

# The Chat

## Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Happy New Year Everyone. Last year was a busy time for the board and the building. We're happy to report that the board has been working hard as a cohesive professional team to help improve our building. Here's a short look back at 2008:

*\* Renovations completed on the Super's apartment*

*\* Finances secured from the insurance company to rebuild the roof deck and contractor bids*

*solicited*

*\* Lighting improved in the stairwells.*

*\* Carpets in the hallways stretched and cleaned for the first time ever (but not the last!).*

*\* Bulk pricing secured on new AC units and screens to save you a little money*

*\* Newsletter improved and expanded*

*\* 214 Web presence improved with a new*

*website.*

*\* Fuel assessment and maintenance increase implemented to insure that the building's financials remain strong*

*\* Halloween and a second Tree trimming party hosted - hopefully both will become building traditions.*

And a look ahead to 2009:

*\* Completing Local Law 11 (work to*

*Continues pg 5*



### KWAJI

The smile is unmistakable and the kindness quickly apparent. He makes everyone who walks through the door feel welcome. And he's been making our building feel like home for 17 years. He's Kwaji Kuffour

and he hails from Accara, Ghana.

By all measure he led a privileged childhood in a country where enough food to survive can be a luxury. His dad was Minister of the Interior so he and his six

siblings didn't want for much. Life was good. But, in 1979 that all changed.

A dictator came to power and the government executed first and asked questions later.

## Getting to Know Our Neighborhood

Question: What has 74 bells, including one that weighs 20 tons and is considered to be the largest and heaviest bell ever cast?

Answer: The Laura Spelman Rockefeller carillon at Riverside Church.

Similar to its Episcopal neighbor, St. John the Divine, Riverside Church is big and impressive. It is famous not only for its Gothic architecture – it is modeled after Chartres Cathedral in France – but also as a center for the promotion of progressive causes.

The tallest church in the United States, it was described by The

New York Times in 2008 as “a stronghold of activism and political debate throughout its 75-year history. . . influential on the nation’s religious and political landscapes.”

Who would have thought that the money to build such a monument to liberal thinking and political action would have come from one of the world’s most acclaimed capitalists, John D. Rockefeller? But it did.

Past speakers at the pulpit have included Martin Luther King, Jr. voicing his opposition to the Vietnam war, Nelson Mandela on his first visit to the United

States after being released from prison, Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan after the September 11, 2001 attacks, and Fidel Castro during one of his rare visits to the U.S. in 1999.

In 1922, the congregation of the Park Avenue Baptist Church, with major financing from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. decided to create a large, cathedral-like church dedicated to following the example of “Jesus as a social revolutionary.” The Church was begun in 1927 and finished with its first service at the main alter on October 5, 1930.

*Continues pg 3*

## Battle for the Block – You Can Help

Neighborhood in the Nineties, our block association, is fighting hard to prevent the City and the Lantern Group from turning 319 West 94<sup>th</sup> Street (the St. Louis) into housing for people classified as MICA

(mentally ill chemical abusers). For complete details of the issues, please visit the Neighborhood in the Nineties website, <http://www.N90s.org>.

It would be great if

community pressure alone could stop this project, but it can’t. The Neighborhood is now in a court battle with the city and the Lantern Group in an attempt to prove that you actually can fight City Hall.

*Continues pg 4*

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*Riverside Church has been “a stronghold of activism and political debate throughout its 75-year history. . .” – The New York Times*



319 West 94<sup>th</sup> street

## Getting to Know our Neighborhood, cont'd from pg 2

The church stretches out over two city blocks and is nearly 400 feet tall. Besides housing the world's largest carillon, Riverside's 22,000-pipe organ is among the largest in the world.

The Riverside campus was also conceived as a complex social services center, with meeting rooms, classrooms, a library, kindergarten, day care center, auditorium and gym. The gym is home to the Riverside Hawks basketball team, whose alumni include Chris Mullin of NBA fame. That's ironic because real hawks can also be seen flying over Riverside Church and nesting in its spires.

Riverside Church takes advantage of its great heights and offers visitors access to the bell tower and observation deck which afford fantastic views of the city and the Hudson River – a fine alternative to the 214 RSD roof deck until it is re-built in the spring.

Question: What do John Gregory Dunne and Robert Joffrey have in common?

Answer: They are both buried in The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in our neighborhood

Everything about St. John the Divine is colossal from its cavernous 601 foot long nave, which can hold 5,000 worshipers, to its 162 foot tall dome crossing which can comfortably contain the Statue of Liberty. It is the largest cathedral in the world, the size being best appreciated from Broadway on West 112<sup>th</sup> street.

Designed in 1888 and begun in 1892, the cathedral has, in its history, undergone radical stylistic changes and the interruption of two World Wars. Construction and restoration is a continuous process hence its affectionate nickname "St. John the unfinished."

The first services in the nave were held the day before the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941.

Construction of the Cathedral was halted then, and did not resume again until 1979, by which time stonecutters were hard to come by. In order to continue building, expert stonecutters came from Europe to train local kids in a valuable skill.

Tours of the Cathedral are available 6 days a week. Sites include:

**- The Portal of Paradise, depicting St. John witnessing the transfiguration of Jesus**

**- The 3-ton bronze doors below the portal decorated with scenes from the Old Testament. The doors are only opened twice a year, at Easter and for the Feast of St. Francis or the Blessing of the animals**

*Continues pg 4*



*Riverside Church stretches out over two city blocks and is nearly 400 feet tall*

**Looking Back and Looking Ahead, continued from pg 1**

*in March- weather permitting)*

*\*Painting the hallways*

*\*Organizing shareholder Committees (Green and Gardening) to help improve the building.*

*\*Rebuilding the roof deck (aiming for work to begin in April).*

*\*\*“Greening the building” through email distribution of memos*

**Getting to Know Our Neighborhood, continued from pg 3**

- The Great Rose Window, made from more than 10,000 pieces of colored glass. It is the largest stained-glass window in the United States.

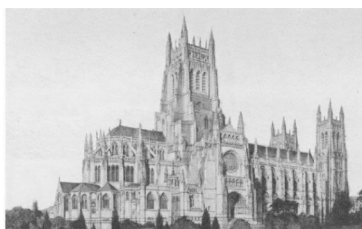
of the seven most prominent ethnic groups to first immigrate to New York City upon the opening of Ellis Island in 1892.

Savior Chapel holds a three-panel bronze alter in white-gold leaf with religious scenes by Keith Haring, his last work before dying of AIDS in 1990.

- The Seven chapels that radiate from the ambulatory behind the choir section of the nave. Their designs are meant to represent each

- Several other chapels including the Missionary Chapel containing a moving genocide memorial and another chapel dedicated to contemporary issues. The Saint

Redwing hawks are frequently seen flying above the Cathedral’s grounds along with a pair of peregrine falcons.



Church of St. John the Divine

**Battle for the Block, continued from pg 2**

That costs money – lots of money.

an attempt to generate the funds needed to pay the legal fees. If you have some time and ideas please give N90’s a hand and join in the fund raising effort.

You can sign up as a volunteer by going to <http://www.n90s.org> and filling out the form on the “Join Us” page.

Neighborhood in the Nineties needs your help to stop this project. They are forming a fund raising committee in

**KWAJI , continued from pg 2**

His dad was one of the political causalities and it was better for a formerly well-connected young man to make his mark elsewhere.

He left Ghana to join his brother in London where he stayed for a year-and-a-half. From there he tried to go home to Africa but realized America would be a better place for him. It was 1990 when he joined his cousins in Silver Springs, Maryland and worked at a

Toyota car dealership. Nine months later, he made his way to New York City to be with his brother and to lead a more exciting life. He quickly settled in Corona, Queens along with a huge contingent of other ex-pats from Ghana and started work at Elite Security. And his first assignment? 214 Riverside Drive. In 1995, building management had the good sense to hire him full-time as a

handyman/security guard.

Kwaji loves the river, the breeze, the view, and the people here. But, if you hear the sound of his melodious laugh, chances are great that there are children around. He talks to his own child -- 17-year-old Frema -- every single day.

And today, you can tell from the ever-present smile that Kwaji Kuffour is satisfied.

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...it was better for a formerly well-connected young man to make his mark elsewhere.

**NEW (BABY) FACES**

Karlie Mia Arkins was born at Roosevelt Hospital on January 6, 2009.

She weighed in at 7 lb 2 oz, measured a little over 20 inches and sported a head of blonde hair. She is a very happy and active baby and keeps her mom and dad busy.

Though it's still early days, we can confirm that which our neighbors surely

already know - she clearly seems to enjoy sleeping during the day and partying at night.

\* \* \* \*

Kyle and Jeff Morris welcomed Samantha Amy Morris on December 9th!

Born at 6lbs, 10ozs, Samantha has been spending these cold winter days eating, sleeping and looking

at the ice blocks float by in the Hudson River. She's extremely excited to welcome the warm weather and go on long walks in the park with Mom, Dad and all her wonderful neighbors at 214 Riverside Drive.



Karlie Mia Arkins



Samantha Amy Morris

## Dixie Chick



There's a new girl causing a sensation on the third floor. She's adorable, kind, fun, and precocious. The tenant in apartment 312 hails from the land of Walmart in the south and she has many mysterious aliases -- Dixie-Belle, Dixie-Cup, Dixie-Licious, Dixie-Lou and her given name Dixieland. It's none other than the cairn terrier best known as simply Dixie.

Fostered in Bentonville, Arkansas where Sam Walton decided that discount stores were where it was at, Dixie was born on August 10, 2008 along with four other siblings.

Lullaby, Hymn, Gospel, and Jazz along with mom Contra Alto have all found wonderful homes thanks to the Colonel Potter Rescue Association.

Julie Schwartz first laid eyes on Dixie's precious visage on the organization's site and decided that Dixie was for her. After filling out an application, giving references, a home visit, and a discussion on the phone with the puppy's foster mom, Julie cashed in her frequent flyer miles for a round-trip ticket to Dixie's land. Julie swears that Dixie now favors The Big Apple over The Hot Springs State.

Quirky, yet sweet to every being she encounters, Dixie is a homebody who doesn't like to get out much. In fact, she prefers to roam only the outside borders of 214 Riverside and to go no further. She loves her toys and to move shoes and clothes into different rooms but never to chew them. Smart, happy, and finicky, Dixie can now sit, come, and fetch on command.

So if you're on three and hear a sweet yelping -- don't worry, it's just Dixieland welcoming you to her new hood.

*"Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge".*

([www.rainbowsbridge.com/Poem.htm](http://www.rainbowsbridge.com/Poem.htm)).

Our dear little friend Barcelona (Apt. 211) passed away on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

Our hearts go out to Jeff.

## In Memorium



# Barcelona

# Fun Stuff

**Brrr! It's cold outside! Can you find these wintry words?**

V M P K O A U C B W M R O T S E C I L R  
 A R P S A V W O J W H V P F H L O R V L  
 L P L M G N I I K S C B T A O E M F Z A  
 E C O Y Q Z W D C S T E G L M D F S X R  
 N C W S M T A E B I Y W L R B L O C H T  
 T D O N D E I E K Z C J I A Z X R W E H  
 I E U E E Q M I C P P L L V Y T T A E G  
 N Q I T M D R K N J U D E S N E E Y J I  
 E M U T J D E P N F V I U Q W W R R J F  
 S F H I R P H L K R V G V T W C D S G L  
 D V J M U W T Q S Q J D C M Q P Q E P L  
 A T E G M J O O U P N R L U U A Z U N A  
 Y N G D E N P N L O Y A E D J E B J Q B  
 I X S K D D Y Y D Y R Z R Q E D E B A W  
 E P E E J A H K M E I Z S R U U V W G O  
 A L S K A T I N G L R I F Z H F K G K N  
 T M X C A Q S M W R H L P Q P T T D D S  
 S E W A E U G B R V G B A Q I A E B N P  
 T L E W X Q J B J Y N J I N P H N Y C H  
 R A E W R E D N U G N O L H D H D G A N

- PLOW
- HYPOTHERMIA
- BLIZZARD
- ICICLE
- WONDERLAND
- SKIING
- SKATING
- ICESTORM
- FREEZING
- COMFORTER
- SLED
- BRRR
- LAYERS
- SNOWBALLFIGHT
- VALENTINESDAY
- LONGUNDERWEAR
- MITTENS

### 214 RSD Sudoku

The objective is to fill the 9x9 grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the characters from "214RSDNYC" only one time each.

			4		D			R
		R	S	C				
		N		R		2		
2		D	C			S		1
S								D
Y		1			S	N		4
		Y		S		C		
				Y	2	D		
4			R		C			

## Russian Teacakes (or Mexican Wedding Cakes)

*These little nutty shortbread cookies were a big hit at the Tree Trimming party. You don't have to wait for Christmas to enjoy them -- just follow this recipe.*

Cream together:

- 1 cup soft unsalted butter (use real butter)
- ½ cup sifted confectioners' sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (almond extract is good, too)

Sift together:

- 2 ¼ cups sifted all purpose flour
- ¼ tsp salt

Add to the Flour mixture.

- ¾ Cup very finely chopped nuts (walnuts, pecans, or hazelnuts – I use walnuts)



Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and blend thoroughly.

Chill the dough for at least an hour. Roll the chilled dough between your palms into balls about 1" in diameter and place them on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake in a 400 degree oven for 10 to 12 minutes, until the cookies set but not brown.

Place the cookies on a wire rack to cool for a little while. When they are cool enough to handle without screaming in pain, but still pretty warm, roll them in confectioners' sugar. Let them cool completely then roll them in the sugar again.

The recipe is supposed to yield about 4 dozen cookies, but don't be too disappointed if the tally is closer to 3 dozen. Each cookie has about 6,000,000,000.000.000.000.000 calories.

RECIPE COURTESY OF BETTYCROCKER.COM



## Zilla's Strawberry Almond Smoothie

*After eating the Russian Teacakes you'll need a few weeks of something a little lighter. This smoothie is a real treat and is pretty low in calories.*

Chop 5 or so ice cubes in the blender until no big ice chunks are left.

Remove the green things from 5 large strawberries and toss the strawberries in the blender along with the ice.

Add 3 packets of artificial sweetener, ¾ cup of Soy milk (or real milk of some sort) and 1 tsp almond extract.

Blend until the blender stops making that "Kurplunk" sound and the mixture is a uniform pink color.

Make sure you drink it far away from any parrot.

*"I used to enjoy it very much, but now whenever I drink it I have a bird on my shoulder grabbing the glass away and trying to drink the whole thing himself."  
– Judy Judd*

### Reminder: WEB PASSWORDS:

The Green Committee:  
214treehugger

The Garden Committee:  
planting94