

WEST MIDWOOD NEWS



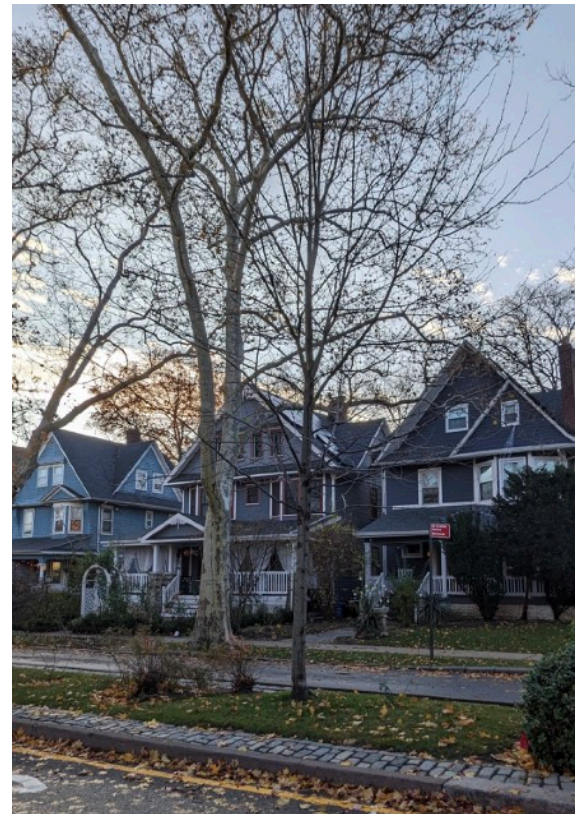
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The leaves have FALLen, and Winter is on its way, but it has been very busy here in West Midwood.



How John Corbin Built His Houses (Part 2) — By Joe Enright

None of the homes in our neighborhood were built with garages – it was that brief interregnum in urban history when horse transport had given way to electrified trains for the transit of the masses. Then on December 1, 1913, Henry Ford's assembly line started rolling, everybody wanted a car, and garages became abundant here, 1914-1917.

By 1908 almost all of Corbin's homes north of Avenue H had already been erected and the LIRR railbed had been depressed fifteen feet below street level. Corbin then relocated his plant to an even larger factory located on the site of what is now Kings Plaza. This waterfront location enabled him to ship his pre-fab lumber to Fire Island where he was about to start a new development venture.

Prior to the submersion of the railroad, which had increasingly morphed its revenue stream from excursion passengers to freight, did

Corbin use those rails to “cart” his lumber? He had paid the LIRR to lay down tracks that connected his plant to the mainline, allowing him to receive shipments of wood, iron, stone and brick, but did he use the line to transport

his factory-processed material less than a mile to the dead ends south of Avenue H, extending from East 19th to East 13th Streets, thence to be placed on horse-drawn carts? Prior to 1907, the railroad sat on a small embankment which might have made off-loading more difficult. We may never know because the only photographic evidence of the actual construction of homes here consists of a T. B. Ackerson sales booklet – and horse-drawn trucks were the only conveyances depicted. 1907 photos of the Brighton railroad “big dig” do show some Corbin



Continued on page 4



President's Message Winter 2023



Dear Neighbors,

I've written about leaves, raking, bagging, London Plane trees, and the like several times in this hallowed column during my "term." It's an obsession. To rake or not to rake is now in debate across the country, and many neighbors have weighed in on our blog. Do we give nature and smaller living things winter cover, allowing our soils to replenish (ie. not to rake)? Or do we comb our yards and collect heaps of treetop defecation for placement in plastic bags (or paper, courtesy of CB 14), so it can be trucked to far away destinations to either compost or wither in plastic bags for many years to come? Speaking of composting, whose idea was it to distribute thousands of hard plastic bins for our food scrap storage? What will future generations think of our trade of less trucked away garbage for thousands of never decomposing plastic bins dotting the landscape of our post-climate apocalypse planet?

I once had a career in the "paper or plastic?" trade bagging groceries at the local Piggly-Wiggly. My mind would float - what is wrong with us that we require plastic bags (made of oil) to carry a plastic container (made of oil) of laundry detergent to our plastic automobiles? The laundry detergent had a handle! As did the milk jug, and countless other plastic containered products that would get bagged, mostly in plastic, to be driven home. Thankfully, many are learning that all the plastic bags are not healthy for anyone, including a whale last week that washed ashore dead with plastic bags blocking its digestive track.

I met a person who lives not far from WM a few years ago at a wedding. I learned he owns a business that manufactures dry cleaning plastic. Aha! Another single use plastic bag that often works it way into my life. When I said I hated his product and wished it death, he gave me a nice defense of its use, and he seemed like a genuinely good person. I wonder if he would care about the whale which eyed the wrong food – possibly of his making.

I know that plastic – even the brown plastic compost bins – serves a legitimate purpose. I just really wish it didn't. Happy holidays to all.

— *Eric*

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West Midwood Cooks (and Bakes!) by Allidah Muller

Cousin Carol's Spinach Lasagna

from Laura Givner

When Howard's cousin Carol had a high school graduation for her son, Matthew, she served a delicious homemade spinach lasagna. I told her that I wouldn't go home unless she gave me the recipe!

- 8 oz. container ricotta cheese
- 8 oz. package shredded mozzarella cheese
- 3 egg whites or 2 whole eggs
- 1 package (box) of frozen chopped spinach (thawed & drained)
- ¾ tsp dried oregano
- Dash of fresh black pepper
- 1 jar (24 - 32 oz) spaghetti sauce (I like the garden vegetable sauce)
- 1 box of lasagna noodles (uncooked)
- 1½ cups water

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, mix ricotta, half the mozzarella, egg, spinach & seasonings.
3. Grease a 9x13x2 (lasagna) pan. I like to use olive oil cooking spray.
4. Make the layers in the pan: sauce, noodles (I use 3 side by side for each layer), cheese/spinach mixture, sauce and a little mozzarella.
5. Repeat step 4 3-4 times.
6. Top with remaining mozzarella. Pour water around the edges.
7. Cover with foil.
8. Bake 1 - 1½ hours covered.
9. If not brown, bake 10 more minutes uncovered.

Cousin Matthew turned 50 this past June. For more than 30 years, Cousin Carol's spinach lasagna has been a cold-weather favorite in my home!

Pasta alla Norma

from Jan Castro via her friend Meredith

- 2 eggplants
- 3-4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- big pinch red chili flakes
- dried oregano
- fresh basil
- 3 Tbsp good tomato paste
- 2 14 oz. cans Italian cherry tomatoes (note: these are hard to find and you might be able to just use 1 28 oz. can whole, peeled tomatoes)
- 16 oz. box rigatoni or similar style pasta

Olive oil (I recommend Gian Franco Becchina Olio Verde)

Balsamic vinegar (I recommend Gemma Nera Aceto Balsamico IGP)

1. Wash and puncture 2 large eggplants. Roast in a baking pan at 350°F for several hours until the eggplants appear deflated and they are very soft. Take out of oven and let cool a bit.
2. In a deep skillet, sauté garlic in olive oil, add a big pinch of chili flakes, a generous amount of dried oregano, and many leaves and stems of basil. Stir as it cooks, careful not to burn.
3. Add 3 Tbsp of good tomato paste, stir well. Add 2 cans of Italian cherry tomatoes. Squish the tomatoes down with a wooden spoon. Cook a bit.
4. Scoop out eggplant and add it to sauce. Stir well and cook a bit. Add a few splashes of nice vinegar. Taste and adjust spices.
5. Toss with cooked rigatoni or similar style pasta.
6. Top with grated ricotta salata and fresh mozzarella. Garnish with fresh basil.

Cooked Spice Cake

from Tori Rosen who got it from her sister Meade

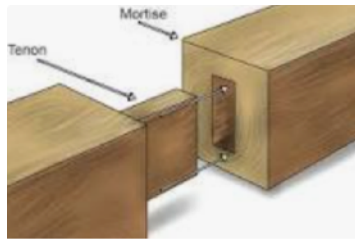
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1¼ tsp cloves
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- Pinch of salt
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 2½ cups whole milk
- 1 15 oz box seedless raisins (2½ cups)
- 1 egg
- 3 cups flour
- 2 tsp baking powder

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Prepare tubular pound cake pan (one with the hole in the middle). Butter/grease the inside well and dust with sugar.
3. Combine sugar, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and a pinch of salt in a bowl and mix well.
4. Then add butter, milk, and raisins. Bring to a boil, and boil gently for 5 minutes. When cold, add 1 beaten egg.
5. Sift together flour and baking powder; add cloves and nutmeg. Combine with milk mixture and MIX WELL.
6. Pour batter into a tube pound cake pan.
7. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour.

homes near the Cut on Waldorf and Glenwood in the final stage of completion.

In any event, the excavation, preparation and assembly work at the lots were carried out by day laborers. It was not uncommon for them to sweep building detritus into nooks and crannies, as many a homeowner has discovered when examining the area beneath their porches. (When I found the bottom of my bay window abutment sagging last year, I hired a handyman to investigate and eighty pounds of masonry debris came pouring out.)

Corbin bragged that all the fittings of the house were carefully machined “to ensure accuracy when assembled on site.” He claimed that connecting the pieces via groove and tenon work reduced the volume of nails needed, creating “a neater finish and greater rigidity.”



The window frames featured pulley stiles and a sub-sill, tongue and grooved into the outside casing and the sill respectively, “preventing water from entering underneath the sheathing.” The trim consisted of “hardwood cabinet finish, joined by the ancient but efficient mortise and tenon method,” and the doors were hardwood veneered. The beams were all one size, “shaped up to insure uniformity in applying the lath, producing a smooth even ceiling, preventing cracking.”

The Corbin homes in West South Midwood, as our neighborhood was then called, did not have as many wrap-around porches and some of the other fancier exterior embellishments that would be found in Midwood Park in the following years. This was likely due to some smaller plots here, and perhaps the Recession of 1902-1904 impelled more modest models.

Corbin was not a public person, preferring to let his ads, salespersons and other company representatives do the talking. He was most at home in his factory. In addition to his craftsmanship (he was a trained carpenter and studied architecture), Corbin was something of an inventor. In 1906 he patented an adjustable door jamb, and a 1908 profile of his plant chirped that his ability to churn out 1,000 houses annually “is made possible by the use of special machinery and tools, many of the appliances being the invention of Mr. Corbin.” (Source: Flatbush of To-Day, 1908, page 104)

Corbin’s factory along Mill Creek at the foot of Flatbush Avenue in Flatlands employed almost 400 workers as he built most of East Midwood (1909) and Slocum Park (1910), then shipped 100 bungalow cottages to Saltaire, Fire Island (1911). By 1912, he was active in Kew Gardens and Jamaica Estates, where he incorporated

“pneumatic cleaners, laundry chutes, cold storage and other up-to-date devices.” But alas and alack, Corbin had over-expanded, and got into financial difficulty. In May 1913, he was forced to sell his plant. Henry Meyer, the president of Germania Realty, and a good friend, helped him out by buying it.

1913 was also the year that Sears produced an expanded catalog showing over 200 models for mail order homes, a dramatic expansion from the 22 styles it began selling in 1908. To build a 2-story, 8 room house for \$1,057, Sears would send: mill work, ceiling, siding, flooring, finishing lumber, building paper, pipe, gutter, sash weights, hardware, painting material, lumber, lath and shingles. However they would not supply labor, cement, brick, plaster and stone, which Sears estimated would cost their customer an additional thousand dollars – if they got “a fair price.” Also not included: Warm Air Heating Plant (\$90), Steam Heating Plant (\$191), Hot Water Heating (\$243), Complete Plumbing (\$120), Acetylene Lighting (\$48). Add it all up and it was certainly cheaper than what Corbin was charging eight years earlier, but then again, Corbin offered so much more: soup-to-nuts construction, gas, water, sewer and electric connections, wainscoting, a basement toilet, upper floor bathtubs, and on and on.

Of interest, the Sears materials would be sent by rail in two shipments and the customer would have to meet the freight trains with a wagon when its contents were unloaded from a boxcar. Sears shipped lumber, nails and outside frames first, so that “you can get the building

enclosed and the roof on, giving you someplace to protect the 2nd shipment from the weather when it arrived a sufficient time later,” to wit: the inside finish, doors, flooring, etc. One imagines shipping all the materials at once would probably



\$1,057⁰⁰

For \$1,057.00 we will furnish all the material to build this Eight-Room House, consisting of Mill Work, Ceiling, Siding, Flooring, Finishing Lumber, Building Paper, Pipe, Gutter, Sash Weights, Hardware, Painting Material, Lumber, Lath and Shingles. NO CONTRACT, as we guarantee enough material at the above price to build this house according to our plans.

By allowing a fair price for labor, cement, brick and plaster, which we do not furnish, this house can be built for about \$2,000, including all material and labor.

For Our Office or Free Plans See Page 5.

THIS modern type of cottages can be built at approximately one-fourth the cost of other cottages of the same size and quality. It is a simple, practical and attractive design, and is a modern type of house.

First Floor.

Living Room, 12 feet by 14 feet; Dining Room, 10 feet by 12 feet; Kitchen, 8 feet by 10 feet; two Bedrooms, 10 feet by 12 feet and 10 feet by 12 feet; Bath, 5 feet by 7 feet; Porch, 10 feet by 12 feet; and a front porch, 10 feet by 12 feet.

Second Floor.

Two Bedrooms, 10 feet by 12 feet and 10 feet by 12 feet; Bath, 5 feet by 7 feet; and a front porch, 10 feet by 12 feet.

Basement finished under the entire house, 2 feet from floor to joists. First floor, 9 feet 2 inches from floor to ceiling; second floor, 8 feet from floor to ceiling.

This house measures 32 feet and can be built on a lot 30 feet wide.

SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

kill any draft animal pulling it!

As for pre-fab innovator John Corbin, he declared bankruptcy in 1917, sold his home on Glenwood Road in Vanderveer Park, and retired to an Ulster County farm, memorialized only by a small lane behind the three story brick building he constructed at the southeast corner of Foster & Coney Island Avenues, where a street sign, erected thanks to the persistence of West Midwood’s Mohammed Chaudry, proclaims: “Corbin Court.”

School News — P.S.217 *by Eric S. Ost*



As most of you know, the mayor recently announced drastic cuts to all city services, including schools. If implemented as is, these cuts will be felt in the new year. We need to continue urging our elected representatives to maintain funding for vital community investments like education, library services, and composting programs.

Fortunately, there are ways to help. Several outstanding non-profit organizations (run by our neighbors!) provide resources and deliver wonderful programming to our local schools, including PS 217 and PS 139. As part of your year-end giving, consider supporting the Flatbush Development Corporation (<https://www.fdconline.org>), the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music (www.bkcm.org), Friends of 217 (www.fo217.org), and My Own Book (www.mobf.org).

Your support will directly contribute to the betterment of our schools and community.

Amidst the coming challenges, I do have some uplifting news to report. In November, as a result of PS 217 Parents Association advocacy efforts, the school was awarded a substantial grant of \$550,000 by Council Member Rita Joseph's office to upgrade the PS 217 playground. This money will go toward the creation of a new ADA-compliant play structure and renovation of the whole space. Construction will not begin for at least a year (or more), so there is time to advocate for designs to transform this heavily-used, community space into a more environmentally-friendly, aesthetically pleasing green space that families, students, and the greater community will all enjoy. More to come on that in the near future!



Parent volunteers at PS 217 pause to pose before the 1st Annual Winter Festival event on Sunday., December 15.

Neighborhood News

What's Happening in Your Life?

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. Write editor.WestMidwoodNews@gmail.com.

Meet Your Neighbors:

Diane and Tamir Choina

“Tamir and I moved to our home on Westminster Road from Bay Ridge in 2010. It was time to start a family, so we said good-bye to our cozy one-bedroom apartment overlooking the Verrazano Bridge and hello to our quaint four bedroom Victorian house in West Midwood. It was a three bedroom when we bought it. It also had just one bathroom, but now has two, plus a powder room.

“We had our first daughter, Alice, in 2012. Now eleven years old, she is a first year middle schooler at MS442,

and she's loving it! Our second daughter, Ania, was born in 2015 and is currently enjoying her third grade year at PS10. Our family became complete in 2019 when we added our sweet GoldenDoodle Archie, to the Choina family. He's been keeping us all in shape with long walks ever since. We love living here. We love our neighbors and the community. When we aren't home, we enjoy visiting National Parks and going to all the museums our amazing city has to offer. We go a lot. So if you ever need a recommendation for an exhibit you don't want to miss, we can provide plenty of ideas.

Ode to the Parade Grounds

by Harriet Rhine

The Parade Grounds have given me so much joy, ability, and endurance, both physical and mental. I'm still biking there regularly many times a week. I have lived near enough to both Prospect Park and the Parade Grounds throughout my life.

Back in the 1950's, I think the population was more homogeneous -- mostly white people -- although of various religions. Now the variety of nationalities is huge and, thus, the variety of activities.

Growing up on Caton Avenue, I have watched the evolution of the use of the Parade Grounds. Back in the 1950's, the fields were less defined and less varied. Now there are fields set aside for soccer, baseball, softball, football, basketball, weights, pickleball, cricket, and rugby. Perpendicular bike paths run through the center of the Parade Grounds, with a snack bar at the intersection. Through the years, the Parade Grounds were training fields for Major League ballplayers, including Sandy Koufax, Adam Ottavino, John Franco, Waite Hoyt, Joe Judge, and Joe Torre.

The surrounding neighborhood has also changed. A few massive high rise apartment buildings now are under construction. They are luxury apartments with high rents. Small bars have been replaced by a school, while old buildings are being cared for and maintained.

As an alumna of P.S. 249, I enjoy the evolution of the school. It is well run and the children seem happy. When I was there, we adored the after school program and attended it for years.

On signs of a certain authority, the title of the area is "Parade Ground." However, my generation refers to the area as the Parade Grounds.

Now, I regularly meet a few neighbors, playing soccer, softball, and biking. We enjoy it all.

**Like cats?
Want to
make a
difference?**



Flatbush Cats, a wonderful resource with a new, nearby clinic, is relying on neighborhood volunteers. Volunteering can take many shapes, from rescuing to fostering. If you're interested, connect at <https://www.flatbushcats.org/volunteer#current-opportunities> or at <https://www.flatbushcats.org/foster>. To book appointments for low-cost veterinary care at the clinic, go to <https://flatbushvet.org/request-an-appointment/>

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 Lstserv.

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 messages as they occur.





Photographs in this issue of West Midwood News are by:

- Jeff Ewing
- Joe Enright
- Linda Howell
- Eric Ost
- Sarah Rosen



Do You Use This Post Office? Want to Keep it Open?

The US Postal Service has announced its intention to close the Midwood branch and move it more than a mile away to Coney Island Avenue and King’s Highway, and has asked for comments on the proposal, and boy, are they are comments! Both CB 14 and CB15 have sent strong letters objecting to the plan, and a number of West Midwood residents have also written. Want to add your voice? Here’s the address:

**Attention: Brooklyn Midwood Station Office Relocation
United States Postal Service
P.O. Box 27497**

Alternate Side Parking Calendar

- Christmas Day* Dec 25, Mon**
- New Year’s Day* Jan 1, Mon**
- Three Kings’ Day Jan 6, Sat**
- Martin Luther King, Jr.’s B’day Jan 15, Mon**
- Lunar New Year’s Eve Feb 9, Fri**
- Lunar New Year Feb 10, Sat**
- Lincoln’s Birthday Feb 12, Mon**
- Ash Wednesday Feb 14, Wed**
- Washington’s B’day (Pres. Day) Feb 19, Mon**



PUZZLE

By *The West Midwood Puzzler*

PUZZLE

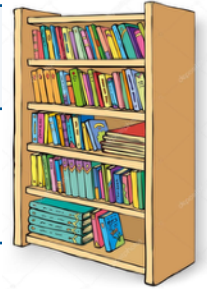
This puzzle is suitable for readers of all ages. It calls for creating a list of animals or animal breeds, each of whose names has exactly six letters. Shortened names, generic names, gender-specific names, and age-specific names are allowed. Your list may not include names of items that are derived from animals, such as burger or salami. Answers to this puzzle may be found on page 10 of this issue.

RANK: 20=good; 40=excellent; 60=genius



West Midwood Bookshelf — *Joan Greenberg, librarian*

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



The Honest Truth About Dishonesty: How We Lie to Everyone Especially Ourselves

By Dan Ariely, professor of psychology and behavioral economics

The book is full of anecdotes and empirical data from case studies, and even a joke or two, that exemplify why people are dishonest and why that behavior is contagious: cost-benefit analysis, temptation, morality, bias, and ignorance, to name a few reasons, or a mixture of the above.

Recommended by Howard Givner

West Heart Kill by Dann McDorman

Private detective Adam McAnnis joins an old college friend for the Bicentennial weekend at the exclusive West Heart club in upstate New York, he finds himself among a set of not-entirely-friendly strangers. Then the body of one of the members is found at the lake's edge; hours later, a major storm hits. By the time power is restored on Sunday, two more people will be dead... Praise includes: "An out of the ordinary whodunit...", "A unique and original murder mystery...", "A suspense novel that hops across elements of the genre..."

Recommended by Jeremiah Clancy and Sebastian Cwilich (proud friends of the author)

Trust by Herman Diaz.

A NYT best seller fiction book about a gilded age entrepreneur. The first page will hook you. The author has been interviewed by CBS' Sunday Morning, if anyone would like to view him on you tube. The interview was earlier this month. The book is available in paperback now.

Recommended by Laura Campbell-Lui



Olga Dies Dreaming by Xochitl Gonzalez

Set against the backdrop of New York City after the most devastating hurricane in Puerto Rico's history, *Olga Dies Dreaming* is a story that examines political corruption, familial strife, and the very notion of the American dream—all while asking what it really means to weather a storm.

It checks a lot of boxes in a very good story.

Recommended by Joni Greenberg

Path Lit By Lightning: The Life of Jim Thorpe, by David Maraniss

When I was the West Midwood News sports editor, I vigorously argued that Jackie Robinson was the greatest athlete in history. David Maraniss makes the case that Mr. Thorpe, a member of the Sac and Fox Nation, was the greatest. This biography also tells the sickening story of the degradation of our native Americans. Thorpe's name in his native language was Path Lit by Lightning. However, the tenor of the late 19th century rulers of our country was to eradicate all traces of indigenous customs and beliefs.

Recommended by Arthur Rhine

The Giver of Stars by Jojo Moyes.

It is a fascinating novel that takes place in the Kentucky coal mining country in the 1930's. The principal is a British woman, as is the author, and she has moved to Kentucky because she married an

American who works for a coal company owned by his father. The characters are memorable, and I am amazed that Moyes has managed to create a totally believable picture of life in this setting. Plus she has introduced some contemporary social issues.

Recommended by Jeff Ewing

West Midwood Architecture

By Nate Rogers

In my last installment, I introduced the topic of how we maintain a comfortable interior, and that our expectations for interior climate are much higher today than when these houses were built. I also covered a few of the passive design strategies incorporated into our houses that remain relevant today, and then reviewed how our home heating systems have evolved over the last century. In this installment, I want to give a layperson's overview of air conditioning and heat pumps, concluding with how your home may offer different design opportunities depending on the design of its heating system.

You may be aware that heat pumps are often discussed in relation to the climate crisis because they can help to remove the onsite combustion sources like oil or gas boilers and water heaters that pump carbon in the atmosphere and degrade air quality. So, you may be asking, what is a heat pump?

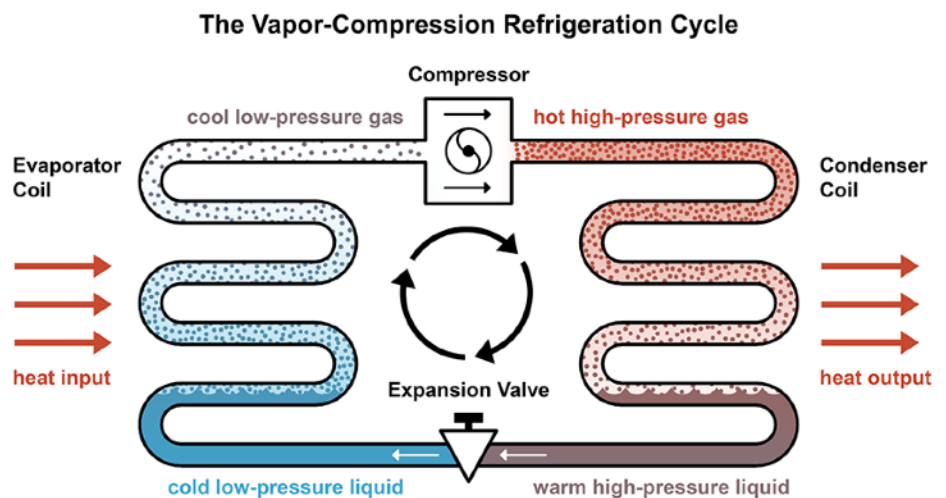
Whether it comes in the form of a heat pump or air conditioning, we are talking making use of “the refrigeration cycle.” If you think back to high school physics (perhaps with terror), you may remember that matter can hold or release significant amounts of energy based on its “phase” (e.g., solid, liquid, gas). For instance, consider how a burn caused by steam is more serious than one caused by hot water, even if each substance is at the same 212-degree temperature. Steam holds more energy due to its phase.

In the refrigeration cycle, a compressor and expansion valve are used to apply or release pressure on coolant running in a closed loop. The boiling point for the coolant has been specially engineered so that these changes in pressure make the coolant cycle between a liquid and gaseous state. Now picture that closed loop arranged so it is half-inside the house, half-outside. Depending on which way the loop flows, the coolant can be used to “transport” heat from interior to exterior, or vice versa.

Stepping back for a moment, we know from personal experience that heat naturally flows “downhill” from hot to cold. Your mug of coffee is lukewarm after 20 minutes. This is called the temperature gradient, and heat flows along it, like water down a hill. The magic of the refrigeration cycle is that heat is moved against this gradient, a bit like pushing a boulder up a hill (to mix

metaphors even further!). That pushing takes work in the form of input energy, but we can harvest heat from something cold and push it to something warmer, helping the cold thing stay cold, or the hot thing stay hot.

Traditional hot weather air conditioners always ran their loops one way: coolant in its liquid state would flow into the house, absorb heat to become a gas, and then head back outside where the compressor and condenser would squeeze it back into a liquid and wring that heat out, dispersing it outdoors. A “heat pump” may sound like something fancy or separate, but it effectively means running the AC in the reverse direction: the coolant is able to absorb heat from outdoors, even on a 20-degree or 5-



degree day, and then push heat into the house, maintaining a cozy 68 degrees.

It's important to note that AC and heat pumps always move heat, rather than making it. This is different from electric resistance baseboards and hairdryers, which are highly inefficient. Heat pumps move more energy than they demand in input operating energy in the form of electricity, which powers the compressor and fans. Efficient heat pumps can move energy at the rate of three times the input energy or better. This is contrary to an oil or gas furnace or boiler, which, because those rely on combustion, can only ever theoretically approach, but will never exceed, 100% efficiency.

Now that you know what the refrigeration cycle and a heat pump are, you will start seeing them everywhere. The most common heat pump application in West Midwood is a “minisplit” system. What is a minisplit? The word “split” comes from the notion that unlike a package window AC unit, the compressor unit

West Midwood Architecture *Continued*

(outdoors) is split away from the indoor conditioning unit. Splitting allows for greater energy efficiency, better acoustics, and a much more sophisticated system. “Mini” just means having multiple small units indoors that can offer room-level temperature control.

The design and technical challenges for these types of systems are three-fold: where to mount the compressor/fan units outside, how to locate the indoor unit in each room in an attractive way (since these are typically big boxes on the wall), and thirdly, how to run the coolant piping as inconspicuously as possible, either inside the walls or on the outside of the house.

Additional things to be aware of are whether you are looking for a system designed primarily for cooling, or for heating as well. The temperature differential between interior and exterior in winter is much greater than in summer, so heating your house solely with minisplits will require a more robust system, meaning more indoor units (and more \$\$) than if you only need cooling. But even if cooling is your aim and your budget, I still advise opting for heat pump capability at a small premium, allowing you to run the minisplits in the winter in concert with your boiler. This gives you the benefit of room-by-room control, allows you to turn the heat down in unoccupied spaces, and means you can hedge a little on your fuel source (gas vs. electric).

One other important item is that heat pump efficiency typically decreases as it gets very cold (e.g., below ten degrees F). Some heat pumps are rated below zero degrees, so do your research.

If you happen to have ductwork in your house already and are interested in a heat pump or air conditioning, you have an alternative to minisplits that may save some money. The trade-off is that you get less room-by-room control. When our 1970s furnace bit the dust a year after we moved in, we opted for a centralized (not mini) split system with “dual heat” that made use of the existing ductwork. This was about 50% less cost than minisplits. Our system cools the house in the summer and can heat it in the winter with either the heat pump or natural gas.

The downside of this approach is our entire house is on a single zone, and with the thermostat on the first floor, it’s hard to get cool air up to the third floor. In the winter, I let the system decide when to switch over to natural gas due to cold weather efficiency (my heat pump is only rated to about 15 degrees F) but on all other heating days, we heat the house with the heat pump, a highly efficient and combustion-free process. Install solar panels with a heat pump or contract with a renewable energy ESCO, and you have to opportunity to heat your house in a more carbon neutral way.



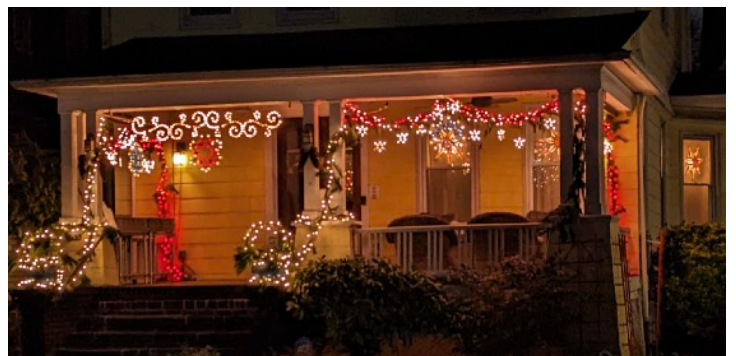
The poster features a blue background with festive illustrations: a colorful beach ball, a candy cane, a snowman, a teddy bear, and a dog wearing a Santa hat. The text is centered and includes the FDC logo, the event title, a description of the collection, suggested price, drop-off times, and contact information.

fdc
Holiday TOY DRIVE
Collection of new, unwrapped toys for local children - all ages!
Suggested price: \$10- \$20
Drop-off Mon- Fri 9 AM - 5 PM
Final day to donate:
Wednesday, December 20- 5 PM
FDC Main Office
1616 Newkirk Avenue
Brooklyn, Ny 11226
For more information:
smallbizsupport@fdconline.org

Answers to puzzle from page 8.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive.

alpaca, baboon, badger, beagle, beaver, bedbug, beetle, bobcat, bonobo, bronco, canary, canine, cattle, cicada, collie, condor, cougar, coyote, cuckoo, donkey, earwig, ermine, falcon, ferret, gerbil, gibbon, gopher, grouse, hoopoe, hornet, iguana, impala, insect, jackal, jaguar, lizard, locust, maggot, magpie, marmot, mayfly, monkey, mullet, mussel, ocelot, oriole, osprey, oyster, parrot, peahen, people, person, pigeon, plaice, poodle, puffin, python, rabbit, raptor, rhesus, rodent, salmon, setter, shrimp, spider, sponge, thrush, toucan, turbot, turkey, turtle, urchin, vermin, vicuña, walrus, weasel, weevil,





West Midwood Block Party 2023!



Halloween in West Midwood 2023!



HALLOWEEN PARADE 2023

by Virginia Waters

It was a great evening, with a large turnout for the annual Glenwood Road parade-trick or treat fest. It was the coldest it has been in years, but rain held off until after 8 p.m. Many people volunteered to help put on this year's event, which could not have happened without them. The same group of people generously helps out year after year and should be thanked for their continuous service.

Joe Enright created the flyer and delivered the supplies. Joan Greenberg bought all of the supplies. Om Agrawal, Harriet and Arthur Rhine, Linda Howel, Tori Rosen and daughter Sarah (home from England) and I manned the tables. This group also did the clean-up. It is literally mayhem giving out food and pouring juice between 6 and 6:30.

Anthony and Henry Finkel set up the lights and helped with table set up and take down. Aggie Smith and Ramest Golrajani supplied tables and garbage cans.

The parade was led by a marching band of Alan Bennett, Warren Bloom, Nate Rogers, Andy Hill, Kyle McGee and Joel Siegel.

Officers from the 70th Precinct closed off the parade route from traffic and closed off the entire neighborhood until 8 p.m. for everyone's safety.

For the second year, Raechel Adams and Charlton McIlwain graciously grilled 300 hot dogs (some halal and kosher) and handed them out to one and all. Jung Lin and Cyrus Beroukhim served hot cider for the kids and home brewed spiced pumpkin ale for the adults. They projected Edward Scissorhands in their front yard.

Many people generously donated cupcakes, donuts and cookies for kids of all ages. Thanks to the many homeowners who decorated their homes and gave out candy to the literally hundreds of trick or treaters. Thanks to one and all for your assistance this year in again making West Midwood's Halloween festivities the best ever.



Halloween in West Midwood



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.

988 — Call this number for mental health crises or suicide prevention. For more information about this service, here is a link: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/07/15/1111316589/988-suicide-hotline-number>

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.

Air Quality This summer, this is a frequent concern. For up to date info on our AQI (Air Quality Index), you can go to <https://www.airnow.gov/?city=New%20York&state=NY&country=USA>

Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs):

Noah Elrowmeim

noah.elrowmeim@nypd.org, 917-679-4587

Mohammad Zubair

mohammad.zubair@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

info@cb14brooklyn.com

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.

Artist's Notebook:

Florence Mangani



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.

Laura Campbell-Lui *Literacy Tutor* ELA help for reading strategies . Phonics/decoding help for kindergarten-grade 4. Spelling help with common rules and word root hints. Grammar help with punctuation, capitalization and conjugating. Writing help with sentence construction. New York State-certified Reading Specialist and Elementary School Teacher. Licensed in Reading, Common Branches and Early Childhood Education. 30 Years of teaching experience. Email Laura at literacytutor@aol.com

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

Amy Rowe *Tutoring and Medicare advising.* Tutoring for young people and adults in math, reading, writing, other academic subjects, and test prep, including SAT, Regents, and SHSAT. Advising on Medicare coverage and enrollment. Professional experience in writing, editing, research, and education helps me make 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 Swedish massage or Thai body work. Safe, clean, open space. I've had 3 vaccine shots. Credentials & references on request. 60–120 minute sessions, reasonable rates. Phone 314-323-9060.

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.

WEST MIDWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022 - 2023



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