

As seen in the pages of



Essential New York

Time **NEW**

essentials

311

In January 2002, Mayor Mike announced plans to create a troubleshooting city phone number. After spending months of time and millions of dollars, we got 311. It's like 911, see? But not for emergencies. Now, with one phone call, you can find out if alternate-side parking is suspended *and* learn how to become a Parks Department lifeguard. Although you might get a busy signal, that could just be a sign that people are actually using the service. And our experience has been mostly satisfying, coupled with a mildly giddy disbelief that this thing really seems to *work*. Bonus: You can even use 311 outside the city by calling 212-NEW-YORK.—*D. Archibald Smart*