service in the South Pacific. In December 1944, Philip Hardie sold the home to the Carroll family and the Hardies moved with their two children to Garden City. Emily died in 1979 and Philip followed her in 1996 after moving home to Auburn, Alabama.

For the next 20-odd years, the home was owned by Thomas J. Carroll and his wife, Margaret. Margaret's father, Edward Quinlan, was an NYPD officer who had died in 1932, and her mother, Mary Quinlan, an Irish immigrant, died in the home in March 1946. In 1952 their son, Thomas J. Carroll, Jr., married Bernice Ahearn. The Carrolls' daughter, Margaret M. Carroll, was deeded the property in June 1967 from the estate of her deceased parents, and in October 1969 she sold it to Ernest J. Lombardi, who owned the house for less than four years and did some significant "re-muddling" of the interior (dropped the ceilings, installed shag carpets, removed the pocket doors, and put in a large bay window in the dining room) before selling it to the Abramowitz family, the sixth owners.

Amnon Zvi Abramowitz graduated from Albert Einstein Medical College in 1969 two years after his Bronx marriage to Heni Bloch (both born in 1945), and became a successful cardiologist. His father, Hayim, was a founder and/or principal of three Conservative Jewish schools in Midwood. In August 1997, after two and a half decades and raising four children on Argyle Road, the Abramowitzs sold the building on Ocean Avenue where Amnon had practiced for many years, and two months later relocated to Israel, where three of their four children and multiple grandchildren are living. Just after Heni and the younger three children boarded the plane to Tel Aviv, Amnon closed the deal to sell the house at 726 Argyle Road to Tori and David Rosen.

One of the features that convinced the Rosens' then-five-year-old daughter Sarah that this was the "right" house, in addition to the swing-set in the back yard, was a colorful mural painted on the back of the garage, with a monkey, a giraffe, a palm tree and a smiling sun. This mural was a joint project of Heni Abramowitz and next door neighbor Florence Manglani, who put their children to work creating the mural from a drawing Florence had

done. The mural is still on the wall, though now completely obscured by ivy.

David, an anthropologist who was also a practicing attorney, is a professor of anthropology and law at Fairleigh Dickinson University, and is currently interim dean of the arts and sciences faculty there. He has written several books about child soldiers (*Armies of the Young and Child Soldiers* – a third is nearing completion). Tori graduated from Guilford College in North Carolina and earned an MA and PhD from Syracuse University. She spent her professional career as a marketing executive at TIAA, a Fortune 100 financial services organization, until retiring to edit the West Midwood News, "always my life's ambition," she confirmed during a recent chat. Their daughter Sarah, a Murrow High School grad, received her PhD and just completed a post-doctoral teaching fellowship in anthropology at the University of Durham in England (only Oxford and Cambridge are older). When not visiting Sarah and her partner Owen in England or traveling in Israel, the Rosens are relishing the completion of the extensive exterior work on their home, and look forward to enjoying the flora and fauna of West Midwood for years to come.



Halloween 2018 at 726 Argyle

West Midwood Bookshelf — Joan Greenberg, librarian



A Fierce Radiance by Lauren Beller
Set during the uncertain early days of WW II, this suspenseful story from the NYT bestselling author of *City of Light* follows the work of the photojournalist Claire Shipley as she captures America's race to develop life-saving antibiotics--an assignment that will involve blackmail, espionage and murder.

Recommended by Andrea Freshman

Sold to the Ladies! Or, The Incredible but True Adventures of Three Girls on a Barge, by Dorothy A. Bennett

Published in 1940. It's about three young women who came to New York to make their fortunes, and wound up buying an old barge on the Gowanus Canal and refurbishing it, with the help of friendly tug boatmen, longshoremen, gangsters, cops, and others into something acceptable to the North Shore yacht club.

Funny and very New York. Can be downloaded at:
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015031997847&view=1up&seq=9&skin=2021>

Recommended by Albert Nofi

The Plot by Jean Hanff Korelitz

A once successful novelist, turned teacher, uses the plot that a student submitted to him to turn out a bestseller, after the student suddenly dies. Now being hailed as a genius, life seems good, until signs that something foul is at play begin to appear. Probing questions about plagiarism and "originality" ensue with a big plot twist at the end.

Recommended by Gail Wasserman

Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro

Nobel Prize-winning British writer Kazuo Ishiguro writes a dystopian science fiction story told by a solar-powered empathic robot that raises important issues about artificial intelligence, friendship and

relationships. I listened to this for free as a NYPL audiobook. Anyone with a NYPL or BPL card can read the ebook or listen to this free using the simple E app
Recommended by Jan Castro

The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah

What an incredible book! Ernt Allbright, a former POW, returns from the Vietnam war a changed and volatile man. After losing another job, he makes an impulsive decision: to move his family to Alaska, to live off the grid in America's last frontier. Ultimately, about an unbreakable bond between a mother and daughter, and the magnificent Alaskan wilderness and the people brave enough to inhabit it.

Recommended by Jeremiah Clancy

Excellent Women and Quartet in Autumn by Barbara Pym

I highly recommend Barbara Pym, a novelist who wrote a dozen social comedies set in 1950's England. For readers of Jane Austen and stories about English village life and church jumble sales.

Popularized again in the 1980s and described as a most underrated writer.

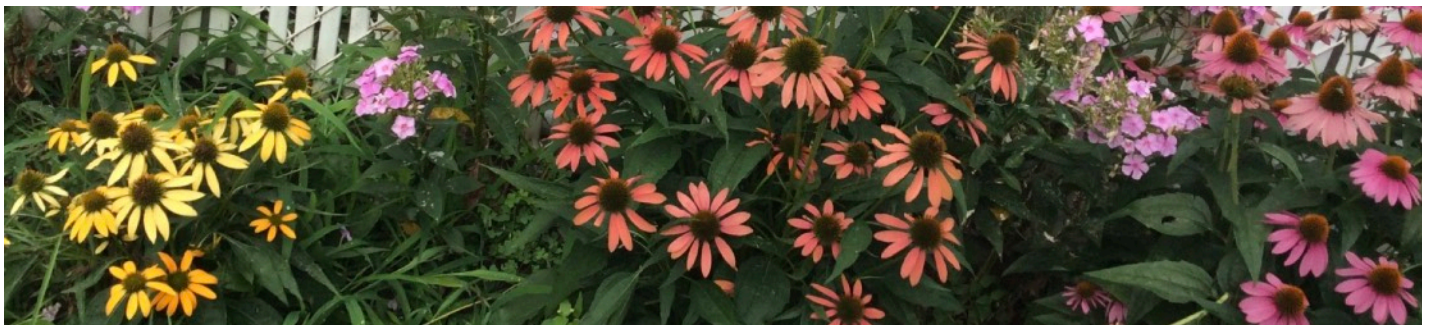
Recommended by: Virginia Waters

The Shipping News by E. Annie Proulx

A beautifully written story of human survival in an unusual setting.

Recommended by Harriet Rhine

Read any good books lately? Have a book recommendation for your neighbors? Please send them to Joan Greenberg at joandaveyg@gmail.com.



PUZZLE

When coronavirus pandemic restrictions were being relaxed or lifted, more people were hitting the road again and were in need of getting their motor vehicles in shape. As a driver, you find that you may need to have parts replaced and supplies replenished because of normal wear and tear or consumption—e.g., antifreeze, batteries, brake fluid, brake shoes, bulbs, fan belts, filters, fuel, fuses, gaskets, mufflers, oil, spark plugs, tires, transmission fluid, and windshield wiper blades. You also may wish to add on theft-related devices such as an alarm, a tracking transmitter, and anti-theft locks. If the vehicle is damaged, you may need replacement mirrors, windows, reflectors, paint, and dent removal. And how about navigation tools, such as a compass, a GPS guide, and road maps (yes, not everyone is into relying on electronic devices for getting around)? All of these items have providers.

Here is a list of popular brands of antifreeze, car batteries, bulbs, engine air filters, gasoline, motor oils, spark plugs, tires, and windshield wiper blades—products that motor vehicle operators often need. Some brands are no longer extant. How many can you identify? To challenge you, some of the letters in the brand names have been replaced with dashes. Be aware that not all of the brands are American.

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Sign Spotting

Many of the signs reported here contain anomalies that make you laugh or do a double take. Two that are noteworthy because they are practical and absolutely correct related to safety. When heading west on Avenue I, as you approach East 14 Street, you will encounter a sign affixed high up on a lamppost saying “CITY SPEED LIMIT 25, PHOTO ENFORCED.” No camera is in sight, but the cautionary sign may still be effective. At the corner where Hillel Place meets Campus Road, there is a sign attached to a lamppost intended to be heeded by pedestrians who are about to cross toward the Brooklyn College campus. One of the pictures on the sign is accompanied by text explaining that when the crossing sign displays a walker, you may cross—after first watching for moving vehicles.

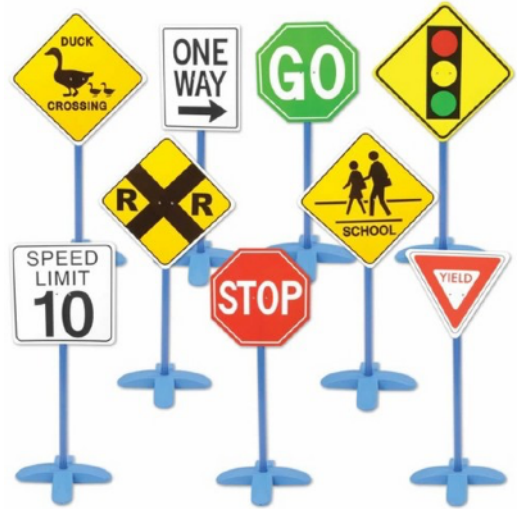
There is an inconspicuous sign on the west side of Argyle Road about a car’s length south of Glenwood Road. Rather hidden by a tree, it says that no parking is allowed at any time. That location, between the sign and Glenwood Road, had been a target for frequent ticketing shortly after the sign was installed, but lately it is often occupied by illegally parked vehicles. If you were to rank regulatory signs in descending order of disobedience, the street cleaning signs would seem to be a close runner-up in our neighborhood only because “any time” occurs more often than Tuesdays and Wednesdays. How would you rank the speed bump and stop signs?

Sometimes signs seem perfectly normal and appropriate, such as the “park closes at dusk” signs posted on the fences around the Parade Grounds fields. If you look up to the top of the long poles that surround the fields, you see arrays of floodlights. Perhaps the lighting is provided for daytime games during a full eclipse of the sun.

The entrance doors of the Chase bank located on Avenue J near Coney Island Avenue have signs reading “Automatic Door – push to open.” They are actually correct. To get a door to open, you have to first push the door’s bar rather strongly and then let go when the door mechanism kicks in and proceeds to open the door the rest of the way.

Because of the frequent changes in regulations regarding safety during the coronavirus pandemic, the Brooklyn Public Library website notes that “These plans are subject to change, based on the latest guidance from public health professionals and elected officials.” This is clearly a case of adhering to science and politics, two of the dominant potentates today.

Avid hikers are no doubt familiar with standard trail blazes that may be found on rocks and trees to guide them along trails. Painted blazes are roughly two inches wide and six inches tall and are placed just above eye level. A single blaze indicates that you are on the trail



and should proceed straight ahead; a pair of blazes arranged on a diagonal indicates that the trail turns in the direction of the upper blaze. Blaze colors are particularly handy when different trails intersect. Because each trail is marked in a different color, it is easy to determine which blaze to follow and which to ignore to stay on track. Trail blazes are placed far apart, but not so far apart that a hiker cannot see the next blaze when standing by a blaze. Painted on or taped to some of the sidewalks of West Midwood and surrounding neighborhoods are large Xs in a variety of colors, some surrounded by circles. They may be found, for example, on the north side of Glenwood Road between Argyle Road and Westminster Road, as well as on Avenue H between Westminster Road and Coney Island Avenue. They are not there to mark hiking trails. They mark the paths to food pantries where people queue up periodically, some with shopping carts. The Xs are usually about six feet apart, to remind people to maintain safe social distancing.

Tori told me about an eatery that offers “quartz chicken soup.” Of course, quartz would be a prime ingredient in Stone Soup. Their soup may have sparkled but may have been difficult to swallow. Maybe the soup was sold in quartz containers.

Periodically, banks notify depositors of policy changes. Earlier this year, Santander announced that on April 1, 2021, they will no longer accept cash payments into personal accounts from individuals who do not have accounts with Santander. That is a harbinger that we are on our way to becoming a cashless society.

Those on litter patrol have noticed a change in discarded PPEs. They formerly consisted only of latex contraceptives. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, those PPEs are now accompanied by disposable face masks.

Happy sign spotting.

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.

Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs):

P.O. Viodelys Brathwaite (917-864-7912)

Viodelys.Brathwaite@nypd.org

P.O. Roshael Layne (929-270-7068)

Roshael.layne@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.

For Information About Covid-19:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>

Artist's Notebook:

Florence Manglani



Advertisements

Mario Catanzaro

No Victorian house, like those in our neighborhood, should be without an antique clock. Whether it be mantle, wall, shelf, or grandfather clock, or something more modern like an early electric clock, I can probably help. If interested, call me at (718) 282-8471.

Park Slope Copy Center

Owners: Jon and Jamie Kalb

123 Seventh Avenue,

Brooklyn, NY 11215

Phone: (718) 783-0268

Fax: (718) 622-8373

E-mail: pscc@nyc.rr.com

Goods & services: copies (color and black & white); engineering copies; digital prints (color and black & white); computer services including design; invitations; business stationery; business cards; mailing services; shipping services (wrap and pack) for UPS, FedEx, DHL and US Mail.

**Would you like to advertise your
Brooklyn-based business in this space?
Quarter page ads are \$25 per issue.**

*

Type-only classified ads are also available.

**For the bargain price of \$50 per year, you can be
included in all four issues of the West Midwood News.**

*

**Please contact Tori Rosen at
Editor.WestMidwoodNews@gmail.com**

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 containing all of the activity within the previous 24 hours, rather than receive

Mark Your Calendars!



Upcoming

West Midwood Events

* **Block Party – September 26**

* **Yard Sale — October 3
(Rain date Oct 10)**

* **Hallowe'en Parade — October 31**

Corinne Bennet Studio

—Suzuki Violin—

Located @33rd Street & 4th Avenue in Brooklyn



Now accepting new students for Fall 2021! Ages 4+ welcome!

“Beautiful tone, beautiful heart.” -Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

The Suzuki method is a way of teaching music that prioritizes listening, learning by ear, and parental involvement. One parent, also known as the practice partner, is required to attend each lesson. Working together as a teacher-parent-student triangle, every child has the potential to learn how to play the violin!

Corinne received her M.M. in Violin Performance from Brooklyn College and is a registered teacher with the Suzuki Association of America.

She has been teaching Suzuki violin in Brooklyn for seven years.

Full bio here: <https://suzukiassociation.org/people/corinne-bennett/>

For more information contact Corinne at:
corinne.o.bennett@gmail.com

Neighbors' Businesses and Services

To add, cancel, or update a listing,
contact **Tori Rosen** at editor.WestMidwoodNews@gmail.com

Education and Lessons

Danielle Buonaiuto *Private voice lessons* for high-school age and adult students in classical, musical theatre, and pop styles. Master of Music from Peabody Conservatory, and 10+ years' teaching experience.
danielle.buonaiuto@gmail.com.

Rob Garcia *Drum lessons*. I've been teaching private lessons to students of all ages for the past 25 years and have a well-equipped teaching studio at my home. More info www.robgarciamusic.com; Contact: robjgarcia@hotmail.com; 917-273-7875

Udi Hazan *Private table tennis and archery lessons*. Certified coach—level 1 in ping pong and level 2 in recurve bow archery.
718-859-8432.

Florence Manglani Semi-retired *bilingual school psychologist*. Still teaching at Brooklyn College, is available for consultations.
718-434-2134; florence@imagineblue.com.

David Picton *Music Lessons in Drums, Piano, and Composition*. 35 years teaching experience. Graduate of Mannes College of Music. All ages, beginner to advanced. 718-859-6313;
davidpictonmusic@gmail.com.

Julian Rhine *Guitar lessons; SAT, SHSAT, and Regents tutoring*. BA in music and English from Vanderbilt University. 917-981-0675;
julian.m.rhine@gmail.com

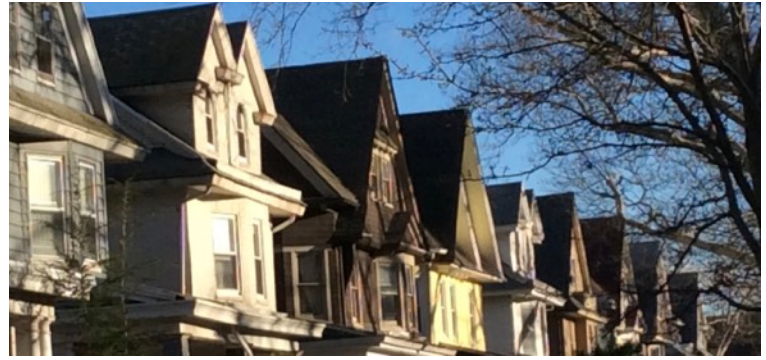
Harriet Rhine *Swimming instruction*, at East Midwood Jewish Center, Fridays: children 6 months–3years old, 10:30–11:00 am; adults, all levels, 11:00 am–12 noon. 646-670-0822; hrhine165@gmail.com.

Amy Rowe *Tutoring* in math, reading, writing, other academic subjects, test prep. Advising on Medicare enrollment and basic nutrition. Meet on Zoom, by phone, or outdoors. Expert educator, researcher, writer, and editor makes complex topics clear. amyrowe.nyc@gmail.com, 917-723-0348

Melissa Scott *Yoga for Every Body!* Currently offering private or small class instruction. 718-781-6509;
kettleandkame@gmail.com.

Jeannine Umrigar *Collectiv3 Fashion Portfolio Lab*. Individual mentorships for students to build fashion and art portfolios for college entrance and beyond. For more information see our website: www.collectiv3.nyc.

David Wechsler *Flute lessons*. Many years of teaching at all levels from beginner to professional. Long-time member of Brooklyn Philharmonic and



many other groups in the NYC area, including Broadway, recordings, symphony, opera, ballet orchestras, and chamber music. 347-528-6318; davewechs@earthlink.net.

Health and Mental Health

Laura Campbell-Lui Shaklee Distributor household cleaning products; nutritional skin care; nutritional supplement products; appointments available. 917-767-3579;
lauraclui@yahoo.com.

Jan Castro De-stress with *massage or Thai body work*. Safe, clean, open space. I've had 2 vaccine shots. Credentials and/or references upon request. 60–120 minute sessions, reasonable rates. Phone 314-323-9060, 2-5 days in advance.

Andrea Freshman, LCSW Specialty: trauma healing with emphasis on integrating the mind-body connection 718-434-6873.

Sara Hochman *Nutritionist*, MS, RD, CDN. Registered Dietitian specializing in chronic disease management and weight loss, nutrition therapy for all ages. Reasonable rates, in-person or televisit appointments. Sarahoch780@gmail.com

Pet Sitting

Nell Mendlinger and Lauren Sullivan, Owners, Abby on Argyle Pet Sitting & Dog Walking, LLC. Available 365 days a year for your pets. We have been in the neighborhood for 10+ years. Bonded and insured. Member of PetSitters International and an eco-friendly company. www.AbbyOnArgyle.com.

Real Estate

Miriam Hurwitz Associate real estate broker with Douglas Elliman on Cortelyou Road. 917-589-6717.

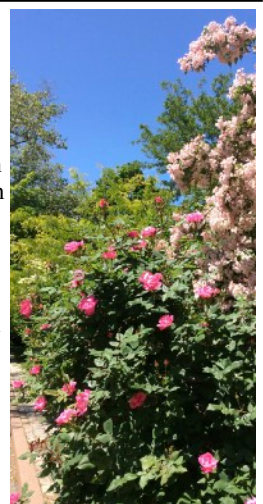
Ester Sciallo Brooklyn residential real estate. Office: 718-676-1755; cell: 646-389-6248; es@brres.com.

WEST MIDWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020 - 2021

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West Midwood ...



Time to clean out the closets!
Time to empty the garage!
Time to find new treasures!

Don't miss the West Midwood Yard Sale!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2021
(Rain Date: Sunday, October 10)

Please provide the information below if you want to participate. Bring the completed form, with a check for \$15, payable to **West Midwood Community Association** to Marilyn Cuff at 725 Rugby Road

Name _____
Address _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____

HALLOWEEN PARADE



West Midwood's Halloween Parade
Sunday October 31st @ 6:30 PM

Gather @ 6PM @ End of Glenwood Rd. @ Q Train Cut off Rugby Rd
Bring Cookies, donuts, cupcakes
Call Virginia Waters @ 718-421-3237

37th Annual Halloween Parade

Calling All Writers!

- and editors
- and cartoonists
- and photographers
- and reporters
- and poets
- and artists
- and idea generators

Your newsletter needs you! If you have bright ideas for stories, but don't know how to get started, let us know, we'll help you find a writer to bring your idea to life. See something interesting on your daily walk? Take a picture and send it to us. Do you have a new neighbor we haven't yet met? Let us know so that we can introduce them. Tried a great new recipe? Send it along, so that your friends and neighbors can share the bounty.

Share your talents and your ideas at:
editor.westmidwoodnews@gmail.com



West Midwood Community Association

Annual Block Party

Sunday, September 26, 2021 from 1:00 - 4:00 PM
Glenwood Road (at the dead end)



Come enjoy food, drinks, music, sports and fun in a safe way with the entire West Midwood neighborhood. Meet your neighbors new and old.

Please contribute to the Potluck food table as you wish. Food and drinks will also be provided by the West Midwood Community Association.

