



The

BUZZ

BAiP Newsletter

Bloomington Aging in Place

baipbuzz@bloominplace.org

Fall 2022

A Message from BAiP President Marjorie Goldsmith

Hello, BAiP Neighbors!

I hope that you all weathered the summer's heat well and are ready to enjoy New York City in the fall. BAiP is ready for you!

An announcement has gone out about new "living room" groups and openings in current groups. Do you have an idea for a group? Visiting New York museums that are not the Met/MoMA? Needlepoint? Theater? The experienced leaders at Activities will help you get a group up and running.

Groups may decide how they wish to meet: in person, on Zoom, or in a hybrid fashion, with those comfortable in person doing so and adding others in on Zoom. Some groups may wish to meet in person outdoors or wearing masks indoors. Your group should discuss this.

We're still looking for a large space to hold the Sands Volunteer Appreciation Award ceremony. If you have a suggestion of a space that can hold 80-90 people, please get in touch with me at president@bloominplace.org.

I hope that you Zoomed in and watched the BAiP Presents program on September 22. As with other BAiP Presents programs, the topic of charitable giving is one that many of us have questions about. The presenters had wonderful information to share with us. Meanwhile, the BAiP Presents Committee is looking for new members; the current committee is made up of interesting and committed people who are experienced in putting together a program for BAiP. Come and learn how to put on a show! Be in touch with the committee through BAiPpresents@bloominplace.org.



Spotlight on Activities

by Geraldine Borell and Miriam Cukier



A Continuing Feature Providing a Look Inside Some of BAiP's Groups

Book Groups

Among the approximately 47 BAiP activities, none are as numerous as book groups—there are 13! In an effort to give readers an idea of what it's like to be in a BAiP book group, *The BUZZ* asked book-group leaders to gather notable titles they've read together and to elicit comments from group members. What we received was so much more interesting than what we asked for.



We hope the following paints a picture of the current book-group experience.

The **Literary Fiction Book Group** was BAiP's first book group, organized at the same time as BAiP itself. It was led by David Greenberg, with Herman Sands, Martha Weissberg, Jane Tuttle, Elisabeth Holtkamp, and Lydia Dufour among its members. Sadly, since then, Herman, Jane, and Elisabeth have passed away. However, with co-leaders Martha Weissberg and Nancy Gropper, the group is still going strong today, reading an eclectic choice of literature.



Jandy Warner leads two book clubs:

Science Fiction and **The Last Book Read**.

Dan Armstrong, a member of the **Science Fiction Book Group**, notes that, rather than reading about

books, “the real ‘aha’ moments come when you engage with people in real life.”

He loves the science fiction club because it has allowed him to “discover new elements of the genre” as well as taking him back “to classics that I dismissed as a child and gave a second chance to as an adult (Asimov and Le Guin, for instance).

“Here’s another great thing about book clubs,” Dan continues. “Once we’ve found something we love, we carry our own story into it. There’s nothing wrong with this. It’s inevitable. It’s what gives books power, the connections we make to our own lives.

“But focusing on our own perspective also means that we miss a lot. And what we miss we can get from interacting with other people in a book club, who have different stories and notice different things.

“Jandy’s club is like a big Venn diagram, with elements we share and those that we don’t, but can benefit from. It has enriched my reading life. My social life too.”



In **The Last Book Read**, each member talks about the last book they read, from any genre.

From book group member Kathleen Haskins: In *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles, “Count Rostov is sentenced by a Bolshevik tribunal to house arrest for life in two small attic rooms in the luxury Moscow hotel where he has been living. He creates a charming world of elegance and erudition in the hotel, against impossible odds.”

A favorite quote: “[A]t one time, I had [all the greatest conveniences]. But in the end, it has been the inconveniences that have mattered to me most.”

From book group member Susan Zigouras: “*The Bookshop* by Penelope Fitzgerald is an emotionally engaging story of a widowed woman who opens a bookstore in a small town that isn’t sure it wants one and responds accordingly. It reminds the reader of how we fight against change as we yearn for it.”

Sharon Waskow, who leads the **History Book Group**, reports, “The History Book Group has been ongoing for more than ten years. We read historical fiction and nonfiction with no particular theme, time period, or place in mind. I think it’s the randomness of our choices that enable us to draw comparisons to time periods and dilemmas people have and continue to face all over the world. We frequently comment on how not much has changed. I loved it when members in their nineties would offer firsthand accounts of what life was like during a particular era we were reading about. I think through the discussion of books, bonds are created, both intellectual and emotional. I love this part of being in a book group most of all.”

From book group member Carolyn Friedman: “I thought *The Daughters of Yalta* by Catherine Grace Katz was one of the best books I read on several levels: the responsibility of the three women who were so young and privileged; the politics of the meeting; the description of Yalta and some of the Russian mindset; and how deceived we were about Roosevelt’s bad health.”



Gail Naruo leads the **Finalists Book Group**, which selects books from the finalists and winners of major awards for fiction, including the Pulitzer Prize, the Booker Prize, the National Book Award, the Women’s Prize for Fiction, the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Novel, and the Nobel Prize.

From Gail: “Early in 2022 my book group read *What Strange Paradise* by Omar El Akkad, winner of Canada’s Giller Prize. I found it so engrossing, I could hardly put it down and immediately reread it. Stunned by the

ending, I had to rethink all I'd read with a new perspective. A seaside is both an aesthetically beautiful tourists' delight and the site of desperate refugees' plight and frantic hopes. Individuals react with fear, attempts at control, empathic action, or "fraudulent outrage." The writing was so evocative, I felt as if I were inside varied individuals' experiences: a refugee boy, island residents, helpers, and law enforcement. There was extensive discussion about the meaning of the ending as the group explored different perceptions. As always, the group's shared thoughts and reactions enriched my reading experience."

From book group member Linda Messing: "I have been a member of the Finalists Book Group since its inception and have read scores of (mostly) great books in that time. I was attracted to the group because the book choices were limited to those listed as "prize-worthy." I wanted to stretch my reading horizons past mystery novels and the *New York Times* book list. Of course, I also was looking forward to the chance to share my thoughts about what I read and hear those of others.



"I sorely underestimated how much I would enjoy the experience. I hadn't factored in how much I could come to value the other women in the group—not just for their insightful and different perspectives, but for the energy, warmth, and camaraderie that they bring to each meeting. We are women from different cultural backgrounds, occupations, and personal histories. And all of this comes to bear on how we 'read' and understand the selected books. Usually, we are in agreement about liking the book or not. But members go beyond, asking probing and challenging questions ('Just why do you think this book received this award, anyway?'). I like that I am always pushed past my own understanding of what I read. So, intellectual stimulation is a big part of why I stick with the group. But also the women themselves are fun and interesting—they are people that I would want to schmooze with (and we do) outside of the assigned discussion."

Michelle Harris, leader of the **Best American Short Story Group** says, "It is said that if a novel is described as a moving picture, the short story is a snapshot—a world condensed into a few short pages. The well-curated stories chosen for the Best American Short Story series have provided us with a rich source of seasoned and emerging writers who continue to inspire lively discussion."

From group member Julia Spring: "At our first in-person meeting since the start of the pandemic, I loved the story 'Clementine, Carmelita, Dog' by David Means. It is about beings (human and canine) losing and sometimes finding each other, told from the viewpoint of a short-haired dachshund, Clementine. The human author struggles to demonstrate that a dog thinks and remembers not along timelines, but through her senses, mostly smell, 'like a fanned-out deck of cards overlapping.'"



Start Your Own Book Group

Waiting lists are kept for those who want to join a particular group, since most fill up immediately. A few times a year, members are notified of groups that have openings.

You can find out what different groups are reading by going to <https://www.bloominplace.org/ongoing-groups.html> under *Reading*.

If you don't want to wait for a spot to open up, why not consider starting a book group or any other type of activity? For more information, contact activities@bloominplace.org.

You can also find a list of BAiP groups at <https://www.bloominplace.org/ongoing-groups.html>.



Join In!

BAiP Activities Update

The Activities sector has been busy with the annual fall listing of groups that have openings. This year there were 19 groups with openings and many members signed up.

Several new groups are launching in October: The **Bridge** group for intermediate and advanced players; A **Widowed Persons** group; **Estamos Charlando**, a conversation group for fluent Spanish speakers; and **Hablamos Espanol**, a Spanish conversation group for beginners. We are also looking forward to a **Mindfulness** group soon.

The fall was also busy with the softball team's games. Both softball games and the tennis lessons, sponsored by the Riverside Clay Tennis Association, will resume in the spring when announcements will go out about signing up.

To continue exercising in the cold weather, remember BAiP **Pilates**, **yoga** and **movement speaks** classes are all available on Zoom. If you want to join, contact is activities@bloominplace.org.

We continue to work with members who are developing new groups. As usual we are looking for members who have ideas and are willing and able to step up and work with us to get a new group launched. We want your ideas. A few are floating around already such as visiting jazz clubs, a movie group either streaming or in theaters, transitioning into retirement, and a single author book group (for example Jane Austen or Elena Ferrante).

If you would like to discuss getting involved as a leader or co-leader of a group or have any other ideas, contact us at activities@bloominplace.org.

Candy Dato and Phyllis Sperling
BAiP Activities Co-Chairs

HOORAY for HOLLYWOOD

H4H is a series of presentations at which BAiP member Rick Harris uses numerous film clips to examine topics in classic Hollywood films. To participate, you can register at activities@bloominplace.org. Then on the day

before the show date specified below, watch for an email that will have the Zoom link to login at 4:55 p.m. The H4H session runs from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

- Nov 8** *Make It Again Sam: The Franchises – 1*
- Nov 22** *Make It Again Sam: The Franchises – 2*
- Dec 6** *Boo, Hiss: The Villains – 1*
- Dec 20** *Boo, Hiss: The Villains – 2*
- Jan 3** *The Mavericks: Independent Producers – 1*
- Jan 17** *The Mavericks: Independent Producers – 2*

BAiP Presents

BAiP hosts monthly presentations on a variety of subjects that are of interest to the membership. The presentations, on Zoom, are followed by a question-and-answer period. The October presentation was done in collaboration with Bloomingdale School of Music.

Bloemendael to Bloomingdale: Music & Culture in this Valley of Flowers

Monica Verona

Concert pianist and music educator

If you missed the October presentation you can find it, as well as previous presentations, on the BAiP website:

<https://www.bloominplace.org/baip-presents>

November and December BAiP presentations will be announced later this fall. Watch for the email notification to register for the month's session.

Free Stuff

Culture Pass: Get Free Access to NYC Museums with a New York Public Library card

<https://www.nypl.org/blog/2018/07/16/culturepass>

Free digital books at ZLibrary

<https://b-ok.cc/?signAll=1&ts=0302>

Juilliard presents performances in music, dance, and drama annually and many are free!

<https://www.juilliard.edu/stage-beyond/performance/calendar>

Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University

<https://wallach.columbia.edu/exhibitions>



Need Some Help?

Neighbor to Neighbor **

N2N is BAiP's outreach to neighbors who may need assistance. Volunteers can pay a friendly visit by phone or in person, do a needed errand, or accompany a member to the doctor.

Contact: n2n@bloominplace.org
or call 212.842.8831 ext. 1

Tech Squad **

BAiP's Tech Squad can help members resolve issues such as connecting computer peripherals (like a hard drive, mouse or camera), set up a smart TV and update Zoom.

Contact: techsquad@bloominplace.org
or call 212.842.8831 ext. 26

BAiP Resource Exchange

BAiP members share with each other their recommendations of service providers, from doctors and physical therapists to tailors and hairdressers. New recommendations are encouraged to keep our multi-page spreadsheet up to date.

Contact: ResourceXchange@bloominplace.org

**** Volunteers will offer assistance to members who are fully vaccinated against COVID. Mask wearing is optional and participants may choose to wear a mask or not, depending on their own comfort level.**

Fresh Food for Seniors – Last Delivery

October 27 is the last opportunity to order and pay \$10 for a bag of fresh fruits and vegetables from nearby farms that will be delivered two weeks later.

The bags can be picked up on November 10 at 306 W. 102nd St. (St. Luke's House) between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m.

Sponsored by Councilmember Gale Brewer and Borough President Mark Levine, the Fresh Food for Seniors program has been providing over 70 participating BAiP members with corn, cucumbers, lettuce, zucchini, kohlrabi, string beans and apples, blackberries, peaches, and more. The produce comes with instructions for storage and suggestions for preparation.

If you have any questions, please write to freshfood@bloominplace.org or leave a voice message at 212.842.8831 ext 20.



From The BUZZ Team

*Miriam Cukier, Michelle Harris, Gerry Borrell,
Dorothy Callaci, Jeanne Chin*

Readers, please send your observations and suggestions. We welcome them!

baipbuzz@bloominplace.org



In Memoriam

Charles Brennan

Phyllis Dolgin

Inge Goldstein

Laura Fisher

Vivian Hewitt

Gina Rusch

Stanley Weiss

Meet Your Board

The role of the BAiP Board of Directors is to set policy and budgets for everything that BAiP does. Each issue of *The BUZZ* newsletter introduces one or two Board members who, in their own words, describe their BAiP experience and their journey to becoming a member of the Board.



Profile of Board Member Jean Schmidt

I have lived in New York City since 1980 and now consider myself a New Yorker. I grew up in Columbus, Ohio, and went to college at Miami University of Ohio. In 1967, I went to work for IBM as a systems engineer, having never seen a computer before. Fortunately for me, computers were a new thing and IBM gave me great training. After a few years, I moved to San Francisco and started my own computer consulting company, designing, programming, and implanting business systems. In 1973, I decided to change careers and went to law school at Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. After graduating in 1976, I worked for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for nine years, first in San Francisco, then in Washington, D.C., and ultimately in New York, where I was the acting regional attorney. In 1985, I went into private practice and have been practicing employment law and litigation representing employers since then.

I first heard of BAiP when my partner, Angela, and I went for a drink at Ellington in the Park about five or six years ago. As it turned out, BAiP was having a Blooming Hour at Ellington's, and as we were looking for a place to sit, the BAiP group assumed we were there for the event. We said we were not part of BAiP, but they invited us to participate, and I am so glad they did.

We immediately joined and have supported BAiP since then.

Last summer, when BAiP offered free tennis lessons at the Riverside Park clay courts for beginners and people like me who had not played in a long time, I signed up. It has been one of the best things I've ever done. It reminded me of how much I love tennis and that I should be playing regularly, and I have been able to do that through BAiP's tennis group, the Aces. In addition, I have met so many interesting and wonderful people and found new friends. And now, as a member of the Board, I have the opportunity to give back and continue to grow and expand BAiP.

I think my experience exemplifies what BAiP offers to all of us, the opportunity to be engaged in things that excite and challenge us, to learn new things, to meet new people and form lasting friendships, and to give back to our community--all of which keeps us active, engaged, and connected as we age in place in our wonderful neighborhood in fabulous New York City!





Classic old Hollywood movies may have kept sex in the closet but they put no restraints on smoking and drinking.

In the six Thin Man movies of the 30's and 40's, Myrna Loy and William Powell play a sophisticated husband and wife detective team who smoke and drink martinis around the clock. But BAiP's Rick Harris, creator of Hooray for Hollywood, BAiP's five-star-rated Zoom series, notes, "They're never hung over because their martini glasses are very small."

Rick has a sharp eye for movie details. He began his Hooray for Hollywood series with a close-up look at individual movie stars, watching all of the star's movies and then editing clips from each, researching sources and then weaving in the story he wants to tell. We get to see Ginger Rogers dancing with Fred Astaire, the arc of Cary Grant's long career and Rick's observations about the careers of dozens of other stars. Added to that are his series exploring other movie genres like crime movies and musicals. Each topic is covered in two 90 minute segments.

Hooray for Hollywood, which airs on Zoom every other Tuesday at 5, is Rick's latest dramatic interest. Beginning as an English and Dramatic Literature major at Iona and continuing through graduate school at Columbia, his first job was at radio station WBAI where he became a theater critic and director of radio dramas.

So it was a natural next step when he became a producer of audio books at Harpers when they appeared on the scene in the late 80's. He read each assigned book, "whether I liked it or not," found a narrator and, working with the authors, directed each production. The work usually ran about three hours daily in a recording studio until the work was done.

Rick remembers the joy of working with Sissy Spacek on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, "the wonderful Irish actors"

for The Dubliners, Barbara Kingsolver, Meryl Streep, Jason Robards and so many others. His work took him to Montreal, London and all over the United States. But closest to his heart was working with Ruby Dee on Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

With 1,100 audio books to his credit, Rick continues to produce audio books but now as a free lancer.

"Somewhere along the way I developed a strong interest in films," he pointed out. "I watch a movie almost every night, taking notes and selecting highlights with my wife vehemently adding her opinions."

Hooray for Hollywood got its start and continues to play to a sellout audience in Naples, Florida where Rick appears live "to provide the thread between the pearls for an overview," a week in January, February and March. From there he brought his series to the Bloomingdale Library and, during COVID, to BAiP's Zoom presentation. Although he values Zoom, Rick enjoys the feedback of a live audience when he tells a joke or makes an artful comment.

Rick and his wife Michelle have long been BAiP activists. His volunteer work began with the technology squad but is now focused entirely on presenting his library of movie stories to BAiP audiences.

"We haven't reached the bottom of the barrel yet," he assures his fans. And he describes all the hours of watching, editing and research as "a labor of love."

His love affair with movies is now centered on three new series including a close-up of the six Thin Man movies. Added to that will be *Celluloid Cities*, a look at mythical and real cities like the Emerald City in *The Wizard of Oz* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. A third series will be *Lovable Losers*, movies made by stars who were nominated but never made it all the way to the Oscars.

BAiP fans will continue to enjoy what's still "in the barrel" until Rick launches his new Hooray for Hollywood takes.



