



Bloomingdale Aging in Place

[baipbuzz@bloominplace.org](mailto:baipbuzz@bloominplace.org)

Winter/Spring 2023

## A Message from BAiP President Jean Schmidt

Hello, BAiP Neighbors, and Happy Spring! I hope you are enjoying the warming weather and more daylight.

It is my privilege to serve as president of BAiP for 2023, and I am looking forward to meeting and working with you. I want to thank Marjorie Goldsmith for her service as president of BAiP in 2022; Diane Petchesky for her many years of service as treasurer; and Lo-Yi Chan for his years of service on the Board. Fortunately for all of us, Marjorie and Diane remain on the BAiP Board and Lo-Yi continues as head of the Zoom Squad.

**Thank You to Our Volunteers**--BAiP has a larger, dedicated organization of volunteers than perhaps our members may know. I want to thank all of you who lead our activity groups and find ways for neighbors to meet and get to know one another. And I want to give a special shout-out and thanks to all who are working behind the scenes to support BAiP and make everything run smoothly as we continue to grow:

- the Tech and Zoom Squads for their important work
- those who find engaging speakers for BAiP Presents
- the volunteers who staff the Resource Exchange
- our coordinator of administration
- the volunteers who provide assistance through the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program
- our webmaster
- the volunteers who welcome our new members
- the leader of our building representatives
- the members who write, edit, and prepare *The BUZZ*

In addition, there are folks who chair committees that support the work of BAiP's Board as well as other activities. We celebrated them all at an enthusiastic,

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## HERMAN SANDS AWARD 2023

*by Geraldine Borrell*



*Sharon Waskow received Herman Sands Award from Phyllis Sperling*

On April 23 Sharon Waskow was honored by BAiP with the 2023 Herman Sands Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service.

Sharon has been a member of BAiP since its inception. She is the leader of a history reading group now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year and has also participated in a film group.

Sharon was recognized for founding the climate education and action group, It's Easy Being Green (IEBG), formed in 2019 as a Tri-Bloomingdale initiative of three organizations: the Block Association of West 102<sup>nd</sup> & 103<sup>rd</sup> Street, the Block Association of West 104<sup>th</sup> Street, and BAiP.

The award was presented in person for the first time since 2019, so the gathering was lively and well-attended. Gary Waskow shared his experience as a volunteer leading a Joyce reading group, wondering if anyone at all would be interested and then being inundated with replies. When the group concluded after two years, he was surprised to be asked for a repeat, which he did. This is a typical reaction to new BAiP group offerings which range from knitting to softball.

Not one to overlook an opportunity to educate and recruit for IEBG, Sharon introduced a table game which engaged everyone in considering how and where to recycle properly. For information or to join IEBG, contact [itseasybeinggreen.uws@gmail.com](mailto:itseasybeinggreen.uws@gmail.com)

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in-person Volunteer Appreciation event on April 23 at Ansche Chesed.

**BAiP Board Agenda**--We are exploring new and more effective ways to encourage more people to join BAiP, as well as to make sure our existing members know about the resources BAiP provides and the many opportunities we offer for people to get involved and participate. We are also streamlining our administration.

If you have any questions, suggestions for ways in which BAiP can better serve our members, or new ideas for facilitating neighbors helping neighbors, please send me an email at [president@bloominplace.org](mailto:president@bloominplace.org). I look forward to hearing from you.

**2023 Highlights**--The January BAiP Presents program featured the leaders of Neighbor-to-Neighbor, our Tech Squad, and our Resource Exchange explaining the many wonderful resources we offer our members and how to access those resources; the February program educated us about navigating in-home care; and the March program offered a stimulating lecture on the opera *La Traviata*.

**What's Coming Up**--The BAiP Board is planning for more in-person activities and gatherings this spring and summer, and we are looking for space. If you have any recommendations for places we could rent for our BAiP Presents programs, wellness activities, or other events, please let me know.

Spring tennis and softball in Riverside Park will start in May. Emails have gone out inviting people to sign up.

And the newest activity is the opening of the Cross-Eyed Cat Café, weekly get-togethers for BAiP members at the Riverside Park Volunteer House.

### 2023 BAiP BOARD

I would like to introduce the members of the 2023 BAiP Board of Directors:

Jean Schmidt	President
Larry Sikon	Vice President
Linda Messing	Treasurer
Cynthia Watkins	Secretary
Candy Dato	Director
Marjorie Goldsmith	Director
Mike Kronberger	Director
Gail Nauro	Director
Diane Petchesky	Director
Sharon Salit	Director
Bill Short	Director



Phyllis Sperling then presented the award plaque which, designed by BAiP member Neil Borrell, has been given to every honoree since the first Sands Award Day in 2014. Phyllis recounted the inception of the organization 15 years ago, when neighbors gathered to figure out what a local organization would look like to help people continue to live vital comfortable lives as their needs changed. Fast forward to BAiP today, with 1,400 members and over 40 active groups. The number of groups is in constant flux and can be increased by a member with an interest to share. Contact [activities@bloominplace.org](mailto:activities@bloominplace.org) for help and information if you would like to start a group.



### Spotlight on Activities

A continuing feature that looks inside some of BAiP's groups

by Gail Naruo, Geraldine Borell, and Miriam Cukier



#### BAiP Presents



The BAiP Presents Committee is one of our longtime treasures, having produced monthly panels of experts and events since 2008! Topics have ranged from health and well-being concerns to our own local "Antiques Zoomshow," with professional appraisers evaluating members' treasures.

#### What makes BAiP Presents attractive *and* fun?

*Roses Katz*, one of the original members, is so pleased that the group has retained the original goals that were articulated by *Hanna Rubin* and *Dorothy Crouch*.

*Marjorie Goldsmith*, a past president of BAiP, talked about how inspiring it is to work together with other members on something that will benefit others.

*Ariane van Buren* wanted to contribute the breadth of her own interests and connections in New York.

*Bonnie Mairs*, the current chair of the committee, values teamwork. As she put it: "One and one equal three."

*Dorothy Crouch*, the original chair, finds “the outreach to expand membership” most appealing.

*Susan Meeker* enjoys the “lively discussions about possible programs” and a feeling of welcome and inclusiveness.

*Lydia Dufour* also likes the camaraderie.

*Gil Tauber* finds it stimulating “working with really interesting people of varied backgrounds.”

*Lani Sanjak* likes learning about a variety of subjects and finds working on the committee “a wonderful way to get to know neighbors and the neighborhood better.”

### How does it work?

To achieve a balance in programming, the committee has focused on some topics specifically related to seniors, while they have selected others just for fun or to showcase BAiP members. Topics are chosen by consensus in informal brainstorming meetings or they may result from problems members have run into in their own lives. Another source is members of the audience, who offer suggestions on a comments form that is distributed at the end of each presentation.

With a running list of possible topics, the committee can plan programs a few months in advance. The background and experience of committee members are useful in organizing each presentation by drawing on their volunteer or work-world experience, or former career and professional contacts. An example of the committee’s cooperative work process was when, during the period between the leadership of *Marian Anderson* and *Bonnie Mairs*, the group alternated in teams of two to plan monthly programs.

### A bit of history . . .

*Lani Sanjek* remembers that “presentations were an integral component from the very beginnings of BAiP.

*David Reich* and *Hanna Rubin* shared leadership and supported establishing a Panel Committee to focus on what Hanna described as ‘BAiP’s biggest form of outreach. We hope that panels will draw in people who have not come before or are unclear about what we do. . . . Panel subjects need to be very focused, positioned clearly for our demographic and present more than one view of a topic.’ We drafted an initial list of proposed programs, including dance therapy, tax breaks, senior travel, and mindfulness-based stress reduction. I feel we have had a very effective committee ever since.”

For a number of years, the panels were held at the Marseilles, where BAiP sponsored Thanksgiving dinners for the residents. A highlight of the festivities was *Gil Tauber’s* trivia quizzes, inspired by his experience working for the city’s tourist promotion agency.

Presentations were subsequently held for some time at the Bloomingdale Branch of the N.Y. Public Library, and then, when she was chair, *Marian Anderson* moved them to The New Jewish Home. This new venue offered the space for round tables and discussions following the presentations that further enhanced a sense of community.

*Dorothy Crouch* recalls the effect of the pandemic. “The biggest change was having to go virtual. Creation of the Zoom team under Lo-Yi Chan was essential. The up side has been the opportunity to reach widely for presenters and for more members to attend.”

### Challenges . . .

As BAiP grew, it became necessary to formalize much of work that had been done informally. *Dorothy Crouch* credits *Marian Anderson* with creating the systems that were needed and are now in use.

A current challenge is the need for new active members. If you’ve enjoyed any of the BAiP Presents programs, either in person or on Zoom, or if you have an idea or two about topics that might be interesting to other BAiP members, or if you’d like to become more active in BAiP, working with and meeting other members, the BAiP Presents Committee may be just what you’re looking for!

For more information or to join up, write [baippresents@bloominplace.org](mailto:baippresents@bloominplace.org)





# Join In!

## BAiP Activities

We have been busy at Activities, increasing our team from two people, Candy Dato and Phyllis Sperling, to eight. This will permit Activities to expand its offerings and involve more members. Although Candy and Phyllis will still lead the team, now expect to see most Activities offerings coming from the Activities Team or the individual team member in charge.

We welcome the new Activities Team members: Carol Barker, Linda Berkowicz, Patricia Burns, Julie Ferrone, Lisa Handwerker, and Cathy Monblatt.

### Dining in the Neighborhood

In March, we offered our first Dining in the Neighborhood experience in quite a while, a brunch at Crepes on Columbus. We were very pleased by the response (more than 40 people were interested in participating), but unfortunately it was not possible to accommodate all; in the end, 18 people attended and had a very good time. We will do more of these, but for this activity, we need hosts, people who will choose a restaurant, date, and time and show up. We have lots of ideas for places and we will advertise and do the administrative work. Let us know if you would like to host by writing to [dining@bloominplace.org](mailto:dining@bloominplace.org).

### The Cross-Eyed Cat Café

With Board member Bill Short in the lead, BAiP will be offering a new and different type of activity, the Cross-Eyed Cat Café. Thanks to the generosity of Merritt Birnbaum, CEO of the Riverside Park Conservancy (RPC), BAiP will have exclusive access to The Volunteers House, which is located on the hillside in the park at 107<sup>th</sup> Street, on Mondays from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Each week there will be a loose program, but generally it's about us being together, interacting, connecting in a bright space overlooking the sloping hillside and the Hudson. The Cross-Eyed Cat Café is an opportunity to get to better know the soul of BAiP . . . one another.

Members register to be on the invitation list. From that list, there will be a random selection of 20 names for each Monday gathering. An email will go out to register for fall gatherings.

### Wellness Classes

The BAiP wellness classes--Movement, Pilates, and Yoga--are currently open to all members. The classes meet via Zoom. To enroll, contact: [activities@bloominplace.org](mailto:activities@bloominplace.org).

### New Groups

In March we launched the **Widowed Persons Group** and the **New Yorker Short Story Reading Group**. We are also working on a group related to mindfulness.

BAiP membership has grown in the last year and we need new groups. We are waiting for you to explore your passion with other members. Be a group leader! It's not at all difficult, and we are here to offer continued assistance. We are particularly eager to start a late-morning or afternoon walking group.

Write to us at [activities@bloominplace.org](mailto:activities@bloominplace.org).

### BAiP Tennis Lessons

BAiP Activities, in conjunction with the Riverside Clay Tennis Association (RCTA), announced our fifth round of free tennis instruction to be given on consecutive Wednesdays from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.: May 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31, and June 7. Registration has closed.

### BAiP Softball

The BAiP softball players are returning this spring. Beginning May 4, games will be held on Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on a Riverside Park ball field, yet to be determined. The season runs through June 15. For more information, email [activities@bloominplace.org](mailto:activities@bloominplace.org) or phone 212-842-8831 ext. 16 and leave a message.

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## 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, email [activities@bloominplace.org](mailto:activities@bloominplace.org) to register. Then watch for an email with the Zoom link on the day before the date specified below, and plan to log in on the actual day at 4:55 p.m. The session runs from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

**May 9** Lovable Losers: Non-Winners of Academy Awards 2

**May 23** The Films of Spencer Tracy 1

**June 6** The Films of Spencer Tracy 2

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## BAiP Presents

BAiP hosts presentations on a variety of subjects that are of interest to the membership. The presentations are held on Zoom and are followed by a question-and-answer period.

The most recent program, presented on April 27, was "The Ridiculous History of *MAD* Magazine".

If you missed a presentation, check the website where there are some archived:

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



## Need Some Help?

### Neighbor to Neighbor \*\*

N2N is BAiP's outreach to neighbors who may need assistance. For example, volunteers can pay a friendly visit by phone or in person, do a needed errand, or accompany a member to the doctor. If you need other help that a neighbor might provide, please ask and N2N will try to help.

Contact: [n2n@bloominplace.org](mailto:n2n@bloominplace.org) or call 212-842-8831 ext 1.

### Tech Squad \*\*

BAiP's Tech Squad volunteers help members resolve problems with technology. For example, the Tech Squad may be able to describe how

mobile hotspots work, help you set up your new Kindle, answer questions about using Zoom, and assist with other non-electronic tasks.

Contact: [Techsquad@bloominplace.org](mailto:Techsquad@bloominplace.org) or call 212-842-8831 ext. 26.

### BAiP Resource Exchange

BAiP members can provide a variety of referrals from doctors and physical therapists to tailors and hairdressers.

Contact: [ResourceXchange@bloominplace.org](mailto:ResourceXchange@bloominplace.org)

*\*\* For in-person visits, volunteers and the members they help will decide on a mutually agreeable health-safety plan, which may include proof of COVID vaccination and mask-wearing.*



## 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 a Board member, who, in their own words, describes their BAiP experience and their journey to becoming a member of the Board.



### Cynthia Watkins

I first heard of BAiP about seven years ago, when I discovered the exercise classes that BAiP was offering at the public library [Bloomingdale branch] on the second floor. The classes were great, and I was happy to find a group that would introduce me to more of my neighbors on the Upper West Side. A year or two later, I joined a new book club that was created and led by Gail Naruo, who later served as BAiP president. The book club continues to this day, and along the way we have become good friends as well as having read a huge variety of great books. I joined the Board three years ago and have been serving as secretary. As a Board member I have learned more about the organization and am so impressed by all of the many programs, groups, and activities that this all-volunteer organization of neighbors

manages to offer every year. I have met many great people and I'm proud to be able to give some of my time to help BAiP continue to enrich our lives.



## BAiP Member Profile: Leilani Straw *by Dorothy Callaci*



Leilani Straw has deep roots in the Bloomingdale neighborhood. Originally from Flint, Michigan, she came here in 1963, after attending the University of Michigan, to fulfill her dream of being a New Yorker and to pursue a graduate degree in social work from Columbia University.

“Flint was a wonderful place to grow up in,” she said, “but I had my heart set on New York. Even with a number of assignments in United States consulates around the world, I have always had a voting address between 95<sup>th</sup> and 125<sup>th</sup> Streets.”

As a social worker for Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children, Leilani helped find adoptive and foster homes for children, many with multiple physical and mental disabilities. And while it was rewarding to be able to place scores of children successfully in new homes, there were many for whom there was no happy ending.

“From the late sixties to the eighties,” she explained, “I saw more and more children who could not be cared for at home, and it became increasingly difficult to find appropriate placements for all the children desperate for homes. I came to realize how difficult life is for people who don’t have resources and to see the issues facing natural, adoptive, and foster families.”

So, after 20 emotionally trying years in child welfare, Leilani retired. But retirement didn’t last long. She soon applied to the U.S. Foreign Service, passed the exam, and spent six

intensive months learning Portuguese. Then, armed with her new language skills, she went on to consular assignments in Brazil, Portugal, the Azores, and Cape Verde in West Africa.

“The Azores and Cape Verde were my favorite postings,” she noted. “I loved hearing music I had never heard before and tasting food I had never eaten before.”

Leilani was again a social worker, now helping a variety of populations in those countries where she was stationed: Americans who had moved there; native-born citizens returning home after working in the U.S.; and residents who needed to apply for visas and understand immigration law. “I enjoyed getting to know each person who came for help in these small countries,” she said, “and why they wanted to immigrate, what their hopes were.”

Leilani and her husband were ideal for the Foreign Service and its changing worldwide assignments. “We were the perfect couple,” she commented. “No children, no pets . . . not even houseplants.”

Ultimately, the Foreign Service’s loss in 2006 was BAiP’s gain. Leilani became interested in what BAiP was creating through its volunteer structure and said, “I can do that.” She got involved at a time when email was not what it is today. She remembers that volunteer building reps kept members informed by slipping flyers under their doors. She was initially in charge of those early building reps and notes that a few members are still kept informed that way.

Leilani served on the BAiP Board for six years and as president for two years. She retired from the board just before the pandemic struck but remains an active member.





## Bring Your Own Container Project Coming to UWS

BYO/UWS Reduces Waste is a new project of BAiP's *It's Easy Being Green*.

In the coming weeks, look for this sticker at neighborhood businesses. Stores that display it will accept your reusable container to fill and thus reduce single use plastic ware.

The project is part of an exciting movement taking place in several areas across the country including: Ithaca, NY; Washington, D.C.; and Silicon Valley, CA. The goal is to make BYO a cultural norm and, in the process, encourage consumers and businesses to work together to reduce the single use packaging that is polluting the earth's environment.

You can join this effort by helping BYO find conscientious businesses that will put the sticker in their storefronts. Send your ideas and recommendations to BYO at [itseasybeinggreen.org](http://itseasybeinggreen.org).



design by Bianca Pasternack  
[biancapasternack.design](http://biancapasternack.design)

## BAiP's Moth Radio Winner

Mary Ann Ludwig's performance of her original short story at The Moth's Halloween event in Greenwood Cemetery last year was recently broadcast on National Public Radio. "We performed outside and there were real bats flying overhead," Mary Ann recalls. "They covered the graves with rugs and votive lights adorned the headstones. . . It was a blast, and I highly recommend it to anyone who likes to be spooked at Halloween."

Mary Ann won a Moth story slam at the Housing Works in Soho that qualified her for the Grand Slam in Brooklyn, where the challenge was to recite a five-minute story from memory. While not the winner of the Grand Slam, Mary Ann was asked to perform her story at the Halloween event, her "first professional storytelling gig."

## *In Memoriam*

Masha Abramoff

Lynn Braswell

Elisa Colas

Margaret Eisenstadt

Laura Leivick

Bob Lejeune

Daniel Leon

Edvin Lian

Lisa Rabinowicz

Dolores (Dev) Rogers

Edwin Sultan

Shatzi Weisberger



photo by member Marlene Schonbrun



