

The Last Picture Show



By Marcia Epstein

The Upper West Side, above 86th Street, needs a movie theater.

The old Metro Theater on 100th Street showed its last film in 2005. I am forced to travel down to Lincoln Plaza Cinema or the Elinor Bunin theater to catch the latest films I'm interested in because the only other theater within walking distance is on 84th and Broadway and shows shoot-em-ups and mostly films for the younger generation.

With all the gentrification going on up in the 90's and 100's in the past few years, a good movie theater isn't one of the happening things. The Metro is an art deco building and has the potential for being refurbished; instead, it's sitting there empty. During its 82-year life, it has been an art house cinema, a home to two national movie chains and a pornography theater. While the building's facade cannot be altered, its interior was gutted years ago. There have been plenty of rumors about what's going to happen to it, but none of them include showing films. What a pity. What a lack of insight into what so many of us would appreciate. It's heartbreaking to see what was once a vital movie house covered with various ads and, slowly falling apart. C'mon everyone, let's do something about this.

It's July and I'm still paying off my prescription drug deductible. Maybe by January it'll be paid off so I can immediately begin start paying the new one. That's just how it goes with regular Medicare, which I do appreciate very much. Though, as I've said in previous columns, fewer doctors are accepting it. That's a crying shame and those doctors ought to be ashamed. But onward and upward.

The New York Foundation for Senior Citizens (212) 962-7559 has a home-sharing program which connects older people in need of housing with someone who has a spare bedroom they wish to rent. I hear that many of these matches work out wonderfully on both ends. Either the host or the guest must be 60 or older to participate in this program. The guest pays less than half the rent and a small part of the utilities. The host gains a companion and help with rent he or she may possibly not be able to afford alone. The guest gains affordable housing and a new friend. A win-win situation.

The Metropolitan New York Coordinating Council on Jewish Poverty (Met Council) is a citywide social service and advocacy organization that provides services to the poor and near-poor of New York City. It has a program called Project Metropair, which helps income-eligible elderly poor and Holocaust survivors fix broken locks, electrical problems and install safety devices such as window guards and bathtub safety rails. This free home safety and security program uses a mobile repair service for those over 60 who meet the income eligibility requirements of New York City's Community Development Block Grant Program. The goal is to improve security in the home. The Metropair van travels throughout the 5 boroughs on an appointment basis and is fully equipped for almost any security problem. The phone number for the Met Council, located at 120 Broadway, is 212-453-9500. The e-mail is info@metcouncil.org.

I attended a "dinner in the neighborhood" event sponsored by Bloomingdale Aging in Place (BAiP),

which I've extolled here before. This all-volunteer organization runs many programs, all free to those in the catchment area of 96th to 110th Street on the Upper West Side. Every few months someone sponsors a lunch or dinner in the neighborhood, and very pleasant evenings are spent getting to know neighbors or re-meeting friends over a glass of wine and a good meal. BAIp also has many groups and events, all of which can be found on their website. It's well worth a look. It's nice to have younger friends and family, but connecting with those in the same stage of life and going through many of the same things is a source of strength and support. Long live all the wonderful organizations in New York that help seniors connect, manage their lives and enjoy what they can to the fullest.