



## NYCHA in the Apartment Next Door

By George Capsis

Below is an excellent history of U.S. public housing by our gifted Architecture Editor, Brian Pape. The article was prompted by the now year-long discussion here in New York to take government out of the building and maintaining of housing for the permanently poor and to invite developers via a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP ) to build apartment buildings that would compete

with other apartment buildings seeking to rent to tenants willing and able to pay, and continue to pay, market rates, and then have 30% of the apartments made available to New York's two million permanently poor.

Most of the objections to this solution have been prompted by the utter failure of the City to maintain public housing. (WNBC has a podcast showing swarming rats running over a kitchen sink and worst of all a baby on a night-ly feeding tube exhibiting scars from sharing

the tube with the rats through the night.)

There is no question that massive public housing does not work. The City Council and current NYCHA management continue to make obsequious noises as they invite NYCHA activists to voice their solution, which is essentially tax the rich and fix our NYCHA.

I am betting that the city will go ahead and carve out a plot on the Fulton housing campus and build New York's first mixed income building and then go on to demol-

ish and rebuild all of the buildings to arrive at the first neighborhood in New York that integrates incomes by law.

I am a firm believer that laws designed to correct a social inequity in one decade create social inequities of their own in the next—take rent control—so I'm anxious about buildings with legally enforced integration. The sprawl of NYCHA needs to be ended and the buildings demolished so, OK, let's have enforced 70-30 integration.

## Gentrifying Public Housing Estates: The Profit Motive is Sharper than Bureaucracy

By Brian J Pape, AIA

New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is the city's biggest landlord, and if any of the city's other landlords had the track record of broken heating and plumbing, mold, lead poisoning, cockroach infestations, and rodent attacks on sleeping infants, they would deserve to be jailed. But this city no longer has the tax fund-ability to build and maintain housing for those who can pay no rent or very, very little.

NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio has tweeted, "Don't believe the rumors and misinformation: this administration would never replace an old building until brand new apartments at NYCHA rents were ready for every single resident. No one in Chelsea's Fulton Houses should stay awake tonight worrying about losing their home."

As reported in October's issue of *West-View News*, The Robert Fulton Houses are facing a radical change: The city is proposing to use the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD) (see also the sidebar "Primer") to improve on the aging NYCHA project. Activists' demands for full funding for housing have hit a brick wall. The five-year capital need at the four

Chelsea NYCHA estates is more than \$344 million; the 20-year capital need is almost \$500 million.

Under the NYCHA 2.0 proposal, a new apartment tower would be built on vacant ground, and when complete, NYCHA residents in two buildings would be re-located to it so that more redevelopment could continue on the site. The Fulton and Chelsea-Elliott Houses have \$168 million each in backlogs alone, which averages about \$166,000 per unit.

The Fulton Houses site is an 11-building, ca. 1965, complex that abuts the High Line, many new condos, luxury hotels, and prominent art galleries in Chelsea just north of the Meatpacking District in the West Village. Fulton's 944 apartments charge an average rent of \$660/month, protected by a federal policy that caps tenants' rents at 30 percent of their income. Together with the nearby Chelsea-Elliott housing developments, they have about 3,000 residents, although there is no accurate or current count because NYCHA doesn't know how many infants and children reside there.

NYCHA Chair, CEO, and General Manager, Gregory Russ, emphatically

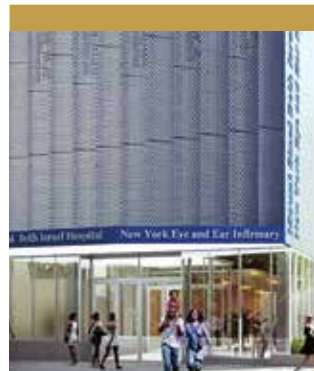


LOOKING WEST ON 18TH STREET, Fulton House buildings are on both sides of the street in the foreground, and new private apartment towers rise in the background. Credit: BJ Pape, AIA.

stated, "There's consistent underfunding of capital by a whole chain of administrations. I think it's particularly egregious that in the president's [Trump's] proposed budget they

zeroed out the capital [for public housing]."

Given Congress's refusal to adequately fund public housing and the \$32 billion  
*continued on page 10*



### Beth Israel

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SEE PAGE 26

### Headline

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SEE PAGE 00

### WestView Concert

Special WestView event at St. John's in the Village

Name of Artist

Date of concert at 7 pm

# WestView

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## Contact Us

(212) 924-5718  
[gcapsis@gmail.com](mailto:gcapsis@gmail.com)



**MIA SAYS:** Heartfelt praise is a gift that warms the giver and receiver. Photo by Maggie Berkvist.

# WestViews

## Correspondence, Commentary, Corrections

### Film Production Limits

This letter is not a complaint but rather seeks compromise and to alert your paper (the amazing *WestView News!*) that there is an issue at hand that needs to be investigated.

I am a native New Yorker. When opposition erupts is when I see the true essence of New Yorkers come to light—they really are about diversity and how we can all live together.

When it comes to film production in the City, the Mayor's office operates and designates what, when and how it wants to approve permits. There are absolutely NO guidelines on how permits for production are approved and the impact in a zoned neighborhood. Communication with the community is non-existent until someone raises their voice. All decisions are made solely by the Mayor's office.

Calling Patrice at Corey Johnson's office and letting them know there are movies is not a way for the Mayor's office to be speaking to the community. There should be a quota of movies that happen in any given neighborhood. There has to be responsible designation when a neighborhood is deemed a hot zone (ie, suspending permit issuances) and when it gets removed. In the last five days alone there have been and will be six-plus movies occurring—some consecutively—and they will take over street parking on over 20 blocks.

Yes, production does bring revenue for the City but can that actually be traced? I often see OUT OF STATE plates of workers/crews that come to the City. (By the way, they often use their own cars and park in designated production spots for their own personal use.) Can we call it revenue for the City when a production company has to pay taxes on payroll in other states? What if the company operating in NYC is from out of state? Do their corporate taxes flow into the City? What is revenue when the City operates their budget in a NEGATIVE flow, almost forced to seek continuous cash flow and revenue?

As mentioned, this is not a complaint but a story for New York City, New Yorkers and *WestView*. It is about finding a way for the community and the Mayor's office to agree and work together, and stand by a set of guidelines not just by happenstance and one-sided fly by the seat of your pants decision-making.

—Jonathan

### Cobblestones

This is a follow up to the letter I sent about the street work being done on Horatio St. and what I consider the theft of the original 150 year old cobblestones. Besides writing to Council President Corey Johnson's office I also wrote to the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, NYC Landmarks Violations unit and even the *Times*.

To date I have not received an answer from anyone, nor did anyone come to inspect the work being done. Well, all the new cheap rough cut bricks have been laid. When I was taking these pics, the on-site foreman approached me and said, "so you are the trouble maker" adding that "the city knows what we are doing." Once before I complained to Mr. Johnson's office when they were doing the same switch at Gansevoort Street. Johnson's office just came back to me with the story the contractor told them, that "the old stones were of an irregular size so could not be used." For one, they had no trouble installing them 150 years ago, and two, if they were being laid on a flat concrete base, they have stone cutters that can cut them shorter to fit. For me, I have had enough. In the future I will just ignore what goes on. The city either does not care or they are aware of contractors selling these stones and replacing them with cheap rough cut ones. The city Government doesn't care, so why should I?

—Mark Duncan Felix



**ALL THE CHEAP, ROUGH-CUT BRICKS,** above, have been laid.

### 14th Street Bus Fiasco

I, like many Villagers, am appalled by the 14th Street fiasco. The 14th Street bus is one of the best in the city, it runs very often, you don't have to stand waiting in the cold or rain more than a few minutes. The MTA complains that bus ridership has declined. There is a very evident and easy reason for that. They may be concerned with cutting a minute or two off the crosstown time on the M14, but if you want to take the M55 uptown from the Village, be prepared to wait 15 minutes if you're extremely lucky, more likely half an hour or more. The other day I waited almost an hour. The M20 also runs very infrequently—it's listed as three times an hour, but if one of those buses is missing, you're stuck for half an hour or more. Most people riding buses are doing so because they cannot walk long distances or climb subway stairs. We can get fairly near our destinations by changing buses, but at what cost of time? If the M55 and the M20 are always "tied up in traffic" either at South Ferry or the tunnel, maybe they should reroute a few of them so they don't all have to go through that bottleneck at the Ferry.

Also I heard a rumor that they're now planning to eliminate the M14A westbound to Abingdon Square—again some people depend on that bus and that bus stop. Okay, I've had my say.

—Diane Martella, Longtime Villager

### There Goes the Neighborhood: The 14th Street Dilemma

Fourteenth Street is the longest cross street in New York City—river to river—and the southern border of The Grid, our 200-plus-block-long crisscross pattern of streets created "for commerce" in 1811 at the Street Commissioner's office at the northeast corner of Bleecker and Christopher Streets, second floor.

So it is Vintage West Village—and our official northern boundary. South of 14th is our south-of-the-border claim to the unique neighborhood we cherish (likewise Houston Street to the south). It is therefore a transformation to our personal sense of home that this long street has become the newly minted "corridor of public transportation" in a secretive Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) plot (see articles by Arthur Schwartz and others in our last few issues) to test the enhanced efficiency of buses by banning cars and diverting traffic in our already overly congested downtown Manhattan.

This is reminiscent of the superhighway that Robert Moses planned through the South Village, which would have demolished SoHo, the not-yet-formed Tribeca, and of course much of the West Village, which was defeated by Jane Jacobs and company. It's also reminiscent of Moses's plan to pave Fire Island, which now has no road and is one of the great coastal treasures of America.

The City has finally decided to cap the number of taxis, Ubers, Vias, Lyfts, and gypsy cabs (do they still exist?) at 120,000 by next year. These vehicles, along with the bicycles, pedestrians, trucks, and buses, have caused massive gridlock and strain on the city's streets over the past five years, turning our neighborhoods into parades of vehicles.

Now, as you cannot turn onto 14th between Third and Eighth Avenues from 7am to 10pm, all cars and vehicles are being forced north and south to be directed across randomly chosen cross streets, invading The Village and the 12th Street to 20th Street Chelsea neighborhood.

This traffic plan is yet another elephant (or SUV) in the room. How can we maintain our Village and New York City character—so beloved to tourists and New Yorkers alike—if we make the massive influx of new vehicles and their dominance in our community-based city a never-ending obstacle to our time-honored neighborhood way of life?

My solution: Let's once and for all drastically reduce the Ubers (read: company

*continued on page 11*

ATTENTION: If you wish to continue to receive *WestView* please read and respond to this—please...

# WestView News' 15th Birthday!



Searching through the basement we came upon issue number one of *WestView News*, an anemic 8 1/2 x 11 photocopied missive with the date October 2004.

The front page article complained about a noisy nightclub and offers this modest statement of purpose...

“a mix of Village news, history, current events, human interest and positions on business and governmental actions that might detract from our preferred life style.”

Well, this is pretty much what the paper has become, but whenever I get a compliment I think that since the very beginning we never paid for editorial material, but invited our readers to offer their own life experience and skills and to write on what they knew (there is nothing so powerful and vibrant as a personal anecdote).

So we have doctors, lawyers, teachers, architects, nurses, musicians, priests, realtors, politicians, mothers, students, filmmakers and even grandmothers to write of what they

know from personal experience.

Still it is a bit of a shock that *WestView* is now all of 15 years old (in this same 15 years *The Villager* has had five owners).

We don't have the funds to do an analysis of who reads the paper—we think it's mostly older folks who wince at the very thought of getting their news from a cell phone. Of course the 6:00 o'clock news does not tell you about the legal thief hitting one shop after another demanding money for noncompliance with handicapped regulations. But *WestView* does.

Yes, it's nice to hear “I like your paper.” Every time I get this compliment I think how much better our paper could and should be.

When you open your email in the morning there should be “*WestView News Today*” with the date, the weather and important meetings that day in the Village—and of course, breaking news (we are working on this).

But as I said, this is your paper, you write it and you put it together and you even deliver it so we need you to volunteer and become a member of the *WestView News* family.

“OK, George, I'm not sure what you are looking for or what I am letting myself in for but I would like to at least 'talk' to you about joining the gang and working on *WestView*.”

## HERE ARE SOME OF THE SKILLS WE ARE SEEKING:

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**DISTRIBUTION**—delivery of papers to the library and other locations.

**ADVISE**—The most frequent sentence I hear is “you know what you ought to do” but if it comes from somebody who wants to pay for a free senior concert—I am all ears...

Call George at 212.924.5718 or email at [gcapsis@gmail.com](mailto:gcapsis@gmail.com)

If you wish to receive our daily briefing email [gcapsis@gmail.com](mailto:gcapsis@gmail.com)

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# Presidential Candidates Pledge to Cure AIDS



BERNIE SANDERS



MARIANNE WILLIAMSON



TOM STEYER



BETO O'ROURKE



PETE BUTTIGIEG



ELIZABETH WARREN

By Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D.

**In a crowded 2020 presidential race, taking the lead on curing AIDS may offer candidates an opportunity to differentiate themselves and resonate with voters across multiple key demographics. More than 1.1 million LGBT, African-American, Latino and female Americans are living with HIV/AIDS today. Where does each candidate stand on curing AIDS?**

Last month, CNN hosted a presidential town hall focused on LGBT issues. With the highest viewership of any such LG-BT-focused event, the town hall provided an unprecedented opportunity to learn more. However, only a single question about curing AIDS was asked during the entire four-hour event, and that question, coming at the end of the night at 11:30pm EST, was directed only to one candidate, Tom Steyer.

An excerpt of CNN's transcript containing Steyer's response reads:

#### TOM STEYER:

What we should be doing in a case like trying to come up with solutions to AIDS, with cures for AIDS, is going directly to the best scientists and funding them as much as necessary, as much as conceivably effective to make sure that we solve this problem.

In order to give all the other candidates a chance to state their position, if any, on curing AIDS in full, I emailed my own set of questions to all the campaigns (see <http://westviewnews.org/2019/10/conquering-aids-in-the-lgbt-presidential-town-hall-top-10-questions-regarding-curing-aids/>). Bernie Sanders, Marianne Williamson, Beto O'Rourke and Pete Buttigieg's campaigns all responded. Their complete response and a summary follows.

Bernie Sanders and Marianne Williamson used the opportunity to introduce curing AIDS as a new pillar of their comprehensive approach to address AIDS. Both campaigns provided specific responses to each of my questions, including these and other significant highlights:

#### BERNIE SANDERS:

Bernie believes that we can and we must end the AIDS epidemic in the United States and abroad, and we can lead the world by developing a cure for AIDS. Bernie will invest significant federal resources and convene experts, advocates, scientists, and researchers to ensure this goal is met. The United States has before come together to achieve things once thought impossible. What we need is a grassroots political movement that will stand up to the greed of the pharmaceutical industry and take the steps necessary to ensure we end the AIDS epidemic by 2025 and ensure no person in America dies because they cannot afford

medication or health care. Bernie is proud to say he will, alongside a political movement, rise to this challenge.

#### MARIANNE WILLIAMSON:

Yes, I will marshal our might to cure AIDS. We will bring together private research and government efforts to work together for a cure with the focus and support that the Manhattan Project received.

I would support a variety of methods to cure AIDS including funding for and support of cellular therapies. We need to look at all means of curing the disease.

In addition, rather than responding to each specific question, Beto O'Rourke's campaign provided a statement. The following is an excerpt attributed to Beto's campaign spokesperson:

#### BETO O'ROURKE:

An O'Rourke Administration will fully support research efforts by NIH and other federal agencies in the United States and throughout the world with resources needed to keep innovating and making progress towards ending the HIV epidemic.

#### PETE BUTTIGIEG AND ELIZABETH WARREN

On the other hand, while Pete Buttigieg's campaign also got back to us, his campaign provided several links including to Pete's coming out story, a press article and his LGBT agenda. However, none of these in-

cludes any further detail beyond general support for research, similar to Elizabeth Warren's previously stated position (see Elizabeth Warren and Pete Buttigieg campaign statements at <https://www.aidsunited.org/Elections-Center/Candidate-Surveys.aspx>).

A cure for AIDS has been proven possible yet it remains a struggle to raise the funds needed to make it a reality. AIDS won't cure itself; what is needed is presidential leadership.

An exclusive focus on treatment and prevention (PrEP) alone must be expanded to include support for cellular science and curative therapies. Special interests and conflicts of interest must be rooted out (see <http://westviewnews.org/2019/09/wild-west-ad-culture-on-facebook-targets-youth/>).

My great thanks to Bernie and Marianne for their leadership on curing AIDS and to Beto, Tom, Pete and Elizabeth for adding "cure" to the national discussion on AIDS. I look forward to sharing any additional follow-ups that we may receive from any campaign.

To read the candidates' responses in full, please visit [westviewnews.org/2019/11/presidential-candidates-pledge-AIDS-cure/](http://westviewnews.org/2019/11/presidential-candidates-pledge-AIDS-cure/).

*The author is a biologist, a biotech inventor, a gay man and the President of Research Foundation to Cure AIDS. Visit [FreeFromAIDS.org](http://FreeFromAIDS.org) to help accelerate a cure for AIDS.*



# Important Ballot Proposals— Vote November 5

By Arthur Schwartz

Did you know that the polls were opened for voting on November 5 (and on our first five Early Voting Days, which have passed)? There are two important things on the ballot:

- We get to vote on giving Jumaane Williams the last two years on the normal four-year Public Advocate term. (Yes, he has a Republican opponent.)
- We get to vote about some important amendments to the City Charter.

The City Charter Amendment of greatest interest is about **RANKED CHOICE VOTING (BALLOT QUESTION 1)**. What ranked choice voting means is that in City races (Mayor, Controller, Public Advocate, City Council), voters get to rank up to five candidates in order of preference. A voter's choices will kick in if one candidate does not get the 40% needed under the City Charter to get elected without a runoff. It is a system now utilized in California which has worked well. It not only avoids costly runoffs, it forces candidates to appeal to more than a narrow group in order to get elected. And

it is nice for voters who like more than one candidate and want to express support for two—or three—or four—or five. It will be a great system. Vote Yes!

#### OTHER CHARTER AMENDMENTS:

- Ballot Question 2—Strengthens the independence of the Civilian Complaint Review Board and would add a person appointed by the Speaker and by the Public Advocate.
- Ballot Question 3—Takes two Conflict of Interest Board appointees away from the Mayor and gives them to the Public Advocate and the Comptroller.
- Ballot Question 4—Allows the City not to spend all of its revenues and create a Surplus Fund.
- Ballot Question 5—Gives Community Boards an extra 15 to 30 days to review land-use decisions in the summer. Community Board input is your input.

My recommendation is to vote Yes on all 5.

*Arthur Schwartz is the Democratic District Leader for Greenwich Village.*

# 14th Street Busway— Neighbors Cringe

By Arthur Schwartz

Polly Trottenberg, New York City's most arrogant Department of Transportation Commissioner since Robert Moses, stood on 14th Street on the morning of October 4th and declared the Busway a total success. The Busway, which has turned 14th Street into an urban oddity, sees buses come through once every 10 minutes during rush hour and once every 15 minutes after rush hour, and is otherwise free of vehicles, except for a truck here and there and the occasional ambulance.

But on many of the streets parallel to 14th Street to the north and south (but especially to the north), and on Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Avenues, traffic is worse than ever. Twelfth Street, between Seventh Avenue and Sixth Avenue and west of Fifth Avenue, is clogged much of the day, often with trucks looking to turn north on Sixth Avenue or onto Third Avenue. Fifteenth, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th Streets, which already had bad traffic, are clogged much of the day, with traffic backed up onto the Avenues. The only reason there is some movement is the array of 40 (yes, 40!) Traffic Agents working 6am to 10pm directing traffic.

Yes, buses are moving faster, partly due to the lack of cars, partly due to the turn re-

strictions, partly due to off-board ticketing, and partly due to the reduction of bus stops on the M14 and M14B lines. And Commissioner Polly is going to tout studies—by not-independent contractors—saying that overall, traffic numbers on the side streets aren't "so bad." It is unlikely that she will talk about the diminished bus speeds on Seventh, Sixth, Fifth, and Fourth Avenues, or about what will happen when the City stops spending \$50,000 per week on extra Traffic Agents.

To those of us who fought and continue to fight the arrogant display of force utilized by Trottenberg, who could have achieved similar results with less pain, the issue has never been bus speeds. Yes we want faster buses, but we also want our streets to cease being major crosstown thoroughfares. We have always wanted reasoned, careful study, with neighborhood input—real input, not sugar-coated input. The 18 Block Associations I represent, which will be arguing an appeal in January, think that is the way a city ought to run. And next time we elect people to office, we should make sure that it is.

*Arthur Schwartz is the Democratic District Leader for Greenwich Village and counsel to Petitioners in Council of Chelsea Block Associations v. Trottenberg.*

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# Community Pharmacists Rally to Advocate for Patients Rights

By John Kaliabakos

Hundreds of community pharmacists held rallies across New York State on October 23 to stand with Governor Cuomo and support legislation containing the nation's toughest protections from prescription drug middlemen known as pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). Village Apothecary was proud to stand alongside other independent pharmacies in the quest for fairness in pharmacy care that could impact millions of patients.

At a rally on the steps of City Hall in New York City, hundreds of independent pharmacists gathered alongside supporters and elected officials to thank Governor Cuomo and members of the New York State Senate and Assembly for their leadership in the fight against PBMs.

Pharmacists demonstrated support for Senate Bill 6531 and Assembly Bill 2836, the legislation passed in June by the New York State Legislature that would require licensure and regulation of PBMs and provide increased protections for patients, taxpayers, and pharmacies.

"The legislation would be a major step forward in the fight against PBMs. We



**PHARMACISTS DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 6531 AND ASSEMBLY BILL 2836.** Senator Diane Savino (front row, far left), next to Roger Paganelli, a leader of the FixRx campaign. Village Apothecary representatives were present as well (first row, far right). Photo courtesy of Tom Corsillo.

need to ensure that pharmacists, patients, and taxpayers alike are being guarded against their abusive and deceptive practices. It is time to shine the light brightly on these greedy corporate middlemen," said Parthiv Shah, Chairman of the New York City Pharmacists Society.

"We applaud the Governor for his leadership over the last few years and for taking the steps to make real change in the way that PBMs are able to operate," said Steve

Moore, President of the Pharmacists Society of the State of New York. "We look forward to the increased PBM oversight and transparency that this legislation makes possible."

The demonstrations were organized by FixRx, a joint effort by the Pharmacists Society of the State of New York (PSSNY) and the New York City Pharmacists Society (NYCPS) to improve the quality of healthcare provided by pharmacists, protect

patient choice, save taxpayers money and restore fairness to the distribution of prescription drugs.

The activities today came on the heels of two successful rallies held in Albany in March and May, which led to several victories for neighborhood pharmacists, their patients and taxpayers. Among these were the elimination of "spread pricing" in Medicaid managed care, the tool that PBMs used to purloin \$300 million from New Yorkers in 2018, and the bills under discussion today.

According to pharmacy organization studies, pharmacies actually lose money when filling prescriptions under Medicare Managed Care plans almost 50% of the time. Consequently, 70% of pharmacies in New York have been forced to lay off employees or reduce store hours in 2019. In 2020 it is expected that 90% of pharmacies may be forced into these measures if there is no change in the reimbursement system.

Village Apothecary and other independent pharmacies are fighting hard behind the scenes every day to ensure that patients receive the highest quality care and we ask for the community's support in the ongoing battle against the questionable practices of these PBMs and insurance companies.

## The Villager is Dead

By Arthur Schwartz

Late last year, as *The Villager* passed from one chain of community newspapers to another, Schneps Publications, one had to wonder about its future and that of its sister papers, *Downtown Express*, *Manhattan Express*, and *Chelsea Now*. All four papers started to look alike other than their mastheads. They carried the same stories, written by the same writers, and shared an Editor-in-Chief, Lincoln Anderson. Lincoln had been with *The Villager* for 20 years and was the guy the Schneps family was entrusting *The Villager* and the other downtown papers to.

Lincoln did an admirable job. He knew every community activist, every politician, every relevant government bureaucrat. And he had a talent for producing material for *The Villager's* website—up-to-the-minute, hot-off-the-street stories about local events: rallies, meetings, community board votes, and cultural happenings.

And then, a month ago, Lincoln got fired as the 30-some-odd-year-old Josh Schneps cringed when the two disagreed about the newsworthiness of a story Lincoln declined to cover. Actually, even before this disagreement, Lincoln had been demoted and his access to *The Villager* Facebook site had been cut off; Schneps was clearly planning to let him go or force him to quit. Schneps had gotten rid of many of the older (over

40) staff at most of his recently acquired papers, and Lincoln was next. And his firing predated by less than a week Schneps' takeover of *AM New York*, a free daily, which immediately laid off half its staff.

So where is *The Villager* now?

**CIRCULATION:** In the October 26, 2019 issue, the Postal Statement says that paid distribution was 1,811—1,540 by mail and 271 bought at newsstands. You read that number right: 1,811 copies sold. What was once *The Villager's* go-to newspaper has a total circulation, including free copies, of 1,990. (*WestView News* distributes over 12,000 copies.)

**CONTENT:** A look at *The Villager* is disappointing. Several articles republished from *AM New York* about transit issues. Four short articles about news items in Lower Manhattan (including Chelsea, Downtown, and the Lower East Side). Not a word about Village or Downtown music, theater, or culture. And things promise to get worse. Even its 14th Street article quotes only government spokespeople and not a single community leader. Clearly it will no longer be a voice of the community.

**THE OUTLOOK:** Bad. Bad for the spread of news about local issues. Bad for community newspapers and the voices of our downtown community, as the Schneps octopus swallows over 40 community newspapers across New York City.

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## NYC Helped Block President Trump's Proposed Public Charge Rule



**COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI, COMMISSIONER STEVEN BANKS**, NYC Health + Hospitals Senior Director Chris Keeley, and LegalHealth Supervising Attorney Sarah Nolan met with reporters at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism to inform communities in the five boroughs about the proposed Public Charge rule and a free legal advice hotline available for immigrants. *Photograph by Karen Rempel.*

### Allocated \$30 Million to Prevent the Spread of Fear

By Karen Rempel

Since 2017, when President Trump took office and began trying to change US immigration policy, 78,000 New Yorkers who are eligible to receive food stamps or SNAP benefits left the program or didn't enroll. A draft of a new "Public Charge" rule was leaked in February of 2018, and even though the rule has been overturned for now, residents are scared and uninformed about who the rule applies to and what the proposed changes would mean. To help end this fear and confusion, the City of New York has allocated \$30 million for free legal advice. Residents are urged to call a new ActionNYC Immigration Hotline (311 or 1-800-354-0365) if they are concerned about how the rule might impact them. They will get to talk to a lawyer for free, who will help them to determine whether they are at risk if the new rule eventually takes effect.

In the meantime, the Mayor's Office, lawyers, and healthcare administrators are united in urging New Yorkers to continue to seek required services such as medical care, food stamps, housing assistance, and so on. Commissioner Steven Banks said the Department of Social Services serves three million New Yorkers a year. Banks said, "Many need basic benefits. The new policy was grounded in fear, aimed at dissuading people from seeking benefits they are entitled to. New Yorkers shouldn't disenroll or refrain from seeking support. They should get legal guidance."

Commissioner Bitta Mostofi, in the May-

or's Office of Immigrant Affairs, said the proposed Public Charge rule would prevent migrants already in the United States from obtaining green cards or renewing visas if they use government benefits or appear likely to do so. The proposed rule also attempts to exclude people on the basis of lack of English proficiency, poor health, or disability.

"Each individual's case is unique, and USCIS [US Citizenship and Immigration Services] evaluates the totality of circumstances," explained Chris Keely, a senior director at NYC Health + Hospitals. LegalHealth Supervising Attorney Sarah Nolan said, "New York has a lot of immigrants receiving publicly funded healthcare through the state... These people aren't eligible for the type of federal benefits that will be impacted by the rule—they are receiving State of New York benefits." According to Bitta Mostofi, even if the new rule is enacted in the future, it can't take effect retroactively.

New York City joined with New York State, Connecticut, and Vermont to file lawsuits as soon as the rule was published, about a year ago. California and Washington followed suit. On October 11th, judges in three separate cases enjoined the Department of Homeland Security from implementing and enforcing the Public Charge rule and postponed the effective date of the rule until there is final resolution in the cases. According to *The Washington Post*, New York Judge George B. Daniels called the new rule "unlawful, arbitrary, and capricious." Two of the injunctions are nationwide and prevent USCIS from implementing the rule anywhere in the United States.

## The Rise of ADA Litigation in New York

By Samuel G. Dobre, Esq.

*The need for a local online newspaper became dramatically evident last month when we got a call from the popular Sandwich Shoppe on Greenwich Avenue that they had been "served" with a nine page legal brief which explained in nearly undecipherable legal gobbledegook that they were not in compliance with the laws to make their shop easily accessible to a handicapped customer and that that customer was suing them but was open to a cash settlement along with, of course, "the payment of legal fees."*

*We discovered that this is a classic bit of legal theft practiced by crooked lawyers and the nightmarish part is it is perfectly legal and can be more expensive using your own lawyer to fend off the legal looter or, God forbid, spending thousands to comply and deliver handicap accessibility. Yes, yes it is cheaper to pay the crooked lawyer.*

*What was so awful was we got a call and email from another restaurant hit by the same lawyer with virtually the same nine page brief. We learned they had hit all the restaurants on Greenwich Avenue up to Elephant and Castle. A call to our 6th Precinct Community affairs officer brought exquisite self-protective silence.*

*So, if you are a young crooked lawyer you might want to study the article below written by a very honest young lawyer at my request.*

*Oh, if you are a handicapped person you can get a fee of \$500 for every brief served on your behalf.*

*Yes, I became outraged when I realized this legal lout was walking around the West Village dropping off these legal larcenies and I could not get anybody to do anything about it.*

*The only weapon I had was the pages of WestView.*

—George Capsis

*(You see why we need your email address to send you a notice to spot and stop this crook from dropping off more legal larceny.)*

Restaurants, bars, stores, and theaters throughout New York City continue to fight against sprees of federal lawsuits brought pursuant to Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These ADA lawsuits raise claims that physical and webpage barriers discriminate against the disabled.

Many businesses hire an ADA consultant to work with an architect to focus solely on physical accessibilities, yet they still may be hit with a surprise ADA lawsuit. The ADA Accessibility Guidelines are complex. For example, the rules respecting bathrooms impose over 95 requirements. There also are requirements for entrances, parking, ramps, windows, signage, telephones, doors, stairs and many more elements and spaces throughout a business's

place of public accommodation. These requirements essentially encourage federal litigation, with thousands of lawsuits being filed in New York courts each year.

A major point of dispute: How much compensation should be awarded to a wheel-chair bound patron who cannot access a place of public accommodation such as a restaurant due to a staircase or entrance lacking an ADA compliant ramp or bathroom? Federal courts in New York have opined on this question. If a plaintiff has not established any specific damages other than alleging compensatory damages, courts in the Second Circuit have found an award of \$1,000 to be appropriate. For example, in *Shariff v. Beach 90th St. Realty Corp.*, the plaintiff was awarded \$1,000 due to a failure to establish any specific damages other than "that he fe[el]t discriminated against."

While the patron's damages in most of these cases are small, the ADA creates an incentive for plaintiff's lawyers to pursue these cases because the ADA permits the award of attorneys' fees. The availability of attorneys' fees, even for small violations, creates hydraulic pressure to settle these cases. This plaintiff-friendly law that rewards attorneys' fees and costs enables single complainants to file dozens of ADA "cookie cutter" accessibility lawsuits against different stores and restaurants usually with representation by the same plaintiff's attorney.

In an ADA case brought by a wheelchair-bound patron who alleged he was unable to access a Subway restaurant, Judge Sterling Johnson in the Eastern District of New York noted that "One such legal giant, Charles Hamilton Houston, famously said that 'a lawyer is either a social engineer or he's a parasite on society.' The conduct of counsel is indicative of a parasite disguised as a social engineer. It must stop."

While the intent of the ADA is very clear—to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in "places of public accommodation,"—Congress may not have effectively anticipated the influx of Title III lawsuits. The ADA should not be used as a weapon for exorbitant monetary benefit to plaintiffs' bar through the creation of serial complainants at the expense of many businesses that are forced to shut down.

Every business that operates a place of public accommodation and/or a website is at risk of potential litigation and should seek experienced legal guidance to best avoid and protect against ADA lawsuits.

Contact Bond, Schoeneck and King's Labor and Employment Attorneys Samuel G. Dobre, Esq., Associate at [sdobre@bsk.com](mailto:sdobre@bsk.com) or (646) 253-2320 and Gregory B. Reilly, Esq. at [greilly@bsk.com](mailto:greilly@bsk.com) or (646) 253-2330 with any questions or assistance.

**IF THIS PAPER MAKES YOU THINK**

*We will print your thoughts in the next issue*

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# Let's Get Real About Aging



**GAIL EVANS**, above, shares resources to help seniors live as independently as possible. *Photo by Robert Asinari.*

By Gail Evans

My husband and I are in our eighties and, yes, we're slowing down. We tire more easily, take longer for daily chores, and complain about aches and pains. Still, we're getting by. But what if our health changed or we suffered a life-changing illness? We and our concerned family would face a bewildering array of in-home service options, ranging in cost and type, from money management help and minor household repairs to services that meet our nutritional, personal care, medical and mental health needs.

And we'd face money questions! Can we afford private pay care and for how long? If we're in a Medicare Advantage Plan what would it cover? Are we eligible for Medicaid Home Attendant services, and what is Medicaid spend-down if needed for eligibility? What other personal care providers are available aside from those that charge full cost or are covered by Medicaid?

If you have these same concerns, here's a quick primer on entry points to in-home support that help seniors live as independently as possible.

**HOSPITAL OR REHAB DISCHARGE PLANNING:** Hospitals are mandated to do discharge planning for older patients. Should you be hospitalized, your discharge plan would require decisions about your current and future capabilities; caregiver availability; finances; preferences for care; ability to live safely at home and need for in-home services. These decisions are too important to leave solely to professionals. Make sure you are involved in the decision-making process.

**NY CONNECTS:** With offices in every borough, this New York State program is a free information and referral service for seniors, caregivers, and persons with disabilities who need services. NY Connects specialists can help you define your needs, inform you about all available programs including nursing home and other residential options, and make referrals on your behalf. New York Connects in Manhattan (212-

962-2720) is operated by New York Foundation for Senior Citizens.

**NEW YORK FOUNDATION CASE MANAGEMENT AND SELF-HELP PROJECT PILOT CASE MANAGEMENT:** Geriatric case managers help their clients plan for current and future needs and connect with services. Funded by the New York City Department for the Aging, New York Foundation for Senior Citizens offers free case management services to Village residents (212-962-7817) and Self-Help Project Pilot (212-787-8106) serves Chelsea. Case managers at these agencies will assess your needs (and help you define them), develop a care plan for you, and connect you to government-funded services that meet those needs—some examples: home-delivered meals, non-Medicaid homecare, transportation services, friendly visiting, mental health services, elder abuse services, and senior centers. Your case manager will also evaluate your eligibility for entitlements and benefits, including Medicaid, and provide ongoing guidance as your needs change.

**SAGE CASE MANAGEMENT (212-741-2247):** Located in Chelsea, this program is part of the many supports and services SAGE (Senior Advocacy in a Gay Environment) offers to the older LGBTQ community. It is a good first place to turn to for LGBTQ seniors and their caregivers when in-home supports are needed.

**CITYMEALS/DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING FUNDED HOME-DELIVERED MEALS SERVICE.** Home-delivered meals service is the entry point to other needed services for many basically home-bound elders who can no longer prepare meals. The city's Department for the Aging (DFTA) funds community agencies to deliver meals to eligible seniors on weekdays. Citymeals-on-Wheels, through the donations it receives, funds delivery of weekend, holiday and emergency meals to those same clients. To receive home-delivered meals from this great partnership, your need for meals must first be established by a case management agency. Villagers should call NY Foundation Case Management (212-962-2720) to begin the process.

**GOD'S LOVE WE DELIVER (212-294-8100; WWW.GLWD.ORG)** provides medically authorized meals to seriously ill people of all ages, including people diagnosed with dementia/Alzheimer's.

There are other avenues that lead to services, of course. But the organizations I've named are nearby and ready to assist you!

Please share your comments and stories about aging through Letters to the Editor or with me personally at [gailevans@verizon.net](mailto:gailevans@verizon.net). You can also leave a message for me or Hannah Reimann (apartment-sharing) at 212-414-4883.

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*Public Housing* continued from page 1

needed for backlogged repairs, supporters say RAD is the best available option to preserve the affordable units lest they become too uninhabitable for anyone to live in at all.

Mr. Russ was interviewed by NBC I-Team's Chris Glorioso one month into his new job as NYCHA Chair, facing multiple massive challenges including \$32 billion in unfunded repairs, a tough federal monitor, and a lead scandal plaguing the authority. He discussed how they will close the funding gap, including partial privatization of some buildings. "RAD brings private investment and private capital," Russ said. "We need that."

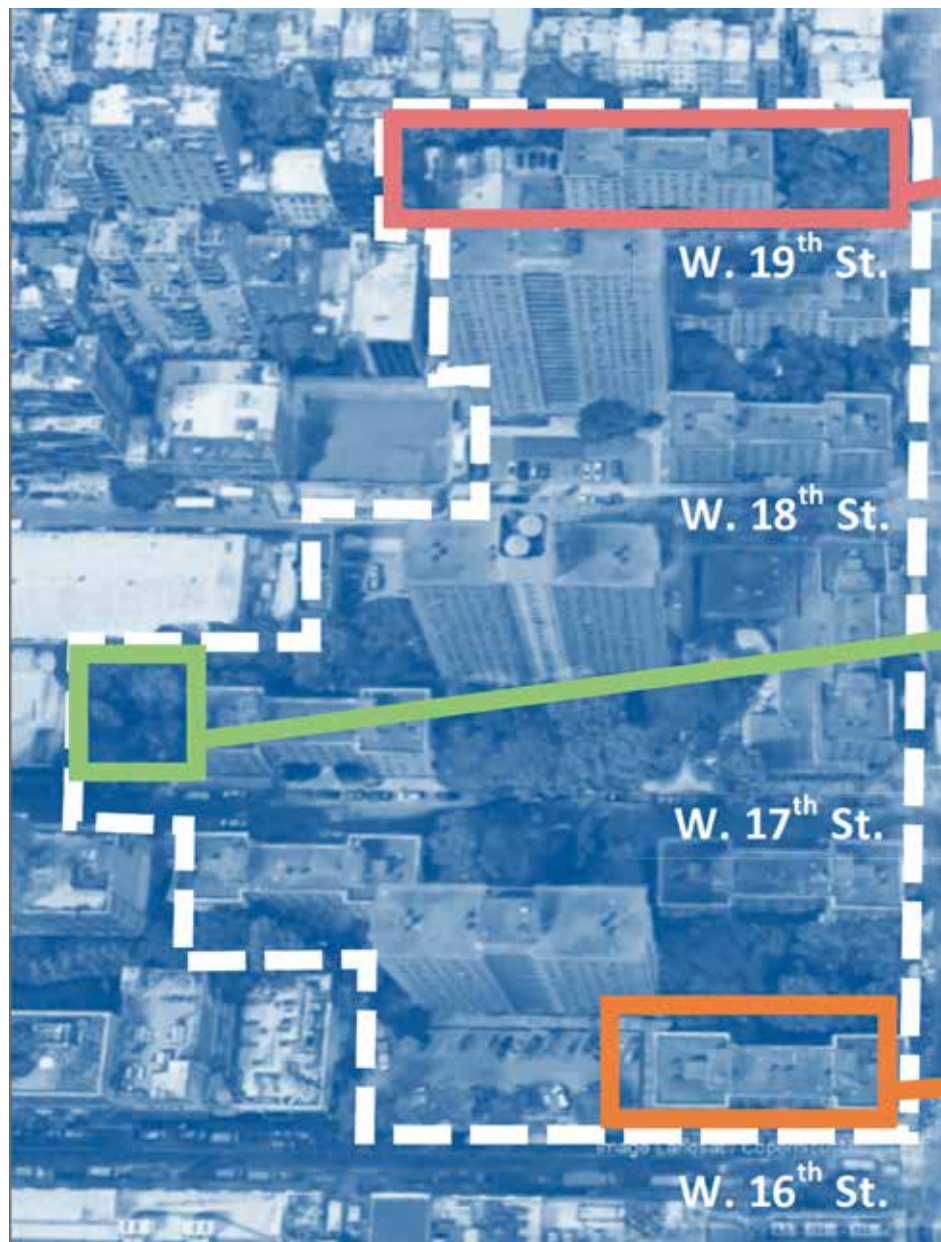
When he led the public housing agency in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Russ transferred all the city's public housing units to its RAD program, and he worked on similar transfers when he had the job in Minneapolis.

RAD works by transferring public housing units to the private leaseholder as Section 8 housing so that developers and housing authorities can tap into a broader range of subsidies and financing tools to rehabilitate and manage the units. This is an experiment using private entrepreneurship and government money to try to solve the problem of housing the permanently poor. They add tax abatement and the sale of air rights, and I would suppose any other benefit that does not actually cost the city hard cash. But developers still have to anticipate the variables in a changing market.

But why aren't those subsidies and financing tools available for the public sector, backed by the federal government?

Alicia Glen was the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development for over five years, overseeing the troubled public housing authority, the implementation of a new ferry system, investments into public land to spur business development, and the rezoning of East Midtown.

According to a citylab.com article written by Glen, she expressed excitement about the "NYCHA 2.0" plan the administration announced at the end of last year, which includes a more aggressive program to build new housing on underused NYCHA land—housing that will be a mix of 75 percent market-rate and 25 percent affordable housing, with the proceeds from leases to developers / private landlords going toward other NYCHA repairs. "Housing owned by the public sector also creates intense pressure on localities to prioritize their lowest-



**FULTON HOUSE ESTATE** is in the white dashed lines, with the development sites highlighted. The green box on West 17th Street is an open lot for possible new construction, and two orange boxes on 16th Street and 19th Street are for potential redevelopment construction after the first tower is complete. *Image Credit: NYCHA2.0/nyc.gov.*

income and most vulnerable residents in distributing this public resource. As a result, developments are often 100 percent occupied by very low-income residents, perpetuating economic segregation and the stigma that all too often is associated with living in public housing. We know mixed-use buildings and mixed-income neighborhoods produce better health, education, and economic outcomes. That is why fully funding RAD is a far better approach than just increasing funding for public housing in its past and present form."

Glen believes "Investing in strong public-private partnerships will improve the lives of public housing residents and is a

proven model for providing quality affordable housing in this country. Abstract promises of 'permanent' government funding and less bureaucracy 'down the line' are hard to believe based on the effect our political past, and present, have had on public housing in this country."

In a gothamgazette.com article she is quoted: "I think most people felt really positive about the city. I continue to think the mayor's position and our position was that you have to link density to more equitable growth and you have to buy into the notion of growth."

In a related citylab.com article, Ben Carson, Secretary of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD), was quoted saying that he loves RAD, an Obama-era federal initiative that has gone largely under the radar. He said he's "very encouraged" by RAD's early results and "looks forward to working with Congress to expand this worthy program."

All public housing tenants should technically be able to return to the new "private" units if they want to, though housing advocates fear that the RAD statute has loopholes that could prevent this goal from being realized. Jessica Casella, a staff attorney with the National Housing Law Project, said that her organization documented many kinds of tenant RAD issues over the past few years. She also admitted that there are many places where nobody really knows how these conversions are going. "One of our major concerns is the level and quality of oversight by HUD," said Casella. "I think HUD has put its emphasis on getting properties to closing, and much less effort in making sure that after deals are finalized, the transitions go smoothly."

Kathryn Garcia, former Interim Chairwoman at NYCHA, said NYCHA will soon introduce the *Connected Communities Guidebook*, a publication that embodies the principles, guidelines, and goals of the initiative. Connected Communities / NYCHA 2.0 is an initiative in the Capital Projects Division of NYCHA, to better connect residents to surrounding neighborhoods through the design of the physical environment by using land-use planning, ground-floor activation, open-space improvements, programming, and resiliency efforts. In other efforts toward a smooth transition, Director Rudy Murillo in the Office of Emergency Management brought on 12 new field coordinators to address emergency incidents on NYCHA property; Jay Flaherty started recently as the new Quality Assurance Officer; and Brian Honan was promoted to Vice President of Intergovernmental Relations, having successfully advocated for significant state investment in NYCHA for the first time in almost 20 years.

We can only hope this initiative is implemented more productively than the rest of NYCHA's programs to date.

*Brian J. Pape is a LEED-AP "Green" Architect consulting in private practice, serves on the Manhattan District 2 Community Board, is Co-chair of the American Institute of Architects NY Design for Aging Committee, and is WestViewNews.org Architecture Editor.*



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# A Public Housing Primer

*The Housing Act of 1937 was intended to improve living conditions in cities and create quality public housing for low- and middle-income families. But after several iterations of the bill, two critical pieces were inserted. First, the Act passed with coverage for only the lowest income residents, due in part to fear that middle-income housing would compete with the private market. And second, while federal government provided the funding, the implementation of the Act was left to local housing authorities, allowing each municipality to decide if and how they wanted to engage. In tandem, these two amendments drove the development of much of the public housing we still have today: largely segregated, often isolated from city and local services, and tenanted predominantly by low- to very-low-income families.*

In 1974, President Richard Nixon created the Section 8 program as a replacement for new public housing, shifting federal funding either directly to tenants to rent in the private market or to private developers and owners to build income-restricted projects.

The Reagan Administration later cut the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) budget by more than 50 percent, including funding for Section 8. In 1986, it introduced the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), which now provides the "subsidy" to for-profit and

non-profit developers that finances the vast majority of the country's low-income housing.

The march against public housing as the affordable housing model continued, embraced by both parties: In 1992, HUD launched the HOPE VI program, incentivizing the demolition of distressed public housing projects that were then replaced with mixed-income housing built and operated by the private sector. And in 1999, President Bill Clinton signed the Faircloth Amendment, prohibiting the creation of any new units of public housing. HUD's budget for the maintenance of existing stock also steadily declined, leading to multibillion-dollar deficits nationwide.

Recognizing the toll that years of disinvestment had on public housing residents, and driven by the core belief that buildings managed by third parties generate better outcomes for low-income families, the Obama Administration launched the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD). Under RAD, public housing units are converted to Section 8, leveraging private capital to renovate and upgrade the buildings. The Section 8 contracts ensure current residents pay the same low rent and that all units remain affordable to low- and moderate-income households, ultimately allowing a wider mix of incomes to popu-

late the buildings as units turn over. In 2018, HUD announced the completion of 100,000 RAD conversions, and Congress increased the total allowance to 455,000. However, many of these projects require incremental funding, and Congress failed to authorize enough to complete all these conversions.

This brings us to the present, with evidence of inhumane living conditions in developments from the South Bronx to St. Louis, and incompetent, bloated, and sometimes corrupt public housing authorities operating with inadequate resources to address the growing capital needs of the more than one million apartments still in public ownership.

Keeping up with both major capital repairs and the day-to-day maintenance issues of large portfolios requires the talent, technology, and financial resources that the public sector simply cannot provide at scale. Even the best public housing authorities struggle to compete for talented property managers in strong markets. Housing authorities are also forced to bid out construction contracts pursuant to Byzantine procurement rules that slow things down and drive up costs.

*From an article by Alicia Glen, Former Deputy Mayor for New York City, in a citylab.com blog.*



**ALICIA GLEN, FORMER NYC DEPUTY**

**MAYOR**, is currently serving as the Chair of the Trust for Governors Island, and Chair of a multiservice platform for women, Women.nyc. She helped design, redesign, and push ahead the administration's 300,000-unit affordable housing plan, which has coincided with changes to the city's land use rules to help spur affordable housing and the upzonings of several neighborhoods. *Photo: Paige Polk/Mayoral Photography Office.*

*Editor's Footnote: New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) has had a tumultuous past few years, from charges of mismanagement to illegality, with questions about mold remediation, lead paint remediation, and forged documents, plus ongoing sagas around buildings that are falling apart. NYCHA and the city recently entered into an agreement with federal authorities at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that includes a federal monitor of NYCHA. RAD also includes three HUD "legacy" programs: Rent Supplement, Rental Assistance Payment, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation.*

## Super "Hero"

By Robert Kroll

There are around a quarter million co-op living units in "The Naked City." There are around 80,000 supers running them. Every one of those supes has a fantastic story to tell. I will be telling at least some of these.

I plan to tell the stories of my Brooklyn Heights brownstone. Nine apartments. Fourteen occupants. Two dogs. Two babies. Three goldfish. I am the super. At the risk of sounding boastful, a note I wrote to my residents, posted on the front door and signed "The Super," was vandalized, and the word "Hero" was added after my ID. The city may arrange a party in my honor at the local Gray's Papaya.

I'm new to this supering business. I moved from Berkeley to Brooklyn 15

months ago. Already I've had adventures you only read about in trade journals like "Pest Control Fancier" and "Locksmith Quarterly." Or the "Vindow Viper's Views." Man's Adventure.

There will be regular articles that you can sink your teeth into and come away with chipped teeth and an understanding of how to be a "super hero," how to be a super tenant, and how get the most from your super.

How do you feel about your super? What do they do well? Poorly? What is the most valiant thing the super did for you when in need? The shittiest? Is your super a hero or a villain? How so? We will be imparting some of what we consider best practices for supers but we will not engage in super shaming. Ultimately the super gains "hero" status when they solve problems, make life better for residents, and recede into their den. We will not be identifying any supers, but will tell their stories, their adventures, their lives. You know who they are.



*Photo by Dusty Berke.*

Hi, Mr. G. Capsis: This is Lily. I am in third grade at PS340. Today, I met a photographer from your newspaper who wanted a photo of me and my new puppy, George. She told us that her boss was also named George.

We named him George because he first lived in the country, so we were thinking of the name "Farmer" but it didn't sound right. So I said, "What about 'George' because he reminded me of Curious George." That's when daddy said, "That's a great idea because 'George' means farmer in Greek!" So Mommy said, "Hmm, maybe. I'll tell you by tomorrow." The next morning she came to wake me up and said, "George it is!" And that's how we named him George.

In the picture, George is in a sling. We got inspired by a woman on the street with an adorable pug about ten-weeks old. His name was Butters.

And, I think that's it. Thanks for reading my story.

*Love, Lily Fernández-Victor (8)*

## Letters continued from page 2

with a criminal history throughout the world), Lyfts, and Vias, not cap them at 120,000. They're choking our streets, hogging our neighborhoods, and turning travel into an urban circus of commerce super-gridlock.

I know this because 1) I am a driver and observe it in the traffic congestion, and 2) my daughter was for two years the Executive Director of the Committee for Taxi

Safety (read: Yellow Taxi Owners). I have observed how palpable the suicides and despair of yellow taxi drivers are—unable to make ends meet—in this David and Goliath struggle. It's crushing them. (She was the first spokesperson to call out Uber's creepy and deceitful practices, leading—among other events—to the ouster of the CEO, Travis Kalanick.)

Corey Johnson and others may be right

that the benefit to buses and bus riders might outweigh the damage to the West Village character and experience, but ignoring the real elephant in the room—the highly unregulated commercial rider industry (I call it the Uberfication of Urban America) will be at our collective peril... not something we cherish in our beloved West Village.

I wrote an article years ago entitled "How

High Is Up," bemoaning the shanghaiing of the 57th Street and Manhattan (and now Brooklyn) skyline and the destruction of New York's character. The same can be said of how congested our choked streets have become.

Buses have their rightful place, but at what cost?

There goes the neighborhood!

—Bruce Poli

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# The Village Speaks Out on Single Payer Healthcare

By Alec Pruchnicki, MD

On Sunday, October 6th, residents of Greenwich Village and much of lower Manhattan had a chance to speak out on the possibility and advisability of bringing a single payer healthcare system to New York State (my article in WestView News last month was, "Want Single Payer in New York? Speak Up!"). A forum was held at the Elisabeth Irwin High School on Charlton Street. It was initially organized by the Village Independent Democrats and later co-sponsored by a range of Democratic party clubs, including the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club, Coalition for a District Alternative, Downtown Independent Democrats, Gramercy-Stuyvesant Independent Democrats, Hell's Kitchen Democrats, Samuel J. Tilden Democratic Club, and the United Democratic Organization.

The speakers included Assembly Member Richard Gottfried and Senator Gustavo Rivera, who co-sponsored the New York Health Act which would establish a single payer insurance system in New York State. Speaking in favor of the bill were Kim Behrens, a nurse, and Mary O'Brien, a physician. Providing a somewhat alternative position was Margaret Flowers, a physician who has been involved for many years in advocating for a single payer system on the federal level. She pointed out the weaknesses of a state system and the various ways the federal government could sabotage it. This led to a detailed discussion of potential legal obstacles to a state program and the methods for overcoming these obstacles.

In addition to the scheduled speakers, local elected of-

ficials advocated for the bill with short statements. These included Congressman Jerry Nadler, Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Brad Hoylman, and City Council Member Carlina Rivera.

After all the presenters on the panel and elected representatives spoke, the audience had an opportunity to ask questions and make statements for and against the legislation. In a spirited detailed back and forth question and answer session, which lasted almost an hour and a half, many views were expressed, with the majority appearing to support the bill.

There was no formal resolution adopted by the audience, but a follow-up did take place on Thursday, October 10th at the monthly meeting of the Village Independent Democrats at Lenox Health Greenwich Village on West 13th street. Another detailed spirited discussion ensued, topped off by a statement by State Senator Brad Hoylman, one of the bill's co-sponsors. A resolution was passed by the membership urging the legislature to pass the bill, and the governor (who will be running for another term) to sign it.

One resolution coming from one club in a busy election year legislative session might not get much attention. Advocates for the bill are hoping that the sponsoring clubs, other Democratic clubs, and the general public will express support for it. As occupied as we will be with other events in Albany and Washington, decisions and policies still need to be addressed. This forum helped to give people the information they will need to decide on action.



**MY 5 YEAR OLD SON LUCAS IS A HUGE HUGH JACKMAN FAN**, especially in his role in *The Greatest Showman* movie. We have watched the movie a large number of times and play the soundtrack and sing our hearts out every weekend in the car. Fortunately, we had the opportunity to attend "Hugh Jackman The Show" in concert yesterday at the Prudential Center. My son of course in full out *Greatest Showman* costume. We had pretty good seats, nine rows back. At the end of one of the last songs my son ran up to the stage and luckily caught Hugh's attention. And they exchanged a high five, and Hugh asked me to lift him up on stage. And sure enough the crowd went crazy and Lucas and Hugh had a small conversation. It was an unbelievable moment and a dream come true for Lucas. As a matter of fact, their picture was up on Hugh's social media within a few minutes. This is especially relevant for *WestView News*, as both Lucas and Hugh are West Village residents and both live on Perry Street!! Photo and text by Peter Grech.

## A New Store for Li-Lac Chocolates



**IN OCTOBER, JUST IN TIME FOR HALLOWEEN,** Li-Lac moved its flagship to a cheerful new shop on Greenwich Avenue. Photo by Darielle Smolian.

By Caroline Benveniste

In the December 2016 issue of *WestView News* we ran an article entitled “The Best of Food Shopping in the West Village” in which we listed our favorite food stores. Somehow, we neglected to include a chocolate category and our readers quickly alerted us to this oversight. And, of course, the winner in that category was Li-Lac Chocolates. Last month, Li-Lac moved their flagship store from 40 Eighth Avenue (at Jane Street) to 75 Greenwich Avenue (between Bank and West 11th Streets) where the Roasting Plant used to be.

Li-Lac is the oldest chocolate house in Manhattan; they opened at 120 Christopher Street (near Bedford Street) in 1923. The business was the brainchild of George Demetrious, a Greek immigrant who learned his chocolate-making skills in France. When George passed away in 1972 he left the company to his long-standing employee Marguerite Watt, as he had no family. Marguerite ran it until 1978, when she sold it to a devoted customer, Edward Bond. Edward’s sister Martha also came on board, and they ran the business jointly. Among other initiatives, they started amassing the large collection of chocolate molds that are still used today. Martha continued to run the business after her brother’s death in 1990, and started Li-Lac’s expansion with a second store in Grand Central Station in 1999. In 2005 Martha was forced to move the first store to Eighth Avenue after the rent at its original Christopher Street location skyrocketed. (120 Christopher Street is a Croman building. In 2009 Pho Sure, a Vietnamese restaurant, opened there but closed a few years ago after issues with the landlord. Red Paper Clip, a trendy Asian-accented restaurant whose chefs had previously cooked at a number of prestigious spots, now occupies the space. Many of the other storefronts in the building remain empty.)

In 2011 Martha retired and sold Li-Lac to two of her customers and an employee. The two customers, Anthony Cirone and Christopher Taylor, were longtime Village residents and Li-Lac devotees. Anwar Khoder was an immigrant from Lebanon who started working at Li-Lac in 1989 and is now the

master chocolatier. Anthony pointed out that Li-Lac has always been run by either former employees or enthusiastic customers or both.

Under its new ownership, Li-Lac continued to expand. Five years ago Li-Lac moved its factory to Industry City in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Industry City was built as a manufacturing, warehouse, and distribution center in the 1890s. It had fallen into decay until 2013 when a new group of owners, which included Jamestown Properties, took it over and began to redevelop it. (Jamestown Properties is the company that invested in Chelsea Market in 2003 and turned it into the huge tourist attraction it is today. In 2018 they sold it to Google.) Li-Lac was one of the first food tenants at Industry City, and now that move seems prescient, as many other food purveyors have set up shop there—including Sahadi’s (Middle Eastern market and restaurant), Hometown BBQ (perhaps the best BBQ in NYC), and Japan Village—making it a fun dining destination. In 2015 Li-Lac opened a store on Bleecker Street, and in 2016 they set up shop in Chelsea Market. This year they opened a store in Hudson Yards, and also moved their flagship store when they were unable to negotiate a new lease at the Eighth Avenue location (they had been there on a month-to-month basis for a while).

Anthony admitted that opening two stores this year has been a huge undertaking. However, they are very pleased with their new Greenwich Avenue location: it is larger, has more visibility, more foot traffic, and is in an attractive spot (overlooking the AIDS Memorial Park and Northwell Health Greenwich Village). The area is becoming more lively as, finally, the Seventh Avenue storefronts in Rudin’s Greenwich Lane development have tenants (Nordstrom Local is open, the veterinary clinic at the corner of 12th Street is under construction, and a fancy Starbucks will be coming to the corner of 13th Street.) The new store takes advantage of the additional space with a hot chocolate bar. The day I visited, the staff was being trained to make the perfect Café Mocha.

Even though Li-Lac has the Industry City factory, the chocolates are still made by hand, limiting the number that can be made. The mold collection continues to expand, and the themed chocolates are popular as gifts. My personal favorites are the chocolate covered orange peels, glacé ginger, butter crunch, and the hazelnut truffle squares which resemble the three-layer Italian Crémino but with an external chocolate shell.

On October 19th the store held a grand opening event with five of their signature chocolates selling at 1923 prices (23 cents per piece) and some boxes of chocolates available for \$9.23. While the prices have returned to 2019 levels, Li-Lac’s new store is still definitely worth a visit. When we see so many beloved Village institutions closing it’s nice to know that Li-Lac has long-term leases on all its stores, assuring a supply of delicious chocolate well into the future.

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# IN and OUT

by *Caroline Benveniste*

We had some good news this month: a beloved chocolate shop did not close, a new jazz club opened, and Bleeker Street continues its metamorphosis with a couple of new shops. We also noted two spots that are either owned by women or feature products made by women.

## Open TOP OPENINGS



### CAFÉ BOHEMIA—15 Barrow Street between West 4th and Bleeker Streets

We expect to read about jazz clubs closing in the Village, but it's big news when one opens, particularly when it is a venerable one that is returning to its original space. According to the new owner, Christine Santelli, Charlie Parker used to drink Brandy Alexanders across the street from 15 Barrow, and when he couldn't pay his tab, he offered to play instead. The owner of the bar decided that he should build a stage across the street, but unfortunately Charlie Parker died before it was completed. The new music venue was called Café Bohemia, and Miles Davis was the first to play there. Between 1955 and 1960, many famous jazz musicians and bands such as John Coltrane, Art Blakey and the jazz messengers, and Charles Mingus played there and several albums were recorded. Later, many restaurants occupied the ground floor space at 15 Barrow, including Tupelo Honey in the 1980's, a restaurant I frequented often as I was living on the second floor of the building for a couple of years. Now the ground floor houses the Barrow Ale House. In February

of 2019, Christine Santelli decided to open a jazz club in the underground space. It turns out that it also previously housed a jazz club called The Pied Piper. The new Café Bohemia will feature Jazz, Blues and Folk, 3 or 4 days a week initially, on the newly outfitted stage. Christine also mentioned that noted double bassist Jymie Merritt had played at the original Café Bohemia, and now the second generation of Merritts will also play there: Jymie's son, Mike Merritt, who is the bassist for Conan O'Brien will be joined there by his musician brother as well as the drummer from Saturday Night Live. Specialty drinks, beer, and wine are served along with small plates and selected entrees.



### THE RIDDLER—51 Bank Street at West 4th Street

The second branch of a San Francisco champagne bar has opened in the space that most recently housed an old-fashioned soda fountain. There are over 100 bottles of champagne on offer and about a dozen champagnes by the glass, most of them made by women winemakers. Many of the champagnes are from smaller producers that are not well-known. There are also a few sparkling wines available by the glass and bottle including Pet-Nats (sparkling wines made using a different and older method than the methode champenoise), which are cheaper than the champagne. There is a full kitchen, unlike in the San Francisco incarnation, and the food spans the gamut from oysters and caviar to hamburgers and icebox cake. The spot is owned by Jen Pelka, and the other investors are also women.

## Also Open

When the **Two Boots** location at the corner of West 11th Street and 7th Avenue closed, I thought that was it for Cajun-Italian pizza in the Village. But true to their promise, **Two Boots Pizza West Village** (101 7th Avenue South at the corner of Grove Street) has opened near Sheridan Square in the space where baked donut concept Holely Donuts briefly existed. The new shop is longer and narrower than the old one, but it looks much the same, just brighter, since in the old store the wall and tabletop decorations had faded with age. They've added a pizza called The Duchess as a tribute to the lesbian bar by the same name that occupied the space in the 1970's. The pizza has concentric circles of pestos, creating a rainbow effect. The rest of the menu is pretty much the same. The Neta space (61 West 8th Street between 6th Avenue and MacDougal Street) did not remain empty for long. The same management has quickly opened **Būmu**, which they describe as an izakaya-style spot. The chef, Joaquin Baca, briefly operated Teo in Bushwick. Before that he had been a chef in the David Chang empire. The restaurant is cheaper than Neta, and the owners hope it will become a neighborhood hang-out rather than a special occasion spot. Bleeker continues to evolve with a slew of unique shops—a big change from the days when many upscale national brands had an outpost there. **Keentu** (345 Bleeker Street between West 10th and Christopher Streets) carries jewelry, accessories, clothing and home décor from more than 40 women-owned businesses in Africa. According to their website, all the items are ethically and sustainably made. **Thakoon** (397 Bleeker Street), a clothing store by Thai-American designer Thakoon Panichgul explains their concept as follows: “the idea is to create a modern, accessible wardrobe that women can wear and cu-

rate over time.” **Banter** (635 Hudson Street between Jane and Horatio Streets) has taken over the space that used to be the dessert spot Sherri B. It is an Australian coffee bar, the second location in the Village (the first location is at 169 Sullivan Street near Houston Street). Like all Australian coffee spots, it offers nicely crafted coffees and avocado toast, as well as smoothie bowls and many egg dishes.

## Closed/Closing

I never would have believed that instead of opening, **Duane Reades** would be closing, but the location at 33 7th Avenue (between 12th and 13th Streets) abruptly shut its doors towards the end of October. Also gone is the mall shoe store **Famous Footwear** (50 West 14th Street between 5th and 6th Avenue). I was excited when **Kopi2** opened at 6 West 14th Street near 5th Avenue as I had been eager to try the Indonesian food available at the original **Kopi Kopi** at 68 West 3rd Street but hadn't quite managed, and this one was closer. But the new branch served only coffee and pastries, and now both are closed. I was always prejudiced against **Horchata** (470 6th Avenue between 11th and 12th Streets) as it had replaced BLT Burger, a favorite of mine. Both were part of the ESQUARED Hospitality Group, and now Horchata, like BLT Burger, appears to have closed. The space looks deserted, and the restaurant is no longer listed on the ESQUARED Hospitality Group webpage. A reader points out that cosmetics and perfume shop **Jo Malone London** (330 Bleeker Street at Christopher Street) has closed. According to the reader, who spoke with an employee there, it had been at that location for ten years. There are three other Jo Malone locations in the city.

## Coming Soon

Two new mostly on-line shoe stores are coming to Bleeker Street, joining Margaux. **Inkerman** (353 Bleeker Street between West 10th and Charles Streets) boasts that they make high-quality, handmade shoes which would normally cost over \$400 for under \$200. The shoes are made in Mexico, and are mostly sold on-line. They have a flagship on Mott Street in NoLita, and also locations in L.A. and Nantucket. **Rothys** (407 Bleeker Street between West 11th and Bank Streets) makes comfortable, washable women's flats out of recycled water bottles at a “sustainable, zero-waste” factory in China. They have recently started offering merino wool shoes as well. They also have a store in San Francisco. A reader reminds us that Jimmy Choo Shoes once occupied the space. **Goodlife** (400 Bleeker Street between Perry and West 11th Streets) is a men's essentials clothing brand. The store is small, and will carry its signature t-shirts and sweats, as well as some other items, but many of its offerings will be displayed in the store, but shipped directly to consumers when purchased. Goodlife will also debut some women's items, and will collaborate with SeaVees for men's and women's shoes. This is the first bricks-and-mortar location for the brand. **Gentile Gelatieri** will open at 41 8th Avenue (between Jane and West 4th Streets), next door to French meringue and brioche spot (and, according to *Eater*, home of a delicious chocolate ganache sandwich) **Les Merveilleux de Fred**, making that a very sweet block. The business started as a kiosk in Bari, Italy, in 1880, and there is also a store in Brooklyn.

## Moved/Other

**Li-Lac Chocolates** moved their flagship from 8th Avenue to Greenwich Avenue (see article on page 13). Last month we reported that **Baby Brasa** (173 Seventh Avenue South at the corner of Perry Street) had been closed by the City Department of Consumer Affairs, but recently we noticed that it had reopened. **Vada Spa** is moving across the street and south a block to 364 6th Avenue (between Waverly Place and Washington Place) leaving three empty storefronts on the west side of 6th Avenue north of Waverly Place (Pet-

*continued on page 15*

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# A View from the Kitchen

By Isa Covo

What do we think about when we think about November? There may be other guesses, but there is one essential one and that is Thanksgiving.

There is the meal of course: the turkey, cornbread, many vegetables, different pies (usually pecan and apple). There are also the guests—those who live nearby and others who cross the country, even oceans. It's good to see them all at such a convivial occasion.

But there is another aspect to Thanksgiving, the real meaning of it when we reflect about our lives and the world at

large. In general, we are thankful for still being here, for having a family, for little children bent on rearranging our apartment, for grandchildren who have reached adulthood and still find us interesting, for friends, for living comfortable lives in relatively good health, for sharing in an environment which suits our lifestyle and more.

It is unfortunate that some people in our country do not have much to be thankful for: the lonely, the homeless, the sick and those who can't afford treatment. There are those who lost their homes, sometimes their towns, to fires, hurricanes and floods, those whose farms and cattle are suffering from droughts.

There are war-torn countries where millions of people have lost their homes, their neighborhoods, often their lives; there are also those who flee repressive regimes and those in search of better lives than the ones they have in their home countries. A legally protected refugee told me she would love to return to her country of origin and family but cannot find a decent job where she came from. There are refugees who need help but can't find any and have no place to settle. Whatever our source of the news, the newspapers, television, and the internet make it difficult for us to ignore these painful and tragic situations during our celebratory times.

I know that many people are helping, donating their time and money, but not enough of us do. It is also true that whatever

the number of people invested in helping, if there is war and unrest around the planet, suffering won't end anytime soon. However, some small acts of personal kindness will be gladly received by those who need them; if you know someone who is lonely, impaired, or homebound, a short visit or phone call is a nice thing to do. If possible, perhaps you could ask if they need help with some shopping or anything else, and for those who are mobile, but still lonely, offer to take them out to have coffee, a meal at restaurant, or a movie; they will be grateful. If a neighbor hasn't been seen in some days, call to inquire if all is well. People need us, we must not abandon them.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving, and remember that Mr. Rogers asked, "Won't you be my neighbor?"

## Honey-Pecan Pie

By Isa Covo

*Pecans are one of my favorite ingredients, whether pecan rolls, pecan pies, toasted with spices, chopped, or toasted and sprinkled on roasted peaches. The pie recipe below is less gooey than the traditional one, very delicious, and is just right for Thanksgiving or any time one is in need of a pecan sweet.*

### INGREDIENTS

*For the crust:*

2 cups unbleached cake flour  
1/3 cup sugar  
10 tablespoons unsalted butter,  
plus more to grease the pan  
1 large egg

*For the filling:*

8 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1/2 cup honey  
1/2 cup light brown sugar  
3 tablespoons heavy cream  
3 cups pecans, chopped  
1 teaspoon vanilla

### DIRECTIONS

1. Grease generously a 7.5 x 11-inch rectangular baking pan.
2. With a heavy knife, or a half-moon chopping blade (mezzaluna), chop the pecans coarsely.
3. Prepare the crust: in a medium bowl, sift together the flour and the sugar.
4. Cut the butter into the flour until the mixture looks like coarse sand. Make a well in the middle of the flour mixture and break the egg into it. Beat the egg slightly and combine it with the flour mixture until the mixture forms a soft smooth ball.
5. Roll out the dough into a rectangle and line the prepared pan on the bottom and about halfway to the sides. Cover with wax paper and refrigerate about 15 minutes. Heat



6. the oven to 350F.
6. Set the rack in the middle of the oven. Blind bake the crust in the preheated oven for 20 minutes.
7. Meanwhile, in a deep saucepan melt the butter over low heat. Add the sugar, honey, and vanilla and stir to mix. Stir in the chopped pecan meats to cover them completely with the butter mixture. Remove from the heat and cool slightly.
8. Remove the crust from the oven and spread the pecan mixture over it evenly. Return the pie to the oven and bake an additional 35 minutes, or until the sides brown lightly.
9. When the pie is ready, transfer it to a rack and cool completely before unmolding.
10. Present the pie whole or cut it into rectangles, squares, diamonds, or any way you chose to serve it.

*Yield:*  
24 pieces or more, depending on size.

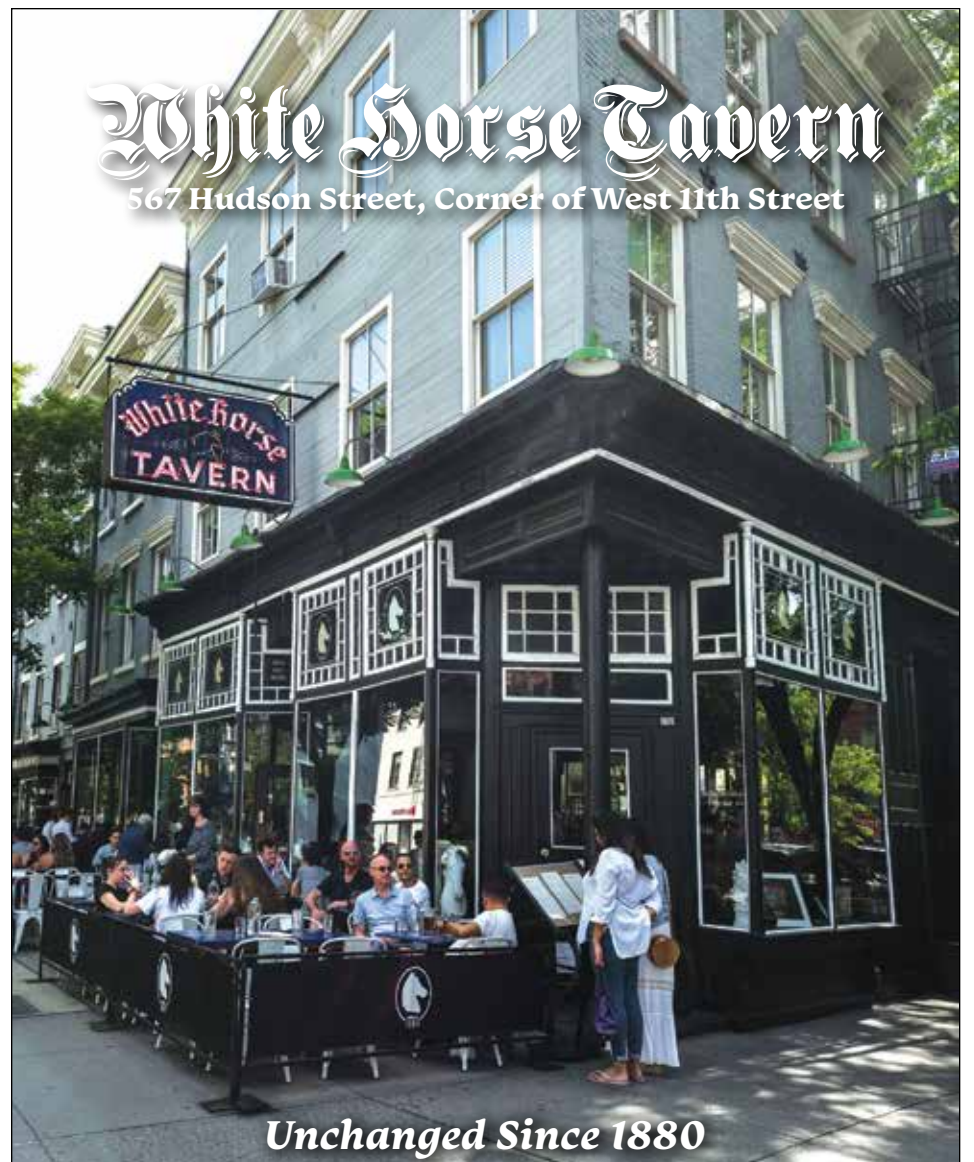
## In and Out *continued from page 14*

land Discounts and Onegin were adjacent and also closed recently). **Gran Gelato** (335 Bleecker Street), which opened in June, has paper on the windows and a sign that says they are closed for renovation. No one answered the phone and voicemail was not activated. **Frankies 570 Sputino** was the Manhattan outpost of Frankies Sputino on Court Street in Brooklyn, but now it has closed and will re-open as a different restaurant called **Anton's**. The exciting news is that the chef at the new restaurant will be Nick Anderer who was, until recently, the executive chef at Danny Meyer's excellent Maialino. The description of the food sounds like what

used to be called "Continental Cuisine." An eagle-eyed reader noticed the following sign at 621 Hudson Street (at Jane Street): "FINAL NOTICE, Empire Merchants LLC vs Frisolino inc d/b/a/ **Piccolo Angolo**. Due Immediately \$5,412.83. You must contact my office immediately to make payment on this judgment. Failure to do so will result in seizure of assets and possible auction of contents of business."

*We need your help! Please email us with any additional insight at [wvnewsinout@gmail.com](mailto:wvnewsinout@gmail.com). We really appreciated all your help on this issue, and hope you keep up the good work!*

*Photos by Darielle Smolian.*





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## November Means Thanksgiving in the West Village

By Gordon Hughes

I sit on an outside bench at Cafe Panino Mucho Gusto in a heavy shirt, and there's a chill in the air. As I enjoy my coffee on these fall mornings, I contemplate the things I'm thankful for this Thanksgiving. Being able to live here in the West Village tops my list.

I recently read an article in *Vanity Fair* about Bleecker Street and also a couple of chapters in Jeremiah Moss's book *Vanishing New York* about the West Village, which mirrored two of my previous articles in this newspaper. One was positive, one not so.

I understand those who feel a loss here in The Village but I also try to understand those new folks moving here who are making changes. What I find in life is that there appears to be a big—very big—pendulum that swings back and forth. The cycles thus created tend to equalize life, sort of like Adam Smith's "invisible hand" theory. But I'm getting a bit off track.

So living in the West Village is number one on my thankful list. Second are the people I have been fortunate enough to meet here in The Village and at the Cafe. Cheryl, Chet, Alex, Claud, Tod, Frank and Duane—to his friends "D-Man," not to mention the owners Sarah and Arshad who always make us feel at home here. I can never forget George Capsis, who put

me to work writing this monthly column, and his trusted executive assistant, Dusty. Those two and the remarkable staff at *WestView News*, I'm thankful for.

I'm thankful for Sue, Randy, Molly and the cast and crew at *Come From Away*. What a remarkable musical, and I'm so proud to be a part of it. I'm thankful for having been a part of *The Cher Show*. I have a Cher Show hat to prove it. Thank you Flody, Jeffrey, Sarahbeth and of course Stephanie Block, and another remarkable cast and crew. And as we go into the final stretch of *An American in Paris*, I'm so thankful to have worked with Robbie, Lianne and Chris along with my great friend Sarahbeth.

In The Village itself I'm thankful that Marie's Crisis Café is still open along with its neighbor, Arthur's Tavern, and for Village Cigars, Bus Stop Cafe, MéMéditerranéan, The Village Vanguard, Abingdon Square Park and the Saturday Greenmarket, Village Apothecary, Three Lives & Company bookstore and of course Christofle. We lost a number of wonderful joints this year, and for that we are not so thankful; there is that pendulum again.

All in all the West Village is still a remarkable part of our city and I for one am thankful—very thankful—to be just a small part of it this Thanksgiving.

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## West Village Original: Denise Marsa



**IN ADDITION TO DEVELOPING HER SHOW AND RUNNING HER PR COMPANY,** Denise Marsa, above, is committed to mentoring young singers and bands. *Photo by Jim Dyke.*

By Michael D. Minichiello

*This month's West Village Original is singer/songwriter Denise Marsa, born in Trenton, New Jersey, in 1954. In addition to a decades-long career in the music business, Marsa owns Key Media Group, a public relations and marketing firm. She also mentors young singers and bands in navigating the industry. On November 26th, she will present her one-woman show about her life in music, The Pass, at Revelation Gallery at St. John's in The Village. Visit the show's website at [www.thepassmusical.com](http://www.thepassmusical.com).*

"I had good parents who were very affectionate and always encouraged me when I was growing up," says Denise Marsa. "Except when I told them I was moving to New York. Then they freaked out! But I was headstrong and said, 'I don't want to hear it. This is what I'm doing.' That was in the seventies when a lot of not so great stuff was going on here, so I don't blame them. But I was paying my own way, just like I had paid for my own education, and I reassured them that I wouldn't be chewed up and spit out."

What drew Marsa to music in the first place? "I was always musical," she says. "My brother got a drum set for Christmas one year and I just started playing it. Same with the piano. I had both the instinct and the inclination. And my mother really pushed me. I think she had been overshadowed by her siblings growing up, so she put her energy into me. I was singing, taking acting classes and I landed my first professional gig in musical theater at age eight."

Fast forward all these years, and it was when Marsa was performing her songs in a couple of clubs that the idea for her current show came about. "My life has been funneled through song," she says. "There are people who are passionate about songwriting and I'm one of them. It's like breathing for us. When I did those club shows, people came up to me afterwards and said, 'Why aren't you a household name? You're like a female Billy Joel or Elton John.' Well, that's a long story. The story of my life, really! It's about timing and where you put your energy. It's about choice. Did I want to

be rich and famous, or did I want to stay true to myself? It's a struggle to be an artist trying to stay relevant throughout it all. I've had a lot of luck but at the same time, things just happen out of your control. I'm sure part of it was me as well. There are so many things I said no to early in my career. But it doesn't matter now because I do what I do, and I still love doing it. My one-woman show is a vehicle to tell my story and get my songs heard. It's also where I started: in musical theatre. I've gone full circle."

These days, in addition to developing her show and running her PR company, Marsa is committed to mentoring young singers and bands. "When I was younger no one really empowered me to understand the music business, let alone the entertainment business," she says. "So instead of being angry, I decided to take my energy and put it towards helping young people protect themselves. I love doing it. There are a lot of dreamers in the music business but only a small percentage actually make a living in it. I think my experience can be instructive."

Marsa has lived in the same apartment on Christopher Street since she moved here over 40 years ago. How is the neighborhood different from those days? "Oh my God! How isn't it different?" she replies. "My perspective, though, is that New York both changes and doesn't change at the same time. By that I mean when you live in The West Village you get a chance to hold on to a bit more of the charm of life. And I think the most charming part of New York is The West Village, hands down. Everything is smaller so maybe smaller is charming. But the people themselves live large lives in small spaces. I've done that as well."


"My apartment is full of history too," she continues. "It's small and dates from 1810, but I have a lot going on in that small space. My building has a backyard and it's been a very magical existence. I come into my house and shut everything off. Sometimes I wish I had one extra room. But this is what it is, and it's also a reminder to make the best of what you do have. That's always been my attitude: 'Make it work!'"

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# Bell Labs' Second-Best-Kept Secret



**463 WEST STREET:** an important address in the allied victory of World War II. Photo courtesy AT&T Archives and History Center.

By Catherine Revland

**Part Two of a series, You Must Remember This, about World War II and its relevance to our times**

*"How do you manage genius? You don't."*  
—Mervin Kelly, director of Bell Research Labs

In the industrial Monopoly game of the 1940s, Bell Labs and Western Electric were Boardwalk and Park Place, an entire city block where the cream of the scientific elite was busy creating the latest wonder. At that time the Bell Empire was the world's largest and wealthiest monopoly, and one

of the secrets of its success was Mervin Kelly's only requirement of his employees: perfection.

## USEFUL FREEDOM

Of all the researchers who have contributed to the oral history of Bell Labs, Kelly's name comes up the most frequently because, perhaps, he understood the needs and complexities of the exceptional mind. "It's exceedingly unlikely to find multiple talents in a single person," he wrote in a report to management, "but it is in the mind of a single person that creative ideas and concepts are born." Undoubtedly it was Kelly who persuaded the corporation to provide the cradle.

"We were cut loose to fuss around," said acoustics engineer Harvey Fletcher, the inventor of stereophonic sound. "I spent ten years and got nowhere, ten years learning to listen with two ears, and finally it was perfect. As perfect as they come."

Another secret of Bell's spectacular success also comes from Kelly: working in close collaboration with people of different disciplines. "I was part of probably the greatest research team ever put together on a problem," recalled William Brattain, winner of the Nobel Prize for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). "One person's remarks suggesting an idea to another always went to the heart of things—people in other disciplines who got interested in what you were doing—so hard to get in a university, so beautifully available at Bell Labs."

This collegiality extended far beyond 463 West Street. There was an auditorium on

the top floor of what is now the A Section where these different disciplines met to educate each other, with tea and cookies provided by management. "It was held after work hours because it was entirely our show," said nuclear physicist Foster Nix, "informal, lively, and incredibly helpful. Einstein and every other eminent European scientist who went to New York came here to visit or give talks. The only rule was clarity—no footnotes, no jargon. We were there to learn how to communicate with each other."

## SULTANS OF SOUND

The human ability to locate unseen objects in the sky or underwater is achieved by a system called radio detection and ranging, a.k.a. radar. It was still in the early stages of development in 1940, but early that year two British scientists achieved a major breakthrough called the cavity magnetron. By manipulating streams of electronic waves within a magnetic field they were able to vastly increase the power and frequency of radar, a feat that immediately revolutionized the industry.

When the magnetron arrived at West Street, shipped by the British government to the U.S. for safekeeping during the Blitz, it couldn't have been in a better place. Bell's acoustics researchers had been "pulling sound out of the air" for decades, and Fletcher had been tinkering with electron waves for 30 years. He called them "the physics of sound." Now, instead of perfecting acoustics for the next Leopold Stokowski recording, he was keen on developing this astounding invention that

would soon change the course of the war.

The work on this super-secret project, code named Rad Lab, was done in a nondescript, converted biscuit factory across from the West Street building, but according to team leader Jim Fisk it was no walk in the park. "Reverse engineering is simple in theory," he said, "but in practice it was turning us inside out—tedious, immensely frustrating modifications—but once resolved it was the gift that kept on giving."

Within two months the team had achieved the impossible, adapting and replicating 30 prototypes, ready for manufacture. In another three months, collaborating with Rad Labs at Columbia and MIT, they had designed a compact version that fit into an airplane, which required team members to go on test flights "because absolutely no one else knew how to run the system." By 1942 they had developed the magnetic airborne detector (MAD) that located and torpedoed German submarines. By 1944 they had perfected an anti-aircraft version that was shooting down 9 out of 10 of Germany's horrific V-2 rocket bombs.

Having witnessed the unveiling of the magnetron at Bell Labs, renowned nuclear physicist I. I. Rabi headed straight to the Rad Lab at MIT. "When people asked us why we weren't working on the bomb," he said, "we told them we were serious about preserving the future of humanity. The bomb ended the war, but radar won the war."

When the future of humanity is under a dire threat, certain people rise up, shift into high gear, and achieve the impossible. Remember this.

## Take the Reins and End the Slaughter

By Anastasia Kaliabakos

Approximately 100,000 horses are transported annually across the United States border to be slaughtered for the sake of human consumption. People seeking to profit off of these magnificent animals cram them into crowded trucks without food or water—oftentimes for over 24 hours—to meet their demise in slaughterhouses, where many are gruesomely dismembered while they are still alive. In early 2019, a bill known as the Safeguard American Exports Act was presented to Congress. This bill can ensure that the slaughter of horses for human consumption would be banned and that the inhumane export of horses for this purpose would be prohibited as well. It is up to the citizens of the U.S. to take action and demand that their representatives pass this bill.

Horses have played a pivotal role throughout the history of humankind. From the time of antiquity when Alexander the Great rode Bucephalus into battle, to the famous midnight ride of Paul Revere, to modern day American Pharoah, horses have been man's

unsung heroes. After men domesticated horses, they were able to harness their immeasurable power and speed, becoming not only their teachers, but their companions as well. Horses gave men new and incredibly significant advantages in transportation, trade, herding, agriculture, and warfare. Additionally, they have become man's partner in various sports and recreational activities ranging from the ancient Olympics to the modern-day Kentucky Derby, oftentimes functioning as the ultimate symbol of social status and wealth. These majestic creatures have given their heart and soul to man—life would not be as we know it today without their impact.

As an equestrian, it has been a tremendous privilege to spend time with—and atop—these magnificent animals. I have witnessed their gentleness, patience, grace, intuition, and care towards people for many years and I am constantly inspired and amazed by their endless empathy. It is impossible to put into words the magnitude of the impact that a relationship with a horse has on a human. In competi-

tions and lessons, horses whose trust I have painstakingly earned have protected me from countless obstacles—both emotional and physical. Horses can sense fear in their riders and quell their nerves—a talent that often and unfortunately goes unacknowledged. In volunteering at a horse rescue, I have seen horses abandoned by their previous owners repurposed into the best lesson horses who continue to spark a love for riding in new equestrians year after year. What has impressed me the most, however, is the effect that horses have on people with special needs. I have served as a volunteer for the past four years at Great Strides Long Island, a therapeutic riding program. At this facility, each and every day, horses who have been rescued help children with conditions such as autism or cerebral palsy and even veterans with PTSD slowly overcome both physical and psychological limitations that most people could not even comprehend. These horses have taught me the true meaning of patience and compassion.

How could anyone stand idly by while these animals are brutally sent for slaughter?



**ANASTASIA KALIABAKOS,** above, with her partner Shenandoah Sweet Dreams. Photo by Jeannie Wood.

The entire practice and industry as a whole are barbaric. After all that horses have done and that they continue to do for man, they should be treated with the utmost respect and be valued as precious assets and partners by people across the world. These are God's creatures—it is an immense gift to be able to interact with them. Ultimately, it is our duty as stewards of the earth to act in a responsible manner and to end the abuse of these animals immediately.

# Talking Dirt in The Village

By Aaron William Perry, with Joanie Klar

Our village—The Village—is the most fertile ground of American culture: magnificent, gritty, thoughtful, proud.

Long before vogue terms like influencer or cultural creative entered popular parlance, generations of the most thoughtful, creative, and influential figures generated great turns in the evolution of our culture. Here, we walk atop the same well-worn cobbles trodden by Walt Whitman, Abe Lincoln, Anais Nin, Mark Twain, Upton Sinclair, Billie Holiday, Kurt Vonnegut, Jack Kerouac, Ella Fitzgerald, and Miles Davis. Here scholars fleeing violent regimes in Europe founded the New School. These cobbles echo memories of footsteps of bygone times. Today, Anderson Cooper lays his head after reporting the day's news.

Our Village is hallowed ground.

Sacred ground.

Fertile ground.

Here, heroes wielding mighty pens have slain fierce dragons—dragons of slavery, suppression, racism, bigotry, and mean, nasty conformism.

Now we face a new dragon: an ecological crisis, a toxicity crisis, a climate crisis—an existential crisis of the highest degree. And, like all the nasty dragons we have slain before (defeating slavery, attaining women's suffrage, achieving civil rights), this one, too, appears at first to be invincible.

But we have a secret weapon. We have David's sling to Goliath's fearsome might. We have the special sauce, the secret code, the lost word.

We have: **THE SOIL.**

And we have the **HUMAN SPIRIT.**

Here's what we need to know:

Worldwide, soil is the greatest terrestrial carbon store—and it can hold much, much more. As soil regenerates, through beautifully complex natural processes with which we can conspire and collaborate, it (countless micro-organisms, along with all the plants and trees growing in it) inhales carbon from the atmosphere and deposits it back in the ground. This carbon—the wondrous element found in all life—is the key element regulating the thin sheath of atmosphere, our single, shared life-support system on this great spherical spaceship: Planet Earth. Carbon—in the molecules carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and others—is what acts like the blanket of the biosphere, trapping some of our sun's constantly streaming heat energy, and keeping enough from escaping to space to maintain conditions conducive to life.

But we have loaded too much carbon in the atmosphere, and this dragon must be tamed!

By collaborating with the natural soil-building systems that are the foundation of life on land, we can amplify the carbon-sequestering power of soil. A mere 10% increase in soil carbon world-wide is tantamount to sequestering ALL of the fossil carbon we have released into

the atmosphere since the beginning of the industrial revolution!

Here's how:

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**COMPOSTING** is essential. When we mindlessly discard food scraps, cardboard, and newspapers, they are buried in landfills, where they off-gas methane into the atmosphere. On the other hand, when they are composted instead, a virtuous cycle of soil-building (and carbon sequestration) is activated. And those old copies of *WestView*? Perfect for composting!

**PURCHASING** certified organic, biodynamic and regenerative food, beverage and clothing products, we are further augmenting this essential soil-building imperative. It is the moral imperative of our time to wield this powerful weapon wisely and with stewardship and regeneration at the fore.

**ACTIVATING** soil is a quality-of-life enhancing practice that invites us to engage with the soil in our home, our houseplants, our gardens, our parks, and our village community. The benefits range from increased serotonin (the feel-good neurochemical) levels, to enhanced cognitive performance and even boosted immune system function.

It's time to talk dirt and get dirty together!

Join us November 9th at 5:30pm at the Revelation Gallery (224 Waverly Place, New York, NY 10014) for a special Biodynamic Soil Activation Ceremony experience with Aaron Perry, Joanie Klar, and friends!

For more information on soil regeneration visit [yonearth.org](http://yonearth.org). Use the exclusive code: **WESTVIEWNEWS** for a 50% discount on all of Aaron's ebook and audiobook resources. If you join the Y on Earth Community's Monthly Giving Program ([yonearth.org/support](http://yonearth.org/support)) you will receive a special code for **FREE DOWNLOADS** of all of these resources—which you can share with friends, family and neighbors!

*Aaron William Perry studied as a Gallatin Scholar at New York University in the mid-1990s, and is the author of Y on Earth: Get Smarter, Feel Better, Heal the Planet. The Founder of the Y on Earth Community, a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization dedicated to community mobilization for climate action, soil stewardship and culture of kindness ([yonearth.org](http://yonearth.org)), Aaron is also the host of the Y on Earth Community's Stewardship & Sustainability Video/Podcast series ([yonearth.org/community-podcast](http://yonearth.org/community-podcast)).*

*Joanie Klar is a producer, activist, entrepreneur, and thought leader who resides in both New York and Colorado. She is on the Y on Earth Community's Global Advisory Board, co-producer of Farmer's Footprint with Dr. Zach Bush, served on the Board of Directors of John Denver's Windstar Foundation, and helps lead soil stewardship and regeneration projects in New York, Colorado, and throughout the world.*

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## Notes From Away

## Maine History Lesson



**OCEANFRONT MARKER ON PEMAQUID PENINSULA** noting peaceful settlement of a century and a half of conflict between Penobscot Indians and English settlers. Photo by Tom Lamia.

By Tom Lamia

As the State of Maine heads into its annual state of hibernation, I leave you with a few odd facts (culled from the internet, an unreliable source). For example, did you know...

*That well into our nation's existence, Maine was an orphan:*

- Neither its borders nor its sovereignty were established;
- Those contesting ownership included not only nation states, such as England, France, the United States and the Wabanaki confederation of American Indian tribes, but also (a) a private citizen, and (b) the State of Massachusetts;
- The private citizen's claim originated

- with a hero of the American Revolution;
- A plebiscite among Maine residents freed the state from Massachusetts.

*That Maine agriculture, industry, trade and finance underperform:*

- Throughout its history and continuing to the present day, Maine has been and is among the poorest of American states;
- A century and a half of near constant warfare between and among European and Native American nations left its population and economy undeveloped;
- Its winters are long and severe; its land rocky; its soil poor; and its rail and highway transport challenged by mountains, rivers, forests and granite ledges;
- Its logical trading partners, Canada's Maritime Provinces, are its principal competitors in its leading industries of lumber, fishing and shipbuilding;
- Of these, the first two are non-renewable and threatened, and the third is obsolescent in the age of steel ships and high-tech motive power.

*That immigration is its greatest strength:*

- Maine's respected place in national affairs is the product of several extraordinarily talented immigrants and immigrant communities;
- The wealth of the nation's elite has been transported to Maine by its "Summer People"—seasonal residents who have built their cottages (called such whether 20 rooms or one) along Maine's long, pic-

turesque coastline from Penobscot Bay (Bar Harbor) to Muscongus Bay (Port Clyde and Monhegan Island) to Casco Bay (Portland) and the hundreds of offshore islands along the way;

- A continuing flow of the world's poor and shunned—Poles, Russians, Jews, Lebanese, Somalis, Rwandans—have come because there are jobs for them; it's cheap to live here; and, most importantly, because they are welcomed;
- Immigrants have found their place in state politics not because they are joined together as representatives of foreign cultures, but because they are not. Although all were born and raised in Maine, this limited roster exemplifies the point: Ed Muskie, son of a Polish immigrant father and a first generation Polish immigrant mother, Governor from 1955 to 1959 and U.S. Senator from 1959 to 1980; John Baldacci, son of Lebanese-Italian immigrants, Governor from 2002 to 2008; George Mitchell, son of a Lebanese immigrant mother and a father who was adopted into a Lebanese immigrant family, U.S. Senator from 1980 to 1995, Senate Majority Leader from 1989 to 1995 and later a peacemaker in Ireland and the Middle East; William Cohen, son of a Russian Jewish immigrant, U.S. Representative from 1972 to 1978, U.S. Senator from 1979 to 1997 and U.S. Secretary of Defense from 1997 to 2001.

Now, with that as backdrop, allow me a moment of family reflection about what I regard as a consequence of this Maine history lesson. I am not a native Mainer, but I married into a family that has deep roots here. For the 40-plus years of my close association with this family, I have been hearing the legend of Lois Ellis, a full-blooded Penobscot member

of the Abenaki Nation who married into the family some four or five generations back and who produced offspring whose genes would have passed into the present generation.

Several firsthand accounts of Lois were given to living relatives in the 1940s that gave credence to these stories when I first heard them in the 1970s. Some particular interest surfaced among my children when their high school counselors noted set-aside opportunities for college admission or financial aid. Various back-of-the-envelope calculations of sanguinity indicated that eligibility was possible. Someone went to 23 and Me for a definitive answer: plenty of European DNA and traces of others, but no trace of Native American. Elizabeth Warren has a ton of sympathy in my house for her assumption that family tales are a reliable basis for ancestry.

The overlapping presence in Maine of prerevolutionary European and Native American cultures, and the subsequent impact of immigration to Maine from outside of New England, have their own impacts on present-day life in Maine. A further family story comes from the 1980s: Cousin Barry, making a summer visit from the West Coast with his family, spent an afternoon with us at our farm in South Bristol. Our household at the time included our six children and two African-American teenagers. After a few hours of swapping family stories, the visitors left. During the ride back to Newcastle where they were staying, the eight- or nine-year-old son of Barry is reported to have said, "The Lamias seem like nice people, but why do they keep slaves?" And that's the best I can do to illustrate the temporal proximity of the onset of Somali and Rwandan immigration into Maine history.

## Hindsight: The West Village Committee in the Sixties

By Brian J. Pape, AIA

Today's residents of the West Village owe a lot to the activists who lived here before us. They say "Hindsight is 20/20," but we still speculate on "what might have been."

Google the still active committee, West-VillageCommittee.html, and you'll find a little history and their current activities, but you have to dig deeper to get a true sense of their accomplishments. And for that we can thank Village Preservation for a newly posted archive on their website, [https://www.gvshp.org/\\_gvshp/pdf/WVCScan1.pdf](https://www.gvshp.org/_gvshp/pdf/WVCScan1.pdf).

Let's recount the battles and victories and imagine what might have been if they had not fought for their ideals.

On Feb. 26th, 1961, a meeting of residents was called to form the Committee to Save the West Village (changing it to The West Village Committee a year later). Jane Jacobs and Dr. Don Dodelson were elected co-chairs. The immediate crisis was that the Board of Estimates had petitioned the federal government for a Title I project for Urban Renewal funds for the area from

Hudson and Christopher Streets to the river and to 11th Street.

Mrs. Jacobs, now famous for her leadership since 1955 and authorship of seminal texts, and Dr. Dodelson, respected for saving the area just north of 11th Street in 1949, worked with subcommittees to deal with many challenges, coming to decisions on a consensus basis. Fighting City Hall seemed like a quixotic endeavor.

They knew what "Urban Renewal" meant: wholesale demolition to make way for superblocks of tower apartments, perhaps exactly like the Robert Fulton Houses in Chelsea constructed in that same era. The Urban Renewal impetus may have been aided by plans to utilize the High Line viaduct running adjacent to Washington Street, which had already destroyed 640 buildings in its path.

The Village wanted to conserve and preserve their community, not scatter people far and wide, perhaps never to return. By not only opposing the Title I project, but also initiating a positive vision for the empty sites and the existing fabric of architecture,

they were able to rally support and convince the powers-that-be to grant a reprieve.

In March of 1962, the City Board of Estimates, at the behest of the Department of Marine and Aviation, resolved to study the reuse of the viaduct for a truck route serving the existing industry. It would have been similar to the elevated Westside Highway to the west, or the proposed freeway through SoHo, complete with on-off ramps, of course. More destruction. The Village rallied again and defeated it, and proposed the West Village Houses in its place (finally built in 1974).

In historic preservation, the maxim is that once it's gone there is no return. The Village knew there would be no second chance—they had to stop the destructive plans or there would be no West Village to come home to. We celebrate with them the 50th anniversary of the declaration of the Greenwich Village Historic District.

Contact The West Village Committee at P.O. Box 20017, New York, NY 10014 or [thewestvillagecommittee@gmail.com](mailto:thewestvillagecommittee@gmail.com)



**WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN** if Title I hadn't been defeated in 1961: This current Chelsea housing project is the model for what the city had in store for the West Village. Chelsea is nice, but it ain't The Village. Photo by BJ Pape, AIA.

# Visitation

By Keith Michael

My phone vibrates on my desk. I hit “Send” on a work email before checking the message: Text? Gmail? Facebook messenger? Instagram notification?

Millie’s photograph, of course, is the wallpaper on my phone. Her doe-like corgi eyes look up out of the palm of my hand, virtually, ever-hopeful for a treat. Tapping in the passcode over Millie’s vigilant gaze brings the tidy grid of icons to life (like autumn leaves waiting to fall). It’s an Instagram reply back to my cryptic “What? Where? Wow!” comment on a friend’s bird photo caption: “Taken on Sunday. It was still there yesterday, maybe it’s still there today. Foraging among the planted area of Abingdon Square Park in the West Village.”

It’s nearly lunchtime. Maybe I can wrap up a few more things at work, hop on the train, and book it to Abingdon Square. If it’s still there and easy to find, I can snap some photos and get back for my afternoon meeting. (What a great subject for my next *WestView* article!)

Oh, you might like to know what the “it” is. It’s a Virginia Rail, a starling-sized marsh bird, brown with gray and blueish highlights, red-orange on its decurved bill, and long toes for walking on soggy ground. A striking physical feature is that, after millennia of squeezing between narrow reeds, their bodies have evolved to be laterally compressed. They are literally “thin as a rail”—though that colloquialism likely refers to fence railings rather than this skinny bird. Not particularly rare, they are infrequently seen as they quietly live their lives among the dense grasses of wetlands.

I have nothing to back this up, but it’s possible that several or dozens of them have spent their summers raising their families while skulking through the damp edges of Manhattan. Even though they are strong on the wing, they are more likely to run and hide than to fly to escape predators. However, while migrating they can show up almost anywhere, like this current avian star walking the red carpet at Abingdon Square Park.

I’ve only seen a Virginia Rail in New York City once before. That was another bird on migration that collided with the glass at Lincoln Center. I well remember holding that wary bird, stunned but not injured, in my hand



A VIRGINIA RAIL stalks lunch in Abingdon Square Park. Photo by Keith Michael.

while I walked to release it in Central Park. My December 2016 *WestView* article, “Crash Course,” documented that encounter.

Logging off, I throw away “Done” notes, square the piles of papers on my desk, close my door, and hurry down the labyrinth of stairs to the subway. The #1 Train is behaving, so I arrive downtown in record time and hightail it to Abingdon Square. While waiting for the light to change to cross Eighth Avenue, I look for a gaggle of long-lens-wielding birders. (That’s the easiest way to find a rare bird in NYC). No such luck. Entering the park, a quick scan reveals no binoculars—no lurking, circling denizens who might be “in the know” that there is an unusual bird in the shrubbery.

I discover an earlier weekend post detailing that it had been seen in the northwest corner, so that’s where I begin. But nearly simultaneously, behind me, I hear a muffled “What is that!” I spin around, and there, energetically crossing the green of the lawn, is the “that”: the Virginia Rail. Gardeners have been planting the fall chrysanthemum spectacle (thank you!), so the rail is feasting on the unearthed worms from the freshly turned ground.

Remarkably fearless, it flies in front of me to the aforementioned northwest corner of the park. Hidden for a moment, I go to the outside of the fence for a better view under the bushes, but then it returns to scavenge along the inside walkway. The number of delicacies it finds seems limitless. What a smorgasbord! I’m clicking away and at one point I actually need to step backward so that it doesn’t walk across my shoes (though that would have been a great shot!)—it’s too close for my camera to focus.

In the blink of an eye this Virginia Rail became my 106th West Village New Bird. The last additions to My List were a Hairy Woodpecker (#105 in 2016) and a pair of Mute Swans flying down the Hudson River (#104 in 2015).

After the recent stunning revelations that the number of birds in North America has plummeted by a third during my lifetime (nearly three billion individuals, while the human population on the planet has increased by more than three billion), and that climate change additionally threatens the survival of nearly half of North American bird species (more than 300), seeing any bird gains proportionately more wonderful weight. One gloomily optimistic thought is that since birds survived the extinction event that wiped out the other dinosaurs 66 million years ago (yes, birds are surviving dinosaurs), they are likely to outlive us.

Before heading back uptown to work, I again swipe up Millie’s wistful photo on my phone. My thumb whizzes through the passcode (grazing Millie’s nose and front paws). I text my friend, “Saw it! Awesome. Thanks!” and hit “Send.”

Visit [keithmichaelnyc.com](http://keithmichaelnyc.com) for the latest schedule of New York City WILD! urban-adventures-in-nature outings throughout the five boroughs, and visit his Instagram @newyorkcity-wild for photos from around NYC.

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# Then & Now:

## The Weathermen Bombsite—18 West 11th Street

By Brian J Pape, AIA

**THEN:** The Greek Revival townhouse at 18 West 11th Street was originally built in 1845, one of four houses on the block built by Henry Brevoort Jr. for his children. It was later (in the 1920s) the home of Charles Merrill (of Merrill Lynch), whose son, the poet James Merrill, was born there. On March 6th, 1970, shortly before noon, firemen were called to fight a blaze there caused by an explosion of dynamite-and-nails bombs being assembled by members of the Weather Underground, aka the Weathermen, a radical leftist group, in the subbasement furnace room in the townhouse owned by the parents of one of the Weathermen. The blast and ensuing blaze of ruptured gas lines completely destroyed the four-story structure in the heart of the newly designated Greenwich Village Historic District. Three of the Weathermen died immediately, and two were rescued alive from the rubble by a police officer but immediately escaped and remained at large for several years while on the FBI's Most Wanted list. The Weathermen had other connections to Greenwich Village, having taken their name from the Bob Dylan lyric "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows," from his 1965 song, "Subterranean Home-



sick Blues." Actor Dustin Hoffman and his wife, Anne Byrne, lived next door at 16 West 11th Street at the time, and Hoffman was seen on the street watching the firemen battle the inferno. This 1940 tax photo of the streetfront of 18 West 11th Street shows the typical details of the 1845-era single-family townhouse. *Credit: Municipal Archives.*



**NOW:** Reconstructed in 1978, this modern interpretation was one of the first new structures in the historic district to be approved by the LPC. Hugh Hardy, the nationally famous modern architect, and Francis Mason bought the now-vacant land at 18 West 11th Street after the explosion and demolition. The challenge was ominous, not just due to the violent tragedy there but also because this would be one of the first new buildings here or in any historic district

in New York City to come before the also fresh Landmarks Preservation Commission. Replicate the prior structure? Combine traditional architecture with an expression of the disruptive impact on the street? Or go fully contemporary to reflect the event and times? Mr. Hardy's proposed design joined a historic-styled base and top floor with an angular bay window on the parlor and third floors, in brick that blended with the row of Greek Revival houses of which the former building had always been a part. Even the cornice work matched adjacent buildings. Hardy said, "It was this whole idea that a new building should express something new." The proposed design went through many hearings and media coverage promoting all sides of the debate, and was narrowly approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The site remained a vacant lot until 1978, when a couple bought the property and Hardy's design, with the LPC-approved exterior, and built their home. Later this home became known for the Paddington Bear placed in the bay window. New owners bought the home for \$9.25 million in 2012, and added a new rear facade and roof alteration, approved in 2014. Traditional and modern in one facade—jarring to some, quirky Village oddity to others—but quality construction nevertheless, adding to the vibrant dynamism of the Village. *Photo credit: Brian J Pape, AIA.*



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# Karen's Quirky Style

By Karen Rempel | Fashion Editor

With apple-picking season flying by and Thanksgiving fast approaching, I brought out my cowboy boots for this month's adventure on Bleecker Street. The weather was still so warm on the day of the shoot that I decided to pair the boots with flared black shorts and fishnet stockings (think Beyoncé at Coachella!).

I scored these boots and the Western blingy belt at Lammlé's, a famous Western-wear chain in Calgary, Alberta, when I was there for the Calgary Stampede in 2016. I had just submitted my US Immigration application on July fourth of that year, and took a short contract in Calgary while I waited for the results. Some friends lived in Calgary and invited me to stay with them, and it just so happened that I arrived the week of the Stampede. My first day at the office, everyone was dressed in Western gear. I thought they just dressed that way every day! But they explained that it was Stampede week, and we had fun events like pancake breakfasts and parking-lot barbecues all week long.

Naturally I wanted to get in on the fun, so I went to Lammlé's and got the boots, a couple of flashy belts—which I wore criss-crossed gun-belt style over my jeans—and an Australian-style cowboy hat. I caused a bit of a stir around the



WEST VILLAGE MODEL KAREN REMPEL ON BLEECKER STREET, stepping out for a Thanksgiving hoedown! Photograph by Dusty Berke.

office with my gunslinger flair. It was the most fun on-the-job week I've ever spent at a technical writing gig. (That's what pays the bills, in case you were wondering.) So I'm happy that this moment from my old world has come forward into the future to intersect with my West Village lifestyle. Fiddler, strike up the music and let's get to the hoedown!

For more stories, style notes, and fun photos, see [karensquirkystyle.com](http://karensquirkystyle.com) and connect @karensquirkystyle.

**GIpsy BY MAURITIUS VEGETABLE-CURED YELLOW LEATHER JACKET.**

All Leather 99/Master Leather, 51 W. 8th Street.

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**GREY DISTRESSED LEATHER COWBOY BOOTS BY DAN POST.** Lammlé's Western Wear, Calgary.

**ANGEL RANCH BLACK GATOR-PRINT CRYSTAL BELT.** Lammlé's Western Wear, Calgary.

**SILVER, BLACK, AND CRYSTAL BRACELET.** CVS, 475 Sixth Avenue.

**CRYSTAL DROP EARRINGS.** Whole Bead Show NYC, Hotel Pennsylvania.

**RHINESTONE NECKLACES.** Shopper's Drug Mart, Vancouver, British Columbia.

# Style on the Street: Sunny Sunday

By Dusty Berke

There is nothing like a sunny Sunday afternoon in The Village. So nice to see everyone out and enjoying the last days of sunshine.

1. Mommy and me rockin' the Zebra pants!
2. Meet me at the Standard Hotel. Now.
3. Too cute for words...!



All photos by Dusty Berke.



## Dusty Berke Joins the Ranks of Award-Winning Artists at the Salmagundi Club's Village Preservation Exhibit



**DUSTY BERKE WITH HER AWARD-WINNING PHOTOGRAPH** *Playing Statues on Bleeker*.  
Photo by Karen Rempel.

Dusty Berke received an award for her arresting photograph *Playing Statues on Bleeker* on October 16th at the prestigious Salmagundi Club. The photograph of West Village model and photojournalist Karen Rempel originally appeared in the "Karen's Quirky Style" column in the May 2019 issue of *WestView News*.

A combination of elements contribute to the photo's appeal. Dusty captured Karen's eye-catching style, engaging smile, and luminous joie de vivre—the first things to draw the viewer's attention. Karen strikes a prayerful pose with Chaim Gross's uplifting bronze sculpture *The Family*, which he cast in 1979 and presented in 1991 to the City of New York in honor of Mayor Ed Koch's service to the city (1978-1989). The complementary orange tones in the jacket and brick building, balanced with the gray shades of the granite and paving stones, please the eye and offer both excitement and

rest. The symmetry of the triangular shapes of the statue, pedestal, and trousers demonstrates Dusty's true artistic eye. A tiny detail, visible in the enlarged printed photo, is the words "Greenwich Village Historic District" on the West 11th Street sign.

It's fitting that this photo appeared in an exhibit of artwork celebrating the diverse, unique character of Greenwich Village and marking the 50th anniversary of the Greenwich Village Historic District. The exhibit, which ended on October 27th, also celebrated the centennial of Salmagundi Club's present location in an Italianate mansion at 47 Fifth Avenue.

There were about 90 artworks in the exhibit. Six awards were granted—five of them to established artists and current members of the Salmagundi Club. Our Dusty was the breakthrough artist of the show. Congratulations, Dusty! We at *WestView* are very proud of you.



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3 "Alleluja" from "Exsultate Jubilate" k 165

"Ave Verum Corpus" k 618

Piano Concerto in c major k 415

Soprano Solo : Amber Evans

Piano Solo : David Oei

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## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

# Beth Israel Forum on Monday, November 4th



**THIS HOSPITAL RENDERING**, above, depicts how the corner of First Avenue and 14th Street will look after construction of the new 70-bed replacement hospital is completed. Image courtesy of Mount Sinai.

By Penny Mintz

Few people have any leverage over the large political goings on in Washington or Albany. But when it comes to quality of life issues here in our community, there is a chance, right now, to have an impact.

Mount Sinai/Beth Israel (MSBI) has plans for Beth Israel Hospital and the medical services that will be available to the communities of Lower Manhattan, and we in the community have an opportunity to be heard on the acceptability of those plans.

At a community forum on Monday, November 4th, 2019, the MSBI plans will be explained and most of our local public officials will be present to listen and respond to community concerns. A large attendance at the community forum can force a better outcome. Look at the impact that massive objections by lawmakers had on President Trump's decision to hold the next G7 conference at his Florida resort. Decisions,

even by the most powerful, can be forced to change. MSBI cannot go forward reducing our medical system if the politicians know that the people are watching and find the plans unacceptable.

Last month, on Wednesday, October 16th, MSBI made a public presentation of their plans for the final closure of Beth Israel. Who knew? You probably did not. MSBI had informed elected officials and community boards about the time and place of the presentation, but they made no effort to inform the public. Accordingly, barely 40 people attended. Half of those seated in the 400-plus-seat theater at Baruch College were either elected officials, their staff, or representatives of community boards.

It is to MSBI's benefit to have insignificant attendance. That shows that people have no objections to the changes.

Dr. Jeremy Boal, president of MSBI Downtown, explained that MSBI will be building a new 70-bed hospital on East 13th Street behind the Near York Eye and Ear Infirmary at 14th Street and Second Avenue. He had lovely pictures of the proposed building. That 70-bed facility will replace the 800-plus-bed Beth Israel building at 16th Street and First Avenue, which still fills 250 beds every day despite all that has been done to make it inhospitable to doctors and patients. Dr. Boal said the 16th Street building will be sold at the highest price possible to raise money to pay for the changes. He expects the buyer to put up luxury residential units but hopes there will be some agreement about affordable housing.

According to Dr. Boal, a new emergency room will be able to handle 70,000 visits

per year, although there are about 84,000 ER visits at present. Anthony Feliciano, director of the community-based health advocacy organization Commission on the Public's Health System (CPHS), told Dr. Boal that the planned ER had the capacity to handle only 45,000 visits a year. Feliciano based his assertion on MSBI's official application to the Department of Health for a certificate of need (CON) to build the new facility. In the CON, MSBI stated that the new ER would have a total of 18,885 gross square feet of space. According to the American College of Emergency Physicians, each ER treatment room takes up 800 to 1,000 square feet of space and can handle 1,500 patients a year. Thus the allotted ER space can only handle 35,000 to 45,000 patients a year.

Right now it has about 84,000 visits. The new ER cannot handle more than 45,000. This does not make for a rosy future for true emergency medical services in Lower Manhattan.

The question of maternity care also came up at the meeting. Before MSBI closed the maternity unit in 2017, there were over 450 births a year at Beth Israel. According to Dr. Boal, 450 births is too low a number to assure safety. Staff with the capacity to handle difficult situations cannot be sustained at a facility with so few births. He said that prenatal and postnatal care will continue to be handled in local, downtown practices, but the births have to go uptown to Mt. Sinai's main facility at Fifth Avenue and 103rd Street.

You might wonder what downtown women in labor are supposed to do if they cannot make it in time to 103rd and Fifth

Avenue. Dr. Boal answered precisely that question: "These women can have their babies in an emergency room." He said that Beth Israel's ER has delivered several babies that way.

That begs yet another question: If babies can safely be delivered in an ER, why is a small maternity unit at the new hospital less safe? Dr. Boal explained that as well: The new hospital cannot have a maternity unit or a birthing center because it would take up too many of the 70 beds and force out other services. That explanation begs another question: Why has the new facility been limited to 70 beds? Why not add a 5- or 10-bed maternity unit and have a total of 75 or 80 beds?

You can get answers to the questions raised here, and raise your own concerns, at the community forum on the future of Beth Israel and its services on Monday, November 4th, from 6:00pm to 9:00pm at the Sirovich Senior Center, 331 East 12th Street, between First and Second Avenues.

I have been handing out flyers about the forum and talking to people outside of PS 11 on West 21st Street. People are concerned. Most are upset to learn that Beth Israel is closing. Everyone knows that after the closing of St. Vincent's Hospital, the local emergency rooms are overwhelmed.

It's not too late to change the outcome. To do that, people have to show up at the forum on November 4th and voice their concerns:

**Monday, November 4th**

**6:00pm to 9:00pm**

**Sirovich Senior Center**

**331 East 12th Street**

**(between First and Second Avenues)**

## The West 13th Street Alliance's November/December Community Event Offerings

By The West 13th Street Alliance

The West 13th Street Alliance is pleased to announce its November/December Community Events schedule that aims to bring together the community in a fun way with events/classes/lectures like, Exploring the Original West Village, Intro to Zumba, Holiday Card-Making, Chair Yoga and Tea and Conversation. All of these events are free and delicious snacks and refreshments are provided.

Our first event is a lecture called **EXPLORING THE ORIGINAL WEST VILLAGE** by Alfred Pommer, local guide and author of four Manhattan guidebooks. The lecture is on Wednesday, November 13th from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Lenox Health Greenwich Village (200 West 13th Street). His talk will include an extensive slide show of historic photographs of the original West Village.

On Friday November 15th we have two events, both at The Church of The Village (201 West 13th St.). First is **CHAIR YOGA**, from 3:30-4:30 p.m., which is a great way

to discover the benefits of Yoga, even if you've never practiced before. Our second event is **INTRO TO ZUMBA WITH TESS GHILAGA** from 6-7:30 p.m. Zumba is a Latin-inspired dance class that incorporates an aerobic fitness program with movements performed to popular Latin and international dance music. This introductory, basic level class is suitable for all ages ranging from 18-100. Ghilaga is a NYC-based yoga and Zumba instructor, and lifestyle journalist, who teaches at The Vanderbilt YMCA and privately.

**TEA AND CONVERSATION** will be led by lifelong Integral Yoga practitioner, teacher-trainer, and West Village resident, Kali Coline Morse. The event will be held at Inte-

gral Yoga Institute (227 West 13th St.) on November 19 from 2 to 3 p.m. and on December 17 (time to be announced at later date) at Lenox Health Greenwich Village.

On Saturday, December 7th from 4 to 6 p.m. we will offer a **HOLIDAY CARD-MAKING** class with mixed-media artist, Linda Edkins Wyatt at The Church of The Village. Explore stencils, stamps, collage, and heat-embossing techniques to create your own unique and festive cards. All supplies will be provided. This event is co-sponsored by The Ink Pad, a mixed media and paper arts shop in the West Village for over 21 years.

Birgitte Philippides-Delaney, President of The West 13th Street Alliance (whose mis-

sion is to improve the quality of life on West 13th Street between 7th and Greenwich Avenues and its neighboring areas) says "neighbors have overwhelmingly requested events that will help build community and provide important socialization, learning, and cultural enrichment. We hope that our programming will help to fill that need."

Wayne Kawadler, Director of Community Relations at Lenox Health GV and Chandra/Jo Sgammato, Executive Director of Integral Yoga Institute, are Co-Executive Directors of Community Programming for The West 13th Street Alliance. They are interested in hearing from the community with your ideas for programs that promote connection and fun. Please email them at w13thstreetalliance@gmail.com.

Many more exciting programs are in the process of being scheduled for January and February as well and will be announced with flyers and on *WestView's* Events Calendar. Stay tuned!



# St. John's in the Village

Enjoy these arts events in the fully-heated, air-conditioned, and ADA accessible St John's (corner of W. 11th Street and Waverly Place). Almost all concerts have some allocation of tickets free to seniors, but booking ([admin@stjvny.org](mailto:admin@stjvny.org) or 212 243 6192) is essential.

**ALL OTHER BOOKINGS AND RESERVATIONS THROUGH STJVNY.ORG**

**This is a partial list of the arts events at St John's.  
Visit [stjvny.org](http://stjvny.org) for a full listing.**



## Friday, November 1—6:15 pm

### ALL SOULS REQUIEM

The Requiem is sung to plainsong at 6.15pm in the church, followed by prayers and candle-lighting in St. Benedict's Memorial Garden. Opening reception is free, but registration is necessary for catering purposes.

## Friday, November 1-17—8:00 pm

### MONSOON SEASON

This romantic comedy for a toxic world by 2019 AFO Artist In Residence Lizzie Vih comes alive with biting humor and blinding insight. The play runs Thurs.-Sun. (with some matinees) until 17 November. \$25.

## Saturday, November 2—4 pm

### LECTURE-RECITAL—MAGDALENA GARBALINSKA

An afternoon rich with depth, drama, dance, and the timeless beauty of Bach's violin solo works. Free. No registration required.

## Saturday, November 2—7:30 pm

**SOHYUN AHN: COMPLETE MOZART PIANO SONATAS**  
\$10-20.

## Sunday, November 3—3 pm

### MARYAM KHEIRBEK IN CONCERT

A piano recital of Schumann études and Chopin nocturnes. \$20 in advance. \$25 at the door. \$10 off for students. Free to children.

## Monday, November 4—7.30pm

### AIRBENDER: BASSOON CONCERT

Matthew Kneale (bassoonist), visiting from Melbourne, Australia, presents a concert of music, new and old, for piano and woodwinds.

## Tuesday, November 5—6:15 pm

### GUY FAWKES NIGHT

Evensong is sung simply to plainsong using the 'Gunpowder' provisions of the Book of Common Prayer of 1662. It is then followed by the lighting of the fire in the courtyard and the Burning of the Guy (symbolizing the rejection of terrorism). Sausages are cooked on the outdoor grill and served with wine, beer, and soft drinks. Free; but registration is necessary for catering purposes.

## Friday, November 8—7:30 pm

### HELLENIC DRAMA

The Greek-American Writer's Association presents an evening of short plays and a musical performance by Nektarios Antoniou. A wine reception follows in Revelation Gallery. \$10-20.

## Saturday, November 9—5:30 pm

### TALKING DIRT IN THE VILLAGE: COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION FOR CLIMATE ACTION

A presentation by Aaron William Perry, writer, public speaker, impact entrepreneur, consultant, artist, and father. Free. No registration required.

## Saturday, November 9—7 pm

### CIVIL DISCOURSE: AN EMBER CONCERT

In our noisy world of high decibels and unrelenting electronic input, listening may be a lost art—and a necessary key to Civil Discourse. Commissioned world premiere: "Mending Wall" by Bill Heigen. East Coast premiere of "Singing Together" by John Muehleisen. \$0-20.

## Sunday, November 10—11am

### FAURÉ REQUIEM FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

At the anniversary of the Armistice, the end of the First World War, we honor the Americans, British, Canadians, French, and others who died in that war and in subsequent conflicts around the world. Music: Requiem by Gabriel Fauré. Drinks and Sunday Lunch follow. Registration is necessary for catering purposes.

## Sunday, November 10—3 pm

### MUSIC FROM THE ALPS

Jeffrey Palmer (countertenor) and Irena Portenko (piano) bring their acclaimed program of music featuring selections from Austria's own Franz Schubert, as well as music by Handel, Debussy, Schumann, Björk, Huang Ruo, and new arrangements of traditional folk songs. \$25.

## Tuesday, November 12—8 pm

### SINGER-SONGWRITER & SPOKEN WORD NIGHT

\$10. Free to performers. BYO wine.

## Tuesday, November 12—7:30 pm

### PARTNER EVENT AT BARUCH COLLEGE: DAEDALUS QUARTET

Renowned Israeli pianist Renana Gutman joins the award-winning Daedalus Quartet to present a sonic exploration of the human response to repression and exile. From \$16.

## Thursday, November 14—8 pm

### PINKNOISE X SPACE ODDITIES

Kevin Kay - duality ii, for ensemble & electronics  
Yifan Guo - Fragile Balance, for violin & cello  
Simon Kanzler - random/control, for ensemble & live electronics  
Zosha Di Castri - La forma dello spazio, for ensemble  
Chaya Czernowin - Duo Leat, for 2 bass clarinets.

## Friday, November 15—7:30 pm

### HOMAGE TO FEODOR CHALIAPIN

Works that were sung by the great Russian bass, Feodor Chaliapin. In addition to performing works, Nick Hay will also show film clips of Chaliapin from the movie Don Quixote. He will be joined by pianist Amir Farid, violinist Jose Pietri-Coimbre, and a small men's chorus. \$15.

## Saturday, November 16—3 pm

### JKLM DUO IN CONCERT

Katty Mayorga, guitar, and Jaimie Lee, flute, present a concert of repertoire for their instruments. From \$10: on the door only (no advance booking).

## Sunday, November 17—3 pm

### 'PETERSBURG' AND OTHER RUSSIAN SONG

Frank Mathis, baritone, with, Jonathan DePeri, piano, performs Sviridov's masterful song-cycle, along with other Russian art song. \$20 in advance. \$25 at the door. \$10 off for students. Free to children.

## Sunday, November 17—8 pm

### BEETHOVEN: COMPLETE WORKS FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO I

The first in a series of three concerts, in which Natasha Lipkina, violin, and Vladimir Rummyantsev, piano, present all of Beethoven's opus for violin and piano.

## Tuesday, November 19—7 pm

### GERLACH & TETZLOFF DUO

Alexia Pia Gerlach, cello, and Reed Tetzloff, piano, perform repertoire by Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, and Piazzolla. \$20.

## Friday, November 22—8 pm

### CHAMBER MUSIC FROM NYU

Marilyn C. Nonken curates a program of chamber music performed by some of the most talented of NYU's up-and-coming classical musicians. Free admission.

## Saturday, November 23—9 am-8 pm

### MAKING MUSIC TOGETHER

Making Music Together, a community-based musical encouragement program, gathers in Revelation Gallery for a day of learning and collaboration, culminating at a concert at 8pm. Free, but registration by email ([craig@craigshpard.net](mailto:craig@craigshpard.net)) is advised.

## Saturday, November 23—7:30 pm

### GIOIA DE CARI IN CONCERT

Gioia De Cari was a third of the way through her doctoral thesis in math at MIT when she up and left. She became an actress and a playwright and hasn't thought about research mathematics again. What happened?

## Tuesday, November 26—7:30 pm

### THE PASS

THE PASS, a musical starring Denise Marsa with the effervescently talented Tracy Stark at piano & vocals. The piece will have its first NYC performance. \$10-18.

## Thursday, November 28—10 am

### THANKSGIVING LUNCH WITH REFUGEES

Thanksgiving Eucharist (to which those of all faiths and of none are welcome) is sung in church at 10am. Drinks follow in the Common Room at 11am, and a traditional Thanksgiving Lunch is served in Revelation Gallery at about noon. We welcome refugee friends whom we have come to know through AdsUp ([ads-up.org](http://ads-up.org)). Those attending lunch should book (\$10) online.

## Maggie B's Quick Clicks

### FROM STILL LIVES



### TO STREET SCENES—



be they mysterious...

enterprising...

incongruous...

or reminiscent of a Hopper painting.

## The Great Hack (2019)



**THE GREAT HACK** is a terrific and frightening documentary film about Cambridge Analytica and the Trump campaigns in America.

Film Review by Roger Paradiso

—Facebook ads used by the Hillary Clinton campaign in 2016 totaled 66,000.

—Facebook ads used by the Donald Trump campaign in 2016 totaled 5.9 million.

For those of you who are wondering how Donald Trump and his corrupt team stole the last election, this is a good film to see. When you watched all those districts turn

red in middle America that election night in 2016, didn't you shiver and wonder how that happened? It seemed like it was a video game or a reality show, didn't it? Well it was.

*The Great Hack* is a terrific and frightening documentary film about Cambridge Analytica and the Trump (and Cruz) campaigns in America. The film also deals with the Brexit voter referendum in the United Kingdom. In both cases it shows how they played dirty tricks to swing public opinion towards their clients. We all know the sad results. The film documents how some of it happened.

Thanks to three incredible citizens and one whistleblower, we see how a nightmare of Orwellian proportions has occurred. Is it a crime? The courageous filmmakers Karim Amer and Jehane Noujaim think so, and most of us would think so too.

The film starts with David Carroll, a media professor in New York, bringing a lawsuit against the British company Cambridge Analytica. He simply wants his data back from this Orwellian brainwashing cabal.

His point is that he has not consented to having his human rights, data rights included, used for any purpose without this permission. As Mr. Carroll is bringing his suit to the London courts, an investigative reporter for *The Guardian* based in London, Carole Cadwalladr, has also been on the trail. You know this is a documentary, by the way, because no screenplay would ever give a character that

### IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Be prepared to expect the unexpected.

All photos by Maggie Berkvist.

last name. That's the beauty of any documentary, and particularly this one—it's at its best when showing real people talking about and reacting to real events.

There is no preaching or manipulative love story to get in the way of this horror film of brainwashing and mind control. There are no weapons of mass destruction or slash and burn scenes. The real story is scary enough to keep anyone up at night.

Cadwalladr and *The Guardian* have been following Cambridge Analytica for years, aided by her own source, former employee Christopher Wylie, who rats out the rats who made a fortune manipulating voters. "Cambridge Analytica is a full-service propaganda machine," says Wylie. "You shouldn't win by cheating." Cheating is what Wylie contends his bosses were doing to elections around the globe.

Cambridge Analytica was busy electing many dubious or authoritarian characters across the globe including our very own Donald J. Trump and family. The tech giants and companies like Cambridge Analytica are pushing the boundaries of marketing and advertising norms. Let's be clear, governments and corporations have for years been massaging our brains. Television was the perfect advertising machine. It is now being replaced by the computer and cell phones, which are far less regulated in the wild west of the internet.

The techniques now used in serious areas like politics have indeed become weapons capable of turning "the fence voters" towards their clients. These unsuspecting

citizens are called persuadables, and are bombarded with manipulative propaganda. They become brainwashed citizens who are persuaded to vote for clients of dangerous companies like Cambridge Analytica who represent sketchy political candidates.

The two bad guys shown on film representing this evil company are Cambridge Analytica CEO Alexander Nix and CFO Julian Wheatland. Their posture is, of course, to lie and pretend they were only following orders. Yes, we've heard this before, and it's getting tiresome. You can find the same weasels on the boob tube shouting from the halls of Congress or the White House that it's not their fault it's the other side's fault.

Assuming there is a God above, these weasels will rot in hell for their lies and deceit. Yes, there is a right and a wrong, and these bad guys took the wrong side for money. They wanted to sway public opinion to win an election by any means. It has pushed ethics to the lowest levels.

A good example of how to handle this came in the 2008 campaign when Republican presidential candidate John McCain refused to follow the birther shouts coming from many, including citizen Donald Trump. It was racist and unethical, and McCain, to his credit, quashed it in his campaign.

Terms like psycho warfare, and even the image of Breitbart or a Fox News correspondent shilling for Trump ca. 2016, can scare anyone with an unwashed brain. We see gestapo-like attacks on Facebook—ads powered by "targeted" marketing to the "persuadables."

*continued on page 29*

# Centennial for Uta and Ellen



**A STUNNING PHOTO PORTRAIT** of the great actress and teacher Uta Hagen. Image courtesy of HB Studios.

By Robert Heide

2019 is the year that both Uta Hagen and Ellen Stewart, two great ladies of the theater, have been honored and celebrated when each would have turned 100. In the world of dates, Uta Thyra Hagen, actress and teacher, was born June 12th, 1919, in Göttingen, Germany, and died in Manhattan January 14th, 2004. Ellen Stewart was the head of the famous La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club at 74A East 4th Street in The East Village, which she co-founded with the prolific playwright Paul Foster. She was an African-American woman who was born November 7th, 1919, and died January 13th, 2011.

## PART I – UTA HAGEN

Uta Hagen's acting career began when she was cast at a very young age by the legendary

Eva Le Galliene as Ophelia, with Le Galliene taking on the top role of *Hamlet*. When she turned 18 she was cast in a Broadway production as Nina in Chekhov's masterwork *The Seagull* opposite the great stage couple Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, both of whom took her under their wing.

In 1951 Hagen received rave reviews for her performance in Clifford Odets's Broadway play *The Country Girl*, for which she took home a Tony Award. Another major highlight was in 1962 when she was cast by producer Richard Barr as Martha in Edward Albee's first Broadway play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* for which Albee provided her with lines like "I wear the pants in this family because somebody's got to!" At the time, in a news interview, Albee stated that "Uta Hagen is a profoundly truthful actress!" The well-known director Austin Pendleton stated, "The most exciting evening I've had in the theater was a preview of the original production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*"

Another of her starring roles on Broadway not to be forgotten was the title role in Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*. Her performance in *Othello* opposite Paul Robeson and Hagen's then husband, Jose Ferrer (as Iago), was a sensation. She and Ferrer were married from 1938 to 1948, and their daughter, Letitia, was born October 15th, 1940. In 1947 Hagen began teaching acting at the Herbert Berghof Studio, which still functions as an important school for actors in two buildings on Bank Street in Greenwich Village.

Following my own theater studies—first at Northwestern University under the great teacher Alvina Krause, who had studied with Konstantin Stanislavski in Russia, and then in New York where I took a two-year

course under Stella Adler, who had also worked directly with Stanislavski—it was Adler who sent me up to Stratford, Connecticut, along with another "apprentice," Peter Bogdanovich, where I met actors like James Earl Jones, Nina Foch, Katherine Hepburn, and Fritz Weaver, and primarily got to work with the great director John Houseman who began his incomparable career with Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre. Following that summer I auditioned for Uta Hagen's acting class, where I received favorable critiques from her in her scene-study class when I acted in William Saroyan's *Hello Out There!* and when I attacked the role of Archie Lee in *The Long Stay Cut Short*, or *The Unsatisfactory Supper*, a one-act play that Tennessee Williams later developed as the screenplay for the brilliant film *Baby Doll*, which was directed by Elia Kazan and starred Eli Wallach, Karl Malden and the great Carol Baker.

Harold Clurman directed Hagen in the national tour of *Streetcar Named Desire* in 1947-1949 opposite Anthony Quinn, and Hagen said it was Clurman who changed her direction in acting at that time. He refused to accept her hiding behind a mask of mannerisms and brought her into the deeper, more emotionally directed method of acting taught by the great Stanislavski. In 1957 she married the director-teacher and founder of HB Studio, Herbert Berghof.

In later years Hagen wrote her own books on acting entitled *Respect for Acting* and *Challenge for the Actor*. A passion for cooking up great dishes led her to write a cookbook called *Love for Cooking*. Some of her illustrious students over the years have included Matthew Broderick, Faye Dunaway, Liza Minnelli, Jason Robards and Al Pacino, and she also coached Judy Garland for her role

in the film *Judgment at Nuremberg*, which earned Garland a Best Actress in a Supporting Role nomination.

Following many accolades, Hagen was elected to the Theatre Hall of Fame in 1981, and in 1999 she received a Lifetime Achievement Tony Award. In 2002, two years before her death, she was given the National Medal of Freedom Award by George W. Bush.

Hagen was a lifelong Village resident and for many years lived in an apartment building on Washington Square. A friend of mine, Rochelle Oliver, an actress and teacher at HB Studio, lived in the same building with her son John Patterson. She had acted with Hagen on Broadway as Honey in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Every Christmas Eve Rochelle had a party in her spacious apartment decorated with a big tree, which I attended along with Hagen and other acting teachers from HB, Carol Goodheart (Carol starred in my Caffe Cino play *Moon* at the Actor's Studio West in Hollywood alongside John Garfield Jr.) and Amy Wright, as well as the actor James Broderick; his wife, Patsy; their son, Matthew (they lived in the building too!); and actors like Fritz Weaver and Hallie Foote, and her father, the playwright Horton Foote, who later taught theater at the Playwright's/Director's Unit at The Actors Studio where I was a member.

*Tune in to WestView's December issue for Part II of this 100th anniversary account, which will focus on the career of Ellen Stewart and her La MaMa Experimental Theater as well as the La MaMa Coffeehouse Chronicles celebrating Stewart's life.*

*Robert Heide's plays and essays were recently published in a volume entitled Robert Heide 25 Plays, which can be purchased at Amazon.*

## Great Hack continued from page 28

These take the form of ads about unsubstantiated corruption committed by opponents, and scandals of any and every kind, and even convincing minorities not to vote since it doesn't matter. In the film we see many of these ads, even those that played in third-world countries around the globe. By 2017, Cambridge Analytica had a hand in an alarming number of elections across the world.

One of the highlights of *The Great Hack* was watching the much-publicized Mark Zuckerberg's Congressional hearing. We watch as the filmmakers show the side-by-side reactions of disbelief from the likes of David Carroll and Brittany Kaiser as they watch Zuckerberg squirm and BS a duplicitous Congress. There are so many villains here it seems like a rerun of a great *Batman* movie. However, this is not a comic book. It is real, even though the characters are as cartoonish and evil as the Joker. How do we stop this modern brainwashing? There are no easy fixes, folks. The genie is out of the bottle. We must contain and regulate.

One of the main characters in the film is played by former Business Development Director for Cambridge Analytica, Brittany Kaiser, who has turned whistleblower. She gives evidence to the UK Parliament detailing her former employer's involvement in the Leave.EU campaign during the EU referendum. She also speaks out about her company's involvement in the Trump presidential campaign. She was brought to testify before our Congress. Did it make the news?

Kaiser is a flawed heroine as she faces the moral fight within herself of squealing on the rats while she has received all the financial rewards of working in this field for many years. She lived the life of the rich and famous for the last decade, even turning herself into a Republican after working for Obama and human rights organizations. Did she brainwash herself or was it the money?

On the one hand you pull for her and on the other you want to see her pay society back in spades. Perhaps she should start a charity. The film mentions briefly that she now works as an advocate for data rights.

While she is no Daniel Ellsberg, she does help bring down this monolithic Joker called Cambridge Analytica. She enters the film late in the first act and dominates the action as we follow her on her whistleblowing life. No doubt it takes courage and will power, but the question does remain: "Why did you do it, Brittany?" She tries to say that no one else would hire her and give her a good living, but sorry, that is not good enough. Let me be clear that the filmmakers don't present her as the perfect heroine. It's up to us to decide how we view Kaiser.

David Carroll meanwhile wins his case and helps bring down the bad guys. But will he ever get his data back from the tech giants? That remains to be seen. He and *Guardian* reporter Carole Cadwalladr are the most sympathetic characters in the film. We watch Carroll as he tries to teach his students the pros and cons of social media. He worries about the world his daughter will inherit. Will she be able to resist the manipulation?

In the end we are left with a far deeper problem. Cambridge Analytica was but one

company. What about all the rest of them? Perhaps that will be another film. I hope so. In the meantime, *The Great Hack* has opened our eyes to the snake oil salesmen of the internet. What can you do? When you see propaganda on Facebook such as Hillary "Crook" Clinton in handcuffs, report the spam to Facebook or Google. Will they do something about it? Maybe, if our Congress regulates them better.

For her part, Cadwalladr speaks before a TED audience in Silicon Valley and asks the tech giants, whom she refers to as "gods of Silicon Valley," "Is this how you want history to remember you? As the handmaidens to authoritarianism?" The audience is left stunned, as we are after we watch this bold and entertaining film.

*The Great Hack* is running on Netflix now.

*Roger Paradiso is a filmmaker whose recent film, The Lost Village, has won many awards and appeared at festivals around the world. It is available to buy from Amazon and to view on Vimeo.*

## EVENTS

## EVENTS

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