

## Neighborhood Eats (and drinks)

**Pizzeria Sirenetta** (Amsterdam b/w 87th and 88th), a new pizza restaurant run by the owners of the Mermaid Inn, has opened and is already getting some positive reviews. The owners want to bring “a Brooklyn sensibility to Manhattan.” “On the menu: housemade salumi, bruschette, seasonal salads, fresh and dried pastas, and three heartier entrées that hover around \$25. The Neapolitan-style pies are clad with ingredients like buffalo mozzarella, fennel sausage, or clams and parsley, and baked in a 4,000-pound Mugnaini wood-fired oven, for which Abrams had to reinforce the floor and build a retaining wall. Sirenetta, by the way, means little mermaid.”

**Amorino Gelato** opened its doors at 414 Amsterdam Avenue (80th), on April 1. The store is known for layering its gelato to make it look like a flower. Amerino, which gets high praise from customers in their other shops, “churn” their gelato and sorbet everyday in typical Italian fashion under the very watchful eyes of their chefs. Using, only the freshest free range organic eggs and the highest grade whole milk. “Absolutely no colouring agent or artificial flavors will be found in our gelato - this is one of Amorino’s fundamental principles”.

**Arts and Crafts Beer Parlor** opened at 1135 Amsterdam Avenue (116th street) on Wednesday. The bar, which opened its first location in the West Village, was started by an FBI agent and an actor. A press release talks about the new space: “Over the past six months, Robert, Don, and their newest partner, Phil Cunningham, have transformed the space, formerly known as Camille’s Trattoria, into Arts and Crafts Beer Parlor-SoHa. Arts and Crafts Beer Parlor (ACBP) is not your typical beer joint or sports bar. Rather,



ACBP is the antithesis of a sports bar: an extension of your living room – a place to entertain guests with quality conversation in a warm atmosphere over a pint of great Craft Beer or a glass of fine wine. It is a cultural center where the art adorning the walls changes as frequently as the 24 beers on tap.” While the main focus is craft beer, not to fear, you won’t leave hungry. ACBP will feature a menu of “comfort food for beer.” Items such as meatball boat, pesto speck flatbread, or pork belly pops will compliment the 24 rotating beers on draft, fine wines by the glass, and delicious ciders.



## PRESIDENT’S POTPOURRI

Dear 336 CPW Friends and Neighbors,

The 2016 Annual Meeting has come and gone. It was a bittersweet affair for yours truly. As was observed from the floor, it was likely the last one I will be attending – certainly the last in my current role. Perhaps I will come back for old times’ sake – somewhat in the manner that we like to visit our kids. In any event, I am moved to use this letter for a bit of reminiscence – perhaps burdening you without your indulgence. Maybe we can agree to call it “transition advice.”

My engagement with the co-op and my fellow shareholders began with my taking up the cudgel to ensure that someone in the building (resident or employee) got a fair shake. Mostly it was the staff “guys” but on at least one occasion it was a rather young single mom who had somehow got crosswise with the board. Looked at from today’s perspective, I can imagine I was an enormous nuisance to those boards back in the early days of our 31-year run at 336 CPW. At the same time, it was how I got to know people in the building – again with special focus on the “guys.”

So, at the beginning of the last of our three decades in the building there was a staff “guy” I thought wasn’t getting a fair shake. I wasn’t alone, but still it took three or four months to straighten out the issues. I got to know the union rep, as did some others who joined the fray, and a number of our group went to the union hall to attend the grievance hearing. It all came out as it should, and as a result I got to know many of my neighbors who had been anonymous for me until then. That was truly the happiest of unanticipated happy by-products. And the “guy” is still working at this same old stand 10 years later.

The next chapter did not take long to open. We needed a new superintendent – the incumbent having somewhat abruptly departed. By that time (roughly sometime in 2006) a number of residents knew Sergio Ochoa well enough to believe he was not only qualified to be considered for the appointment but also undoubtedly the best and only choice by a wide margin. For some reason there was resistance to appointing Sergio. Perhaps it was that he was a handyman and had no experience as a superintendent. Whatever the reason, a group of us lobbied on his behalf and, in the end, Sergio got the job. I still consider that the single most valuable contribution we made to the co-op, our neighbors and our fellow shareholders.

I have worked with Sergio now for nearly 10 years. It took me some time to begin to learn the method to his madness (my mother’s phrase), as I am quite sure it took Sergio time to learn mine. But a method was surely there, and we at 336 CPW are vastly better off for all that he has done – and does – every day to ensure the safety, good repair, utility and appearance of our shared home. He does it all, and it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with him and to support his mastery of everything that goes into managing a building of this size and complexity. And believe me, it’s not only about bricks and mortar and plaster and cement and plumbing. It’s also about psychology and people and relationships, all of which Sergio does with great care, empathy and dexterity.

Over the years, especially at the beginning of my active involvement with the affairs of the building, there has been a band of brothers and sisters who not only made it easier to face the challenges issued by a home approaching a century in age but also made it more fun. Of course we struggled from time to



time, but mostly we enjoyed ourselves, enjoyed the humor of many situations – even difficult ones – and stuck together, whatever the tensions. Can I ever forget what seemed like an entire year of meetings devoted to dealing with New York City’s foremost “dog lawyer”? That’s right, a real estate landlord/tenant expert who specialized in law and situations involving dogs in co-ops and condominiums. Perhaps I achieved the status of “dog whisperer” conferred on me at the annual meeting because I found the dogs a whole lot easier to deal with (and more logical) than their lawyer.

I wish I could talk about everyone who has touched me over the years. Truly, I can say I learned from everyone and I enjoyed the company and the collaboration of virtually every one of my fellow board members. But several deserve special mention – even without naming them. First and foremost were my fellow musketeers at the beginning (we were three). We were completely simpático, trusted one another, had a common vision and were almost always in sync. It was rather assumed we would all join the board if our crusade was successful, and two of us did. But our third partner called me just before the annual meeting that year and shocked me into insensibility with the news of his impending demise. He passed away in a matter of a couple of months. I missed him then and I still do. He was a delightful, generous soul. As a somewhat irrelevant aside, his memorial service was attended by more than a thousand people.

There is of course the other musketeer who has just now rejoined the board as I contemplate the end of my tenure at 336. There is a term they use in high schools for an expert trained in psychology who helps kids with their problems – a “guidance counselor.” As a title it has lost the true depth and breadth of its meaning, but it perfectly describes the role and contributions of my friend the third musketeer. He has counseled and guided with exquisite judgment, sensitivity and wisdom ever since I met him. In a sense, he has been the conscience of the board – and often helped to guide my own.

That first year of my board tenure I met a lot of new people. Many had observed how much needed to be done in the building. Most were quite willing to share their observations, along with a healthy dose of the urgency they were feeling about what they saw. The proverbial fire alarm was ringing constantly. Two couples among those new acquaintances wanted to talk about how the building’s governance failed miserably to deal with same sex relationships. That part was easy. The difficult part was that one and probably two of these folks were very attractive candidates for the board – a fact that seemed more obvious and compelling to me than it did to them. I stalked them – one in particular. It took stealth and persistence, but the result is a great personal friend and one of the most valuable and hardest working, most dedicated and contributing board members we have had the good fortune to have at 336. She is truly invaluable, and I am quite sure I have no idea what we would have done without her.

In the decade of my board membership perhaps the best part of the experience has been getting to know almost everyone in the building. The folks who have been here since the 50s and 60s. The folks who were in the middle of the co-op process in 1970. The folks who were on the admissions committee that overcame resistance to Kathy and me as prospective new tenants back in 1984. The folks who have worked here over the years, many of whom still do. And all the wonderful friends we have made over the 31 years we have lived here. There was the lady with whom I sometimes walked our dogs who pried out of me the nature of the cancer surgery I had just had. As a result, she disclosed she had survived the same variety and became a kind ad hoc support group member for me.

I hope this little trip down memory lane will not leave anyone feeling left out. Truly, everyone who ever sat on the board, everyone who has lived in this building and everyone who has worked here has touched me (and Kathy in many cases) in the most special ways. And truly I could fill a book of reminiscences about all of you if I had the room.

One of my favorite books closes with the main character asking one of his friends “How do you thank a man for a thousand kindnesses given over a lifetime?” Well, I am similarly wondering about all my friends at 336 CPW – How do I thank all of you for the many thousands of kindnesses given me and Kathy and our family over the years? There are two answers: One is “I can’t – at least properly and adequately.” And the other is simply “Thank you and God bless you.”

Mike Schell

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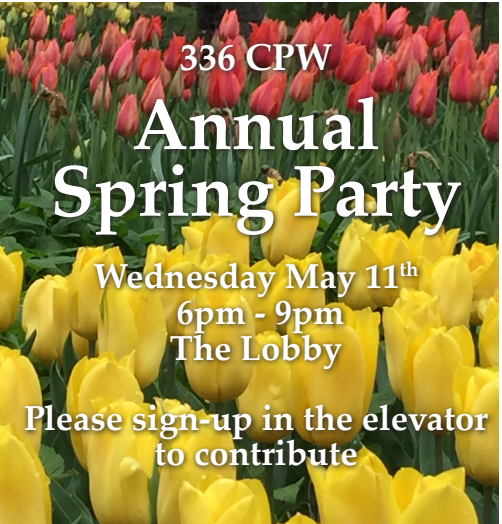
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got paper?

Shredding Service  
at  
336 CPW

Saturday May 14<sup>th</sup>  
9am - 1pm

Truck will be parked on 94th street

Meet the Staff - Alex Arias

Some residents may have noticed the U.S. Army pin that often graces the lapel of Alex Arias, who has been working since November as a doorman and elevator operator at 336 CPW. It is a proud reminder not of his own past, but of his eldest son, Victor, a 22-year-old combat engineer serving in Germany. Alex lives in Harlem with his wife, Valerie, a professional hair stylist, and their four other children: Valexa, a 17-year-old honor student at Cathedral High School; Vince, 15, who attends La Salle High School and plays soccer, Vernon, 13, another soccer player who goes to Sacred Heart of Jesus, and 6-year-old Vyda, who--you guessed it--also plays soccer.

Alex grew up in Washington Heights as the son of parents from Cali, Colombia, and his kids didn't become soccer-mad by accident. Alex likes to play himself, and he roots for Real Madrid and NYC Football Club, as well as for the NYC pro teams in other sports. Every year since 2012, Alex has hosted and DJed in Times Square at a charity event for Street Soccer USA, which aims to help homeless people and kids better themselves through playing soccer.

Alex grew up in a musical environment, and at the age of 2 years old was already the house DJ for parties at his parents' house. At the age of 12, he started attending Johnny Colon's Music School in East Harlem's El Barrio, and later studied professional Latin percussion at Boys Harbor Music School. After that he went on to play for many famous Latin artists and groups, including the Salsa Latin Grupo Niche from Colombia.

Before he started at 336CPW, Alex worked for more than eight years as a New York State Park police officer. He's happy to be working at 336, and happy to tell you about his favorite things: his family, his music, and soccer.

