

St. Luke Asks: Who Do We Let In?

By George Capsis

I received a carefully-worded invitation from Wellspring Consulting, a firm that “provides strategic planning for nonprofit organizations,” to attend a meeting to help explore how St. Luke Church in the Fields could “expand its service offerings to meet the needs of the West Village community.” Following that meeting, I received a letter from Christopher Keevil, the Partner

and Managing Director of Wellspring Consulting, summarizing the firm’s findings.

St. Luke was founded in 1820, which makes it nearly 200 years old. During that time, the church would have identified the community needs, and indeed that seems to be the case. Since the 1980s, for example, St. Luke has had an HIV/AIDS program inviting victims of that now-controlled pandemic for Saturday

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The Ego Fight for Diller Island

By George Capsis

In a recent two-part article by Lincoln Anderson, the now years’ long ego tussle to control the development of the Hudson River Park was traced, culminating in the now locked-horns court battle to stop Pier 55, also known as Diller Island.

As we go to press, an appeal by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to allow construction may be approved. We may then have yet another court action by The City Club of New York (City Club) to stop, or at least slow, the island’s construction.

Without question, the dominant ego has been billionaire TriBeCa dweller Michael Novogratz who recently bought Robert De Niro’s spread. In 2015, he was ousted from Fortress Investing due to two very wrong multi-million-dollar investment decisions relating to Brazilian debt and the Swiss franc. He walked away with a \$255 million package, leaving him still very much a billionaire, and with an ego to match.

The key to Novogratz’s brawling personality is that he was the captain of the wrestling team at Princeton and continues to sponsor public school programs. He was the one who offered to pay \$90 million for the air rights of Pier 40, which was sneakily passed in at the end of the Albany session by Deborah Glick.

In 2010, Novogratz was appointed to the Board of the Hudson River Park Trust (HRPT) and followed Douglas Durst as Chairman of The Friends of Hudson River Park (FHRP). Novogratz’s four kids play in the park and he lives near it, prompting perhaps his proprietary feelings. However, his verbal attack on the members of the City Club and his competitors for control of the park, including Tom Fox and developer Douglas Durst, reveals Trump-like adolescent excess—he calls the City Club leaders “a group of old guys who still want to be relevant.”

One of those “old guys” is Tom Fox who was an early director of the Hudson River Park and headed the New York Water Taxis. He says that the HRPT and Diller met in secret and presented the island as a *fait accompli*. Douglas Durst was the head of FHRP in 2012 and offered a plan to construct offices on Pier 40. HRPT head Madelyn Wils is now offering that plan to no takers.

After last month’s court victory, which shut down Diller Island construction, I called City Club President Michael Gruen to ask if he had received any congratulations. The otherwise staid Gruen paused and changed tone as he recounted the tsunami of exhilarated bravos he received.

Novogratz accuses and Durst agrees that he (Durst) picked

up the legal costs for the lawsuit when the main backers of Riverkeeper threatened to cut off funding. (Riverkeeper is an organization, based in Ossining, New York, which aims to guard waterways and defend clean drinking water.)

The Hudson River Park is the wreckage of the multi-billion dollar, federally-sponsored West Way, which would have extended the island by 500 feet with landfill and resulted in a partially submerged highway. It would have allowed West Villagers to walk on grass to the shore of the Hudson River but protest to save the breeding ground of the Stripped Bass. The federal government withdrew their billions for the park development and now we have a tussle between the egos of billionaires.

Two years ago, *WestView’s* Architecture Editor Brian J. Pape priced out the then-proposed enormous mushroom-shaped piles upon which the 2.7-acre island of reinforced concrete would be draped and predicted that they would be exorbitant. It proved to be so much that the contractors would only bid cost-plus, so the design was flattened. Now, to meet the concern of flowing liquid concrete into giant mushroom molds, the builders offer an even flatter version (more like concrete lily pads).

By the time you read this, the courts may have reversed, allow-
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MoMA Lost My Art

By Martica Sawin



MISSING ART: Pictured here is Pat Lasch’s lost five-foot-high artificial cake. Photo by Pat Lasch.

In 1979, MoMA curator Kynaston McShine was walking along SoHo’s West Broadway when he noticed a display of exquisitely-decorated artificial cakes in the window of the Holly Solomon Gallery. He tracked down the artist, Pat Lasch, and commissioned her to create a monumental cake for the Museum’s 50th anniversary celebration. Lasch, at that time a young artist connected with the woman’s cooperative Artists In Residence (A.I.R.) Gallery, accepted the challenge. Working in her Westbeth Studio, she produced a multi-tiered five-foot-high sculpture in acrylic over a wood base, festooned with roses, pure gold leaf, spun gold thread, feathery embellishments made from Arches archival paper, and encircling garlands of acrylic lace. (See the accompany-
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The Future

Read about Franco Noriega’s enthusiasm for the future of his restaurants in the face of epic closures throughout the Village.

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Carnegie Hall Concert

Vocal coach Sylvia Olden Lee’s 100th birthday is being commemorated at Carnegie celebration.

SEE PAGE 28

Lessons Through Sports

Read about how effective coaches can help children gain valuable lessons in teamwork and leadership.

SEE PAGE 20



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MIA SAYS: With sad eyes, I plea for a pat from a stranger, and with each loving stroke, become friends. *Photo by Andreea Ioana Pantor.*

WestViews

Correspondence, Commentary, Corrections

WestView Delivers Relevant, Local News

Dear Editors:

I must comment on something about which I feel most strongly: the quality and depth of *WestView News*' coverage.

In order to economically survive the impact that email, digital media, and video have had on their bottom lines, media outlets have been wallowing in trivia, desperately reaching out to a (perceived) newer audience. But *WestView* has remained steadfast. Its concentration on articles significant to the West Village and beyond has always been both timely and meaningful. Keep it up!

—Elliott Gilbert

Praise for WestView

Dear Editors:

Thanks so much for seeing merit in my "Seniorhood" piece for the May issue of *WestView*. It is beautifully laid out, giving it the feel of a true prose poem. I happen to have a large number of 'oldster' friends and most identified with the writing; they got a sort of serious chuckle out of it.

Getting published in my local paper is a huge ego boost for me and I will continue to submit oldies but goodies as well as new inspirations.

I can't figure out if my fellow poet and writer friends are jealous that they can't

get published in *WestView* or if they just have publication envy. Who cares? I feel blessed to live in the West Village AND to be a contributor to your enviable enterprise.

Please don't stop doing what you're doing.
—Roberta Curley

Mobile Stroke Care Innovation

Dear Editors:

Thank you for your continuing focus on health care issues in our community! A short time after attending the May 4th meeting announced by Arthur Z. Schwartz in *WestView News*, to discuss the crisis in our area's health care, I went to Weill Cornell Medical Center on York Avenue to hear a talk, which included the topic of advanced stroke care.

Reminders of the 60-minute ideal "golden hour" of time for medical intervention after the onset of symptoms seemed an illusory goal given our fragmented, failing system. However, Weill Cornell, Columbia University Medical Center, and the New York Presbyterian Hospitals have implemented a mobile stroke unit—"a customized emergency vehicle that brings a highly-specialized team of experts, diagnostic equipment, and stroke-specific drugs right to a patient's doorstep." (Consult the March 23, 2017 article in *Early Intervention*, "With a State-of-the-Art Mobile Unit and Pioneering Research, Weill Cor-

nell Medicine is at the Vanguard of Treating Stroke Patients—for Whom "Time is Brain," by Heather Salerno.)

This enables neurologists to see stroke patients immediately, rather than waiting until they reach the emergency room. For Dr. Matthew E. Fink, Chairman of the Neurology Department at Cornell Weill, mobile units are "representing a shift in how providers deliver overall emergency care."

How can such a life-saving vehicle be incorporated into our already nomadic system?

—Rosanne Levitt

Many Thanks for My Ziedonis Article

Dear Editors:

Thank you very much for my article on Ziedonis. Everything is fine, and the layout looks great. I have had quite a few compliments not only on the article, but on your paper as well, which was unfamiliar to most of my friends and acquaintances.

—Bitite Vinklers

P.S. Maybe you should have a poem in every issue. This is a good (and needed) time for poetry, as expressed in my article. Also take a look at the front-page article in the *New York Times* on April 21st regarding the science march and the poet Jane Hirshfield—"American Poets, Refusing to Go Gentle, Rage Against the Right," as well as subsequent articles and YouTube postings.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Follow-up on Ellis Nassour's "Villager Heaps Scorn on Verizon"

This is the author's update to the article published in the May 2017 issue of WestView News.

On May 24th, I was informed that the date we were told service would be restored (May 22nd) wasn't met, and that service won't be restored until late May or early June.

I thank *WestView News* Publisher Mr. Capsis and the many readers of *WestView* for your calls expressing concern, and asking for information, which hasn't always been easy to give.

After pleading with Verizon, I was finally sent a "voice box." Don't be surprised if the customer service reps don't know what that is. However, it is a Verizon-sanctioned device that you plug your phone line into to get service—at least on one phone. It isn't especially good service, but it's better than nothing. (You will not

have call forwarding or use of the answering machine.)

Since the outage on March 26th, due to a sliced cable on Gansevoort Street, and following the article published in *WestView*, I've heard from readers as far South as Thompson Street who have also been affected. Approximately 80 phones still have no service.

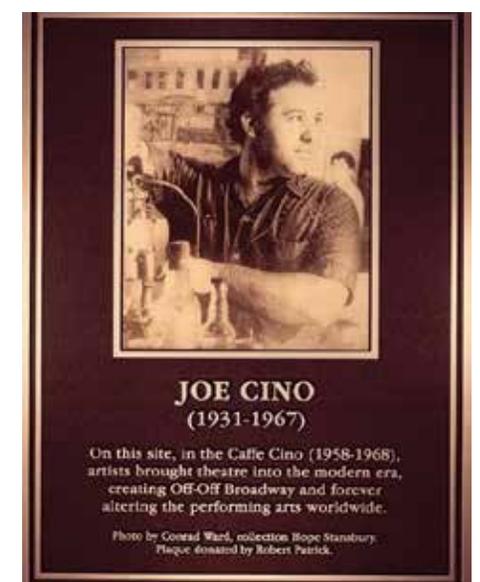
—Ellis Nassour

Missing Caffè Cino Plaque on Cornelia Street

Pó Restaurant, at 31 Cornelia Street (near Bleecker Street) for 24 years, closed suddenly, and the bronze Caffè Cino plaque that was on the outside wall of the venue has disappeared. (Read more about Pó Restaurant's closing on page 16.) The owners have sent an email stating that they know nothing about it. Caffè Cino was in the space for 10 years back in the 1960s. If anyone has any information as to where the plaque

might be recovered, please let Magie Dominic know. She is the curator of the Caffè Cino archives at NYPL at Lincoln Center. Her email address is: magiedominic@hotmail.com.

—Robert Heide



WHAT DID YOU LOSE? Makers of *The Lost Village* Query Publisher



Director Roger Paradiso questioned, on camera, WestView Publisher George Capsis as to what he has lost in the rapidly changing West Village. Capsis recounted an early morning walk to St. Vincent's Emergency Room with his wife who was experiencing an uncontrollable nosebleed induced by blood thinners. During that visit, he discovered his neighbors in need: (1) a very young girl at a Village party who is offered drugs for the first time and has a bad reaction, (2) a friendly neighbor who comes in with his elderly father who is having chest pains, (3) a young NYU student who cannot make it home after drinking too much at a party. Capsis argued in the film that the hospital was an integral part of the community. *Text by George Capsis. Photo by Maggie Berkvist.*

St. Luke *continued from page 1*

dinners and Sunday teas. In fact, the second Sunday service has attracted a largely Gay attendance.

I arrived at the meeting late, with a staffer who regularly attends Al-Anon meetings in the same room, in response to the alcohol abuse problem of family members. I thought: This is exactly the kind of organization the church should support.

Reverend Stacy had just left and the meeting was in progress with Christopher Keevil, who one might easily mistake for a minister. Keevil had projected the following statistical portrait of us West Villagers:

About 55% of us live alone and are elderly, versus 32% for the rest of the City (this is a bit of a shocker and maybe explains why our readers still want to hold a newspaper in their hands). 84% have a Bachelor's degree or higher, versus 36% for the rest of the City. 6% have incomes below the federal poverty level, versus the City average of 21%. And, oh, we have the least amount of parkland in the City. But now the important stuff—Wellspring Consulting's conclusions—the need to:

1. Support the elderly to reduce social isolation, help with basic needs, and assist in crisis.
2. Prioritize early childhood care by providing out-of-school recreational space for children and families.

3. Foster spiritual fulfillment (Keevil explained that there is little patience for old-fashioned religion but there is a yearning for "something.")

4. Provide flexible space for community activities (hmm, I'm not sure what this means but maybe we should keep space open for the next social need.)

There could not have been more than 25 people at the meeting, but sitting in a tight group were a number of African Americans. We learned that they belong to fringe groups who now use the open community room after they come in on the PATH train for a day of gathering on the piers.

I sensed that this group was afraid of being shut out in favor of poor seniors and so they quickly recited their protest mantras. Later, I asked one of them why they did not use the LGBT Center on 13th Street. He rattled off a complaint, which I think was that they did not have enough room or services.

Now, St. Luke is finishing a condo tower on its parking lot which should keep them solvent and, yes, allow them to "better serve the community."

But the question is: What community? Perhaps Reverend Stacy hired a consulting firm to discover THE West Village "community" that is really fitting and proper to "serve?"

Post No Bills Except Ours— NYPD

*A few weeks ago, I was walking home from Cinema Village on 12th Street after viewing *The Lost Village*—a film cataloguing how our old, familiar West Village is being shattered by inflation. The film featured interviews with female NYU students who are turning to prostitution to pay the breathtaking tuition and also Village restaurant owners who are hanging on by a thread until their next lease.*

When I arrived at 6th Avenue, I viewed a conservative blue-tinted 20-inch by 14-inch poster announcing the monthly 6th Precinct Public Meeting at St. Anthony's Church, neatly taped to the steel lamppost. It was accompanied by the usual pastiche of torn and dirty ads.

Whoa, a 6th Precinct poster taped to a lamppost! Hold on! Pasting ads or notices on lampposts must be illegal. However, the 6th Precinct Community Affairs Officer, Jim Alberici, said that it was not. In fact, it was a decision made by the 6th Precinct Community Council "and they even pay a guy to put them up." He suggested that I check with Ben Benson, the expert on the subject who has devoted some of his retirement time to removing ad stickers.

Ben knows more about sticker/poster rules than any City official, so I offer his comments below to supplement my point.

—George Capsis

(Date: May 19, 2017)

Dear Mr. Capsis:

If you read Sanitation Code Title 10-119 and Title 10-121, the anti-posting law exempts certain "official" government notices from the NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) anti-posting law. You will always see a 'No Parking Saturday' or a 'Street Fair' poster going up the week before a fair. Another example of an authorized posting is 'CAUTION, Rat Poison,' which for obvious reasons, I would never rip down.

The fact that government entities have DSNY-issued permits to post, though, does not make the streetscape any prettier, but that's how the Sanitation ordinance is written. As for the 6th Precinct Community Council meetings, which I support, I have always, right or wrong, put them in the 'NYPD/NYC Government' category. I assume that you cannot rip them down until the event is over, which I frequently do. Whether or not these are authorized by the DSNY is debatable; I have not checked with the agency. Those who post 'Street Fair' and 'Street Closure' posters, in their defense, are pretty good at cleaning up after themselves, although not always thoroughly. In fact, today, in Chelsea, I removed a couple of 'Street Fair' posters for a street fair held two weeks ago!

Another posting category is the 'Movie/Filming' posters that go up for a commercial or movie on a particular block. Movie companies always obtain permits to post but sometimes do not clean up after themselves. Many times, I have ripped down such fliers two and three weeks after filming!

The DSNY prescribes fines for illegal

postings—\$75.00 per flier for the first offense—which increase for subsequent offenses. How often the DSNY actually metes out such fines I do not know. I do know, however, that the DSNY did issue fines to several political candidates whose operatives illegally draped their election placards around lampposts and traffic signs at election time. If I remember correctly, Bill Thompson was fined hundreds of thousands of dollars the last time he ran for mayor. The same applied to Michael Bloomberg. I do not know whether they actually paid. The political candidates, of course, NEVER return to clean up after themselves. One would think that someone running for office, and seeking our trust, would comply with the law. Well, many obviously don't.

Interestingly, the DSNY's fines for posting ILLEGAL posters, are the same for ripping down LEGAL posters. Hence, if you remove a 'No Parking,' 'Street Fair,' or 'Rat Poison' poster, you may receive the same fine as for an illegal poster. Sometimes you might see a tug-at-the-heartstrings 'Lost Dog' or 'Missing Person' flier. Technically, however, they are also illegal, and may be removed.



POLICE INVITE POSTINGS: The 6th Precinct Community Council encourages illegal postings by displaying its own. *Photo by Maggie Berkvist.*

A note of caution: A couple of years ago, a 'Lost Dog' poster turned out to be an ad for a dog grooming service in Union Square! A 'Missing Person' poster turned out, at one time, to be a modeling agency seeking talent! So, everything is not always what it seems. In the last few months, I have noticed, in the East Village, a sign saying "Please do not remove this sign," and nothing else. Maybe they are testing the waters. Naturally, I immediately took out my nail clipper, ripped several, and dumped them into the nearest trashcan. The next big test will come with the Jane Street Street Sale on June 2nd. They typically saturate the entire

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11 Jane Street and Other Sorrows—*What Are We Losing Here?*

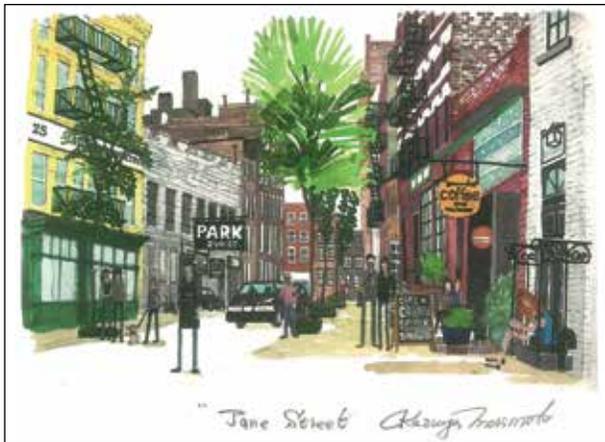
By Robert Widmann

As parking garages go, this one was something of a sweetheart, like an old love you could count on—never overbearing, always sort-of cheery, not too gassy. When returning from places dark and distant, she welcomed the lonely sojourner looking to find home, with her low-rise crenelated fortress-top beset with eight diamond-shaped panels of art-tiles outlined in contrasting brick. Even after being painted over (ceramic art-tiles and all) a garish white, here was a neighborhood friend that said, “Welcome back to Jane Street. You’re back where you belong.”

I knew this was going to be a big part of my life ever since I got to Jane Street in 1959. The garage was right next-door. It gave off an aura of the Jazz Age, prohibition, and the roaring twenties—flappers and flivvers, powerful Packards and Pierce Arrows—of F. Scott Fitzgerald and his “Coffin Nose” Cord and maybe even Hemingway and his Chrysler New Yorker. There was a speakeasy on the corner of Jane and West 4th Streets where the Corner Bistro is now located (behind a flower shop front).

OK, that was then. About a year ago, Minskoff Equities proposed the demolition of our old garage in favor of a six-story luxury condo on the site. But first, Minskoff forces had to secure approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). The old girl was almost, but not quite, able to stand up to a total of four public hearings.

At the first hearing, in mid-June of 2016, in the Municipal Building, the community rocked the place. The day belonged to the people. Near the close of this hearing, Commissioner Adi Shamir-Baron proposed that consideration be given to adaptive reuse of the garage. The Chair, Meenakshi Srinivasan, in tabling both the motion and the hearing, agreed to take this up at the next public hear-



OLD-SCHOOL GARAGE BUILDINGS ARE AN ENDANGERED SPECIES: The NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission found no architectural value in the great old parking garage located at 11 Jane Street. *Illustration by Kazuya Morimoto (KayzuyaMorimoto.com).*

ing. Meanwhile, commissioners would have time to think about it. Things looked good.

But one month later, when the hearing reopened with only three days’ notice, the community was largely absent... and the fix was in. Rather than opening with a discussion of adaptive reuse, the rostrum was put into the hands of the developer’s super-star architect, Sir David Chipperfield. In a soft but insistent voice tempered by a rawther upper-British accent, Chipperfield chipped away at our garage, citing a 50-year-old Designation Survey wherein the garage had been labeled an “intruder” and “non contributing.” “Veddy vernacular. Veddy Grand Concourse.” (The garage’s original architect had designed buildings on the Grand Concourse.) He made the garage sound like a

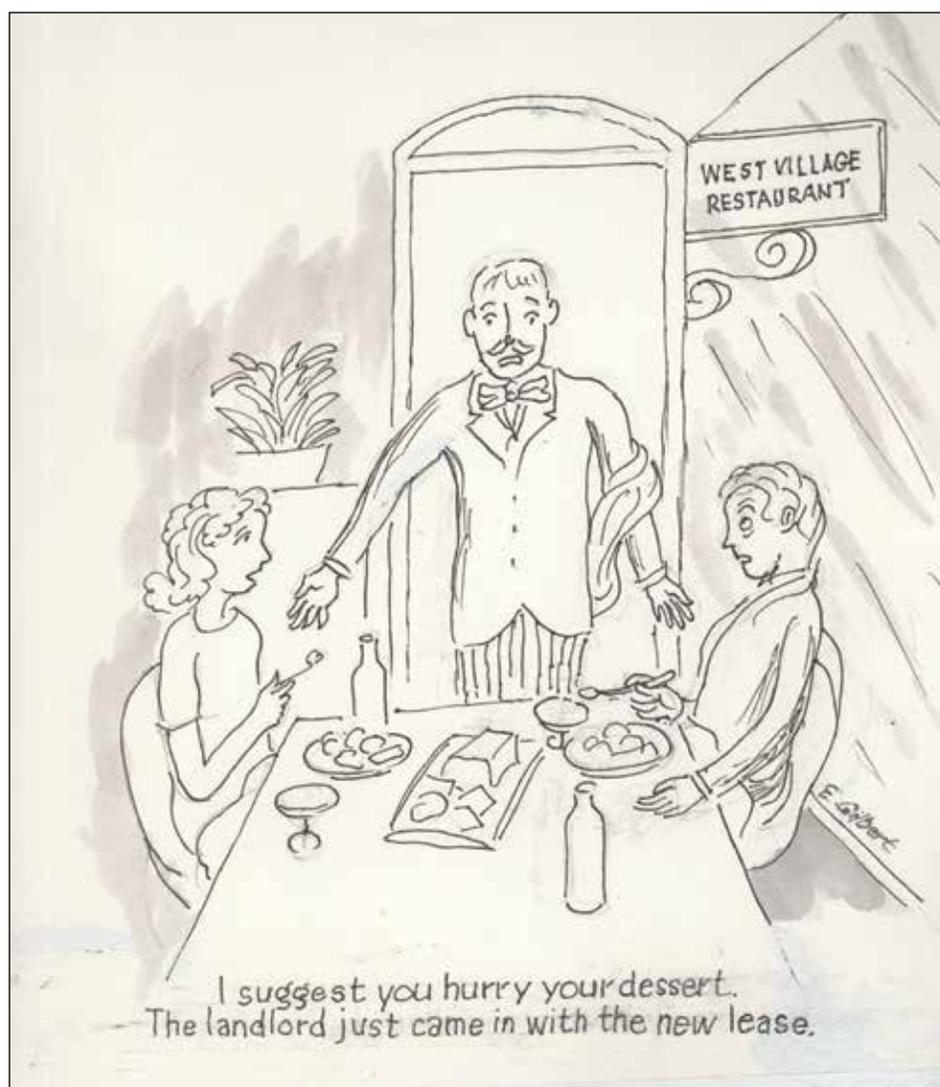
couple of broken teeth in an otherwise promising smile.

Discussion ensued. Commissioner Michael Devonshire spoke eloquently in defense of the garage, which, he reminded, had grown into a landmark-class building over 50 years. Several other commissioners agreed, pointing out that old-school garage buildings were becoming an endangered species, especially in the Village, thanks in no small measure to the decisions of the LPC. But the Chair, Ms. Srinivasan, declared that the garage building had no value, no architectural merit, and could go. Forty minutes into the meeting, she further declared that one of the most troubling features of the proposed structure, a 61-foot 4-inch street wall, was okay with her. That was the ball-game. Most commissioners fell into line with the Chair, fussing and futzing only over design details for Minskoff Equities’ inevitable replacement structure.

Where was the Mayor in all of this? The LPC is a mayoral agency. Commissioners are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Mayor. So, did this decision bring the Mayor pleasure? Nobody’s saying. But the decision may not have hurt his charitable trust. Local and national news outlets, as well as the FBI, noted the connection with developers. But no indictments got handed down.

So now, here sits our dear old garage, abandoned and alone, awaiting the moneyball of demolition for dollars—her exterior plastered with asbestos warnings; her innards soaked through with ethyl lead from 70 years of exhaust fumes; her guts infiltrated with benzene, lead, and toluene from decaying gas tanks below grade.

What is to be done? What can be done? Maybe we should talk. (Comments are welcome via email to RWidmann@nyc.rr.com.)



THE VANISHING VILLAGE: For more than 80 years, the El Faro sign was a landmark for good food at cheap prices. Now, the building owners invite a new tenant for a restaurant or boutique. *Photo by Maggie Berkvist.*

We Cannot Save What We Have Already Lost



FRANCO IS THE FUTURE: Fashion model Franco Noriega opens his third Peruvian restaurant in what he confidently predicts will be a chain. *Photo by Maggie Berkvist.*

By George Capsis

The evening of May 24th, I met the Peruvian-born, and very young (age 28) and handsome (he is an underwear model, artist, and former student at Le Cordon Bleu), owner of the week-old Baby Brasa—Franco Noriega. The restaurant is located at 173 7th Avenue South, near Greenwich Avenue—its 100-plus seats were nearly all filled when I visited. Franco was positive and smiling as he spoke about the start of his “chain” of organic chicken restaurants (they only serve chicken).

Yes, it is natural for us to be skeptical when a young person, after opening just two restaurants, talks about a “chain” (the first one, also very recent, is at 129 Allen Street, between Rivington and Delancey Streets) but there was nothing boasting or posturing in Franco’s demeanor. He was just calmly reading the first pages of his future, already written in large clear letters—it was beyond confidence.

As I gazed at his relaxed face, I thought of the hard, tight, grim countenances of those restaurant owners who have lost everything and more till, at last, they put the padlock on the door. Why do some restaurants succeed from the day they open and others die a not-too-slow, but very expensive, death?

There is no question that we have an epidemic of closings, so many that Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer got volunteers to count the number of “To Let” signs on Broadway. She wanted to make a case for some kind of civic action, if not a law, that would prevent businesses from,

essentially, going out of business shortly after signing a new lease.

But you can’t cure a problem unless you understand exactly how it works. To say that this City has inflation is certainly true and to say that it is accelerating is also true. You have only to look at the ‘LUNCH SPECIAL’ signs that quickly went from \$5.95 to \$9.95 and now \$14.95, in the last 24 months. I called back a waitress when I discovered that a \$1.00 bottle of beer at Trader Joe’s was \$9.50 on my credit card receipt for the restaurant I visited.

I am waiting to see who moves into the Rudin/St. Vincent’s Condo. What will they look like, those people who can write out checks for \$12 million? And, why oh why do they want to live on 7th Avenue with all the traffic facing that strange big, white, toothy building? Just to say, “We bought in the Village?” But it is not the Village of just a few years ago and certainly not the Village of 70 years ago, when a glass of porter at the White Horse Tavern was 50 cents. (Owner Ernie used to talk about his flights on the Hindenburg.)

Inflation is a natural phenomenon, if you can call something mathematical natural. In the depths of the recession, the government tried to stimulate inflation (no kidding) but they just wanted a gradual inflation, not \$9.50 for a lousy bottle of beer.

I don’t have any answers as to how we can save whatever we think of as the “Old Village.” Of course, you can never save the past, but in the face of young Franco, I see the future.

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Parks and Gardens of the West Village:

Exploring the Church of St. Luke in the Fields and Jane Street Gardens



PRESERVING AND COMPLEMENTING HISTORICAL HERITAGE: The Barrow Street Garden, a main part of the Gardens of St. Luke in the Fields, is made up of four triangular quadrants. Photo by Justin Matthews.

By Justin Matthews

The West Village contains a variety of parks and gardens, several of which, along with hosting native bird species, preserve or complement the abundant historical heritage of the area. Here, we'll explore two in particular.

THE GARDENS OF THE CHURCH OF ST. LUKE IN THE FIELDS

The Anglican Church of St. Luke in the Fields is located on Hudson Street, just below Christopher Street. The church and bordering houses date back to 1820, though its grounds have gradually developed over time.

The church itself, though from the federal period, has relatively few distinctively federal traits (those it has are muted). Despite its subtle neoclassical moldings along the pediment and low-pitched roof, it recalls an older, more timeless provincial English style, with rectilinear lines and a square, plain frontal tower. It resembles the Jamestown and St. Luke's churches of Virginia, and somewhat those of the Anglo-Saxon period. The church's archaizing tendency allows it to blend with the red

brick rectory, which is newer but contains Gothic windows and decorative Romanesque recesses.

The garden is made up of several sections. The Rector's Garden, the oldest, from circa 1840, lies at the church's south side in front of the attached rectory. One small path leads along the church. The rest is like a small wilderness largely covered by low vegetation, with trees growing gradually denser away from the gate. Further back, part of the Rector's Garden behind a ruined stretch of original wall (with Gothic windows), appears to preserve much of the area's original pastoral character—an English park style, meadow-like, and thinly interspersed with bushes and trees. Many of the oldest trees are in this area.

Although the graveyard has been removed and the graves relocated, several prominent trees survive in the Rector's Garden. They evoke the tradition of focal churchyard trees—associated with the souls of the dead in a British tradition with pre-Christian roots—preserving the aesthetic of the English churchyard. Some are century-old maples, and some descend from a graft of the Glastonbury Thorne (of

the Hawthorne) brought from the sacred site in England in 1840.

The other main section, the Barrow Street Garden further south, is made up of four triangular quadrants with a variety of plant species. Though created in the 1950s by landscaper Barbara Leighton, its four-sectioned bed design, with low-shrub margins and brick borders, recalls a design most common in country gardens. Indentations in the quadrant's inner corners accommodate benches facing a small bed centered on a Kentucky Yellowwood, which fosters a contemplative mood.

The garden and church are sheltered from the street partly by a mid-height red brick wall and partly by an iron fence. Though small, and away from the street, the garden seems expansive, sheltered, and pastoral.

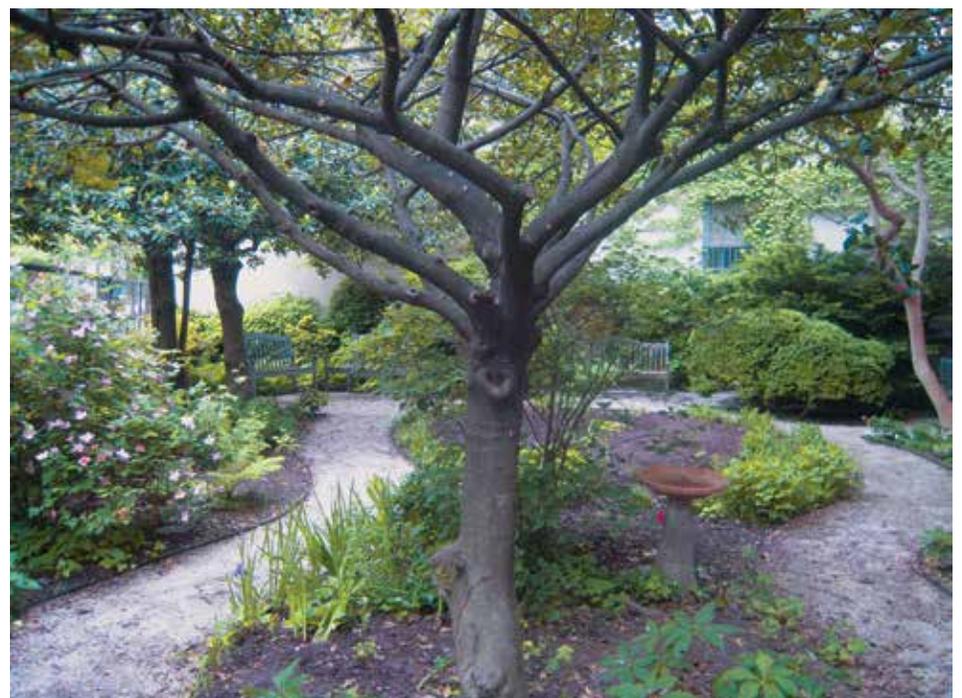
THE JANE STREET GARDEN

Though only several decades old, the Jane Street Garden also follows the naturalistic English style. Even in its small triangular space on the corner of Jane Street and 8th

Avenue, it suggests—with its distribution of low-medium and tall shrubs and trees—a small, compact forest. Its center, surrounded by a path, is planted with low, often flowering plants, and ends at the holly toward the northeast corner.

In winter, the three or so mid-height evergreen holly trees (a plant sacred to both Celts and Saxons, and common in gardens of the English style) dominate on the east. With the lower bushes, they evoke a sort of sacred grove. The branches of a few taller trees overhead overlap for a forest canopy effect. The garden overall has, especially toward its margins, the look of a naturalistic grove.

Sadly, the naturalistic woodland effect has been compromised by the creation of a discrete metal-bordered gravel path (replacing a more subtle trail of embedded stones). This path, circling the middle, and in front of the various benches, has affected the continuity of the planted areas, more definitively isolating them and occupying more of the available space.



THE LOOK OF A NATURALISTIC GROVE: The Jane Street Garden follows the English style and suggests, with its spread of shrubs and trees, a small compact forest. Photo by Justin Matthews.

Diller Island continued from page 1

ing Diller to go ahead and build his \$200 million island for a few pop concerts during the clement months.

The only thing this small community newspaper can do is allow you to vote. You can now vote to have the \$200 million spent to build a hospital to partially replace St. Vincent's. And, since we have more than one billionaire living in and around the West Village, we invite them like, Kenneth Langone, to donate \$200 million. We will name the hospital after them.

CAST YOUR VOTE!

Mail your vote and contribution to 69 Charles Street, New York, NY 10014.

1. ___ I think Barry Diller should donate \$200 million to build a concrete platform for outdoor concerts.
2. ___ I think Barry Diller should donate \$200 million towards the construction of a hospital in the West Village.
3. ___ I would like to donate to the 501(c)(3) nonprofit, The West Village Fund, to restore a hospital in the West Village. Here is my donation of \$ _____.
4. ___ I don't have any spare cash but I think those who can afford it should contribute to building a hospital so it is there when I need it.
5. ___ I don't plan to have a heart attack or any medical emergency so don't build a hospital.

MOMA continued from page 1

ing photo.) This sculpture was mentioned in a *New York Times* account of MoMA's anniversary celebration in November 1979.

At the time of the commission, Lasch was told that her sculpture would enter the Museum's study collection. A drawing by Lasch is currently part of the MoMA Permanent Collection.

Over the years, Lasch created many more "cakes" as well as figure sculptures, gold and copper-leaf "prayer cloths," and sinister black constructions of wire and found materials. Her work in various media has been exhibited in many solo and group exhibitions. Lasch has become known for her adherence to an independent course, resulting in unique artworks that give form to her own emotions.

When a retrospective exhibition of Lasch's sculptures was scheduled for the Palm Springs Art Museum, the curator, Mara Gladstone, sent a loan request to MoMA asking to borrow the anniversary cake. Eventually, an answer came back from the Museum's Registrar saying that, after a thorough search, the object could not be located.

In the fall of 2016, Lasch had a residency at the famed artists' colony, Yaddo. She told the story of the missing cake/sculpture to a fellow resident who happened to be a colleague of *New York Times* writer Randy Kennedy. The result was "A 1979 Sculpture's Vanishing Act," an article by Kennedy with three photographs in the *Times'* Arts section in January 2017. The piece questioned why MoMA, with its sterling reputation as a protector of art, did not at the very least contact the artist. Standard procedure in the case of a work's deteriorated condition would have been to consult the artist about conservation measures to be followed.

Interviewed in the Westbeth studio that she has occupied for 47 years, Lasch recounted: "One of my collectors who saw the *Times* article wrote to MoMA's Director, Glen Lowry, protesting the Museum's careless handling of the artwork. In his response, Lowry claimed that it was, "an 'event-based object' and that, although it had been kept at the Museum for years, the materials were such that it had deteriorated beyond repair."

"I know the piece couldn't disintegrate," said Lasch. "The Palm Springs Museum is showing three pieces from the same year made of similar materials, all in mint condition; one five-foot piece is part of their permanent collection. I think I was just perceived as a woman artist—they wouldn't have thrown out a plaster Oldenburg hamburger. Why wasn't I contacted? Why wasn't it kept in a protective case? On a personal level, it made me feel disrespected. On a larger level, I was shocked that a museum could treat an artwork in such a cavalier way. I had thought it was protected and safe—it was one of the major pieces of my life."

The cake image may suggest something edible and ephemeral, but Lasch is an artist of skilled and solid craftsmanship, and is zealously attentive to the quality of materials. She may have started with applying frosting in her father's bakery, but she has produced exquisite sculptures in bronze and porcelain and was in charge of the welding studio during her years on the faculty at the University of Massachusetts. Her creations are not prone to self-destruction.

pensers, mail boxes, etc. Graffiti, however, to the best of my knowledge, falls within a separate jurisdiction. I mention this since, in your initial email, you said that the "6th Precinct Board exempts [itself] from graffiti laws." The 6th Precinct Community Council does not scrawl graffiti anywhere, whereas it does post announcements in the form of fliers on lampposts. According to my lay interpretation of the anti-posting laws, the 6th Precinct Community Council fliers most likely fall into the 'NYPD/NYC Government' category.

—Ben Benson

Post No Bills continued from page 3

area with a blizzard of illegal lamppost fliers. I haven't yet decided what to do about it, but past history has shown that they never clean up after the event.

(Date: May 20, 2017)

A point of clarification: I believe it is important to distinguish between GRAFFITI, which is an NYPD issue and ILLEGAL POSTINGS, which are a DSNY issue. Graffiti and illegal posters often appear on the same surfaces, such as lampposts, traffic signal boxes, newspaper dis-

The Cyber Hand in Your Pocket

By George Capsis

I recently opened this email... "CHASE FRAUD PROTECTION SERVICES: Please tell us if you, or somebody you authorized, charged your card for: Navy Yard Gas \$96.85."

On this day, the cyber crooks went right around the globe from the U.S. to China and Russia with sweeping electronic speed and the exquisite arrogance of complete impunity. Were they now buying gas on

my Chase card?

And what about this email from "FRAUD PROTECTION SERVICES" in San Antonio, Texas—a phony name if I ever heard one? Anything from Texas has to be fake so I went to the bank. The nice, young Chase officer furrowed his brows and phoned the security office. A rapid, hard voice instantly clattered forth and demanded I close and open a new card right away. I obeyed.

But wait! I publish a newspaper and I

continued on page 25

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Lenox Health Greenwich Village Wins Prestigious Award for Excellence in Preservation

By Barbara Osborn

In May 2017, Lenox Health Greenwich Village (LHGV), located at the corner of 12th Street and 7th Avenue, was recognized by the New York Landmarks Conservancy for excellence in the restoration and adaptive use of the historic New York City building, which it occupies. LHGV received the Lucy G. Moses Award, which is given to organizations for their outstanding commitment to preserving New York City's neighborhoods and landmarks.

Specifically, LHGV was honored for its revitalization and sensitive restoration of the landmarked National Maritime Union Building. It was designed by New Orleans architect Albert C. Ledner and built in 1964. Once named the Joseph Curran Building in honor of the National Maritime Union's founder, the six-story structure is an architectural fixture in Greenwich Village. The nautical-inspired building is widely recognized by its porthole-shaped windows and rooftop bulkhead resembling a steamship smokestack. Through careful restoration, LHGV developed a brand new medical building center while also preserving the structure's original aesthetic.

The façade was returned to its original appearance and the interior was renovated with nautical-inspired decorative elements. The light fixtures are round, the roof resembles a boat's sail, and the floors in the emergency room evoke a deep-sea bottom. The glass-block ground floor—a distinc-

tive feature of the building's original design—now encloses the waiting and patient rooms.

"When St. Vincent's Hospital closed in 2010, this historic building was nearly lost," said Alex Hellinger, Executive Director of LHGV. "It has now been reborn as a modern healthcare hub in the West Village while still retaining all the cultural value and its landmark status."

Lenox Health Greenwich Village, which is part of Northwell Health, is a state-of-the-art medical complex representing a new model of community-based care. It offers a full range of medical services and access to 24-hour emergency care.

Northwell Health invested over \$150 million to renovate the landmark building, beginning with the opening of Manhattan's first free-standing emergency center in 2014. The medical facility is now home to a state-of-the-art Imaging Center and later this summer will open an ambulatory surgery center, physician offices, and a new conference space for the community.

"As it begins its next half-century, this historic building is now providing a wide range of medical services as distinctive as its community and its architecture," said Hellinger.

Northwell Health is New York State's largest health care provider and private employer, with 22 hospitals and over 550 outpatient facilities. For more information, visit Northwell.edu.

Cities Are for Walking

By Barry Benepe

When I was but six years old, I accompanied my father on Saturday morning walks from Gramercy Park to Madison Square Park; his office was on the 12th floor of the Victoria Building at 230 5th Avenue. One warm spring morning, as we crossed Madison Avenue, we heard the screeching of brakes. A yellow cab had struck a pedestrian who lay lifeless on the pavement. As he was lifted to an ambulance, his head glowed like a red billiard ball. I was struck by the enormity of this sudden awful blow, one which started me on a life-long quest as an urban planner—to make our cities safe for walking.

The horrific crash that took place in Times Square on Thursday, May 18th at around noon, left a string of damaged bodies like a nightmare necklace along three blocks of 7th Avenue, from 42nd to 45th Streets. The automobile is a deadly weapon in which the pedestrian is always

the victim and the driver the perp. This butchery took place alongside a pleasant protected pedestrian refuge created by the conversion of four blocks of heavily trafficked streets into landscaped promenades.

Only last year did Mayor de Blasio and his Police Commissioner recommend that this oasis be destroyed and returned to vehicular pandemonium. This was motivated by the Mayor's objection to the virtually nude, tall, statuesque women and costumed cartoon characters who strolled the plaza for opportunistic photos with admirers. Their somewhat overpowering elegance recalled the feminine power of statues by Aristide Maillol or Gaston Lachaise. Fortunately, that space and its contented *habitués* remain protected, but much of our City does not. Pedestrians are regularly mowed down by motorists who often don't even get a ticket. It happened to me on a bicycle in 1987, at the intersection of Greenwich and 6th Avenues, after

continued on page 10



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The Washington Square Music Festival is made possible with public funding through Council Member Margaret Chin and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs along with the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Generous grants from the Earle K. & Katherine F. Moore Foundation, the Washington Square Association, the Music Performance Trust Fund, the Margaret Neubart Foundation Trust, New York University Community Engagement and the NYU Community Fund, the Salamon-Abrams Family Fund, the Hilaria and Alec Baldwin Foundation, Con Edison, the Washington Square Park Conservancy, Three Sheets Saloon/Off the Wagon/Down the Hatch, and Sanford L. Smith Associates are deeply appreciated.



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Washington Square Park Designer Nabs Dual Role

By Geoffrey Croft

The irony.

George Vellonakis, the controversial NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) landscape architect behind the much-vilified \$30 million renovation of Washington Square Park, has recently been appointed to head the historic park.

On May 15th, Vellonakis became the Washington Square Park Administrator, a City job, as well as the Executive Director of the private Washington Square Park Conservancy. He replaces Sarah Neilson (who left in 2016)—the former Chief of Staff for Jonna Carmona-Graf, who is the Chief of Capital Program Management at NYC Parks.

With these developments, Mr. Vellonakis has stepped down as a landscape architect for NYC Parks after more than 35 years. His appointments will certainly ruffle a few feathers.

Vellonakis, the then-unlicensed landscape architect—and licensed real estate salesperson for Brown Harris Stevens—was responsible for the controversial re-design

of Washington Square Park during the Bloomberg administration (he subsequently received his landscape license after his lack of licensure became widely known).

The renovation plan drew considerable public opposition. Controversial elements included: (1) moving the fountain to align with the arch (it had been in the center of the park since 1870), (2) reducing the size of the fountain, (3) eliminating the park's popular mounds, (4) installing a wrought iron fence to close the park at night, and (5) removing numerous trees. The City was forced to make several concessions after community backlash; the park's infamous nine-year renovation was completed in 2014.

The formation of a conservancy for the park also raised the ire of the public; it was established behind the scenes with the help of actor John Leguizamo's wife, Justine, and socialite Veronica Bulgari. The role of a City employee simultaneously holding a park administrator job while serving as the head of a nonprofit affiliated with the same park has raised serious conflict of interest issues.

Praising George Vellonakis and Washington Square Park

By Barry Benepe

With all due respect to Geoffrey Croft, I feel that we are fortunate to have George Vellonakis in charge of the design and maintenance of Washington Square Park, probably one of the most heavily utilized and historic parks in the City. Through careful and thoughtful research on the park's original 1836 design, Vellonakis has returned the contemporary park to its welcoming traffic-free green surroundings while at the same time retaining its contemporary music, dance, and cultural attractions. The popular, but unsightly, black asphalt mounds were replaced with even more popular green grass mounds where adults and children can roll and lie as well as run up and down. More trees, robust flowering shrubs, and plant beds border the paths. It is truly a people's park.

Vellonakis has also used his talents to improve City Hall Park, Abingdon Square, and other City parks. He is nature's poet, following the steps of such luminaries as Robert Nichols and Bobby Zion. The Washington Square Park Conservancy and the City are lucky to have him.

Vellonakis' unique perspective and design acumen also shaped a *WestView* article I authored in July 2014. I have provided some excerpts below.

"The [Washington Square Park Conservancy] respects the extraordinarily beautiful restoration design prepared by George Vellonakis of the [NYC Department of Parks & Recreation]... 'I love the restoration,' said Betsy Ely [Chairman of the Board of Directors]. 'Now, what can we do to help maintain its beauty?' 'We work together as a team,' added Gwen [Evans, Treasurer of the Board]. 'The park is a glorious mosaic of activities and people. There is something for everyone.'"

"Vellonakis began to return [Washington Square Park] to its original form in 2012. [Since then, the] park has... become the sylvan paradise it once was, exclusively for those on foot. It now has an abundant, rich planted texture with broad green lawns, arching trees, and banks of shrubs and flowering plants. The curvilinear paths provide a relaxing stroll toward the central fountain, which still attracts a wide range of activities."

"A new handsome administration center has replaced the former ordinary brick maintenance building. The controversial black-topped play mounds have been replaced by a green turfed hill and dale design which is a village of pure delight for the many children who run up and down its slopes while caretakers relax on the grass like those with the morning dappled sunlight spilling over their heads... [like] in the paintings [of] French Impressionist, Georges Seurat."

"[Washington Square Park] continues to remain one of the earliest formal parks in the City, an attraction for visitors throughout the world as well as a refuge for thousands of residents who walk in from the surrounding Greenwich Village."

The Black Mounds in Washington Square Park

By George Capsis

I was reminded of an unpleasant incident when I read Barry Benepe's pleasure at the removal of the black asphalt mounds in Washington Square Park. (See his article on this page.) Barry evidently does not know what they were or how they got there—I do.

The mounds were demanded by the 'Crazies'—a radicalized group of P.S. 41 parents that broke into and operated P.S. 41 in the final hard, cold days of the month-long school strike in 1968. They melded with the Gorilla glue of collective hatred into a single, hard civil action fist just in time to say something about Washington Square Park, which was being renovated.

"We want skateboard mounds for the kids," they demanded, still smoking hot from the school break-in. (They came with their sleeping bags and just stayed. What fun for forty-ish moms and dads—their last radical hurrah).

The strike began when a newly-created local African-American school board in Brooklyn voted to replace the white principal. The strident United Federation of Teachers (UFT) President, Albert Shanker, called a strike on the first day of school and then called strike after strike. He tried to break the back of the opposition and make it clear that he was the President of the all-powerful UFT. He called the shots.

Gradually, the strike split the community from those who supported an emergency school that taught in churches and meeting rooms using the very same P.S. 41 teachers. Those participants did not have to cross the picket line nor interact with those who broke into the school and took it over—the 'Crazies.'

The break-in radicals exalted in their action since these were the why-are-we-in-Vietnam-anyway days; they had two

kids in P.S. 41 and couldn't take the train to Washington, D.C. to join a White House protest. So, instead, protest against the establishment took the form of breaking into and running P.S. 41 (I mean that's pretty cool—breaking into a public school—wow!)

Bang. At last the strike was over but the break-in parents were reluctant to give the school back to the Principal, Mr. Kreitzberg. So, they decided to run for President of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and make his life a living hell. It was the biggest political race ever in the Village, with sound trucks and placards. I mean, they were not going to lose this race. No, never—they wanted their school back.

Now a confession. I was campaigning against the Crazies because I had run the emergency school and they hated me because I represented the establishment.

Dr. Matt Ferguson, a General Practitioner whose office was across the street from P.S. 41 on 11th Street, threw a party for the teachers to keep them around until the 7:00 p.m. PTA meeting and vote. A gaggle of giggling teachers helped vote me President. But it was not over.

The Crazies came en masse to the first PTA meeting and sat as a hard-shelled articulated snake across the auditorium with a single voice. Every time I spoke, they shouted me down—it was hopeless. I turned to Principal Kreitzberg and handed him the mic with, "Here, this is your problem." He stopped my exit and chastised the parents as if they were in a kindergarten class.

It was then that I went before the Chancellor of the Board of Education to get the empty P.S. 3 building to absorb the P.S. 41 overcrowding. When the imperious Chancellor sneered at my demand, we sued and won. The day we got P.S. 3, the Crazies took over and have had it ever since.

Walking *continued from page 9*

a truck ran a red light, fractured my collarbone, and broke open my scalp, which required a hundred stitches.

Despite the dangers, walking in the City can be a great, wholesome pleasure. The rhythm of walking restores a sense of well-being and brings us a constantly changing and evolving experience of urban delights—other people, store windows, relaxing outdoor cafes, glorious trees framing rich historic architecture, and a filigree of white clouds dancing against deep blue skies. One really feels the topography of an ever-changing city on foot. As I tramp the great granite slabs around Union Square, I share the millions of foot falls which those slabs have sustained and wonder about the heroic labors of workers who laid them

over 150 years ago.

I also wonder why the City allows over a million free parking spaces, which could generate between \$100 and \$200 million dollars per year. Such an investment could help make streets safer, more beautiful, and more efficient and also improve transit service, deliveries, unloading, and emergency response times. That space could provide more room for pop-up parks and cafes as well as places to sit and to ride bicycles in a more tranquil environment. Major steps were taken in this direction under the Lindsay, Koch, and Bloomberg administrations and are being continued by NYC Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg. We should cheer their accomplishments.

Hold the Mayo!

The Future of Grocery Prices in the West Village

By W. Russell Neuman

I know I should, but I don't pay a lot of attention to price tags in stores. I should also keep track of sale items and I don't do that either. But when I picked up a jar of Hellmann's Mayonnaise at a chain grocery store/supermarket in the West Village recently, I had to say, "Wait a minute!"

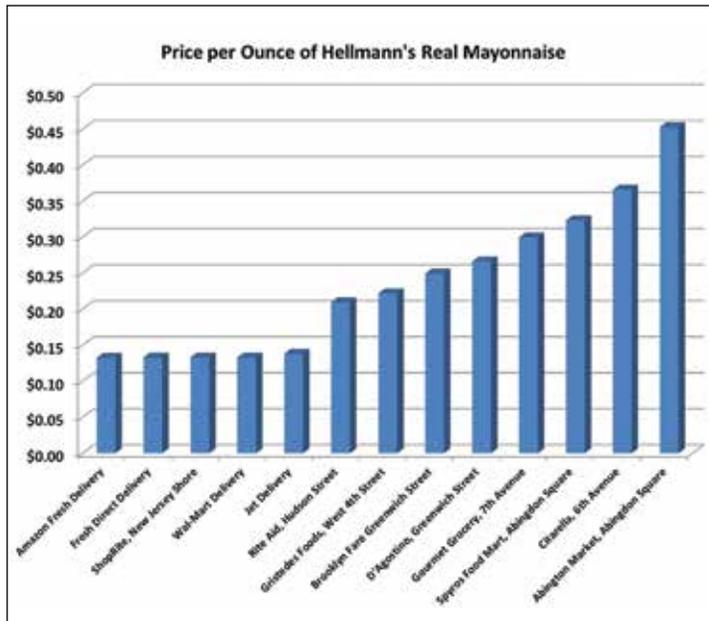
I somehow remembered paying about half that amount in a similar grocery store across the river, in New Jersey. I know real estate prices are particularly high in these parts, but a 100% markup? Really? What is doubly puzzling is that, despite these prices, the grocery stores in the area seem to be in some sort of financial meltdown.

Mrs. Green's on Hudson Street survived only 14 months before shutting down. D'Agostino hit a cash crunch last year, and after a few weeks of nearly bare shelves, was saved by a last-minute investment from John Catsimatidis' Red Apple chain, which also manages the Gristedes stores in town. There are newspaper reports that Fairway, Whole Foods, and Trader Joe's are also struggling financially.

Mayo is my measure. Some folks order a particular dish like Pad Thai to compare

the true quality of Thai restaurants. Connoisseurs of night club balladeers might request a classic song like "New York, New York" to test the mettle of an aspiring songster. For me, the price of a standard 30-ounce jar of Hellmann's "Bring Out the Best" Real Mayonnaise is my metric for verifying the grocers.

So, I'm in the aisle holding the mayo jar with one hand and scratching my head



with the other. When I'm at the New Jersey Shore in the summer, Hellmann's is \$3.99; here it is \$7.99. That could represent a \$4.00 profit on this single non-perishable staple. What are these guys spending that \$4.00 on? I doubt that it is due to higher labor costs in New York City.

In New York, they pay grocery associates an average of \$10.51 per hour compared to \$11.33 in New Jersey (the hourly rate in the West Village could be somewhat higher because the older grocery chains tend to be unionized). True, commercial rents are higher here, typically \$200.00 annually per square foot compared to \$40.00, and often lower in New Jersey. The national average in grocery sales is \$500.00 per square foot, so I remain puzzled about why the local folks are struggling.

Mayor de Blasio remains adamantly opposed to Wal-Mart and other "big box" stores setting foot in Manhattan. I understand his concern about wages. But what about the prices Manhattanites pay for food given artificially limited competition?

For the record, I've compiled the latest sampling of local Hellmann's sticker prices. Some stores carry only the 15-ounce size so prices per ounce tend to be even higher. Clearly, the direct delivery guys are making a point about competitive pricing and free delivery. So, "big box" prices are available in the Village online, just no "big box." Yet.

Curious about Hellmann's?

Hellmann's was invented right here in New York, at 490 Columbus Avenue, by Richard Hellmann in 1905. Hellmann had arrived in the states from Germany only a few years before. He made his own mayo within his deli. Customers loved it and he would sell it to them in small amounts and to other delis in bulk. Hellmann's recipe continued to win culinary awards and the business expanded into major manufacturing; it was ultimately acquired by mega-giant Unilever. Pretty much the same product (just slightly more lemony) is sold with the same blue ribbon label as "Best Foods Real Mayonnaise" west of the Rockies. Now you know.

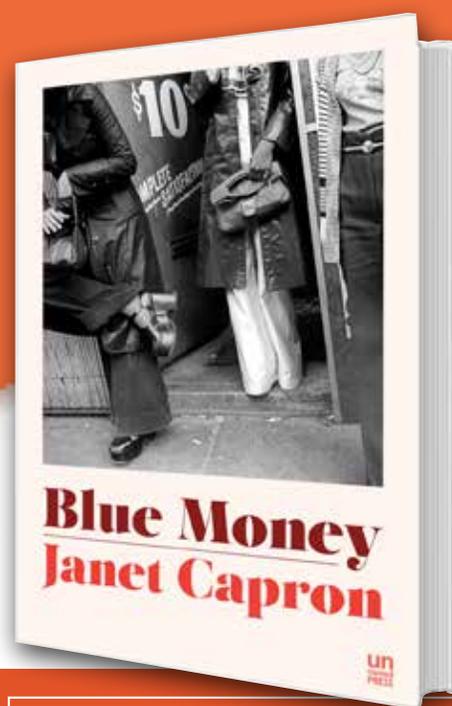


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Local Residents Challenge Democratic Candidates at Village Forum

Oh wow! The election for Mayor and other sundry City offices is coming up fast—on September 12th. And, although there has been some disenchantment with Bill de Blasio, no for-real opposition candidate has emerged.

At a recent meet-the-candidate rally at the LGBT Center on 13th Street, the only sparks were over the Mayor's insistence to build senior housing on top of the Elizabeth Street Garden. Our own WestView News contributor, Dr. Alec Pruchnicki, who treats seniors, strongly supports housing on that site. (I am sure he hears heart-wrenching tales of seniors losing their homes after decades. Read his article on page 26 of this issue.)

Personally, I am in favor of keeping the park a park. It will serve a lot more seniors as a place to sit in the sun than as apartments—a place to sit and watch TV.

—George Capsis

By Edward Yutkowitz

The Democratic primary for City-wide offices is months away, but at a candidates' forum held at the LGBT Center, on 13th Street, downtown Democrats began the formal process of assessing the incumbents and their challengers.

Some 200 members of the public, including many members of the downtown Democratic political clubs, participated in the forum, which was sponsored by five political clubs representing Lower Manhattan: the Village Independent Democrats (VID), the Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club, the Village Reform Democratic Club, the Downtown Independent Democrats, the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club, and the Coalition for a District Alternative.

"It's important for us to have our voices heard on the issues that affect Lower Manhattan," said Erik Coler, President of the VID. "We particularly wanted to give some of the lesser-known candidates for public office the opportunity to address issues that affect our community and the City as a whole."

City Council Member Corey Johnson introduced Mayor Bill de Blasio with a ringing endorsement. Not surprisingly, the Mayor faced the most criticism from the other candidates and the most pointed questions from the audience. They were particularly angry about the administration's policing practices and his plan to develop affordable senior housing on the site of the Elizabeth Street Garden. But the Mayor stood his ground, emphasizing that affordable housing is his highest priority for the City. He also defended his progressive credentials and his record on both housing and policing. The Mayor was also applauded for his commitment to maintaining New York as a "sanctuary city."

Audience members were familiar with the records of the established candidates, all of whom described themselves as "progressive." Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer emphasized the way she's reached out to community groups and other stakeholders to promote practical solutions to meet the needs of the borough's residents, from making sure that schoolchildren have fresh fruits and vegetables to working to save Beth Israel Hospital.

Seeking re-election as Comptroller, Scott Stringer spoke briefly about his record of fiscal probity and how he balances his fiduciary responsibilities with his progressive political views. Public Advocate Letitia James made a compelling case for her re-election, focusing on her work on housing issues.

Cyrus Vance, who is running for his third term as Manhattan District Attorney, said that the Trump administration is putting communities at risk with policies that will allow more guns on City streets. Pushing back against an audience member who pressed him on privacy issues, he spoke of law enforcement's need to access electronic devices to obtain evidence under proper, court-ordered circumstances. He noted, "Cell phones have revolutionized our lives [but] they've also revolutionized the lives of criminals."

The forum also gave several lesser-known candidates the opportunity to introduce themselves. Mayoral candidate, Sal Albanese, a former Brooklyn City Council member, was rough around the edges, but both idealistic and pragmatic. Decrying pay-to-play corruption, he said, "New York should be Athens." He called for bold, creative ideas for mass transit, and reminded the audience of his progressive credentials, ability to work with Albany, and refusal to take contributions from lobbyists or real estate developers.

Long-time advocate for prison and police reform, Robert Gangi blasted the de Blasio administration's approach to criminal justice. Calling himself an "honest progressive," he promised to implement truly progressive reforms should he be elected Mayor.

Warning that the status quo is unsustainable, the two youngest candidates foresaw a dire future for New York City if government doesn't act quickly and imaginatively.

Mayoral candidate Mike Tolkin, an energetic high-tech entrepreneur, proposed a strategy to ensure New York's "economic resilience." He called for government "companies" to help the City meet the crisis of automation, but didn't flesh out the details of his intriguing ideas.

Running for Public Advocate, David C. Eisenbach, a historian and art professor at Columbia University, had the intriguing idea of guaranteeing lease renewal through arbitrating.

continued on page 26



SAL ALBANESE: Mayoral candidate. Former Brooklyn City Council member.



SCOTT STRINGER: Incumbent Comptroller seeking second term.



MICHAEL TOLKIN: Mayoral candidate. CEO and founder of Rooms.com.



GALE BREWER: Manhattan Borough President seeking second term.



KEVIN COENEN: Mayoral candidate. Retired FDNY Lieutenant.



DAVID EISENBACH: Public advocate candidate. Faculty Member, Columbia University.



BOB GANGI: Mayoral candidate. Co-founder of Police Reform Organizing Project (PROP).



LETITIA JAMES: Incumbent Public Advocate seeking second term.



BILL DE BLASIO: Incumbent Mayor seeking second term.



CYRUS VANCE: Incumbent Manhattan District Attorney seeking third-term.



COREY JOHNSON: Incumbent City Council Member seeking second-term in District 3.



ERIK COLER: President, Village Independent Democrats.

Getting to Know the American Tap Dance Foundation

By Kelly Bayer

What do you get when you mix African tribal dance and an Irish jig? Tap dance—America's traditional dance form.

If you've ever wanted to give it a try, get your kids involved, or even just watch the pros have at it, the American Tap Dance Foundation (ATDF) is a fantastic resource for classes and entertainment alike, and it's right here in the West Village.

Inconspicuously tucked away on the second floor above the New Ohio Theatre at 154 Christopher Street (between Washington and Greenwich Streets), this two-room studio is a home base for some of the world's greatest contemporary tap dancers and choreographers, as well as a fun and affordable practice space for dancers of all ages and skill levels.

fordable place to tap dance in the City. New students pay just \$9.00 for their first class. That is unheard of in a place where most studios charge about \$20.00 per class regardless of whether it's your first time or not.

Don't have tap shoes? No problem. The ATDF has a wide selection of shoes available for students to borrow during class, a great feature for those who want to try tap dance but aren't ready to invest in their own shoes. To top it all off, the studio is right by the water, so when you get out of class you can revel in the natural beauty and serenity of the riverfront.

The ATDF also regularly hosts events to enrich and develop the tap community, such as seasonal Tap Talks, workshops, tap jams, choreography showcases, and annual festivals like Tap City, and the New York City Tap Festival, which is coming up in July.



AMERICA'S TRADITIONAL DANCE FORM: Tap dancing is featured in the "Rhythm in Motion" choreography showcase held at The Duke on West 42nd Street. Photo by Amanda Gentile.

Originally founded in 1986 by legendary tap dancers Brenda Bufalino, Tony Waag, and the late Honi Coles as a touring tap dance ensemble, the ATDF is now a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving tap dance history and keeping the art form alive.

With adult and youth classes offered every day of the week, ranging from Absolute Beginner to Advanced, the ATDF is the only dance studio in the neighborhood exclusively dedicated to tap dance.

The ATDF provides students the unique opportunity to learn directly from the pros. There are several knowledgeable Artists in Residence available for instruction, all with different cultural backgrounds, musical tastes, and influences. One thing they all have in common, however, is credentials. Each teacher fills a unique niche in the tap community through choreography, running their own tap companies (such as Dorrance Dance), or performing on Broadway or in other productions like STOMP.

What's more, the ATDF is the most af-

Last month, the ADTF hosted its annual choreography showcase, Rhythm in Motion, a five-day event at The Duke at 229 West 42nd Street (between 7th and 8th Avenues). There, many of the studio's resident artists performed self-choreographed pieces, which demonstrated the versatility of tap dance as an art form. Dancers used tap to tell stories, make political commentary, and express a wide range of emotions, concepts, and themes. Given the current political, environmental, and social climate, it was very refreshing to see art and hear commentary expressed in this way, from the feet up.

Whether you're looking to take up a new hobby, an art form, a fitness regimen, a musical instrument, or even Alzheimer's prevention, tap dance is worth a try. If you've had the itch, the ATDF will help you scratch it. Set your souls on fire. Come tap dance at the ATDF!

For more information on The American Tap Dance Foundation, call (646) 230-9564 or visit atdf.org.



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Notes and Perspectives From Away:

Republican Democracy

By Tom Lamia

From early January to mid-April of this year, I was in New York having a knee repaired. My surgery was on January 20th, the day that politics and governance took a new direction. Every day since has brought something new for discussion, with no one sure where it is all headed. Your choice of news source likely determines what you hear and what you think. All sides seem to agree on one thing: The new president tapped a populist revolt among working class rural whites. That category covers most of my Maine neighbors. As I lay immobile on Horatio Street, I thought about the prospect of an urban elitist like me finding acceptance in South Bristol, where guns are everyday tools and pompous elitists are not welcome.

After ruminating on this, I concluded that all of us within the American Republic are safe, at least until some further political catastrophe occurs.

Our form of government arose in rebellion against a king. It has multiple layers of protection against autocrats and tyrants because such protection was critically important to those who wrote our Constitution. Constitutional principles, including the separation of powers, have kept the country together for 228 years, from our agricultural roots to our urban industrial present. These principles have been tested many times and they will see us through. But that is not our only protective umbrella.

Powers not given to the federal government are reserved for the states. But state governments are not all cut from the same cloth. Have they the power to restrain federal ambitions? To keep their way of life intact when economic and political times change? I believe so. The Constitution gives the federal government the right to regulate interstate commerce, for example, but the police power is reserved for the states. Already this power is being used to protect state interests in “sanctuary cities.” State and local governments will use their reserved powers to fiercely defend local interests thought to be in peril.

The Civil War was fought over an issue that the U.S. Constitution had finessed, not because slavery was overlooked, but because no political solution to it could be

found in 1789. The moral dilemma resulted in war and a bitter national division that continues today. This lesson is not likely to be forgotten. Economic issues often divide state and national interests and are hotly contested. The State of Maine must find common ground on trade (of lumber, lobsters, cod). The City of New York has been challenged in its basic industries (e.g., finance, publishing, the arts) by parts of the country whose cultural values differ. We have gotten through these differences.

The recent election may suggest that the world is going to Hell, with all of us sharing the ride. But do not abandon hope. The country has President Donald Trump; Maine has Governor Paul LePage. These men are more alike than different and not in ways that I admire or approve. I voted for neither, but I see in each the qualities that appealed to the voters who put them in office. The critical question is whether our constitutional system is strong enough to help them govern while protecting us from their governance.

In the last year, I read Ron Chernow’s *Alexander Hamilton* and Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. They give me some confidence that we can keep our heads as all about us are losing theirs. Piketty, if I can synthesize, provides the income and wealth data for most of the western world since the 17th century. It shows a massive shift in the nature of dominant wealth (from agricultural to industrial) and the income distribution associated with it. Inequality of wealth and income has persisted throughout the 250 or so years covered by the data, excepting periods of war, in which wealth (capital) was destroyed. The loss of capital decreased incomes, resulting in greater equality. As war has ceased to be a practical device for income redistribution in the nuclear age, political resistance in the Bernie Sanders model must now serve to restrain a growing inequality.

Point One: Our constitutional system and democratic traditions provide a political tool to deal with economic inequality. We need only get out and vote.

Chernow’s biography of Alexander Hamilton describes the extraordinary impact of a single, exceptional individual



NEW BRIDGE IN SOUTH BRISTOL: The bridge represents a compromise between town and state. Pictured above is the Town Hall in South Bristol, Maine. *Photo by Tom Lamia.*

on our country. Hamilton was a man of such intelligence, energy, ambition, and self-confidence that he was both feared and admired by political opponents. If not the principal author of the Constitution, he was the principal force in explaining and selling it to the states whose approval was necessary for its promulgation.

Point Two: A few among us possess the qualities to carry us through to political salvation. We need only get out and vote.

These high-minded thoughts have practical local application even in rural and coastal Maine. Next month: Maine’s contribution to good government—from Frances Perkins to Angus King, with due credit given to Ed Muskie, George Mitchell, Margaret Chase Smith, William Cohen, Olympia Snowe, and Susan Collins.



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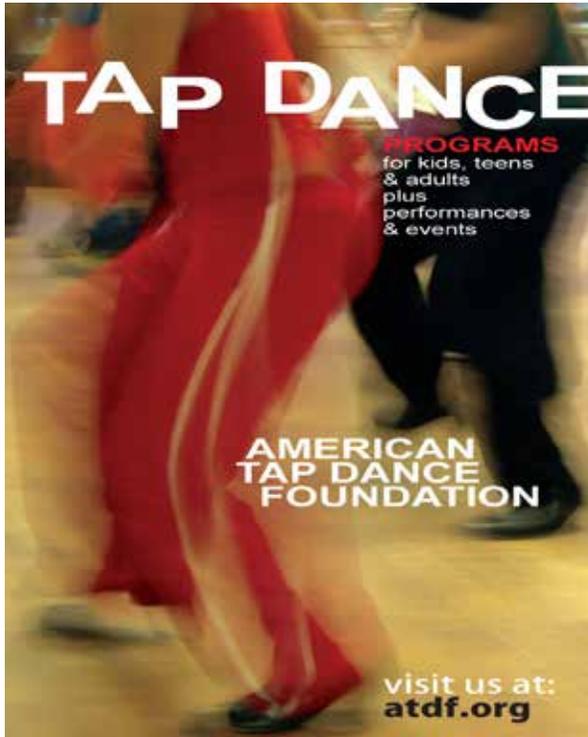


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DIGGING THE BEAT: After watching students from the American Tap Dance Foundation in their annual show on May 21st, these two youngsters were quick to get into the groove on the Christopher Street Pier. *Photo by Maggie Berkvist.*

Blue Money:

A Scathing Debut Memoir by Janet Capron



AN "ELECTRIC" DEBUT: Author Janet Capron's new memoir is earning early praise. Photo courtesy of Janet Capron.

By Andreea Ioana Pantor

The controversial new memoir *Blue Money* is about to hit bookstores on June 20th. For its author, Janet Capron, prostitution was a defiant retort, an exotic adventure that didn't impede her ongoing search for love amid the ruined landscape of drugs and rock 'n' roll in the streets of 1970s New York.

WestView News likes to defy convention too, which is why *Blue Money* (published

by Unnamed Press) made an impression. People are already raving about it. *WestView* Publisher George Capsis called it "electric" and the five-star reviews are piling up on *Amazon Vine Voice* (one *Vine Voice* called it "a masterpiece"). Even a sales manager couldn't resist emailing Unnamed Press: "This is an amazing volume, truly. I can't get over how damned good the writing is....genius really."

Here is some of the early praise from other writers:

"Smart, lurid, and engrossing, *Blue Money* reads like an authentic dispatch from the dark side of 1970s New York."

—Drew Nellins Smith, author of *Arcade*

"I was struck by how wonderfully *Blue Money* paints such a sharp picture of that time."

—Kenneth Bowser, filmmaker and writer/
director of *American Masters'*
Phil Ochs: *There But for Fortune*

"A modern-day *Moll Flanders*...terrifically entertaining and brilliantly written."

—Phillip Lopate, preeminent essayist and
recent author of *A Mother's Tale*

Trump and the Saudi Connection

By Gary Tomei

Trump recently traveled to Saudi Arabia and told the Saudis that they are our friends, even though they espouse a type of Islam, known as Wahhabism, which essentially preaches hatred of America and promotes Jihadism. Trump made this connection even though the Saudis are, in fact, the leading promoters of terrorism in the world—what Trump calls "radical Islam." But, never let principle get in the way of a business deal! Trump is now planning to outsource our government's obligation to maintain the national infrastructure (which is part of the general welfare) to the Saudis. The Arabs get a huge windfall when we pay them for their generosity and the public gets the bill—and gets screwed again.

Do you believe that the Arabs are executing this deal because they love us? Of course, America's con men won't let the foreigners make all the money. Apparently, U.S. billionaire Stephen A. Schwarzman arranged the deal with the Saudis.

Mr. Schwarzman's company, Blackstone, announced that Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund had committed \$20 billion to infrastructure projects, primarily in the United States. It appears that Blackstone will commit another \$20 billion to the fund and, all told, including potential bor-

rowed money, the new fund could invest more than \$100 billion in infrastructure projects.

So, if I understand this correctly, Blackstone and the Saudis will essentially be partners in this scam.

We seriously need to upgrade our infrastructure, but having private companies hand out contracts for those projects presents huge opportunities for cost gouging and corruption.

Imagine how it will work: Instead of the government hiring engineers and construction companies directly, our government will contract with Blackstone/the Saudis. Who will hire the entities who will actually do the work? Both Blackstone/the Saudis, and the company doing the project, will have to make a profit. Even without overcharging and stealing, the increased costs to the citizenry are evident.

America appears to be obsessed with the idea that private business always functions better than government. The fact that the private contractor, Halliburton, wasted and/or stole billions of dollars during the Iraq war should have disabused us of that idea.

It is evident to me that the present trend to privatize government functions in everything from schools to prisons is leading us down the garden path to our own demise.

Maggie B's Quick Clicks



FAMILY AFFAIRS: The celebration of Mother's Day was launched well ahead of time by Sam Mercado's D'Agostino mural, already greeting customers on May 1st. But whether it was at the annual Perry Street Fair, Perryphrenalia, on May 6th, or on The Day itself two weeks later, neighborhood dads were certainly very much involved in all the festivities.

All photos by Maggie Berkvist.



IN and OUT

by Caroline Benveniste

This month, we saw a large number of store closings of all sorts. The closing of Pó was widely reported, and with the previous closing of Home, and the news that Cornelia Street Café is struggling, the outlook for the Cornelia Street restaurant scene is not rosy. On the positive side, two interesting openings and a 'Coming Soon' sign in Gansevoort Market are good news for this food court, which has experienced a high level of turnover since its move to 14th Street.

Additionally, one of our WestView contributors bemoaned the dearth of newsstands in the West Village. She explained, "There is no place to buy a newspaper in the entire area from my house on Morton Street heading east until the newsstand near the handball courts on 6th Avenue and, heading west, until a deli on Hudson Street." Last month, we reported on the closing of Perry News and Grocery, and recently we've noticed that the newsstand on 6th Avenue near 8th Street has also disappeared, making it hard to get one's print news (fake or otherwise). All photos by Maggie Berkvist.

Openings



Chick'nCone (Gansevoort Market, 353 14th Street, between 8th Avenue and Hudson Street): The *New York Post* reported on the opening of Chick'nCone with the headline: "The new Frankenfood people are freaking out about." This stand is the first brick-and-mortar manifestation of a concept that started as a food truck and at stalls in holiday markets. The chicken breast is breaded, fried, and chopped into bite-sized pieces, then coated with sauce (there are five options) and served in a homemade waffle cone, yielding something that is #SoCluckingGood. If you enjoy the concept, you can also have apple- or blueberry-filled cones topped with whipped cream for dessert.



Baby Brasa (173 7th Avenue South, at Perry Street): The "I FEEL YOU BABY" sign

next to the "Tiles for America" enticed many to stop for selfies, and finally, the restaurant that spawned the sign has opened in the space formerly occupied by Empire Szechuan Village. This is the second restaurant for Chef Franco Noriega who is a former model known for his shirtless photos. I was excited to finally have Peruvian rotisserie chicken available in the neighborhood. One can order half- and quarter- chickens (white or dark meat) accompanied by unusual sauces, as well as chicken sandwiches. The Tequeños appetizer is delicious—wonton skins filled with cheese and fried, then served with guacamole. The Arroz con Choclo is an addictive pilaf of sorts with kernels of giant Peruvian corn, similar in taste to hominy. Pisco sours are the drinks of choice, with an outstanding passion fruit version. Good food, friendly staff, and reasonable prices should make this a popular destination. (See George Capsis' piece on page 5 of this issue.)



Rahi (60 Greenwich Avenue, between 7th Avenue South and Perry Street): The space that housed the short-lived Tapestry has been reincarnated as Rahi (meaning 'traveler' in Hindi). The owner has not changed, but the concept has: While Tapestry served Indian food with American accents, Rahi bills itself as an "artisanal Indian restaurant." The maître d' told us immediately that they had poached the chef from Michelin-starred Junoon. The menu is divided into three sections—"In a New York Minute," "At Ease," and "Leisurely," allowing diners to choose their level of commitment. The entrée prices are still high, so it remains to be seen whether this approach to Indian food will work better.



Flip 'n Toss (82 Christopher Street, between 7th Avenue South and Bleecker Street): For a while, we only observed closings on this stretch of Christopher Street, but recently we have reported some openings (e.g., Hudson Bagels, Milk Bar). Flip 'n Toss appears to be primarily a burger spot, but it does have a more extensive menu than you might expect. The "flip" includes grass-fed and vegetarian burgers as well as lobster rolls, while the "toss" comprises the salad options. There are hand-cut fries, and the milkshakes come in various flavors including Oreo. Some of the most interest-

ing dishes reside on the breakfast section of the menu, which includes a PB and Banana Croque (hot-pressed sandwich).



Sushi by Bou/Sushi by Bae (Gansevoort Market, 353 14th Street, between 8th Avenue and Hudson Street): Next to Chick'nCone is another new stand, this one serving sushi/omakase. At the eight-seat counter, four seats are set aside for Sushi by Bou, which serves lunch and dinner seven days a week. The menu is an affordable \$50 12-piece sushi offering which must be consumed in 30 minutes. At the stand's other four seats, different chefs will do pop-ups. Currently, Sushi by Bae with Chef Oona Tempest is open Tuesday through Saturday for dinner. Each evening there are three seatings, and for \$100, you get an 18-piece omakase and 90 minutes in which to eat it.

Closings

Two long-standing village institutions closed this month—Pó and Good. **Pó** (31 Cornelia Street, between Bleecker and West 4th Streets), the Italian restaurant that opened in 1993 with Mario Batali (he later left to open Babbo) is gone. The remaining owner, Steve Crane, told *Eater* that his \$10,000 monthly rent was set to increase 120%. **Good** (89 Greenwich Avenue, near Bank Street), another spot popular with locals, has also closed. Neighbor Mimi Sheraton bemoaned its passing in a *New York Magazine* piece entitled "There Goes the Neighborhood Restaurant – A regular's lament." In it, she called Good her "go-to place for lunches, dinners, and send-out." In this case, the rent increase was only 20%, but owner Steven Picker explained that higher staff pay and other costs meant he "struggled with charging enough to stay profitable but not enough to drive away repeat customers." It is unfortunate that, after surviving the closure of St. Vincent's Hospital and the years-long construction, Good is closing, and just when that part of Greenwich Avenue is benefitting from the opening of the lovely St. Vincent's Triangle Park and NYC AIDS Memorial. Perhaps the West Village is just not a favorable location for vegan restaurants. Gone is **Ladybird** (127 MacDougal Street, between West 4th and West 3rd Streets), which opened in July 2016 and served "globally-inspired vegetable tapas." It had the same owners as meat-centric Bourgeois Pig which had occupied the space for

10 years before. The restaurant received positive reviews and will apparently reopen in the East Village where the owners have three sister vegan spots. **Gingersnap's Organic** (113 West 10th Street, between 6th and Greenwich Avenues), which specialized in raw food, vegan food, cold-pressed juices, cleanses, gluten-free, and was "all organic all the time," also didn't last long. On the same block, **Stolle** (109 West 10th Street, between 6th and Greenwich Avenues) the Eastern European sweet and savory pie purveyor is also gone. **Malibu Dog Kitchen** (35 Christopher Street, near Waverly Place) has closed its doors after a brief run. Perhaps dog owners here are not as willing to spend money on homemade dog food as they are in California. **MM6 Maison Martin Margiela** (363 Bleecker Street, near Charles Street) is the latest Bleecker Street retail clothing casualty. It opened in 2012 in the space that had housed the literarily-named gallery, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place." At the time of its opening, the real estate listing for the space referred to the location as "the Far West Village Gold Coast Retail Mecca."

Further east on Bleecker Street, we must say ciao to **bisous, ciao Macarons** (235 Bleecker Street, between Leroy and Carmine Streets). For seven years, the store was colorfully decorated with a large selection of macaron flavors. The parting note on the door promises "This won't be the last you see of bisous, ciao." **Silk Day Spa** (47 West 13th Street, between 5th and 6th Avenues) is now shuttered. It opened in 2003 and was an early entrant into the day spa explosion. With treatments like the Silk Emperor/Empress and Silk Melt Away Massage, it had more character and charm than the spa chains popping up all over the West Village. **Il Conte** (310 West 14th Street, between 8th Avenue and Hudson Street) had a similar approach to pasta as the long-awaited Pasta Flyer; the pasta is partially cooked in advance, and then finished at the time it is ordered, making the wait much shorter. Il Conte was in the original Gansevoort Market on Gansevoort Street, and did not wait for the market to re-open. Instead, it moved to a stand-alone shop where it remained for less than a year.

Coming Soon

Skinny's Satay Bar (Gansevoort Market, 353 14th Street, between 8th Avenue and Hudson Street) promises that "Our Chicken Satays will revolutionize the fast food industry." Initially, this stand, which plans to serve chicken, beef, and shrimp satays, was supposed to open on May 21st, but now the opening has been delayed until June. Two more Asian restaurants, **Village Express Asian Cuisine (33 Barrow Street, near 7th Avenue South)** and **Ms. Mi's Hot Pot (6 West 14th Street, near 5th Avenue)** are displaying signage. **blow dry bar (113 West 10th Street, between 6th and Greenwich Avenues)** is coming to the space just vacated by Gingersnap's Organic and will offer blow-outs starting at \$40.00.

A Food Tour of London's East End—in the West Village



LENNY THE PUB CAT: British health codes allow cats in pubs, so Lenny is a big draw at The Pride Of Spitalfields, and has a robust internet presence. *Photo by Caroline Benveniste.*

By Caroline Benveniste

Recently, while in London, we (my husband and I and about 10 other people) took a wonderful East End food tour. This was not really a surprise, as we'd previously gone on an Eating Europe's tour in Amsterdam, which was equally brilliant. I didn't know much about the East End, which turns out to be a neighborhood with a long immigrant history. Our engaging guide, actress Madi Dunne, explained that, in the 1700s, Huguenots who fled France settled there. In the early 1900s, there were over 135,000 Jews in the area, and when they moved out in the 1970s, Bangladeshi immigrants replaced them. In the late 1990s, the area was the largest red light district in Europe. Slowly, things began to improve as people involved in food started to move in.

Madi took us to eight food purveyors that spanned a wide range of cuisines and dishes. I enjoyed it so much that, when I returned to New York, I kept thinking about it. Slowly, I realized that I could design a reasonable facsimile with establishments (mostly) in the West Village. Here is the proposed itinerary:

BACON SANDWICH: A bacon sandwich contains back bacon, which is cured pork loin with a small amount of pork belly attached (American bacon is called 'streaky bacon' in England). We enjoyed ours at St. John Bread and Wine (94-96 Commercial Street), a nose-to-tail restaurant and one of the gentrifying food pioneers in the area. The sandwich was served with homemade ketchup, but we were told that brown sauce is also an acceptable accompaniment. Bacon sandwiches are on the menu at Tea and Sympathy, and if you ask nicely, they'll bring you brown sauce on the side.

BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING: We went to The English Restaurant (52 Brushfield Street) for pudding, which in England just means 'dessert,' but in this case it was actual pudding. Bread pudding was developed during lean times using old bread, but this one was made with brioche and served with custard sauce—"naughty goodness," we were told, and it was. In the Village, a Bourbon Biscuit Bread Pudding is avail-

able at the recently-opened 33 Greenwich, and while not exactly the same, it is just as decadently delicious.

CHEESE: Our next stop was The House of Androuet (Spitalfields Arts Market, 10 Lamb Street), a chainlet of French cheese shops. Unlike the ones I've been to in Paris, two-thirds of this store was dedicated to British cheeses. We tried a muslin-wrapped unpasteurized Somerset West County Farmhouse Cheddar (cheddar is the most popular cheese in England), which was nutty and assertive, and a three-month-old Stilton. In the Village, at Murray's Cheese, (which, like Androuet, has caves for affinage) you can try the Neal's Yard Dairy Montgomery's Cheddar and the Colston Bassett Stilton.

FISH AND CHIPS AND MUSHY PEAS: Pop-pies (6-8 Hanbury Street) was our fourth stop, and there we tried the food that kept the British fed during the Second World War. The fried cod and chips arrived in faux newspaper (the real thing was banned in the 1990s for health reasons) and we each got a dollop of mushy peas on top. A Salt and Battery on Greenwich Avenue specializes in fish and chips and also carries mushy peas, should you want some.

CASK CONDITIONED ALE AND CIDER: We walked around the corner and stopped at that most British of institutions, the pub. This one, called The Pride of Spitalfields (3 Heneage Street) was crowded inside, so we stood outside and tried Bow Bells, a cask English Pale Ale from Truman's Brewery. It was relatively uncarbonated, unfiltered, and served at room temperature, but pleasant nonetheless, with orange and lemon notes. We also had a cider called Orchards, which was not as sweet as most ciders found here. On Bleecker Street, the Blind Tiger Ale House carries cask ales and ciders on tap; the dark wood interior is reminiscent of a British pub.

CURRIES: Brick Lane is synonymous with Indian (actually Bangladeshi) restaurants, and we went to the oldest curry house there called Aladin (132 Brick Lane). We ate Vegetable Bengali, Chicken Tikka Masala (apparently the U.K.'s national dish), and Lamb Bhujon (prepared with tomato puree, coriander, and fenugreek). The vegetable curry was my favorite; I found the chicken a bit too sweet. For similar curries, head to Surya on Bleecker Street which serves colonial Indian cuisine.

BAGELS: Coming from New York, I was quite skeptical of English bagels, but I was wrong to be. Two bagel stores on Brick Lane are all that is left of a once-bustling Jewish community. Beigel Bake (159 Brick Lane) is open 24 hours, and is famous both for its bagels and its salt beef, which is prepared by boiling beef in salt and spices for four hours. The resulting product tastes

like a cross between corned beef and pas-trami. We had a beigel and salt beef sandwich with mustard and a pickle; a number of people on the tour thought it was the best thing we'd had. You could order a corned beef sandwich at Murray's Bagels, but to get an approximation of the artisanal salt beef you must travel to Mile End in Noho and order a smoked meat sandwich, ask to have it on a bagel (bagels are made at the sister establishment Black Seed), and add a pickle.

SALTED CARAMEL TART: Our final stop was Pizza East (56A Shoreditch High Street), a trendy restaurant owned by the Soho House Group. There, we ended the tour with a slice of salted caramel tart which had a layer of caramel at the bottom, and above it a layer of chocolate ganache. Yum! It was, in my opinion, the best thing we ate. The closest one I could find in the Village was a miniature salted caramel tart at Le Pain Quotidien. In this version, the caramel is gooier and there is more of it and less of the chocolate. It may not be as amazing as the Pizza East version, but it comes close.

One last item of interest: At the The Pride of Spitalfields pub, there was a resident cat named Lenny. The Blind Tiger Ale House does not have a cat, but Myers of Keswick does. Their cat, Molly, was briefly famous in 2006 when she went missing and turned out to be stuck between two buildings. The story was covered extensively, even abroad, and during the ordeal crowds congregated outside the store. It took 12 days to rescue her, but she is fine and you can see

her standing guard as you browse the shop's large selection of British comestibles.

Learn more about the East End Food Tour by visiting: eatinglondontours.co.uk/east-end-food-tour/

The West Village establishments mentioned in this article are listed below:

TEA AND SYMPATHY

108 Greenwich Avenue, near Jane Street
33 GREENWICH

33 Greenwich Avenue, between Charles and West 10th Streets

MURRAY'S CHEESE

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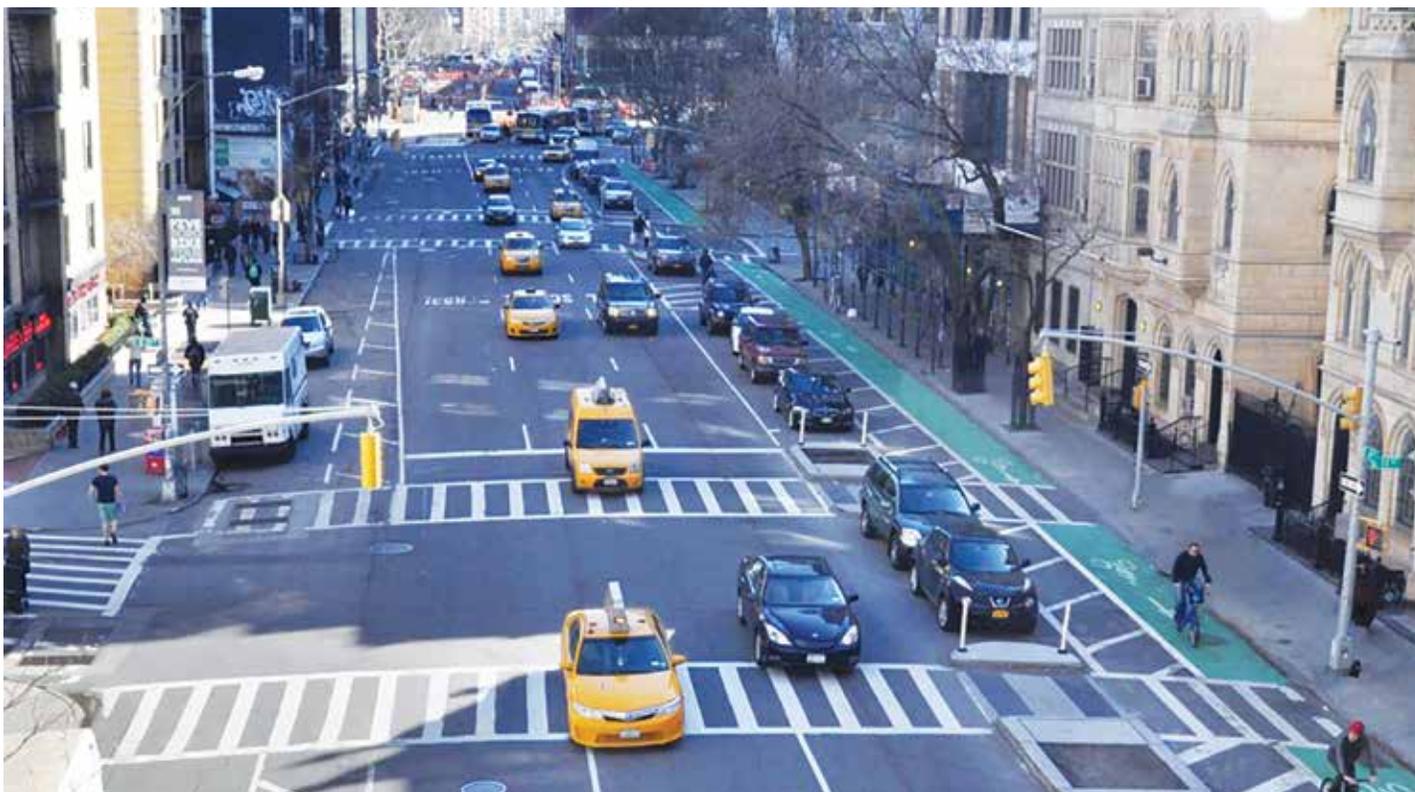
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7th Avenue South to Get Bike Lane, But Residents Demand More Pedestrian Safety



SAFER COMMUTING FOR NON-MOTORISTS: The new 7th Avenue South corridor will contain a parking-protected bike lane, among other design elements. (4th Avenue is pictured above.) Image courtesy of NYC Department of Transportation.

By Andrew Buemi

In 1811, the City of New York adopted an urban design plan that became famous for its logical, navigable grid system. While it has helped preserve the character of the West Village, it has also contributed to unintended consequences that continue to reverberate as the City evolves.

The Commissioners' Plan of 1811 intended to catalyze the structured street development of Manhattan from its southern tip through present-day Harlem, while also allowing the "free circulation of air" to stave off disease. By this time, the City had seen the crippling effects of yellow fever and cholera epidemics during the mid-1700s and early 1800s. Greenwich Village became a haven for those seeking the fresh air and open land of what was, at the time, a small hamlet technically outside of the City limits. As a result, Greenwich Village—and what has become the West Village—was excluded from the Commissioners' Plan and

today retains much of its original layout.

In 1914, 7th Avenue, whose southernmost point was 11th Street, was extended southward to connect with Varick Street at Clarkson Street (this required Varick to be widened, resulting in the destruction of several landmarks). The extension allowed for better passage of vehicles—and the facilitation of business—from Midtown Manhattan to TriBeCa, which was a thriving commercial district. Soon after, construction of the IRT subway line—today the 1, 2, and 3 lines—began. The 7th Avenue South extension hence became a critical artery connecting northern Manhattan to the Village and below. However, in the process, it spawned odd plazas, multi-legged intersections, and dangerous conditions for bikers and pedestrians in the Village.

Last month, members of Manhattan's Community Board 2 (CB2) Transportation Committee unanimously approved a Department of Transportation (DOT) initiative that will make commuting a little safer

for the Village's non-motorists: a protected bike lane on 7th Avenue, extending from 30th Street to Clarkson Street. According to the DOT, there have been over 230 vehicle injuries, 175 pedestrian injuries, 96 bicycle injuries, and one fatality on this stretch of 7th Avenue from 2011 to 2015 alone.

Included in the DOT Plan is a parking-protected bicycle lane with concrete pedestrian islands on the east side of the street (reducing four travel lanes to three); the installation of split-phase traffic signals at the intersections of 14th Street and 7th Avenue, Greenwich Avenue and West 11th Street, West 4th Street and Christopher Street, and Bleecker Street and Barrow Street; and the addition of mixing zones to all other intersections off 7th Avenue.

The project also describes additional pedestrian safety improvements like concrete islands and painted curb extensions, which will force vehicles to slow down while shortening the distance between sidewalks for pedestrians.

A DOT spokesperson recently indicated that work on the 7th Avenue protected bicycle lane between West 30th Street and Greenwich Avenue will begin this summer and is expected to be completed by the end of the year. However, the DOT does not expect to begin construction of the protected bicycle lane between Greenwich Avenue and Clarkson Street/Carmine Street until 2018 due to ongoing utility work in the area.

The DOT Plan is welcome news for many residents, but leaves others demanding more. The CB2 Committee has called for an additional signalized crossing at Leroy Street and expanded pedestrian spaces, particularly at Grove Street, plus an extension of the project down to Canal Street. Other residents point to the existing bicycle lanes and more robust pedestrian protections on 6th and 8th Avenues, wondering why it has taken so long for 7th Avenue to become a priority.

The parents and faculty of P.S. 41 on West 11th Street (between 6th and 7th Avenues), who since 2013 have been advocating for safety improvements along 7th Avenue South, have been among the most vocal proponents of more robust change. Last June, a group of federal, state, and local elected officials wrote to the DOT on behalf of the P.S. 41 community and CB2, calling for a "complete street redesign of 7th Avenue," which would "greatly improve pedestrian crossing times and reduce traffic collisions."

The Commissioners' Plan of 1811 was, for all intents and purposes, widely effective in facilitating the flow of goods and people at a time of rapid growth. It has also laid bare the inherent issues with running a grid design into the labyrinth below 11th Street, where no two intersections are the same.

As the P.S. 41 community, cyclists, and pedestrians living in and visiting the Village would argue, the unique history and present-day reality of the Village behoove officials to take extraordinary precautions when devising City-wide initiatives impacting the area.

Visit nyc.gov/dot to learn more about the DOT's 7th Avenue South Plan.

The Village is Alive and Well (on West 4th & Bank Streets)!



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS: The annual flea market at Le Fanion continues to offer treasures from the South of France. Photo by Emilee Dupré.

By Claude-Noëlle

In the Spring of 1987, two recent college graduates, who had brought wares from Provence to the brocantes of NYC for more than a year, decided to open a little store on the corner of West 4th and Bank Streets in the West Village. The space had just been renovated, and when a 'For Rent' sign appeared in the window, Claude-Noëlle ran the crazy idea by William, "I'm tired of the antique show schlepping. Should we?" He said, "Sure!" Two months later, Le Fanion opened its doors.

Still run by the same yet not-so-young-anymore owners, William and Claude-Noëlle, and shining as brightly as ever, Le Fanion turns 30 years old this Spring and continues to offer treasures from the South of France.

Back in the 1980s, people moved to the Village to be around unique stores like Le Fanion, to hang out in cafés and talk about art or literature, to stroll along Bleecker Street and buy vintage clothes, or to shop at Johnny Jupiter for a unique little something. You couldn't find stores like these anywhere but in the Village. They were the true expressions of their owners' personalities, and a means of creating a sustainable life for people like Claude-Noëlle and William, who had fallen in love with the neighborhood.

The shops opened late because that's how people lived in the neighborhood. At 9 a.m. they would head to a coffee shop for breakfast and an early morning artsy talk. Most of the people in the West Village were, in some way or another, involved in the arts; there were: journalists, writers, dancers, actors, musicians, and painters. The two Le Fanion owners are still modest

West Village residents; they get around by foot, rollerblades, or bicycles. They've kept up with the bohemian style that seduced them 30 (or more!) years ago.

Over the years, Le Fanion hosted some wild Bastille Day parties with the help of Everett Quinton and the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, and with Laurent, a dynamic young French student who brought 80 troubadours from Provence to dance at Le Fanion's Fête! Paloma Picasso once visited and bought cracked pots that she "broke" into shards; she soaked them with her new perfume and gave them out as testers. People still ask about the Annual Le Fanion Flea Market throughout the year. It is a festive occasion that owners and customers look forward to—a chance to "visit," to catch up on what happened during the year, to reminisce, or to show photographs of grown children or newly-adopted pets!

The neighborhood has changed a great deal. Most stores and restaurants from the 1980s are long gone. Kids have grown up and become customers. Old-time customers have moved—some to unreachable spheres. Suppliers and potters have retired or passed away.

Le Fanion has remained, in a consistent and somewhat subdued way during all these years, a steady ambassador of the lifestyle of Southern France. At this very special corner in the West Village, Claude-Noëlle and William continue the neighborhood tradition—opening up a little later than the rest of the City, maintaining relationships with neighbors, and bringing the warmth and sunshine of Southern France. "We feel both proud and honored to be such an integral part of the Village, and to have played a part in this historical neighborhood which has been home to so many famous and less-famous characters."



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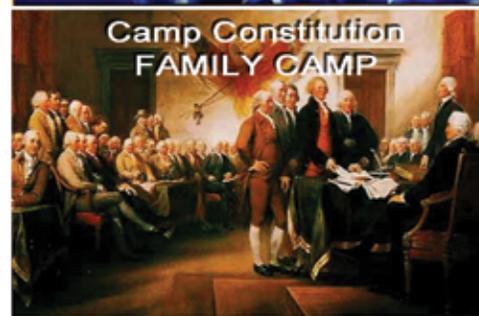
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Who's Coaching Your Kids?

By Paul Caccamo

It's a challenge to raise kids in the West Village, which is why we need to take a much closer look at some of the adults with the greatest influence on them. One group, in particular, is their coaches.

I've lived in the West Village for 20 years and have focused my career on the field of youth development. What I've learned is that kids often listen to their coaches more than their teachers, and sometimes, even their parents. And that may or may not be a good thing. Any parent with a kid in competitive soccer or baseball in this City has seen the impact of good and bad coaching. Bad coaches can make kids feel so much pressure that they begin to lose confidence in themselves—and that can transfer from the playing field to the classroom. I knew that if I could create a new model for coaching, emphasizing values like teamwork, leadership, and inclusion, I might just prove that sports are not only worthwhile but critical to inspiring the health and well-being of urban youth.

In 2010, I launched Up2Us Sports. With public and private funding, I hired young adults to spend a year as coaches in schools, parks, and nonprofits in low-income urban communities. In order to become a coach, they had to first complete extensive training on using sports to inspire positive youth development.

Research has shown that sports participation can lead children to better decision-making on and off the field, like saying no to drugs and/or staying focused on academics. Additional research has linked the benefits of sports (e.g., physical activity, positive peer experiences, adult role models) with a greater ability to deal with stress and trauma, both of which disproportionately affect urban youth. These outcomes are not endemic to sports, but are the product of intentional coaching.



KIDS LISTEN TO THEIR COACHES: Coach Delmy keeps the girls on her South Bronx soccer team on the right path. Photo courtesy of Pauline Zalkin/Fineas Media.

Training coaches to organize and customize the sports experience to keep every child engaged and to constantly foster these values is the hallmark of my program's success.

Since launching the program, I have hired and trained more than 2,100 coaches from New York City to Los Angeles. I have also been able to recruit an equal number of female and male coaches, which is badly needed if we are to extend the benefits of sports equally to girls. Lastly, during the past two years, I discovered that returning veterans make incredible coaches for youth. Their years in the military have taught them the same values of leadership and discipline that are critical to success on a sports team.

The value of all this to West Villagers may be obvious but I'll restate it as a question: What kind of training is your kid's coach getting? It's worth asking before you give that coach the responsibility of being one of the most important adult figures in your child's life.

I welcome WestView readers to learn more about our coach-training program by visiting Up2UsSports.org and contacting me at info@up2ussports.org.



A QUARTER OF A CENTURY: Ariadne and Doric Capsis are joined by their daughter Sophia and son Theodore for a 25th Anniversary photo. Photo by XXXX.

West Village Houses: The Saga Continues



MAINTENANCE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Recently, West Village Houses embarked on significant façade repairs and changes, including the addition of large picture windows in the stairwell walls. Photo by Brian J. Pape.

By Brian J. Pape, AIA

In the April and May issues of *WestView News*, I reviewed the history of West Village Houses (WVH), beginning with their 1960s inception as residences to replace dilapidated industrial buildings along the elevated railroad on Washington Street. The railroad had erected the elevated tracks, starting slowly in 1929, due to public outcry after years of deaths on the surface tracks leading from the St. John's Terminal building at Clarkson Street to various manufacturers on the far west side of Manhattan.

The City-sponsored WVH residences got off to a rough start, both financially and aesthetically. Heavy-handed simplification of construction was forced onto it to save costs. During the quarter-century under the Mitchell-Lama Housing Program, residents saw the change from a rough-and-tumble maritime work area to a highly improved and desirable residential neighborhood. Since 2006, WVH maintained its affordability as a City-supported tenant-centered 420-unit complex—a housing development fund corporation (HDFC) cooperative increasingly surrounded by expensive condo towers.

Recently, WVH has embarked on significant façade repairs and changes, including the addition of large picture windows in the stairwell walls, opening light and views. Bricks have been tuck-pointed and replaced where needed; work on many of the 42 buildings has been phased over numerous months, at budget-busting cost. Superstorm Sandy flooded some WVH buildings, but those damages have been repaired with insurance coverage. The co-op has purchased a flood protection system for

its most vulnerable buildings.

Shareholders of WVH also mention the garage at Washington and Perry Streets, which produces some income for WVH, but could also be sold for revenue. But to whom and for what type of development should it be sold? A meeting to discuss those options will be held in May.

Facing the expiration of its tax abatement in March 2018, which will significantly raise everyone's tax bill (one shareholder says it will double his monthly charges), WVH residents have mobilized information meetings. On April 20th, Julie Walpert and Jim Charleton of the City's Housing and Preservation Development (HPD) Department presented a 'Proposal to Extend the HDFC,' which would create a condo of two co-ops. One co-op would need to have at least 40 units committed to the HDFC option for at least 20 years, while the other co-op would contain units that revert to market-rate ownership, without restrictions.

The HDFC co-op maintains current monthly charges, but caps sales prices and income restrictions for buyers (even if they are family members) as well as the 25% flip tax.

Rumors have circulated that WVH could be sold to a private developer, who could then build new condo towers at market rate. That would require a majority vote by shareholders, as well as major zoning and land use changes. However, this is unlikely and not getting serious consideration from shareholder groups.

What is clear to officials is how difficult it is to develop and maintain affordable housing. So, Mayor de Blasio's goal of 200,000 affordable units over 10 years is indeed an aggressive goal. Can it be achieved?

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Nest. Egg.

By Keith Michael

*This little wren went to market,
This little wren stayed home,
This little wren had, well, caterpillars,
This little wren had none.
And this little wren went, "Wee wee wee"
all the way back to the nest.*

—Anonymous

Let's face it: Birds are baffling. They have feathers. They can fly. They either migrate incomprehensibly long distances or survive brutally cold northern winters, without long johns or down coats. (Oh wait, they do have down coats, but still, those twig legs!) Their eyes are on the sides of their heads. They hatch from hard eggs. ("Which came first...?" is the ultimate riddle.) And they build architecturally intricate nests.

On the sidewalk, a bright blue Robin's egg catches my eye (and Millie's nose). At the end of her leash, Millie's corgi-shortness is the perfect vantage point for examining this seemingly alien shell tottering in the summer breeze. I have to stoop to pick it up while looking for the other half at the curb. Perfectly smooth, a bit of down feather stuck to the outside, and that color! Look up. Where's the nest? The branches of the willow oak above are too dense to find it. But that's the point: Hidden is better.

The basic purpose of a bird's nest is similar across species: to build a protected place



AN ARCHITECTURALLY INTRICATE NEST: A wee House Wren goes "au natural," nesting in a street tree cavity. Photo by Keith Michael.

to lay eggs and care for the hatchlings. Incredibly, the strategies and range of engineering skills employed for this safe place run the gamut from the nearly non-existent to the equivalent of raising a fortress with sentries.

Our common red-breasted American

Robin constructs what most of us think of as the classic bird nest: a comfortably robin-sized bowl woven of twigs and grass secured in the fork of a tree branch. The eggs are laid, obviously, in the center. Simple. But how do Robins know how to construct this perfectly efficient nursery the first time, every time? There are no pre-assembled starter models, no 'How-To' manuals to Google, no Ikea instructions that come with all of the pieces in the box (one hopes) and the note: "Some assembly required."

Aside from this classic nest, the variants of style and ingenuity are nearly endless. Hummingbirds make a Lilliputian demitasse cup from spiderweb silk and lichen flakes. Woodpeckers, rather than weathering the elements of the great outdoors, prefer the arduous task of chiseling a hole in the trunk of a tree, creating a tidy round woodpeckers-only doorway that keeps unwanted company out. The fiery orange and black Baltimore Oriole has the opposite strategy. They've moved out to the suburbs at the very ends of tree branches to weave a hanging silken pouch for their eggs, choosing wind-blown leafy twigs so tiny that even squirrels can't trapeze to them. Then there are the Barn Swallows and the Chimney Swifts who build elaborate mud nests under eaves or bridges (Swallows) or inside chimneys (Swifts), one mouthful of mud at a time.

Birds known as cavity-nesters—Sparrows, Starlings, Bluebirds, Kestrels, and our *wee-wee-wee-ing* House Wren—prefer setting up housekeeping in a pre-fab home. Being near people, our buildings suit them just fine. We provide a bounty of nooks and crannies protected from the rain and isolated from homewrecking predators. Check out the Starlings gallivanting in and out of window pediments or roof cornices, and the House Sparrow co-ops at every intersection

in the T-bar pipe supports for the traffic lights. Bluebirds and Kestrels have readily adapted to man-made nest boxes, though they're very finicky about floor plans, ceiling heights, and accessible entrances.

Larger birds such as hawks and herons demand more real estate. Their piles of ever-larger sticks are more likely to be retrofitted year after year, whereas smaller birds painstakingly start from scratch each season. An eagle's nest can grow to nearly a ton and can be reused for decades. On the ephemeral end of the spectrum, gulls, terns, and shorebirds that "nest" along the coast, travel light, barely scratching an indentation in the sand before depositing their tidy clutch of eggs, maybe pushing a few pebbles nearby as egg-like camouflage. Beach-nesting birds, oddly enough, don't sit on their eggs so much to keep them warm, but to shade them so that they don't hard boil in the sun!

As for the 'nest-as-fortress' model, visit Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn and look up at the imposing gothic gateway entrance. At the top of the central spire is a mammoth installation of sticks. Screaming to and fro are dozens of green, blue, and white Monk Parakeets (their provenance from Argentina is another story). This pile of sticks is a fly-up condominium with multiple entrances. Any predator should think twice (or even once) before raising the wrath of this boisterous coven of sharp-tongued (and billed) birds.

Millie has stood, or rather sat, in the hot sun quite long enough, and her eyebrows inquire, "That egg shell is very nice, but can't we go back to our air-conditioned nest now?" I acquiesce.

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The Broadway Musical Trail— So-So Shows with One Exception

By Robert Heide

Two shows which recently opened on Broadway, *Bandstand* at the Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre at 242 West 45th Street and *Anastasia* at the Broadhurst Theatre at 235 West 44th Street, are just so-so. Both are around the corner from *Hello Dolly!* at 225 West 44th Street on Shubert Alley at the Sam S. Shubert Theatre, where the incomparable Bette Midler as Dolly Gallagher Levi is drawing Broadway crowds like no show since *Hamilton*. With great songs by Jerry Herman and Michael Stewart, advance sales have exceeded \$40 million; some say that the show might simply be called *Hello Bette*.

Bette lived for many years in the Village on Barrow Street where she still owns property; I remember her sweeping the sidewalk in leopard leotards and high-heeled shoes in the 1970s. That was around the time she performed her one-woman shows at the Palace Theatre and later starred in *Clams on the Half Shell Revue*. Those who saw these shows will never forget them. New Yorker critic Hilton Als cited the film *The Rose*—made shortly after her Broadway successes, where she played a singer modeled after Janis Joplin, opposite Fred Forrest as the love interest who couldn't save her from self destruction—as one of the best movie moments of her career.

If I seem to be side-tracking, I am doing so only to describe the two so-so shows, *Bandstand* and *Anastasia*, around the corner from *Dolly*, both costing millions of dollars to put on. I wonder why or how such money was spent and why or how these shows ever made it to Broadway.

Recently, I saw an interview with composer Richard Rodgers from 1974 re-broadcasted on CUNY TV. He complained that nobody writes Broadway musical songs that audience members can hum or sing as they leave the theater anymore. Songwriters like Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Rodgers and Hart, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Arthur Schwartz, and others fostered by Tin Pan Alley, are largely responsible for what's called the 'American Songbook.' For this, tune into Jonathan Schwartz's (son of Arthur) music program on 93.9 FM Saturday nights from 8 p.m. to midnight or Sundays from noon to 4:00 p.m. Every Sunday you can also catch the Big Broadcast from 8:00

p.m. to midnight where host Rich Conaty plays 78 rpms of the 1920s and 1930s.

The sad news is that, when you buy tickets to Broadway musicals these days, there are few memorable songs. I would include the hit, super loud, and aggressive shows *Kinky Boots* and *The Book of Mormon* in this category.

This is also true of *Anastasia*, which is partly based on the film of the same name starring Ingrid Bergman, Yul Brynner, and Helen Hayes. (Bergman won a Best Actress Oscar for the role.) The film also featured a beautiful popular song entitled *Anastasia*, which was recorded by several top artists. The problem with the story is that the film opens with the Princess, supposedly murdered in the Russian Revolution with the rest of her family, wandering the streets of Paris 20 years later in a state of amnesia. The entire first act is given to the Revolution and just getting the Princess to Paris with a pompous parade of the Czar's family (mostly as ghosts) juxtaposed with dour scenes of Communist Russia. Act Two picks up with *Anastasia* finally in fashionable 1920s Paris. However, the hoards of unruly and very young people, apparently huge fans of the animated 1997 film, screamed and laughed throughout the show when I attended, completely shattering the writers' good intentions of this latest and unnecessary incarnation of the mythological story (music by Stephen Flaherty, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, book by Terrence McNally).

Bandstand fares a little better. The singers and dancers are good looking and do well with their vocalizing, but to little avail; the music and songs often fall flat. The direction and dance routines by Andy Blankenbuehler, who choreographed for *Hamilton*, have main actors singing, dancing, and playing several instruments on stage, which ultimately wears them out, along with the audience. I kept thinking of a long-ago Broadway show called *The 1940s Radio Hour* incorporating actual hit songs of the 1940s era, the great Big Band music, some of it upbeat, some positively sentimental, all of it swell. It gave the bandleaders Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Sammy Kaye, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, and vocalists Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Doris Day, and Peggy Lee their due. Everyone was, if not dancing, at least humming and singing the music as they left.

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A Restoration Without Shortcuts

By Anne Olshansky

In 2015, Joe Ienco purchased the West Village landmark building at 35 Perry Street. As an experienced property owner and landlord, he had plans to renovate and restore its original beauty and character. Being a West Village resident for the past 30 years and a Village history aficionado, Joe dove enthusiastically into researching the building's unique past in order to accurately represent the landmark structure.

The four-story brick townhouse at 35 Perry Street is one of three Italianate-style houses in a row constructed in 1852. Originally built as a one-family dwelling, it was converted into a rooming house in the 1890s. One of Number 35's noted dwellers during this time was the Trappist monk, writer, and social activist Thomas Merton, who lived there in the 1930s while working on his graduate degree in English. In fact, at one point, to ascertain the dimensions of the outer balconies, Joe consulted Merton's own writings. In an excerpt from *The Seven Storey Mountain* (which is on the *National Review's* list of the '100 Best Non-Fiction Books of the 20th Century'), Merton mentioned sitting on the balcony; Joe knew to revise the dimensions of the previous plans because they would not have accommodated such an activity. It was meticulous research but personally rewarding to contribute to preservation efforts.

After Merton, the building was reconfigured again in the 1960s to accommodate private apartments, and then became a co-operative in the 1980s. In the video "A Merton Pilgrimage," produced by *America Magazine*, Contributing Editor Father James Martin stands in front of 35 Perry Street and observes that there is no plaque in front of it. When restoration is completed, Joe intends to have a plaque affixed to the building to

commemorate Merton's residency there.

Joe also plans to move into 35 Perry Street when the work is completed, however, he's not sure when that will be. Initially, he planned according to the renovation timeline, but soon discovered that the building's unstable condition warranted a great deal more work. Foundation-related problems in the backyard required complete gutting and correction; the staircases were unsafe and violated City codes; the building façade was detached from the side walls; and the beams were so severely rotted that only plaster walls supported the ceilings and upper floors. This last problem once caused a resident's foot to punch through the wooden floor of her apartment and the ceiling of the apartment below.

Joe is adamant about using materials of superior quality and is unwilling to compromise his standards; this approach is more aligned with the interests of preservation. However, work permits are regularly delayed because all plans and changes need the approval of the NYC Department of Buildings and their inspectors who must visit the site to confirm that Joe's improvements meet (or, in his case, surpass) the current requirements. Joe is installing steel beams and columns that will provide "fortification which will last a millennium," and is determined to achieve a restoration that will rival the solid structures of ancient Rome.

Joe feels that this approach to restoring 35 Perry Street will not only add to the aesthetic beauty of the block (he has replaced the balcony and added four flower boxes), but will also "keep history alive." His neighbors are in agreement and have supported his efforts. As Joe says, "It seems pointless to renovate a landmark building in a manner that wouldn't last as long as [it's] been around." He hopes that other builder-renovators will follow suit.

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Caruso's Quips

By Charles Caruso

Cityscape: No curtains, ladder against a wall. Someone's gone, someone new is coming.

Everyone rewrites his life into a form he can live with.

Immigrant's progress: from blue collar to white collar to no collar.

Spring is a promise summer doesn't keep.

Where Hamlet got his furs: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern & Co.

Our politics come from our deepest gut.

Even the saddest moment passes.

A man who calls a woman 'Baby' doesn't know anything about women—or babies.

Americans don't know their own history, a real advantage for our rulers.

Boxer with the runs: Kayo Pectate.

The one who calls is the one in need.

Yellow sneakers and white hair. Hmmm.

Your jokes tell where your heart is broken.

One Guy's Story and a National Epidemic

By M. Zakir Sabry, MD

"There was always a moment of inertia." That was the best way that Guy could explain his every movement prior to having weight-loss surgery. As he so eloquently put it, "Every time I moved, there was a pause of a second or two and, then my large hanging skin and fat caught up with me."

For years, this is how Guy managed his day-to-day business. Contrary to the conventional preconception, Guy was not an average couch potato who ingested large amounts of processed and fried food and watched TV all day. He was, and still is, a small business owner who runs a construction company and does well enough to feed his own family and 15 others.

How did Guy let himself go? He has a simple explanation, "I loved food." He worked hard, earned enough, and spent most of it eating while his family helplessly watched him getting bigger and bigger. So, eventually Big Guy became the new normal.

Before Guy knew it, he was a mammoth 322 lbs. One day, he realized that something had to give, and it was his weight. After having a very poignant conversation with a friend who underwent weight-loss surgery, Guy decided that it was time to let the scalpel change his course.

Obesity is a national epidemic that is on the rise. More than one-third (35.7%) of adults are considered to be obese. More than 1 in 20 (6.3%) have extreme obesity and it affects both sexes equally, about 36% of each.

Most people with obesity are at risk for type II diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, fatty liver, osteoarthritis, certain types of cancer (e.g., breast, colon, endometrial, kidney), and stroke. These individuals often take mul-

iple medications to manage the activities of daily living. The estimated annual health care cost of obesity-related illnesses is a staggering \$190.2 billion, or nearly 21% of annual medical spending in our country.

The social aspect is a whole other story. Obese individuals are trapped in bodies they can't deny and somehow adjust to the new reality. According to Dr. Paul Thodiyil, Chief of Bariatric Surgery at the Mount Sinai-Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City, many, almost 60% to 70%, consider themselves relatively healthy and without the need for any medical/surgical intervention.

The solution is multi-factorial—a combination of behavior therapy, diet, and exercise. All of these factors are essential for success but there is a subset that includes strictly surgical candidates. Post-surgery, not only do physical appearances improve, confidence levels also improve and, best of all, medical problems disappear; most are able to discontinue their pills.

However, once the heavy burden of obesity is lifted, most patients are left to deal with a new problem—the persistence of redundant wrinkly skin and the misdistribution of fat. This new problem can be addressed only with staged body contouring procedures including: abdominoplasty, lower-body lifts, thigh lifts, arm lifts, and sometimes face and neck lifts.

These procedures are not always affordable and may present complications. However, the rewards can be overwhelming. With changes in appearance comes the feeling of a new, jubilant life. In Guy's words, "I feel incredible...like a different person. I feel [like] I'm 10 years younger. Today, I feel every part of my body, and know it's there."

Cyber Hand *continued from page 7*

must think of our readers who may experience the same cyber theft.

"How did they get the number of my card?" I asked the nice, young Chase officer who looked pained as he offered, "I don't know." He then called the Branch Manager who politely talked in circles and circles and handed me the official Chase pamphlet—30 pages of fine print. He referred to page 9, paragraph 3 (I can't find the book now so that may not be the right page).

Some time ago, I received a robot call from Chase telling me that somebody was trying to remove thousands of dollars from my account. The voice asked if that was OK. After blurting out to the robot voice that it was not OK, I marched with righteous indignation to the bank to protest—With that much money about to be stolen, a humanoid should have called, not a robot! I received furrowed brows, a sympathetic drone, and vague allusions to: "That's how the bank does it."

Yes, well, I am the man who slaps bullying

cops so I emailed Jamie Dimon, the handsome young Greek-American Chase President who went to Bronx Science. He came right back with, "Sorry, we get so many of these attempts we have to use computers."

I foolishly boasted to my nice, young Branch Manager that Jamie Dimon emailed me back. He, in turn, gossiped to the District Manager who went insane—How could you let a customer send an email to Jamie Dimon? The District Manager then had every copy of *WestView* removed and stuffed into other people's news boxes around the subway entrance.

My email protest went unheeded because, as I discovered later, you don't send emails to Jamie Dimon but to the lady in charge of reading Jamie Dimon's emails. She decides if they should be put on his desk. Oh, but last week the lovely new Branch Manager all on her own, without prompting, smiled and offered "You can leave your papers."

Computers will not only rob our few bucks from the bank but the human exchange as well.

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Bread and Roses

By Keen Berger

1. Affordable housing is a top priority.
2. Every community needs housing that is truly affordable.

Yes and yes. I agree completely with both statements. I state this at the outset to prevent critics of the Elizabeth Street Garden (including Mayor de Blasio and Councilmember Chin) from implying that they are noble, and fighting against greed.

However, like a blind bulldog with a meatless bone, some people fall into an ideological trap that makes them bite anyone who tries to look at the big picture. Housing is a top priority—YES. Housing is the only priority—NO.

I taught at Sing Sing prison, where housing and food are free for inmates. In doing so, I saw that people need more than a small room to thrive. What Elizabeth Street Garden will continue to provide unless the lot is carved up by developers is: (1) a conduit for social support, (2) a community gathering space, (3) neighborhood friendship, (4) plant cultivation and growth, (5) fresh air, and (6) multi-generational interaction. People need all six components to live fully. To destroy them for very few apartments is like that dog with the bone, unable to release its grip and see that people do not live by bread alone. Bread AND Roses are necessary (look that up on YouTube to understand the reference).

In order to make housing a top priority, we must have all luxury developers offer half of their apartments at affordable

rents. Mayor de Blasio and Councilmember Chin can fight for that instead of letting the real estate industry profit by destroying a valuable garden.

Making truly affordable housing available in every community involves: (a) creating four times more affordable housing on Hudson and Clarkson Streets—an exchange that Community Board 2 (CB2) has made and that the City has not considered, (b) building housing on the former St. John's Terminal site (for which CB2 and Corey Johnson obtained far more senior housing than Elizabeth Street Garden could ever have), and (c) finding other neighborhood locations where no thriving garden would be displaced.

The neighbors of Elizabeth Street (young and old) believe that their community is park-starved. Some *WestView* contributors disagree. But everyone should stop growling over a bone and start recognizing that humans need more than a place to sleep. Once the gnawing stops, we can join forces to keep Elizabeth Street Garden whole while creating low-cost housing in areas that now have neither parks nor affordable homes.

I write not only as someone who has taught in prison and in the poorest neighborhoods of the Bronx, but also as someone who has been displaced from her West Village home for nearly a year due to a fire. I have a safe room in Brooklyn, and I am grateful for it. But I realize every day that a place to sleep is only a start: People need community. Elizabeth Street Garden is, for many just that—community.

Kill the Zombie Park Already Part I: Build Housing

By Alec Pruchnicki

It should be dead, but somehow it's still alive. Advocates continue fighting to keep the Elizabeth Street Garden entirely open space rather than a site for housing. Since *WestView News* first examined this issue in its articles: "Selfishness One, Housing Zero" (May 2016) and "Parks Are Good, Housing is Better" (November 2016), the basic arguments are still the same.

First, the City is experiencing a housing crisis. Homelessness has increased more than three-fold since the Koch administration—from over 17,400 in 1988 to over 62,000 people today. Beyond the numbers, it is plain to see all around the City—they sleep on our sidewalks, panhandle, and show up in our hospitals, prisons, and subways. On rare occasions, they engage in horrific acts of violence. They live in crowded quarters with their families, often with resources stretched to the breaking point. They desperately need housing, not parks.

Second, there is no shortage of parks around Elizabeth Street. The garden is made attractive by its lawns, flowers, and statuary, which other concrete-paved parks don't have. But, within five blocks of the garden, there are six parks, concrete paved, but parks nonetheless. They have their own strengths, including handball courts, athletic fields, playgrounds, water fountains, public bathrooms, and a food kiosk. Additionally, these parks have extended hours and much more space,

which sometimes includes community gardens. Elizabeth Street Garden advocates say that Community Board 2 (CB2) lacks parks. But venture a few blocks north and east of CB2 and you'll find a plethora of park space.

Now, local business owners, including Allan Reiver, his son Joseph, and a few others, have formed a new organization to sue the City and stop the building of housing. This is unsurprising. Years ago, Reiver did a lot of work to fix up the garden and leased it from the City to store materials from his gallery. Does this give him a proprietary interest in this parcel indefinitely? Years ago, Arturo Di Modica placed his massive *Charging Bull* statue near Wall Street, at Broadway and Morris Street. When the *Fearless Girl* statue was erected in front of it, he claimed it infringed on his freedom of speech by ruining the image of his work. Does he have propriety rights on that sidewalk? No, this is stealth privatization of public space.

How does this matter to the West Village? At a recent town hall meeting, several prominent West Village political activists castigated Mayor Bill de Blasio for supporting housing instead of the garden. If he had taken their advice, he would have moved the housing to a lot on Hudson Street, in the heart of the West Village.

Though this debate only involves the West Village slightly now, it may heighten a lot more in the near future. Stay tuned.

Candidates *continued from page 12*

tration for small businesses. However, it wasn't clear whether this would be legal or under the Public Advocate's purview.

Former firefighter Kevin Coenen seemed sincere in his disgust with corruption in City Hall, but wasn't able to articulate a clear rationale for his candidacy for Mayor.

"We were happy to provide an opportunity for our neighbors to speak directly to the elected officials whose

decisions affect their lives," said Erik Coler. "The give-and-take between audience members and the candidates demonstrated the knowledge and passion of our community and helps keep our elected officials on their toes."

On May 11th, the VID endorsed Mayor de Blasio and Public Advocate Letitia James; it declined to endorse Cyrus Vance for re-election. The Democratic Primary will be held on Tuesday, September 12th.

Using State and City Law to Fight Bad Landlords

By Joseph Turco, Esq.

The battle between landlords and tenants is epic. It's like a jungle, where the landlord predator can smell weakness from a mile away.

In my April 2017 article in *WestView News*, "Landlords: From Best to Worst (and So Much in Between)," I wrote about a longtime West Village tenant, Lydia Martinez. Her family had owned La Sangria back when Flamenco was regularly performed at their Hudson Street restaurant. Lydia's residential landlord, Time Equities (owner/manager of 150 buildings City-wide), claimed that a mere four late rent payments constituted a breach of her rent-regulated lease. Hogwash. Once we responded in court with counterclaims for the landlord's failure to make required repairs, they backed down and withdrew the case against her.

Any lawyer will tell you that you must assert the "warranty of habitability" defense whenever you can, and that's what we did against Time Equities. That means that when a landlord uses your rent arrears as a basis for eviction, you break out the list of complaints and requests to repair. These requests are useful later in court, especially when they are ignored.

Our case against Time Equities was successful because of Lydia's good record-keeping, and her respectful vigilance when complaining by text and calling 311 when a report was justified. (Is it just me or is 311 a much better service now than it was in the past?) The bottom line is that an empowered tenant makes all the difference (consult the Tenant Rights and Responsibilities section at NYC.gov).

A new case on our docket involves rent-controlled apartments on West 10th Street, where a landlord named Julian Whiting appears to be bucking for a place on the Public Advocate's 'Notorious Landlords' List. Readers should be aware that, in addition to the common defenses and actions available to tenants in the City's housing courts, New York State law provides complaint forms and hearing officers if you feel that you've been retaliated against, denied service, harassed, or denied a lease renewal. All of the above seem to have happened in Mr. Whiting's buildings.

As usual, record-keeping and due diligence will come in handy at our upcoming hearing in that case, where it's alleged that the landlord had been deceitful and malicious regarding a rent-controlled apartment. That should be a red flag for anyone concerned about preserving affordable housing. Our client is fighting back at the New York State agency, Division of Homes and Community Renewal, whose main City-wide office is in Queens (visit NYSHCR.org for more information).

Elsewhere in the Village, it is not a landlord raising our concern this week, but a cooperative board (co-op), which is sometimes worse, especially when that co-op is badly managed and its financials are in disarray. If your co-op board has not held a board meeting in years, leaves shareholders in the dark about important matters, or neglects its responsibilities, it is important to strike back and assert claims and defenses early. As for common areas, outer walls, structural issues like foundation and roof problems, and services like plumbing and electric, the co-op board is responsible for all of it. That board will be held to the same standard as any other landlord in this regard.

So, shareholders and residents, take note: The greatest arrow in any tenant's quiver—complaining about problems and demanding repairs—is available to any shareholder or resident in a co-op when the board is suing for unpaid common charges.

They say when it comes to landlords, I like "stickin' it to the man," which is true, but I also take pleasure in negotiating amicable settlements, which we did recently with landlord Ken Friedman of Christopher Street. As landlords go, Ken is a pretty decent guy, agreeing to a concession that he did not have to, proving that there is some kindness among the 1%.

I hope to write a future article with positive conclusions to these and other cases. Sometimes landlords do see the light and are compelled to behave better. That's usually because the tenant or his/her advocate displays a stiff upper lip, a thick skin, and a strong spine—all necessary to survive in the jungle.

For more information on New York City housing rights, visit metcouncilonhousing.org.

Favorite Restaurants, Continued

PICCOLO ANGOLO (621 Hudson Street, at Jane Street): In more than 20 years, I've never had a bad meal at this family-run establishment. I've found it a little expensive but always high quality. Its large portions and diverse menu make it well worth the price. One caveat is that it can feel small and crowded, which has never bothered me, but might annoy others.
Food: 5 Service: 5 Price: 5
Ambiance: 4 Noise: 4

—Alec Pruchnicki

Will you share your favorite West Village restaurant with the readers of WestView?

Please limit each review to 50 words or less and provide five ratings, each on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most positive. The rating categories are: Food, Service, Price, Ambiance, and Noise (e.g., A "Price" rating of 4 would indicate a good value for the money; A "Noise" rating of 1 would indicate a noisy venue).

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Carnegie Concert to Honor Sylvia Olden Lee

By Dennis Speed

The Foundation for the Revival of Classical Culture is presenting a concert at Carnegie Hall, in collaboration with the Schiller Institute, New York Chorus, and Harlem Opera Theater on June 29, 2017 at 7:30 p.m., to honor the 100th birthday of the extraordinary musician and vocal coach, Sylvia Olden Lee. Performers will include vocalists and instrumentalists that knew, worked with, and were deeply affected by Ms. Lee, including: Osceola Davis, Elvira Green, Gregory Hopkins, Everett Suttle, Simon Estes, Kevin Short, David Lofton, Richard Alston, and others.

Sylvia Olden Lee (1917-2004) was among the greatest vocal coaches of the 20th century, and an extraordinary music teacher. As a talented young performer, she played for Franklin Delano Roosevelt at his first inauguration at the age of 16. A classical musician fiercely proud of her African-American origin, Sylvia successfully rectified the once-prevalent misconception that the spiritual was inferior to the canon of classical music. She was a go-to person, in Europe and America, for countless promising singers trying to break into the world of opera and concert recitals. She worked with singers including: Elisabeth Schumann, Kathleen Battle, Gerhard Hüsch, William Warfield, and Jessye Norman, among others.

PROJECT "SYLVIA"

Sylvia Olden Lee's great passion, and most enduring legacy, was her 60-plus years in teaching. In this field, she displayed an energy, enthusiasm, and endurance that was authentic,



HONORING SYLVIA OLDEN LEE: Students from the Foundation for the Revival of Classical Culture's Summer Program display their various constructions of the "five Platonic solids." Photo by Lynn J. Yen.

borne of her unflagging faith in a better future for all mankind. Fearless in the face of controversy, Sylvia toured in 1942 with the great, and later much-maligned Paul Robeson.

"Sylvia's truth-telling teaching was intended to lift the human spirit through music," said Lynn J. Yen, Founder and Executive Director of the Foundation for the Revival of Classical Culture. "She wanted...us to realize, as she [often] said, that we are all one human race, and to discover that universal harmony is the natural condition of mankind. For Sylvia, mu-

sic was the most powerful weapon...to achieve that objective. She believed that 'Where words divide, music unites.'"

To that end, Sylvia developed a program entitled "Project SYLVIA (Saving Young Lyric Voices In Advance)." This program entailed a comprehensive approach to teaching voice training and proper voice placement, in the national school system, from grade school through high school. It also focused on the preservation, maintenance, and development of the vocal capabilities of matured professional and non-professional singers. Within the last decade of her life, Ms. Lee was involved in a non-stop crusade to re-popularize classical musical performance and education among all youth. "The great voices of the operatic stage are singing in the garages, waiting on tables, and singing in the showers of our country," she often said.

On June 29, 2017, the occasion of Sylvia's 100th birthday, the Foundation for the Revival of Classical Culture anticipates that at least 1,000 of the people that attend Carnegie Hall for the tribute will be between the ages of 11 and 18. In addition, the Foundation hopes to form a 'June 29 Movement,' a choral association and network of persons devoted to the research, performance, and teaching of spirituals and other elements of the classical repertoire.

All who share an enthusiasm for this task are heartily encouraged to attend the June 29th Carnegie Hall concert and to help alert others to it.

The Foundation for the Revival of Classical Culture may be contacted at (718) 707-8722 for more information and group and discount rates for tickets.

Are We Alone? Ruminations About Extraterrestrial Life (Part One)

By Josef Eisinger

In these troubled times, it is enlightening and consoling to ponder our place in the larger scheme of things. We are today privileged to have gained a realistic perspective of our place in the universe thanks to the great progress scientists have made in the past century. Their observations of the universe and the laws of nature they discovered explain the physical and biological evolution that brought humankind to the state it is in.

I find this insight most gratifying and it, in turn, raises the question posed in the title of this essay: Is our story of life on Earth unique or did life emerge on other planets scattered by the billions in our own galaxy, the Milky Way, and in the universe at large? And beyond that, did life elsewhere evolve to a technological state comparable to that attained on Earth—a notion that has some intrepid Earthlings contemplating interstellar communications.

The raw materials that make up a living organism—its constituent atoms and molecules—are at the base of all such speculations. We know from observations and the well-tested laws of physics that the same 92 stable nuclei that exist on Earth are also found in all reaches of our universe. We also know that, under suitable conditions, these positively-charged nuclei are surrounded by electrons to form atoms and molecules that interact with each other according to



DID LIFE EMERGE ON OTHER PLANETS? This is an artist's impression of the planet Proxima b, which orbits our nearest star Proxima Centauri on the horizon. It is pictured with its companion stars Centauri A & B above it and to the right. Image courtesy of ESO/M. Kornmesser.

the laws chemistry—or, more precisely, according to the rules of quantum mechanics, which determine their affinities to each other. The results of many experiments give us confidence that the same physical laws are valid in all corners of our universe.

The raw materials of extra-terrestrial life—the elements and their chemistry—are therefore very familiar to us, whatever planet they find themselves on. But for a living organism to evolve from them, the prevailing conditions must be 'just right,' and must remain so for a very long time. We know that, under suitable conditions, the sun's radiation can generate the basic building blocks of life (e.g., carbohydrates, amino acids) in water, although the crucial steps of assembling the

components into a self-reproducing organism, remain hidden. The same chemical building blocks are, incidentally, also found in meteorites—those messengers from outer space that land on Earth.

All forms of life on Earth, from the lowly ant to the majestic whale, employ the same biological master plan to create a living organism: a genetic memory, coded with four letters (the bases of DNA), which is expressed in proteins that consist of some 20 different amino acids, strung together in the particular order that determines each protein's form and function. Other schemes for generating living organisms may have existed on Earth in the distant past but could not compete with

the formula outlined above; its remarkable stability and flexibility made Darwinian evolution possible.

While somewhat different biological schemes may well have evolved under different conditions, it seems likely that they would employ the same matchless solvent, water, and would also employ carbon-based molecules because the rules of quantum mechanics (Pauli Principle) endow the carbon atom with uncommon chemical versatility. In searching for extra-terrestrial life it is, in any case, reasonable to look where the prevailing conditions resemble those on Earth—home of the only example of a successful biological evolution we know.

In Part Two of this piece, I will further explore the nature of the conditions necessary to foster extraterrestrial life.

Josef Eisinger, Professor Emeritus at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, is the recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships, and the author of more than 150 scholarly articles that range from nuclear physics and molecular biology to the history of science. While at Bell Laboratories, Eisinger's research base for 30 years, he and colleagues developed the Hematofluorometer—a device for diagnosing lead poisoning. Eisinger is also the author of Einstein on the Road, Einstein at Home (Prometheus Books 2011, 2016) and his memoir, Flight and Refuge: Reminiscences of a Motley Youth (Amazon 2016).

Jim Fouratt's

REEL DEAL: Movies that Matter

JUNE 2017

It's June: Festivals and Pride are in the air. In this era of "fake news," 90-second sound bites, fast food documentaries, and the constant "breaking news," we welcome the 28th edition of **The 2017 Human Rights Watch Film Festival (HRWFF)**, which is co-presented by the **Film Society of Lincoln Center (FSLC)** and **IFC Center** (June 9th through June 18th). This international, traveling film festival is especially strong this year with **21 films and discussions showcasing courageous activists during challenging times. *The Blood Is at the Doorstep*** is about the killings of black people, mostly men and boys, in the U.S. In ***Complicit***, one worker stood up and said "NO!" to Foxconn and its Chinese government connections. Foxconn has 13 Chinese plants that manufacture Apple cell phones in slave-like working condi-



COMPLICIT: This film centers on the woman who exposed working conditions in the FOXCONN iPhone factory. *Image courtesy of BAMcinemaFest.*

tions reminiscent of 1984. In ***Home Truth***, murder made a newly-minted activist fight back and confront the police department's cover up of what actually happens. These are just part of the inspiring stories of the HRWFF. A complete list of films can be found here: ff.hrww.org. I will cover more extensively the films and panels on the *WestView* website and my *Reel Deal* blog. Besides film, there are special events and panels and all the films will have Q&As after the screenings. If you have kids, or a significant other, make a play date and take them to the **HRWFF**.

BAMcinématek (June 14th through June 25th) has, since its inception nine years ago, become one of the most exciting festivals in the U.S. Its programming features some of the best new American independent films. Now in lock step with **MoMA** and **FSLC's New Directors/New Films**, it targets the Brooklyn millennial filmgoers and the creative community. The line-up this year includes the big-screen return of acclaimed New York filmmaker **Jim McKay**. He is back from the land of the small screen after his move to Los Angeles where he worked in quality network and cable television and raised a family. I have waited almost 10 years for him to return to the kind of cinema so needed these days, the kind that tells the stories of everyday people. McKay is committed to humanizing by making visible the people who ride public transit anywhere. In fea-



LANDLINE: Jenny Slate and Abby Quinn star in Gillian Robespierre's new film. *Image courtesy of BAMcinemaFest.*

tures like *Girls Town* and *Our Song*, he "sings the song electric." His new film, ***En el Séptimo Día***, which is about an immigrant, feels like it was ripped out of today's newspapers. In fact, it is the story of people who come from somewhere else to build a better life—a story that started with the Pilgrims on the Mayflower. Also returning is one of my favorite storytellers, **Andrew Dosunmu**, who has an eye for beauty and a sensitivity for what lurks beneath the mask of secrecy. The director of *Mother of George*, Dosunmu returns with ***Where is Kyra?*** We also see the return of *Obvious Child* director Gillian Robespierre with ***Landline***. Be warned: this festival sells out.

Really, BAM's **Rose Cinema** is just a short subway ride away.

Gentrification and its effects on residents and small businesses in the City, including Greenwich Village, is a subject important to older people who have lived here a long time. It borders on sentimental nostalgia for what once was. While documentaries are the logical place to put into context what has been happening in our neighborhood, I recommend two award-winning narrative films by our neighbor **Ira Sachs**, which you can view through all the normal streaming platforms (e.g., Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc.)

Sachs puts into context how disruptive to family life and neighborhoods gentrification is. ***Love is Strange***, set in the Village with a cast of recognizable faces, tells the story of how one same-sex older couple loses its rent-regulated apartment and how its inter-generational community of friends come to the rescue (Marisa Tomei, who was brought up in the Village, is perfect). In ***Little Men***, which is set in Brooklyn, a house left to an actor and his psychologist wife becomes the template for what happens when the high cost of living, taxes, and rents make it impossible for small businesses to survive. How this affects the friendship of two boys is the core of the story. Both of these narrative films capture the effects on individuals when relationships are impacted by gentrification. Sachs is a master storyteller and a genius at casting.

Let's Go to the Movies...

RISK

Director: Laura Poitras

Risk is Laura Poitras' follow-up to her Oscar-

winning documentary on **Edward Snowden**, *Citizenfour*. **Julian Assange** is the subject of this well-crafted documentary containing subtle touches of artistic vision. Poitras first started shooting whistleblowers in 2011. Assange was the most prominent and she continued to follow him with her camera. He and **WikiLeaks** lawyer **Sarah Harrison** (who I met at Fort Mead in Maryland when we both attended the **Chelsea Manning** military court trial) were instrumental in getting Edward Snowden out of Hong Kong to safe harbor when the U.S. government made it impossible for him to switch planes in Russia. (Snowden got stuck at the Moscow airport.) Poitras is upfront about her conflict between respecting the courage of Assange and maintaining a distanced view of his personality as he lives confined to a small apartment in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. While Assange has nerves of steel, she also questions in a voice-over his "creeping vanity." Many people hate Assange, from **Donald Trump** to **Hillary Clinton** voters. The latter are still outraged that he had *WikiLeaks* publish the Democratic National Committee emails which showed that Clinton's campaign was complicit in shutting out **Bernie Sanders**. Poitras appears to take no sides in *Risk* and it is not a puff piece on Assange. What she does, as in her other work, is present in a complex and challenging manner living history. I came out of the theater thinking about Abbie Hoffman with whom I had a close relationship in the 1960s. (Hoffman was a charismatic narcissist, who was much loved by people who did not know him personally.) *Risk* is a compelling documentary that moves like a thriller not the least because of the soundtrack by **Jeremy Flower**. Poitras has made what we see little of today in popular, fast food documentary filmmaking. It is easier to produce black-and-white advocacy by taking sides on complicated issues, both political and personal. But Poitras, like **Charles Ferguson** and **Alex Gibney**, puts all the facts on the table and allows the viewer to make the choice. Because of the political climate we are living in today, *Risk* should be seen by all, regardless of how one personally feels about Julian Assange. *Risk* raises questions of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and the right of the public to know what its government is doing.



CITIZEN JANE: Jane Jacobs holds high the signed petitions to stop the road through Washington Square Park. *Photo courtesy of the U.S. Library of Congress.*

CITIZEN JANE: BATTLE FOR THE CITY
Director: Matt Tyrnauer

Jane Jacobs lived in Greenwich Village for about 30 years. When she heard that city planner **Robert Moses** was going to put a road through Washington Square Park, she said to herself "NO!" Robert Moses was well known for his bullying tactics and had an almost imperial presence in re-shaping New York City into something that would no longer point to the past but to the modernist future. Moses either had the support of, or stood above, the politicians of the City and succeeded in implementing his vision overall. However, Moses went one step too far in wanting to put the roadway in the middle of Washington Square Park. Jane Jacobs' quiet outrage set to challenge the giant not with a slingshot, but her pen. Skilled at letter writing, she choose her weapon carefully. *Citizen Jane* is not a documentary which is neutral in its viewpoint and, if you live here in the Village, you probably don't want a neutral documentary. *Citizen Jane* is very relevant today as we see our community being ravaged by real estate cabals united in greed—their frenzied building of luxury condos even where a hospital used to stand and serve the community.

Michael Bloomberg was the "socially conscious and morally ethical" independent, political entrepreneur mayor. He saw development as the future of New York City and placed Amanda Burden, a woman born into a billionaire family and a member of the Social Register, as the head of the New York City Department of City Planning. There wasn't a development plan that Bloomberg wanted that he did not get. This time, there is no Jane Jacobs to emerge like **Joan of Arc** to save our community and so the "**ghost condos**" have been built on the skeleton of a hospital.

I think it is critical for anyone who cares about saving whatever is left of the Greenwich Village culture and community to see this film. Is it too late? Possibly! The court win involving the **NYU expansion** as well as the local politicians' and Community Board 2's (CB2) acceptance of the **St. John's Terminal waterfront project** are poised to fundamentally rupture the infrastructure of what is now called 'Greenwich Village.' The amount of people moving in to live and work within the boundaries of CB2 I think would give Jane Jacobs a major migraine. But I do believe that cinema has the power to give people the will to stand up and say "ENOUGH!" Well, you can see what *Citizen Jane* has done to me. Go see it for no other reason than to learn the history of Greenwich Village.

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