



Ruth and Chip, friends forever

IN MEMORIAM: RUTH NAGOURNEY

Our building lost one of its most active and engaged residents with the passing of Ruth Nagourney, who died in her apartment, 16E, on January 23 at age 86. A number of 336 CPW residents were among those who attended a shiva at her apartment and a later memorial service, a testament to what a good friend and neighbor she was to many in the building.

Ruth moved into that unit in 1977 from Larchmont, where she had raised her three children. She soon became a fixture in the work of making 336 CPW a better place to live.

“Ruth was a very family-oriented person, and she brought to the building what she brought

to her family: complete and utter devotion,” said Mark Maas (16CD), a friend and sometimes board colleague.

She also brought considerable professional skills. When Ruth moved in she was vice president of consumer marketing at Citibank, and in 1987 she was named senior vice president at American International Group. After retiring she volunteered as a mentor with the Service Corps of Retired Executives.

Ruth joined the 336 board in 1998, and for years headed the committee that reviewed and approved new shareholders. She served as board president from 2004 to 2007. While on the board she helped get major projects done, including replacing the passenger elevators, installing a new boiler system, redecorating the lobby and installing mailboxes and new front doors. Her financial acumen, eye for good design and quiet businesslike approach were great assets to the building.

Ruth’s daughter Beth is a physician in New York. Both her sons work for the New York Times, Eric as a senior editor on the international desk and Adam as Los Angeles bureau chief. That connection, along with her general engagement in the events of our times, likely played a role in the outsize interest Ruth took in the paper over the years.

“I used to run into her at the gym,” columnist Frank Bruni wrote shortly after Ruth’s death. “She was a faithful reader of The Times, always ready with an observation—a smart one—about some article in the paper. She had a great way of being outraged by the right things but not being consumed by that emotion. She could smile. She could laugh. Those two abilities may well trace the line between psychological paralysis and a forward-moving life.”

The staff and many longtime residents share that appreciation of Ruth Nagourney, and for what she did for 336 CPW. “Mrs. Nagourney was a great person for me,” said veteran elevator man Chip Scott, who knew her for more than 30 years.

CO-PRESIDENTS’ POTPOURRI

Dear 336 CPW Friends and Neighbors,

Happy new decade! Let’s move into it with confidence.

Over the past months, your Board has received feedback on many issues. One that concerns the whole community, and typically ends up a controversial one, is the lobby.

I think most of us agree that the time has come to put a bit of care into our common area. What makes tackling this task more relevant than ever is the significant rise in the number of packages the building takes in on a daily basis, from Amazon.com to Zappos.

In the lobby’s current configuration, there is no place to store all those packages -- scores of them every day, piling up by the hour. While our diligent staff does all it can to process and deliver these boxes immediately, the volume is too great and often residents are not home or available to receive packages. Further, the manual process of logging incoming packages into a ledger is tedious and prone to error, and it often pulls our doormen away from the door or elevators.

To resolve this dilemma, your Board has identified an automated package intake system, one that is used in hundreds of buildings throughout NYC. While we move to implement this computerized system, the Board is also looking to make adjustments and some freshening of the lobby itself. These measures will include putting in a shelf on the north side of the entrance vestibule (for the intercom phone and other technology) and constructing a cabinet for package storage and for housing technical wiring. More details will be forthcoming. Your Board is doing all it can to keep costs of these enhancements to a minimum while ensuring that the quality of the work matches our high-quality, Art Deco lobby.

As we have previously communicated, the Board secured additional financing for the building in order to manage our future expenses, in particular to fund various maintenance and repairs as required by Local Law 11. This additional financing puts the building in a strong financial position and we are better prepared for any unplanned event.

As the engineering assessment found minimal window risks and thus the window program is on hold, a few residents have approached the Board on taking the initiative to replace their own windows. The Board supports such efforts, but please keep in mind that replacing windows can be an involved task. To assist in providing clarity, your Board has implemented a policy that window replacements be done on a “brick to brick” basis. Specifications of the window type along with other information will need to be submitted to Orsid and our building architect for review and approval.

On a more somber note, we lost our long-time neighbor and dear friend, Ruth Nagourney, on January 23. Ruth served on the board for a number of years and lived in our building for more than 40 years. Our thoughts are with Ruth’s family during this sad time.

As spring approaches, some friendly reminders to service your air conditioners, change your filters, and clean your dryer vents. If you still have a non-compliant laundry set up (i.e. lack a water capture pan and water leak sensor/alarm), please contact Sergio for assistance in resolving this important issue.

As always, we welcome noteworthy items for our newsletter. Please e-mail us at board@336cpw.org.

Cindy Michel (Apt. 12C) and Seth Segel (Apt. 9E)

336 CPW HISTORY: THE ALCYDE WAS HERE

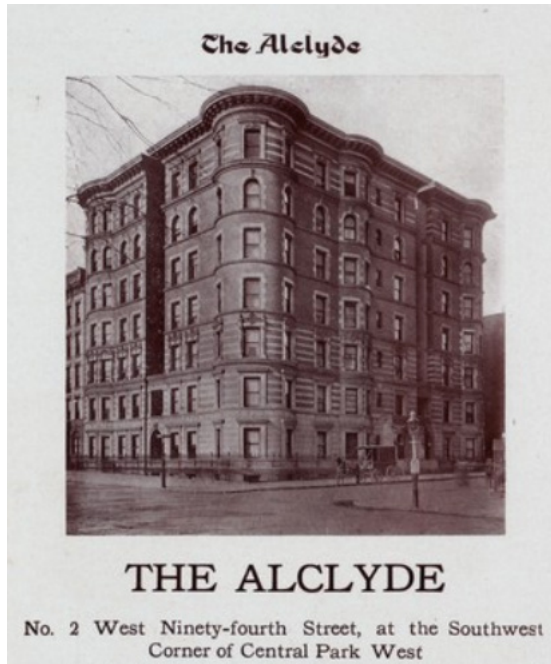
Did you ever wonder what stood on our corner before our own 336 CPW opened in 1929? I did, and was in for a surprise. We have a long-lost ancestor: a seven-story apartment building called the Alclyde. But since it went by a different address, 2 West 94 Street, its history remained in hiding for many years. Somehow our missing link even eluded the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. In designating 336 as a landmark building, the LPC incorrectly stated that it had been built on the site of three 19th-century brownstones on 94th Street.

Recently, without consulting our co-op board or managing agent, a real estate firm has been marketing our wonderful Art Deco building as the Alclyde. That name, meaning rock on the Clyde River, seems to have been a Celtic term for the Scottish city of Dumbarton, back in the fifth century. It suited the Alclyde, whose imposing stone façade with rounded turret-like corners recalled Scottish castles. But the name is wildly at odds with our 20th-century Art Deco home.

In the 1890s and for some years afterward, tenements and apartment buildings were typically given foreign or romantic names. But that fashion changed around 1910, Columbia University architectural historian Andrew Dolkart has written, when the style for luxurious apartment buildings shifted to let the number do the talking, as it has for our place since 1929.

In 1910, The World's New York Apartment House Album described the Alclyde as a "high class apartment house, convenient to all surface cars; elevated station at Ninety-third street and Columbus avenue, and subway station Ninety-sixth street and Broadway." In anticipation of the 1932 opening of the Eighth Avenue subway line, developers saw that Central Park West was ripe for development, and the outdated Alclyde was doomed. Its plan was old-fashioned: it had three eight-room apartments to a floor, each with only one bathroom for its three main bedrooms. There was just one elevator for the whole structure, among other inconveniences.

Today that old building lives on as more than a memory of bricks and mortar. You can visualize a dramatic episode that occurred there, thanks to a New York Times article from December 17, 1913, headlined (with old-fashioned spelling) "EMPLOYEES SAVE TENANTS. Give Alarm and Aid Escapes at Fire in Central Park West."



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The report reads:

"Three persons were injured and a number thrown into a panic yesterday morning at 11 o'clock, when a fire in the basement and first floor of the Alclyde Apartments, at the southwest corner of Central Park West and Ninety-fourth Street filled the seven-story structure with smoke. The smoke drove a number of women to the windows, where their behavior aroused the fears of spectators that they contemplated jumping. Two extension ladders were raised by firemen, as a precautionary measure.

"The removal of tenants from the building was facilitated by two negro employes, Clifton Parham, of 127 West 132d Street, a telephone boy, who sent out the first warning to occupants, and James Seeley of 128 West 134th Street, the elevator boy who made several trips in the choking smoke. Parham took special pains to warn Mrs. Oscar Pfeiffer, a tenant on the fifth floor, who was supposed to be hard of hearing. Mrs. Pfeiffer became hysterical and had to be treated by an ambulance surgeon.

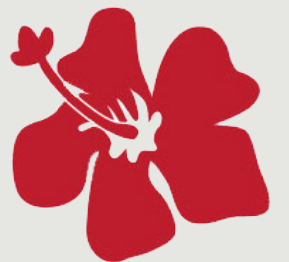
"After the fire was checked, it was found that it had eaten its way through a telephone cable attached to the house and that many apartment houses on the block had been cut off from the telephone central."

The article's use of the words 'boys' and 'negro' to describe African American men is offensive to our ears now. But the tale of the Alclyde, from so close at hand, illustrates how valuable a building's employees can be to its residents, and serves as a good reminder for all 336 occupants to appreciate our 21st-century staff for their daily help—seen and unseen.

---Barbara Michaels

A TRADER JOE'S BUMP?

Real estate values are sensitive to large factors, such as housing supply, demographics, economic growth, and changing tax regulations. But local attributes—like ample choices for food-shopping—are sweetening the pie as well, a recent study of neighborhoods close to Trader Joe's outlets has found.



ATTOM Data Solutions looked at home price appreciation and sellers' profits from 2014 to 2019 and broke down the data by zip codes that had outlets of Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and the quirky retailer's downmarket cousin, ALDI. It found that owners of residences near TJ's had an average return on investment of 51%, considerably higher than the 41% realized by those with a nearby Whole Foods and far above the 34% in the ALDI neighborhoods.

The value of apartments in the nearby building that houses Trader Joe's, 100 West 93rd Street, surged by more than \$300 per square foot in the year after the store opened in early 2018, according to Warburg Realty agent Susan Fishman. It's not rocket science. "People pay more to live near a nicer grocery store," Steven Gottlieb, another Warburg agent, told Yahoo News. 336 CPW residents are in the happy situation of having several within walking distance.