Penn South: An Experiment in Affordable Living

By Bennett Kremen with Roger Paradiso

Thirty years ago, my wife put us on a long waiting list and paid a $200 fee for a chance to buy a $25,000 two-bedroom co-op apartment in Penn South, located in Chelsea in New York City. "Two hundred dollars!" I grumbled. "Who the hell ever wins one of those things?" Well, ten years ago—I blush to say—that's exactly what happened for us. And now I'm one of the luckiest people in town, blessed to live in Penn South—a complex of fifteen 21-story buildings between Eighth and Ninth Avenues, between West 23rd and West 29th Streets, housing some five thousand residents.

The Penn South complex is wide, well-lit, well-maintained, peaceful, and surrounded by trees and shrubs and friendly people quite satisfied with where they're living. People I know bought a one-bedroom apartment years ago for as little as $7,500. A recent purchase of a two-bedroom apartment for $149,995 reflects the huge increases in real estate taxes but is still far below market rate.

We also pay "rent," which, in a co-op, is called a maintenance charge. An average studio's maintenance charge here is $430-$658 a month, for a one-bedroom apartment it's $552-$899, and for two bedrooms it's $830-$1,160. For those whose income is above $96,564 there is a sliding scale maintenance charge that cannot be more than 200 percent above what is currently charged.

On May 19th, 1962 Penn South had a grand opening attended by none other than President John F. Kennedy, Eleanor Roosevelt, Nelson Rockefeller, and, most importantly, David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. It was the members of that union alone, through their weekly dues over years, that ultimately got together the millions of dollars needed to construct these well-made buildings.

Erik Bottcher Declares Candidacy To Succeed Corey Johnson

By George Capsis

Erik Bottcher, currently the chief of staff to City Council Speaker Corey Johnson (member for the 3rd district—which encompasses Greenwich Village and Soho), just announced that he is running to replace Corey, who will, hopefully, move on to become our next mayor. Wow.

I asked Erik, "Why announce so soon?" since the election is more than a year off, and he quickly explained that his opposition had announced months ago because the city gives you $8.00 for every election dollar you raise—wow, I forgot that. But hey, if you are in the city council you can pass any law that all the other members like; and certainly, they all liked the idea of $8.00 for every $1.00 your relatives or friends give you (hey, maybe we will get some political ads!).

But here we are, a small 15-year-old community newspaper still glowing with our victory of getting Northwell Hospital to build an emergency heart operating room that can save heart attack victims in minutes, with our always-smiling friend Erik standing a very good chance of being not only our local city councilman but providing if not an open door then at the least an open crack to the next mayor. Wow again.

Right now, Erik's only announced opposition candidate is Marni Halsa, a strikingly healthy young woman who is very opposed to the demolition of two of the buildings at Fulton Houses (a public housing complex that starts at West 16th Street and 9th Avenue). The plan is that continued on page 2

Cuba Travel

Americans can now visit Cuba on tours if they are arranged by a U.S. based tour operator

SEE PAGE 4

At the Whitney

The Vida Americana Mexican Muralists Remake American Art exhibit is equivalent to walking into a time warp

SEE PAGE 26
WestView
Correspondence, Commentary, Corrections

Cath Lab Matters
Congratulations George. You have worked long and hard for this. I am one long time West Village resident who is grateful for all you do to make living here more comfortable and friendly.

PS I am a subscriber.

—Ruthanne Greghy

Thank you Ruthann. Your words of support makes us realize again that we are a collective voice for our West Village readers.

—George

I’ve Seen The Light And It Ain’t Pretty
I wrote the Letter to the Editor, below, that you published in the February 2017 issue. Your February 2020 issue has a long article on page 8 about the hazard caused by the lights of the W Hotel sign across the river in Hoboken. Something must be done to stop this unnecessary light pollution affecting us in the far West Village.

My apartment faces the towering buildings across the river in Jersey City. While I can mostly only see their higher floors and not the river itself, the views of the open sky and sunsets are important to us West Siders. I was shocked, stunned and appalled a few months ago to look out my windows one night to see those glaring LED lights strung up and down the newest luxury high rise in Jersey City (The Eclipse by Lefrak). A serious eyesore to anyone looking across the river from the Village or Chelsea. I have written to Corry Johnson (getting only a form response), left messages at Lefrak and even filed a complaint with the Jersey City Department of Buildings. I am sure I am not the only one disturbed by this light pollution so I am hoping that someone can do something about it.

—Walter Boxer

Open Letter to Representative Carolyn Maloney
Dear Representative Maloney,
I sat in the front row, just to the left of center facing you, when you spoke at a recent meeting of the Village Independent Democrats in order to secure the group’s endorsement of your campaign for re-election.

Afterwards you took my hand warmly and said you liked my long necklace of children’s tiny wooden toy animals from India. But I had asked you a question about how you saw Israel-Palestine. I forget my exact words but I referred to the vicious treatment of Palestinians by Israel.

You had answered that you favored a two-state solution, which is really not answering the question; besides, the Palestinians have hardly any land left for a state. I favor one state with equality for all, and I know many others agree with me. But first, Israel has to stop wantonly murdering Palestinians, including small children, and grabbing their land for settlements limited to Jews only. You said nothing about that.

You then abruptly segued into a speech about antisemitism, which is a serious problem but has NOTHING to do with what I asked about. Criticism of Israel has NOTHING to do with antisemitism, although ever so many politicians have made evil and sneaky insinuations that it does.

I want you to come clean on this, Carolyn Maloney. You have done many good things, but you can’t cover up the criminal actions of Israel, or the complicity of our country with them. The US pours billions of dollars into the Israeli war machine, so that it can fight—whom? The helpless Palestinian people who have every right to live on their own land. This is their homeland, Representative Maloney. As long as you do not oppose this, you are complicit. You have washed your hands in innocent blood.

—Carol F. Yost
212 West 16th Street, Apt. 1-E
New York, NY 10011-6194

Bottcher continued from page 1

new buildings, when completed, will offer 70 percent of the nice new gleaming apartments to market rate tenants and 30 percent will be reserved for those who can only pay the much lower public housing NYCHA rates.

This 70-30 share is a proposal that was conceived by the Obama administration, but Marni Halsa believes that public housing should only be for people who cannot, and perhaps will never be able to, afford anything approaching market rate rents (we have come to know them as NYCHA tenants). She also believes that rich New Yorkers should be taxed to pay for public housing.

But wait, here we are, just about the last old fashioned for-real newspaper in Greenwich Village, and our always-smiling friend Erik Bottcher is running for city council; and when you run for office you have to say what kind of legislation you are going to campaign for, what problems you are going to correct, and how you are going to make this community better. (I forgot to ask him for his platform and after I hung up, still elated, I found myself writing one for him.)

Right here on Charles Street we have a row of once identical townhouses all built in 1866, where the real estate taxes vary from over $51,000 to $100,000—with the richest owner paying the lowest tax. Some years ago the city created a committee to look into this type of sprawling fiscal injustice but it evidently proved to be too complicated; I don’t know if the committee still meets. But—and here is the thing about having a friend who needs your help to get elected to the city council—I can ask Erik right now, “Would you please create a fair, equitable and transparent means of assessing and collecting real estate tax?”

OK, the big thing right now is housing—apartments are outrageously expensive. A friend, after three years of searching, was delighted to find and rent a two-room apartment in a well-kept and ideally located century-old tenement building for $1,925 a month with a broker’s fee of $3,495. But her private WC was on the first floor in a public hallway. There was a time when you got out of school and went to the Village and found one or two rooms, rented an apartment and began your life. No more—even Brooklyn is too expensive. Erik’s opposition, Marni Halsa, is for more and better maintained public housing, but I don’t know that if you just arrived in New York after graduating from a college in Kansas the City will rent you an apartment in public housing.

We have, perhaps, half a million or more elderly New Yorkers that are trapped in rent-stabilized apartments. Some can no longer make the stairs and need 24-hour care, but they are not getting it. Two years ago we proposed a new kind of apartment building—Senior Share—with apartments divided at the kitchen and bath, with one side for the senior and the other for the two kids just out of college who help the senior to the doctor visits, do the shopping, and make the morning coffee; and in return for these services they enjoy an affordable rent. Our architecture editor, Brian Pape, did a rendering of such an apartment on one of our front pages and within minutes we got our first call from a senior, “I’ll take one.”

OK Erik, build the first senior share apartment building in America.

So, readers of WestView sit down and key what sort of legislation or action you want your new city councilman to perform and we will print the best in our next issue. You know what you ought to do, Erik.
Sixth Precinct Community Council

By Frank Quinn

Village residents are invited to 6th Precinct Community Council meetings on the last Wednesday of each month. Meetings begin with a report from Deputy Inspector Robert O’Hare, followed by a speakers list and Q&A. There’s a distinctly local vibe at the meetings, where police refer to offenders by first name, and you may hear something intimate about an otherwise impersonal situation.

After attending regularly for about a year, this writer was disappointed by the generally low attendance. But 2020 began with a well-attended meeting reviewing New York’s bail reform law. Many residents became aware of this new law late in 2019 when judges began implementing it, but it’s been discussed at 6th Precinct meetings since last spring when it was signed. Back then polls showed that 55 percent of New Yorkers supported it, but a recent poll indicates 59 percent are now opposed.

Law enforcement professionals argue that the reforms decrease public safety because judges no longer have discretion to keep violent and repeat offenders off the streets. But advocates say cash bail unfairly incarcerates poor people accused of crimes when those with money can buy their freedom. Eliza Orfins, a NYC public defender and local resident, spoke about how her clients often plead guilty just to avoid jail. That description contrasts with the case of Anthony Manson, recently arrested in Greenwich Village. Records show he’s been arrested 75 times since 1991, with two stints in prison. Two days before Christmas, Manson was busted for three burglaries he allegedly committed in Brooklyn but was released on Christmas Day due to the new law. He was arrested on January 3rd in two more break-ins. Prosecutors sought to have him held on $15,000 bail during his January 4th arraignment but he was freed on supervised release. According to court papers, early on January 15th Manson was found inside Center Stage Optique at 45 Seventh Avenue, where he had smashed the door, with a suitcase filled with $3,995 worth of sunglasses and a rock. “And he hit me again when we got him again,” said Commander O’Hare. Manson was arraigned the next day but released again without bail.

While people had strong views on both sides, there was a productive and respectful discussion at the council meeting. Commander O’Hare reported that the 6th Precinct was one of only two precincts in Manhattan South below 59th Street that had a decrease in burglaries and robberies in 2019. But, unfortunately, “we’re trending the wrong way” according to Commander O’Hare, as those numbers are rising in the first months of 2020.

The state officials that we perfunctorily vote for seem to want to expose their constituents to more opportunities to be victimized by crimes. I don’t want to go back to the ‘80s and ‘90s crime-wise. I’m in my late 50s and can’t recover from a punch as well as I was able to in my 20s or 30s. Serial assaulters usually victimize people who don’t fight back—woman, the elderly, and immigrants.

The Other Side of Bail Reform

By Philip Yee

Recently, legislation was passed to make it easier for you to stay out of jail while waiting for trial if you could not make bail. Here, a retired sergeant of 33 years of service with the NYPD speaks about the intended results.

Bail reform is not working, as several high-profile assaults by released individuals have occurred in the neighborhood. I understand what the law was meant to accomplish—young and financially disadvantaged people would not have to sit in jail until trial or adjudication of their cases. However, serial assailants with mental health issues have been released and have shortened the timeline between their assaults.

On January 8th, 2020, Eugene Webb, a man in his 20s, punched, and later kicked, a woman in the back of her head at Varick and Houston Streets. The woman had two teeth knocked out. Later that day Webb attacked another woman near Grand Central Station. Two days later Webb was arrested for aggressive panhandling. He was released on each charge as per bail reform. I urged our state representative’s office to examine these offenses. One aide tried to lecture me on how misinformed of the particulars of the law I was, and assured me that violent felons do not qualify for automatic release under bail reform. The teeth being knocked out is a misdemeanor.

There are negotiations taking place regarding reworking bail reform law in Albany. The mayor acknowledges that bail reform has led to an increase in crime. The Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. stated that his office is overwhelmed with cases.

The bail reform law needs to be adjusted; recidivist misdemeanor assault defendants should not be released automatically, for starters. The impact on the criminal justice system should be considered.

The state officials that we perfunctorily vote for seem to want to expose their constituents to more opportunities to be victimized by crimes. I don’t want to go back to the ‘80s and ‘90s crime-wise. I’m in my late 50s and can’t recover from a punch as well as I was able to in my 20s or 30s. Serial assaulters usually victimize people who don’t fight back—woman, the elderly, and immigrants.
Yes Virginia, You Can Legally Go to Cuba!

By Philip Levine

The good news is that last year new laws regarding US travel to Cuba went into effect. It is still 100% legal for Americans to travel to Cuba under the new guidelines.

Americans can visit Cuba on tours with family or friends if they are arranged by a U.S. based tour operator—which describes my company 1WorldArtTravel. I will accompany you, lodge with you, help arrange air travel, coordinate travel visas, obtain the general class license we need, and create the itineraries required by the Treasury Department.

Americans are allowed to travel to Cuba under the conditions of 11 different categories that reflect the activities travelers will engage in while in Cuba. The category my company selects is “Support for the Cuban People.” I have a custom-designed group tour for New Yorkers ready to go in January 2021. A private university-trained expert on Cuba will accompany us every day. We will be lodging at the Hotel Capri, just two blocks from the ocean and with breakfast feasts unlike anything you’ve experienced anywhere. There are comfortable and spacious rooms and a gym on the top floor overlooking the city of Old Havana.

We will have our dinners at paladares, which are private family-owned restaurants located in gorgeous palatial-like settings.

Not too long ago, Havana was one of the most beautiful cities in the world. You can still see that beauty shining through the faded European style architecture. And still see that beauty shining through the most beautiful cities in the world. You can.

And we are being offered a specific tour which will take you to the floor overlooking the city of Old Havana. There are comfortable and spacious rooms and a gym on the top floor overlooking the city of Old Havana.

There is no limit to how many cigars (or how much rum) you can bring home.

We will also visit: Las Terrazas, an eco-community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community declared a biosphere reserve by the United Nations; Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a huge organic farm within the city limits of Havana; Cojimar, the fishing village that inspired Hemingway to write The Old Man and the Sea; Fusterlandia, the community decla...
21-story buildings all around me. They built them proudly, so they could live in dignity close by their work near New York’s famous Garment District—now a shadow of its earlier days—where thousands once labored at sewing machines or wheeled dresses and furs through the crowded streets of the West 20s and 30s. After work they had a short walk back to their homes in Penn South and had a decent life. A few still live here and some of their families are thriving, protected in place by our rent laws and the co-operative Penn South’s by-laws guaranteeing everyone democratic rights and limited nonprofit agreements pertaining to our apartments, and guaranteeing strict affordability now and into the future. “We need that so much today,” said my neighbor Vivian Traiman. “We’ve got so much to protect here, not just our apartments but our cooperative services too—our workout rooms, our art clubs, our community garden.”

There is much more that makes Penn South a comfortable place to live—like the inestimable comfort of our Program for Seniors, respected nationwide. For those families with children, Penn South has two model playgrounds, a wonderful toddler’s room, annual picnics, and a security force keeping an eye on them. The co-op by-laws allow only our residents to elect our board of directors members who receive no salary; they all volunteer. And it’s amazing how efficiently this system is working. Everything’s kept in order, the trees are pruned, the heating is perfect. I’ve seen few other large institutions, banks, schools, or churches doing a better job administrating to the needs of five thousand complicated people in a complicated city. Other old values, many out of style, persist at Penn South. Most striking is the deep desire to keep this community affordable for those that will follow us, affording them some control over ever escalating rents and neighborhood gentrification. Often, we’ve voted to keep this a limited equity co-op, not allowing it to become private in a wildly booming real estate market that could make many of us millions of dollars. When vacating our apartments, we retrieve only the equity we paid, nothing more. No profit, none, is made in this complex. And, ten percent off the top is not going into someone’s pocket, thus cutting our rents mercifully. That, along with property tax breaks established fifty years ago by the state and city, make Penn South an affordable place to live for working class families and seniors.

And I believe there’s a lesson to be learned here. The failures of NYCHA, and the anguish of productive middle-income people, many fretting over their housing, may be addressed by what’s been worked out at Penn South. Having ownership where we live makes a positive difference in how we handle ourselves in these building. We are deeply involved in how things are run, and our democratic by-laws help us keep it that way. The city, of course, can’t grant unlimited real estate tax breaks to everyone, but our democratic by-laws help us keep it that way. The city, of course, can’t grant unlimited gentrification and, instead of giving Hudson Yards seven billion dollars in tax abatements, could make grants available to those whose incomes are modest, and to middle class individuals as well, for setting up many places like Penn South.

Yes, on a bright day, when I’m feeling most kindly toward New York, I truly wish all in our hard-driving city could live as we do at Penn South. As I look out on my terrace at the recent newcomer to the neighborhood, Hudson Yards and all their mega expensive apartments, I thank God, my wife, and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union for this wonderfully affordable place to live in Chelsea.

Bennett Kremen’s novel “The Performance” is available on Amazon under his name. Roger Paradiso is a contributor to WestView News and a filmmaker whose latest film is “The Lost Village.”
The Tech Giants: Google, Facebook and Their Sinister Ways

How You Can Survive in this Orwellian Quagmire of Greed, Selfies, Posts and Porn

By Roger Paradiso

There are many people fighting for our rights and lives in this internet jungle. I spoke to Ruth Vitale, a former founder and co-president of Paramount Classics and President of Fine Line Features when independent film thrived. In 2013, Ruth and her team took on the crusade of fighting pirates and other strange creatures on the internet. The organization she heads is named Creative Future because she still believes in the creative power of artists in the currently dystopian world of social media. Facebook is supposed to be bringing the world together and Google is supposed to be making it easier to search the web. Unfortunately, these Silicon Valley giants are doing some very bad things also. For one thing, they are too big.

 Forbes lists Alphabet (Google’s parent company) at number 4 among digital companies on the planet; Facebook is number 10. Google has an estimated 1.7 billion users worldwide; Facebook has 2.4 billion active users worldwide. Both companies are positioned in every continent on this planet, at least in every country. Inside Google are small companies like YouTube, Chrome, Android, Google Maps, among others. Facebook has Instagram and WhatsApp among other companies.

ROGER PARADISO: Ruth, what is Google doing that keeps you up at night?

RUTH VITALE: What aren’t they doing that keeps me up at night? I have to tell you, I used to feel just like most people— that Google was an important and essential part of the internet and had changed the world for the better. But this job has opened my eyes to their immense lobbying effort on Capitol Hill, an effort aimed at dismantling the copyright protections that creative people rely upon, as well as ruthlessly protecting the legal immunities that allow them to profit from illegal content, whether it’s piracy or opioids or hate speech or terrorism.

Google, its sibling YouTube, and Facebook have almost single-handedly fueled the rise of a massive global digital marketplace of “shared” and stolen creative work (journalism, music, photography, film, and television) that has increased their bottom lines and made them into the largest, most profitable companies in the world. YouTube is the largest streaming site globally, and their entire business was built on the creative artworks of people who were never compensated for their work.

RP: Villagers with children want to know: would you let YouTube be your kid’s babysitter while you’re not home?

RV: This is actually a very serious question that many parents do not think about near enough. In addition to the make-up tutorials, music videos, cat videos, and movie trailers one can find on YouTube, there is a dark side that is just as big—a cesspool of hate speech, terrorism propaganda, conspiracy theories, fake news, and violence. We know that pedophiles use YouTube to lure and exploit children, and to network with each other. Even worse, we know that YouTube has known this as well, FOR YEARS, and has looked the other way. In addition to all this, YouTube has a perverse, yet shockingly prevalent, community of users who create videos with the sole intent of disturbing and frightening children. So, in short, absolutely not—I would never leave a child alone with YouTube!

RP: Hollywood anointed Zuckerberg and Facebook as the kings of the new world order in their overly praised film “The Social Network” way back in 2010. How has FB affected the film business?

RV: If YouTube has a dark side, Facebook is equally dark. White supremacists, terrorists, pedophiles, Russian bots, drug dealers, illegal gun sellers, and large-scale piracy networks have one thing in common—they all have a home on Facebook. Cyber pirates are using their Watch Party tool to host illegal movie marathons for thousands of viewers, and Facebook Groups are widely used for sharing stolen movies. Just like YouTube, Facebook knows all this. They’ve known it for years, and they’ve made billions of dollars by fueling this Wild West frontier.

So how does that affect our business? We absolutely cannot compete with free. And, if most people spend a good chunk of their day on platforms like Facebook, where they can search for content and find free pirated versions of our movies, why would anyone pay?

RP: What is FB doing that drives you to keep fighting them?

RV: Just like Google, Facebook spends millions of dollars each year lobbying the government, fighting against the interests of creative people to preserve the safe harbors that give them immunity from accountability. So, I will never stop fighting. Unless, of course, they decide to come to the table and work with us on common sense solutions that would eliminate the criminal activity on their platform and better safeguard creative works. Believe it or not, I don’t want to fight Facebook. I would welcome their partnership. But right now, they aren’t even maintaining the bare minimum of what should pass for a safe and secure online environment; and that cannot stand.

Look at it this way: If I opened a store on Bleecker Street selling guns, opioids, bootleg DVDs, and children, it would be shut down in a day. How is it that Google and Facebook are allowed to facilitate an online marketplace for the same exact illegal goods with impunity?

RP: You say that Google is the largest search engine in the world and a monopoly. What is the dark side of Google in their quest to dominate the internet world?

RV: According to Statista, Google handles almost 88 percent of all search queries with no other search engine obviously coming even close in market share. It is indisputably a monopoly, and that might be the source of all our problems. Google has no incentive to change. That leaves regulatory forces as the only way to stop them. And even with Congress being very aware of the issues, that will take years.

The dark side of Google’s monopoly power in both Search and streaming (through their sibling YouTube) is that it forces everyone to agree to the terms they set. If you’re an advertiser on Search or a musician on YouTube, if you want the world’s largest audience, you must “negotiate” with them. And, as you can imagine, that negotiation is more like a robbery than a negotiation. This lopsided negotiation is just one side effect of Google’s unchecked monopoly power, but it affects almost every business and every worker in America.

RP: You mentioned in your latest issue of Creative Future that Facebook and YouTube’s terms of service are all they need to keep criminals of all kinds off their platforms. Could you please explain?

RV: It’s not all they need, but it would be a very good start—if only because it wouldn’t require any new laws to be passed. All they would have to do is honor what they have already promised all of us. Take YouTube’s terms of service, for example. They couldn’t be clearer; they require that the user agree that any content they upload to the site “will not contain third party copyrighted material, or material that is subject to other third party proprietary rights.” Furthermore, they require that none of the more than 300 hours of video uploaded to the site every minute be “contrary to the YouTube Community Guidelines”—guidelines, we might add, that forbid “harmful or dangerous content,” “hateful content,” content involving “child endangerment,” and “videos that someone else owns the copyright to,” among other harms. What about someone who violates one or more of these guidelines? “You Tube may at any time,” their terms of service continue, “without prior notice and in its sole discretion, remove such Content and/or terminate a user’s account for submitting such material in violation of these Terms of Service.” That all seems pretty clear, and Facebook’s terms have similar language. That’s why it’s so shocking that these platforms remain active hubs of activity like piracy, illegal drug sales, and a lot of hate, because they already pledged to police things like that, and they’re simply looking the other way.

RP: What kind of help are we getting from Congress in protecting us Villagers from the modern-day robber barons called FB and Google?

RV: Well, until 2016 we had a small number of allies in Congress who understood that Google and Facebook were bad for our democracy. Then we saw how the Russians used social media to manipulate the election, and how Cambridge Analytica and Facebook worked together to steal data and manipulate all of us. And then the waterfall of bad news and negative press started, which continues to this day. So now we have more and more allies in Congress who understand that something needs to happen to regulate these monopoly platforms.

RP: What can Villagers do to protect themselves and their families from the dark side of the internet?

RV: Stay away from it! Take a walk on the West Side Highway [Hudson River Park] and enjoy the fresh air. See a movie at the Angelika! Go to Three Lives and buy a book. Support creative livelihoods with your hard-earned dollars, if you can afford to. As much as the internet has changed the world for the better, the current state of the internet is broken. And do not let them tell you otherwise.

Next month we will talk to Ruth and Creative Future about copyright issues as well as the newest human right called data rights. The MIT Technology Review states, “It’s time for a Bill of Data Rights designed to protect your privacy, liberty and freedom in the digital age.” To see more about data rights, search for Roger Paradiso’s review of “The Great Hack” at WestView News online.

Roger Paradiso is a writer and filmmaker whose latest film, “The Last Village,” explored the conditions destroying Greenwich Village and our country.
Bachelor & Bachelorette Auction to Cure AIDS

By Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D.

On Valentine’s Day weekend, Research Foundation to Cure AIDS (RFTCA) held its first “Love Labs” Bachelor and Bachelorette Auctions at Henrietta Hudson and Club Cumming—lesbian and gay bars, one in the West Village and one in the East Village.

Why a dating game to help cure AIDS?

The leading edge of medical philanthropy is always driven by those impacted by a disease who have the ability to pay, yet most of the wealthiest gay men with HIV/AIDS keep it a closely guarded secret. Would-be high-level donors can almost always live near normal lives with the best healthcare in the world, and many choose to do so without disclosing their HIV/AIDS status to anyone. Splashy celebrity-fueled galas may draw people out, but it’s quite another thing to prioritize one’s giving to cure AIDS.

If it is challenging for rich older gay men with HIV/AIDS to make curing AIDS their priority, perhaps it may be young gay men living with AIDS (and their families) who fill their shoes. That’s where RFTCA’s “The Love Lab” comes in.

At each Love Lab, bachelors and bachelorettes take the stage. Following a brief Q&A, bidding begins to win a date with each contestant. The bar keeps 100 percent of the bar intake (business as usual), but 100 percent of the winning bids go directly to RFTCA, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. When our bachelors took the stage at close to midnight deep into the Saturday night event at Club Cumming, everyone in the packed room became silent in full anticipation.

In the pin-drop silence our message was heard: what we need now are the Greta Thunbergers of a new movement to cure AIDS. In an age when the focus on AIDS is on treatment and prevention, our message to young gay men with HIV/AIDS is this: your lives matter, too!

Living with HIV/AIDS is not the dream of future generations.

For our youth, a cure is on the horizon and at stake. By hosting The Love Lab at Club Cumming, recently voted best gay bar in New York City for a second year in a row, as well as at Henrietta Hudson, a long-standing West Village lesbian bar that caters to a diverse clientele, we hope to engage all stakeholders.

Love Labs will take place once a month at Club Cumming and at Henrietta Hudson. After we get a few rounds under our belt, perhaps we will export the model to additional cities around the world. Please get in touch if you would like to participate in our date auction, either as a participant or as an additional host venue.

A great thanks to Darren Dryden, co-owner and DJ at Club Cumming, co-DJ Sammy Jo and Club Cumming host Daphne Always, as well as to Lisa Cannistraci, owner of Henrietta Hudson, and Robert Galinsky, host of The Love Lab there, for launching the series. Says trans-devoted artist and activist Galinsky, “Working to save lives through RFTCA is one of my passions; and The Love Lab is where I show support to my sisters, cousins, nieces, aunts and mothers!”

Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D. is a biologist, a biotech inventor, a gay man, and the president of Research Foundation to Cure AIDS. Visit FreeFromAIDS.org to help accelerate a cure for AIDS.

Contact kambiz.shekdar@rftca.org to inquire about joining RFTCA’s founders’ circle.
Notes From Away

A Witches’ Brew

By Tom Lamia

Witches have always been with us. Proof of their existence lies in the act of retribution, the fear of witchcraft, and the belief in the existence of the unknown. The idea of a witch hunter’s maniacal drive to hunt down and destroy witches is a common theme in literature and history. In researching and writing The Crucible, Arthur Miller intended a historical allegory of the Hollywood Blacklist and Red Scare, in which the individual’s rights to be left alone, and the right of the individual, to be left alone, were threatened. He was protecting his home state’s motion picture industry, and the struggle for whether those opposed to these restrictions did so out of divided loyalty led to the Blacklist and the Red Scare in Hollywood. Later, Senator Joe McCarthy, who used it to more fearful effect than Nixon and HUAC, took up the loyalty issue. McCarthy publicly announced (without names or evidence) that he had found specific witch hunts, but his threats to punish those who oppose him made clear that, to paraphrase Huxley, the witch hunter was the threat of being identified as disloyal to the President or they are an enemy, against whom he will use his terrifying power. We have seen the result in the impeachment trial of others at the hands of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Senators and Representatives who would not speak up against him were disloyal. The threat of career suicide was an effort to encourage a change in their form of government. The witch hunter was the threat of being identified as disloyal to the President, and he too was a witch hunter “if the witches are Communists.” By naming names many escaped career suicide. No witches they. By their silence others were blacklisted, had their careers destroyed and suffered catastrophic economic loss.

New York Transit Museum: Buried Treasures?

By Brian J. Pape, AIA

After having visited the two New York Transit Museum galleries of rotating exhibits and retail stores in Manhattan, where the Grand Central Terminal store has free admission, as does the store at 2 Broadway at Bowling Green, I was excited to hear about a new vintage photography exhibit. Streetscapes & Subways: Photographs by Pierre P. and Granville W. Pullis is not in Manhattan, and it’s not free. Housed underground in an authentically restored 1936 subway station at 70th Street station, the New York Transit Museum displays vintage subway and elevated cars dating back to 1907, when a ride cost five cents. The Pullis brothers were employed by the MTA for more than 30 years, and about 100,000 of their glass negatives from before 1925 have survived, many to be shown here. These are the scenes of old New York, when communities were being drastically transformed, or, as lines were extended outward, created for commuters into the big city. The teeming hustle of everyday life of the thriving city is frozen in photographic frames, a time when horses pulled trolley cars and delivery carts, when the street paving of Belgian blocks was laid over a foundation of dirt and rocks.

But the streetscapes, like now, consist of rows of townhouses, tenements, business storefronts, office buildings, community centers and churches. Founded in 1976, the New York Transit Museum is dedicated to telling and preserving the stories of mass transportation—extraordinary engineering feats, workers who labored in the tunnels over 100 years ago. It is a self-supporting non-profit division of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Knowing the problems of today’s MTA, with delays, derailments, failing elevators and soaked ceilings since it first began operating on October 27, 1904, we might forgive them for charging admission; some tours require annual membership to buy a ticket.

Seniors 62+ are half-priced at $5, or free for seniors on Wednesdays. https://www.nytransitmuseum.org/exist/
This month's West Village Original is painter Stephen Hall, born in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1954. A resident of Westbeth, Hall has exhibited throughout the U.S., India, Japan, Korea, and Mexico. His work is part of numerous corporate and private collections and has been featured in major motion pictures, music videos, and magazines. Hall's latest paintings can be seen in a show called “Sign of the Times” that opens March 19th at Westbeth Gallery.

“I always had this drive to draw and paint,” says artist Stephen Hall. “I was never not doing that. According to my mother I was drawing behind the couch by the age of three or four. And I’m completely self-taught. I was actually very lucky, as well. I grew up in a council estate but thanks to the Eleven-plus exams, I was taken out of my working class school and sent to Aberdeen Grammar School, founded in the 14th Century. I was always a bit of a maverick, even back then, but the art teachers at the school were very encouraging to me. And my parents were always very supportive.”

Hall admits that he didn’t really become an artist until moving to New York in 1978. That was after hitchhiking around the world when he was about 19 and deciding he didn’t want to return home. “I had seen a lot of the world and Aberdeen was too small a town for me,” he says. “No offense to small towns, but I was looking for more. At one point I was working on a kibbutz in Israel. While I was there, I met a girl from New York and I came back with her and I eventually started exhibiting and selling my work. I’ve been here ever since.”

“What is Hall’s preferred medium? “Acrylics,” he answers. “They’re the easiest and cleanest for me. I never had the patience for oil, the drying times. I believe, especially now, that oil is just a vehicle to move the pigments. And with acrylic you can make just as superior a painting as the classic oil painting. As far as my style goes, I think there’s always been a recognizable vocabulary as being mine: a crisp color sense and graphic skill.”

“I’m endeavoring to be more specific and less ambiguous in my work,” he continues. “I still want to make beautiful, well-crafted paintings that aren’t elitist and stimulate thinking. With my new series called Earth Matters—prompted by climate change—I’m fully up to my eyes in three-dimensional backgrounds of plastic, garbage, and rising sea levels. They get more and more complicated and harder to do. I often wish I was an Abstract Expressionist and could just throw paint on the canvas!” He laughs. “My paintings are meticulous and time-consuming. But doing the work is what drives me. Quite literally, the time I’m not painting is when I catch the flu or a cold. My resistance drops and my energy level drops. That’s because I’m driven to paint. I’ve got no choice.”

What has the life of an artist been like for Hall? “It’s been like a wave that ebbs and flows,” he says. “I’ve had times of great success and having patrons, and times when I didn’t sell much work. I never became super famous—although I was big in Japan at one point—but I do sell all my work.”

And as an artist, living in Westbeth has proven to be a “fantastic haven” for Hall as well. “Westbeth was set up to provide support for artists and it actually does that”, he says. “For the 22 years I’ve been here it has seen me through some lean times. A lot of artists have had to move out of the city or get a corporate job, but I haven’t due to the support of Westbeth.”

The neighborhood has certainly changed, though. “There used to be transvestite hookers outside the building here,” Hall says. “It was very cinematic. I enjoyed it. It’s a bit more shopping mall now but I appreciate that since I have a thirteen-year old daughter who’s always coming and going. Years ago, I had the good fortune to move to Bleecker Street between Charles and Tenth. It was my first apartment in the West Village and I fell in love with it. It was like a village. The streets weren’t gridded, there was still a hint of Bohemia, and it was pretty and quiet. When we lost that apartment and moved to the East Village, I loved that too: it was raw, gritty, and arty. But when I had the opportunity to move into WestBeth and back to the West Village, I jumped at it. It was like coming home.”

“What has Hall been up to since March 19th at Westbeth Gallery?

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Let’s Get Real About Aging

By Gail Evans

Some stereotypes die hard. It’s time to bury the stereotype of senior centers as dreary places where old people sit around waiting for lunch and a game of bingo. I just spent several weeks attending classes and activities at the four Greenwich House centers serving our community, and believe me, that stereotype is so wrong! The centers are busy, cheerful places with diverse and interesting memberships, and the classes—well, I was blown away! Dip into my senior center “diary” to learn why.

But facts first. There are some 250 senior centers throughout the City, run by nonprofits like Greenwich House with funding from the City’s Department for the Aging. Membership is free, so are classes and activities, although centers ask for contributions for lunch and sometimes for activities. Greenwich House operates four senior centers—Center on the Square at 20 Washington Square North; Judith C. White at 27 Barrow Street; Our Lady of Pompeii at 25 Carmine Street; and Independence Plaza at 310 Greenwich Street.

SHAKESPEARE (Center on the Square)

I’ve taken Shakespeare courses and seen many performances, but this class is amazing. I’m sure my 50–60 classmates (from all over the City) agree. Actor Leo Schaff takes us through The Merchant of Venice line-by-line, his voice a marvel of interpretation, his comments challenging us to imagine what the characters are thinking and feeling, and to appreciate what Shakespeare does with every word. We revel in the language and the insights. Schaff’s been leading this class for years at Center on the Square and other centers. What a New York treasure! I can’t wait to learn what play we’ll do next.

MIDDLE EASTERN DANCING (Judith C. White)

With awe I watch as the six participants move sinuously to the music, their glamour embellished by silk scarves and gold coin belts. Not easy! You have to coordinate arms, shoulders, fingers, upper body, belly and hips while mindful of dance steps and rhythm. You have to feel—and therefore look—sexy, beautiful, enticing. “I was tickled by the idea of belly dancing at a senior center,” one womanconfides. “It’s erotic, you know!” Two others praised the class as a great fitness and weight loss workout. Instructor Margrecia also leads Line Dance and Movement classes at Mary C. White and Independence Plaza. She’s a powerhouse who could motivate even a klutz like me!

HEALTHY EATING (Independence Plaza)

I’m taking notes on this session in the center’s dining room. Enthusiastic Chef Irbania Tavares is demonstrating how to make a quick, healthy dish of lentils I’d like to try at home. “It doesn’t have to be from scratch to be healthy,” she says, opening lentil cans. “But let’s not stint on fresh basil, that really makes the dish!” When it’s finished, we all sample. So good! No wonder this class is popular! Chef Irbania also serves it up at Our Lady of Pompeii and Center on the Square, where it’s funded through a Healthy Eating Grant from Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer.

LOST AND LONELINESS GROUP (Center on the Square)

Other groups—like Let’s Talk at this center, and Friday Cafe at Judith C. White—let loose on politics, pet peeves, other favorite topics. But here the focus is the shared experience of loss. I hesitate to intrude on this small, intimate gathering, but soon feel comfortable. The Chair of the center’s Senior Advisory Committee started the group in recognition that many center members had lost loved ones. He and his wife are nominal group leaders, but people don’t need much encouragement to speak freely. Respect, compassion and solace mark every interaction.

LET’S JAM (Center on the Square)

These older musicians have been jamming in Washington Square Park for years. But they play indoors at this center across from the Park every Wednesday afternoon, to the delight of members. Seated in a semi-circle at the window end of this fine “parlor” overlooking the Park, they play the great songs of the past 70 years, granting every request and calling up our memories. Their enjoyment at jamming is palpable. So is ours.

Photograph: Musicians playing together at Center on the Square. Photo by Chasi Annexy.

WHITNEY MUSEUM ART (Judith C. White)

This six-week class is presented free at the center by Whitney Museum educators. For five weeks the class makes art using materials and techniques similar to those used by artists in the Whitney’s current show. The sixth session is at the museum itself, where participants get to see the actual exhibit, Making Knowing: Craft in Art. Today we begin by examining reproductions of works by three of the show’s artists who were inspired by “women’s work” such as quilts, embroidery, decoupage. Our creative juices start to flow as we discuss how these artists achieved the effects we admire. We then apply their techniques to our own inspirations, cutting shapes from solid and print fabric supplied by the instructor and gluing them to rectangles of felt. We’ve made fabric collages! Last week the class made constructions from ribbons and paper. What fun!

OPERA (Center on the Square)

“This class is about discovering what makes opera worthwhile,” says instructor Simon Saad. “Enjoying great voices and melodies is fine, an indulgence of the senses, but I challenge you to develop critical ability, to discover what’s transcendent and eternal.” Wow! This is stuff for the cognoscenti, and my fellow participants follow intently. He then launches into anecdotes, opinions, a wide-ranging discussion, before playing a video of the first act of Britten’s Rape of Lucretia and inviting our reactions. Incidentally I learn there’s a cadre of older New Yorkers who know which senior centers to go to for classes on Verdi, or early opera, or the current opera scene. Who knew?

ALSO, I enjoyed KNEE HEALTH (Judith C. White), a small class of knee, hip and lower back suffers devoted to instructor Maurra Nolan’s personal approach as she leads them through discussion, gentle exercises and guided meditation; TAI CHI (Center on the Square and Our Lady of Pompeii) where I finally found instruction I could follow; CE-RAMICS (Judith C. White), taught by potters from Greenwich House Pottery, which also fires participants’ clay sculptures and bowls. I wish I’d been able to sample a wealth of other classes, exercise groups, movie viewings, seminars. Thank goodness I didn’t let the negative stereotype keep me away!
Love Me Hug Me, an Alzheimer’s Themed Pop-Up Exhibition

By Hannah Reimann

139 Wooster Street
New York, NY 10012
Between Houston and Prince Streets

Walking up Wooster Street a few weeks ago I happened to notice Love Me Hug Me, an Alzheimer’s-themed pop-up exhibition. I was my dad’s caregiver when he lost his memory and I’m aware that there are over five million people in the US with dementia. I had to go in. The exhibit begins in a small screening room with a loop of a short film, Wrinkles, then a room of spinning blue and yellow butterflies representing the thoughts of those with dementia flying out of their minds and poems about memory printed on the walls. There are six rooms of colorful symbolic imagery, each poetically inviting personal reflections, from falling Gingko leaves, a starry night with a sculpture of the earth to a crowd of identity-less people, how many dementia patients see groups of people they may have once known, now strangers to them. This is interspersed with opportunities to write answers to questions about the memory loss of loved ones on note cards. The message is that, even without memory, love lasts and it helps.

Wrinkles tells the story of a group of people living in a facility for elders, some of whom have Alzheimer’s. When Elaine Hong saw this film in May 2019, it moved her to create Love Me Hug Me, on exhibit until March 10.

Hong is a graduate student in finance at Columbia University. She created this exhibit, a tribute to her grandfather, after finding investors who were willing to help her rent the space in Soho. She networked with the Alzheimer’s Foundation and Caring Kind, two important organizations in the world of dementia.

Hong’s grandfather had Alzheimer’s and passed away two years ago in his native China. There are over 9.6 million people in China with dementia. Hong happened to see the Chinese reality TV show, Forget-Me-Not-Café, which features five early-stage dementia patients and three celebrities including Zhang Yunkun and Huang Bo, one of China’s biggest box office draws. They all get together to open a restaurant. In one scene, an old man writes to his best friend of 50 years, asking him to visit. Ten days later the same man doesn’t recognize this friend when he shows up. Gently prodded and reminded by his fellow cast members, he is brought to tears of recognition and hugs.

Hong learned about Wrinkles in online comments about the TV show. She incorporated a 15-minute excerpt of the 90-minute Spanish film, hoping to capture the attention of young people. Every 66 seconds someone develops Alzheimer’s in the US. Hong’s aim is to inspire young people to spend time with their loved ones who have dementia and not wait until they cannot recognize them anymore. She encourages family members to be patient and to understand that the anger and restlessness that people with dementia demonstrate are part of the disease.

She plans to bring the pop up to China this summer. Of course, this will depend on how things go regarding the Coronavirus. In China, one person per family are allowed to go out every two days wearing antiviral masks to buy food and other supplies. Her parents, who live in Hangzhou, haven’t left home for a month. From afar, they are proud of her and her efforts. When her grandfather was alive he called everyone in the family, “Elaine.” This very moving exhibit is a testament to that, the love between them, palpable.
Seven useful tips for new runners

Research shows that up to 80 percent of runners will be injured at one time during a 12 month period. But that doesn’t mean runners have to quit their favorite activity to avoid getting hurt. With the proper plan, they can stay in that safe 20 percent.

Here’s how to prevent injury and maximize performance:

SET REASONABLE GOALS. Determine why you run (e.g., fitness, recreation, training, competition), then develop or find a plan that is compatible with your goal and current level of fitness. Whether you run for distance or time, most running plans recommend increasing by no more than 10 percent per week to avoid injury.

WARM UP AND STRETCH. Warming up is crucial to ensuring your legs are ready for the demands of running. Always spend at least five to 10 minutes warming up. Dynamic stretches—stretching in motion—are typically recommended over static stretches, especially during warm up. If you prefer to hold on to static stretches—the deep stretch and hold without movement—reserve them for the end of your run.

WEAR THE RIGHT SHOES. Knowing what type of running gait you have and wearing proper running shoes are crucial for avoiding injuries. Orthotic shoe inserts are equally as important, especially for people with flat feet or high arches, as well as a wide variety of foot problems. Everyone’s feet are different; if you’re unsure of what kind of shoe you should be wearing, visit a local running shop to have your gait assessed.

STICK TO SAFE WEATHER CONDITIONS. Avoid running outside if temperatures are over 90 degrees, humidity levels are high, or temperatures are exceptionally cold or freezing. It’s especially a good idea to stick to the treadmill if the roads outside are slippery or icy.

CHANGE IT UP. Once you’ve established consistency, try varying your run workouts. There are many different types of running workouts such as tempo, interval, fartlek, and hill repeats. These not only can make running more fun and interesting but will improve running efficiency, endurance, power, speed, and mental toughness.

MIX IN CROSS TRAINING TO SUPPLEMENT YOUR RUNNING. Try cycling or swimming as alternatives to running, and incorporate strength training as part of your weekly routine – this will help you build strength and flexibility, prevent injury and recover faster. Core strengthening along with Hip abduction – glute strengthening, are two key components to being a successful runner.

DON’T UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF REST. Without appropriate rest you can easily find yourself injured or over-trained. Exercise results in microscopic tissue breakdown, rest allows your body to recover and improve from one training session to the next. Planning scheduled rest days at least once or twice per week can increase gains and decrease the chances of downtime due to injury.
Chelsea Piers Fitness is More Than a Health Club

By Anthony Paradiso

Chelsea Piers is a great gym located on West 20th Street at Hudson River Park in Chelsea. There are five different sports venues at Chelsea Piers including Sky Rink, a Field House, the Golf Club driving-range, Bowlmor, and Chelsea Piers Fitness—the largest of those facilities.

The general manager of Chelsea Piers Fitness—Chelsea is Lesley Kiger. Kiger described what makes Chelsea Piers Fitness so valuable to the community, “The track and sand volleyball courts you’re not going to find at any other [Chelsea Piers] locations; but I think what really sets us apart is the community around all of the different options that we have.”

Chelsea Piers Fitness has kept up with the latest trends in the gym industry by building new spaces so they can appeal to everyone’s fitness goals. Kiger added, “We have a huge sun deck which is right on the Hudson and is beautiful; you feel like you’re not in the city at all [because] you’re floating on the water. We also built a new Pilates studio. Pilates is a great activity for all ages and we built a new space that is really beautiful.”

Chelsea Piers also works with schools in the area to accommodate their athletic programs. “The Avenues New York school— we host their track practice. That’s a strong relationship because they’re right around corner from us,” Kiger said. “We also work with Collegiate and the New School. Community is very important to us [and] we’ve been working with NYU for five years on creating that experience for their students.”

I was able to contact several Villagers who shared their experiences as members of Chelsea Piers. The health club offers group exercise classes such as Yoga, Pilates, and Barre.

Joan Hall, who lives in the West Village and used to waitressed at Caffe Reggio, described what appealed to her about taking yoga at Chelsea Piers Fitness, “Yoga works for me, I have been doing it for a long time and I highly recommend it.” Michael D. has been a member of the health club since 1996. He described the atmosphere inside Chelsea Piers Fitness, “The air and light just sold me on it. No matter what you are doing it feels open and spacious, like the opposite of NYC.”

At the present time there are not enough sports fields and indoor facilities to accommodate the community’s need to exercise during the winter. Chelsea Piers Fitness should be the first place people check out. It is nearby, and a new and well-run space that has helped Villagers like Joan and Michael and can help many more.

Sinus Health

By Jason Bander
General Manager, Owner
Lifethyme Natural Market

Sinus infections are one of the most devastating of illnesses. They punish us with horrible headaches (in the frontal lobe), inflamed passages, teary, itchy eyes and if really bad, pain throughout the facial cavities.

THE DRIP

Often sinus infections start with those gnarly, annoying post-nasal drips. That drip is the sinus system creating mucus, it’s unhappy. But why is it suddenly unhappy and what can I do to remedy that drip before it becomes an infection? There are many possibilities; pollen, dust, mold and yeast (there’s an abundance of airborne yeast plus wine, beer, bread, etc!) all find their way into our sinus system and can wreak havoc.

I THINK I HAVE AN INFECTION, NOW WHAT?!

It’s important to recognize there is valid medical research suggesting (and proving) antibiotics are an ineffective treatment for most sinus infections. Search (by search engine); “sinus infection antibiotic effectiveness medical journal”. After significant research of the World Wide Web, we come to test and see great results from the Baylor University study suggesting the use of a mild soap in the saline solution and The Sinus Flush from Friggy’s Journal. The Flip Turn Sinus Flush personally helped me overcome a horrendous sinus infection in less than 72 hours.

TREATING INFECTIONS NATURALLY AT LIFETHYME

Heading up the second floor of Lifethyme Market, we assist our customers in choosing the most comfortable and effective approaches to alleviating sinus conditions naturally without contraindications to existing medication plans. We offer contraindication-free solutions using essential oils, diffusers and nasal irrigation systems, like a neti pot, nasal wash and maybe even a nasal spray. A neti pot or nasal irrigation bottle is quite helpful in flushing the sinus system of irritants that created the drip or caused the headache. Tip: Warm distilled water combined with the right salt and baking soda solution is a great first step for nasal flushing. This solution should have the same taste as your tears. If you have an infection, add some food-grade detergent (like Seventh Generation or Dr. Bronner’s) to help break through the biofilm-bad bacteria use to hide behind.

We also sell some excellent natural anti-histamines to compliment the treatment and keep seasonal allergies under control too.
DA TOSCANO
24 Minetta Lane (near 6th Avenue)

Michael Toscano was the well-regarded chef at the original location of Gabe Stulman’s restaurant Perla. Perla moved from Minetta Lane to 234 West 4th Street (at West 10th Street) in 2016 and later morphed into all-day dining venue Fairfax. Toscano, in the meantime, moved to Charleston, SC, where he and his wife have been running a restaurant called Le Farfalle Osteria. After Perla moved, the space on Minetta Lane remained empty. The landlord eventually contacted Toscano and offered him a new lease on the space, which he took. He returned to his old kitchen (which had remained untouched), and a number of his former staff have rejoined him at his new spot, including his pasta maker. Toscano shares Italian and Mexican heritage, and this is reflected in the menu which adds some Mexican flavoring and techniques to traditional Italian dishes. Perla was known for its offal offerings, and some are again available at the reboot. Many Villagers with fond memories of Perla are eager to try Toscano’s new project.

AMERICAN BAR
33 Greenwich Avenue (between Charles and West 10th Streets)

For many years, Maracas Restaurant occupied the space at 33 Greenwich Avenue, and it always seemed pretty lively. After that, Chapter One was in residence briefly, and then a southern restaurant called 33 Greenwich opened in 2017 and closed shortly thereafter. This sad history leads many to believe that this is a cursed space. Now, the owners of Cafe Clover and Clover Grocery have taken over the spot serving “modern American and Continental classics”. The restaurant is proud of the local purveyors used for sourcing their ingredients. Great efforts were made to decorate the venue with fancy brands, but it is a large sprawling space and the bamboo chairs give it the appearance of a temporary set-up.

TOP OPENINGS

DA TOSCANO
24 Minetta Lane (near 6th Avenue)

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AS THE END OF WINTER APPROACHES, LOTS OF SIGNS HAVE Popped up all over the Village announcing spring openings. This month also saw a number of high-profile openings, and some sudden closings.

CHELSEA MARKET UPDATE

75 9th Avenue (between 15th and 16th Streets)

The subterranean space at Chelsea Market (which is dubbed “The Chelsea Local”) continues to expand: Black Seed Appetizing has opened there, offering a large selection of sandwiches served on their wood-fired oven baked bagels, made in the Montreal style. Dickinson’s Farmstand Meats will soon have a larger space, where they will serve a more extensive menu including steaks, Las Delicias, familiar to many from the Union Square Greenmarket, has opened a counter with kosher pastries, some of which are gluten-free. The owner is from Uruguay, and the store is named after a street in a resort on the Atlantic Coast.

This business has a stand at Urban Space that was upstairs has now moved downstairs as the Montreal style.

Selection of sandwiches served on their counter with kosher pastries, many from the Union Square Greenmarket, has opened a counter with kosher pastries, some of which are gluten-free. The owner is from Uruguay, and the store is named after a street in a resort on the Atlantic Coast.

His pasta maker. Toscano shares Italian and Mexican heritage, and this is reflected in the menu which adds some Mexican flavoring and techniques to traditional Italian dishes. Perla was known for its offal offerings, and some are again available at the reboot. Many Villagers with fond memories of Perla are eager to try Toscano’s new project.

American Bar
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I have been living in Greenwich Village for many years. I have seen it transform, as have many of us who have lived here for a long time. There is no question that nothing stays still. Whether we like changes or not, we must learn to accept them. But who wouldn’t be saddened to see empty stores, as small businesses cannot afford the rent? There are too many banks, too many nail salons, and not enough art galleries, dress shops, pottery stores, and all the different types of small businesses that were here when we moved in.

But the Village cannot disappear; it is still lively and attractive. The side streets are lined with beautiful, and some truly elegant, townhouses and there are plenty of public gardens of various sizes. There are still small theaters, art-movie houses, a few art galleries, and, of course, dozens of bars and restaurants. And then there are the jazz clubs—so many of them.

I’d like to talk about Café Bohemia. It was a jazz club which opened in 1955 and closed in 1960, but in those few years it became a mecca for progressive jazz where non-celebrated musicians began their career. The space was in a basement and small; no more than one hundred people could fit in. It was in the shape of a narrow rectangle with the stage at one end and a small bar at the other. Miles Davis, The Jazz Messengers, Cannonball Adderley (to name a few) appeared on that stage; the acoustics were so good that about half a dozen records were recorded at that club, some with the name Café Bohemia on their covers. Jazz musicians were not only performers, they were sometimes part of the audience as well.

Artists and poets were also part of the Café Bohemia audience, and the place was reminiscent of the “caves” in Paris that also attracted audiences who listened to jazz, and sometimes poetry, and where writers, artists, and musicians congregated.

Last year Café Bohemia was resurrected, and you can see the covers of the historic recordings made in the café on its red walls. There is live music six nights a week. On Monday nights, from 7:00 p.m. to midnight there is no live music, Matthew “Fat Cat” Rivera spins records—and not just any record, these are 78s from 1915 to about the 1950s, most of them from his own collection. There is no entrance fee, though a donation is welcome; you can also buy food and drinks. Fat Cat is inspired by the Hot Club De France which was started in the 1930s in Paris by a group of high school students and then attracted other adherents. Records were presented to its members in various venues around Paris even after its headquarters had moved to the South of France.

The Hot Club of Café Bohemia resembles the French one in that the audience appreciates the music and the history of the recordings. Fat Cat leads a discussion. There is no entrance fee, and it’s free up to 3:00 p.m. On his radio program he has guests that are just as passionate about the music, and some are old enough to have heard many of the musicians whose music is preserved on those vintage records perform live. What is amazing is that on some occasions the presenter and guests can recognize who the musicians were even if they are not listed on the recording’s sleeve or were wrongly identified on them. Check it out, as they say, and bring some Bohemia to your life.

Café Bohemia is located at 15 Barrow Street right here in the Village.

Isa Covo’s Daube

Daube is a peasant dish prepared throughout France—each region, even each household, has its own version of it. Some have simple ingredients, just beef stew with smoked bacon, red wine, onions and carrots, but other versions have more ingredients and flavors. I perused several cookbooks and, in the end, got my inspiration for this recipe’s ingredients from a couple of them from southern France.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ lb. slab bacon
- 1 onion
- 4 shallots
- 4 large garlic cloves
- 3 carrots
- 2 celery stalks
- 2 lbs. pot roast
- 1 bouquet garni (3 stalks of rosemary, thyme, 1 bay leaf)
- ¼ teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon of ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg
- zest of half an orange (optional)
- 1 1/3 cup vegetable or olive oil
- ½ bottle of red wine
- ¼ cup brandy
- 10 oz. cremini mushrooms
- salt and pepper to taste
- ½ lb. fresh wide tagliatelle

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut the bacon into half-inch cubes. Chop the vegetables, except for the mushrooms.
2. In a wide shallow pan (12-inch if possible) with cover, add the bacon cubes and sauté over medium heat for about ten minutes to melt some of the fat.
3. With a slotted spoon, remove the bacon cubes and transfer them to a bowl. Add the chopped vegetables to the fat left in the pan, lower the heat, and sauté for about fifteen minutes stirring the mixture occasionally.
4. Cut the meat into six slices, and wipe each one carefully.
5. Once the vegetables are ready, remove them from the pan with a slotted spoon and add them to the bacon.
6. Add the oil to the pan and increase the heat to medium. When the oil starts shimmering add the slices of meat and cook three to four minutes per side until the meat browns slightly.
7. Heat the oven to 300 degrees.
8. When the meat has cooked, mix the spices, the tomato paste and the brandy into the wine, add the vegetables and bacon to the meat, and pour the wine over the meat and vegetables to cover them. If needed, scrape the bottom of the pan to detach any caramelized bits. If necessary, add some water or stock. Bury the bouquet into the mixture.
9. Seal the pan with foil and place the cover on top.
10. Transfer to the oven and cook for three hours undisturbed.
11. Clean and cut the mushrooms into quarters.
12. After three hours, remove the pan from the oven and uncover it and add the mushrooms. If there is too much liquid in the pan discard the foil and partially cover the pan. Continue baking for another hour, occasionally checking the level of the liquid.

To serve: Cook the pasta and serve it alongside the daube.

Yield: 6 servings

Note: The daube improves if refrigerated and served one or two days later to let the flavors develop. Reheat covered on the stove over low heat for thirty minutes or until hot.

In and Out continued from page 14

Ram-don with Steak as a special. Intersect by Lexus, (412 West 14th Street between 9th Avenue and Washington Street) which has a rotating roster of chefs is now featuring the Goan cuisine of O Pedro, a restaurant in Mumbai India.

What a great month! While it was hard to keep up with all the changes in the neighborhood, your tips helped immensely! Keep up the good work, and email us at wvnewsinsight@gmail.com with any information you have. Photos by Darielle Smolian.
The Heat Timer Controls the Boiler. Photo by Robert Kroll.

By Robert Kroll

Winter is winding down. The flush of leaf buds is emerging. We’ve survived the cranking, clanking pipes of the cold season—many of us shivering, others of us living in sauna-like halls of our own (or our steam boiler’s) making.

When taking over the reins as superintendent of our Brooklyn brownstone cooperative in January, 2019, a cold month, one of my first conundras was how in hell does one heat this drafty place? The 15 people living in our five-story walkup tenement were shivering. Within an hour, that problem was resolved by turning on the boiler via the early 20th century analog device known as the Heat-Timer EPU-CH™. You flip the timer switch from “summer” to “winter”. You flip the boiler “on-off” switch to “on”. You keep your damn hands off the rest of the settings and watch helplessly as the choo choo leaves the station, bound for swollen town.

I had been told by my predecessor (super) that I should set the dials on the Heat-Timer, and let her rip. “Don’t futz with it.” We give maximum heat during the day-time and less at night when we’re bundled in our stocking caps and cuddling under comforters. That’s that.

When it gets too warm inside, you use the “double hung thermostat”—i.e. open the window to cool things down. Two hours later, you do the opposite. If you are in an apartment on the lower floors, close to the boiler, you are maddeningly hot; if you are on Floor five, you put on your winter sleeping gear, plop under the covers, and pray that you wake up the next morning without icicles on your nose.

I take my role as “super” very seriously; it is my job to see that everyone inside the building is comfortable and happy. Can this be achieved with a 19th century invention like steam heat? Most New Yorkers have come to terms with steam heat and pray that you wake up the next morning without icicles on your nose.

The lost art of steam heating, according to Holohan and others still alive, has not been completely lost, but has been preserved by those who have restored many of these previously well-working steam systems to their original glory. What is this system but a large kettle that is connected to tea pots in every apartment, modulated by air vents that release cold air and trap the hot steam? When the boiler turns off, the steam cools and condenses into water and needs to return to the kettle. If all that happens, bliss ensues. The art is knowing what to replace, what to restore, and how to get the radiators to dump the condensed steam back into the pipes leading to the boiler. In our building we were able to do this in a matter of a single day. Immediately afterward, I began getting messages from deliriously happy co-op dwellers that they were getting husful heat for the first time in memory. Yippee. Job done.

Co-op Boards Adapt to Present-Day Demands

By Gordon Hughes

A few months ago I read, with interest, an article in the New York Times real estate section regarding the changing face of co-op boards. There was time when the co-op board meeting was as much a social gathering of tenants as it was a business meeting. Today, however, the expectations and demands of residents have increased. Co-op board meetings have become very serious business as there have been escalating economic demands and more city requirements. The changes taking place within these boards are dramatic (senior citizens being replaced by Gen Xers is just one example).

Obviously, different parts of the city call for different types of boards. For example, residents in ‘A’ buildings on Park or Fifth Avenues and those in other parts of the city that are not so tooney will have far different expectations from their boards. You know that something on Park Avenue may have little in common with many co-ops in the West Village. ‘The boards on the upper Eastside would deal with far different expectations than most of those in our Village. Now, those of you who read my column know I love to do tongue-in-cheek comparisons of our West Village with other parts of Manhattan as well as with the other boroughs. Nevertheless, there are what I will call “business models” or fundamental similarities in all co-ops. The Times real estate article pointed out several common considerations for board membership. There were suggestions such as: all board members should read the co-op’s bylaws and constitution, and board members should have a fundamental understanding of the building’s finances—its budgetary outlook and all fiduciary responsibilities. The article also pointed out that in order to be a good board member you need to know the strengths and weaknesses of your building. I could go on, but for those of you who own a co-op or condominium apartment you really should know what’s up. Board member or not, you need to be aware of how your building is being run. So, the primary reason for sitting on a board is to keep an eye on your investment (which is probably a major part of your portfolio). Being a board member gives you that opportunity.

So what else do you get out of being on your co-op’s board? Well, as a board member myself, let me tell you that neighborly and building personalities are a big part of it. Personalities are the big insight and in the West Village those personalities can be quite theatrical. I have witnessed tears, tension, and drama. As a producer I really appreciate drama, laughter, hysterical fits of anxiety, and (in the end) forgiveness. I have found that most people would rather get along and most co-op board members share a goal. That goal is to have an outstanding building that is a delight to return to at the end of each day. A very good board member must take off his or her personal goal hat, check their emotions, and do board business. A very outstanding building that is a delight to return to at the end of each day. A very good board member must take off his or her personal goal hat, check their emotions, and do board business.

Charlie Caruso’s Quips

This is the 2020 decade. Will we see a better world? Don’t count on it.

Breakfast is best. No surprises as reliable as sunrise.

The football playoffs are at the end of the season when everyone is totally bored with sports.

Does anyone ever call the numbers on the TV screen?

Why do TV studio audience always scream like maniacs?

The stripes on men’s ties are always diagonal. Imagine if they were horizontal.

Most of our miseries are due to sex or lack thereof.

The chief benefit of a nursing home is 24 hour a day company.

A sure cure for depression is a constant state of busyness, whether useful or not.

If the cold war is over, why is Russia on page one every day?
**In Those Days There Were Giants**

*“REPEITION DOES NOT TRANSFORM A LIE INTO A TRUTH.”* Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1943. Photo credit: histomania.org.

By Catherine Revland

Part 4 of “You Must Remember This,” a series commemorating the history of the West Village during World War II

Some conspiracy theories die hard, especially the ones about catastrophic events that change the course of history. For example, take the rumor that President Roosevelt had advance knowledge of the attack on Pearl Harbor but did nothing because he wanted to take the country into war. This insult can still be heard 75 years after his death, even though it has been debunked by many knowledgeable sources, including the super-secret National Security Agency (NSA). Declassified war documents, released in 2013, confirm that it was not FDR who caused the nearly total destruction of the Pacific Fleet; it was an urgent message sent by shortwave radio to the fleet commander that arrived a day too late.

Like many commanders, General George C. Marshall didn’t trust speech transmissions because enemy codebreakers could overhear them in real time. Instead, he sent a written message by radiotelegraph—each letter painstakingly encoded by hand. The tragic lesson of Pearl Harbor was that without the right communications technology, hundreds of ships and planes and thousands of troops could be mowed down before breakfast on a Sunday morning.

**ROOM L-30**

In the wake of Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government contracted with Bell Labs to develop a thousand military projects, including its top priority—an impenetrable speech-scrambling system that provided both speed and accuracy—a system that didn’t exist. Bell then doubled the size of its research staff to 9,000. The largest collection of scientists and engineers in the country now crammed the halls and elevators of West Street, working six days a week and sometimes 12 hours a day to meet the needs of the war effort.

Thirty specialists in sound transmission were assigned to work on SIGSALY, the Army Signal Corps’ cover name for the new system. At Bell Labs it was called Project X. House in Room L-30, originally the sound movie lab, it was a sight to behold—55 tons of electronic equipment that filled every square inch of the very large room—but it was hardly true that speech-scrambling technology didn’t exist. It did. Sound waves had always been Bell technicians’ bread and butter, and by the time the project was launched in September, 1942, they had already done much of the groundwork. As for the government’s demand for speed, that could only happen with electronic components. Once again Bell was decades ahead. Nevertheless, Project X was daunting. According to NSA historians, “It required a degree of precision and refinement that scarcely seemed possible when undertaken, extremely difficult to implement in the technology of the ‘40s, and they were pushed to the limit.”

**TURING COMES TO AMERICA**

The story of Alan Turing’s trip to the U.S. has been “weedied” from British military archives and other primary sources of information are few: a brief mention in NSA archives, a snippet in Bell’s corporate history, and some carefully parsed recollections from Claude Shannon, a math wunderkind who was new to West Street when Turing arrived. “At the time I didn’t know he was as important as he was. I knew he spent a lot of time with a group working on speech-scrambling, but we didn’t know it was to protect the secrecy of conversations between FDR and Churchill. Hitler got these messages.”

Turing’s mission was twofold: to determine whether Project X was indeed unbreakable, and to immerse himself in electronics. He did both with flying colors. On his first visit to Room L-30 he successfully “boiled down” an equation in an hour that had bedeviled the X team for a week. American electronic technology might have been decades ahead, but Turing picked it up in two months.

By March, 1943, the group had resolved every problem. Churchill and FDR conducted their first overseas call in July, and by September, engineers had installed terminals in 12 locations around the world. “Everything functioned flawlessly,” said a jubilant Paul Bly, head transmission engineer, “so secret, we were convinced that we could have dropped a terminal in Berlin and without the records no one could figure it out.”

According to NSA historians, “Bell had not merely improved, but invented the fundamentals of digitally encrypted voice and the means to transmit it.” The inventor of that technology was Claude Shannon, at a time when the term “digital” was virtually unknown. In six months an army of giant brains, “professor types,” had turned the tide of the war. Churchill’s prediction that it was the “end of the beginning” proved to be wrong. It was the beginning of the end.
Unfinished: Croman’s Trail Since Jail

By Cynthia Chaffee and Mary Ann Miller

According to Joseph Turco’s January 9th, 2020 article in WestView News, referring to the American Greed episode aired last year “starring” Steve Croman, we tend to agree. There is so much more for the program to cover about convicted felon Croman; we hope they will do a sequel as so much has happened in the last year since the show originally aired.

But not much has changed since Steve Croman’s time in jail. In fact, he seems to have been emboldened as a consequence of serving so little time for his misdeeds. If anyone thinks that jail made a difference in Croman’s life, think again. He’s emerged with a new defiance, a new slew of lawyers, and a new company. In fact, on Janu- ary 12th, 2021, still in jail, Croman started the new company, ECALP CORP., with the law firm Goldberg, Weprin, Finkel, Goldstein LLP. (ECALP is the word place spelled backwards.)

Also, in 2018 a fire at 204 East 13th Street caused all the tenants to become homeless and completely destroyed the business Bruno Pizza.

Two class action lawsuits have commenced against Steve Croman for illegally deregulating apartments—one lawsuit in Harlem at 326-338 East 100th Street and another at 560-566 Hudson Street. In sever- al of his buildings tenants were forced to vacate their apartments because the bed- rooms, built below street level, were death- traps. Even though these rooms were never meant to be used for sleeping, but for “recre- ational” use only, as there is no egress to the street in case of emergency, Croman con- tinues to fraudulently advertise these apart- ments’ recreational rooms as bedrooms.

Croman is trying to remove all negative publicity about himself and his family from the web, going so far as to have his lawyers remove content from Google for the Stop Croman Coalition.

We have followed Steve Croman’s trail ever since his incarceration, and we will continue to follow his activities. We hope his trial leads back to jail.

New York is Not Alone in Attempting the Impossible

By Donna Schaper

The most wonderful thing about Mayor de Blasio’s Safe Haven plan—to dra- matically reduce street homelessness in NYC—is its boldness. Most of us don’t even think it can be reduced, much less have a plan for doing so. The most aw- ful thing about the situation is that many New Yorkers are so far down the cynical path that they don’t really think anything can be done. But somehow, it can be done (even though everything can’t be done). Cynicism is a decision not to shiver with the cold because you are so cold you can’t even shiver anymore.

So, first, what’s right about the mayor’s proposal? It comes from his heart. De Blasio has not had an easy mayor- tenure—in New York and in the world—may- be no one does—but he, in particular, got to override the White House, which was hos- tile to cities, especially sanctuary cities. So why not defy the bureaucrats and do some- thing that is not lame, like not clefting the poorest among us? As Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer said at the rollout at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in December of this bold program, “The city has the money; the cardinal has the land. Do it—but don’t do shelter. Do housing.” Of course, she was right. Housing, not shelter, is the solution to homelessness.

To not have a place in your heart and a plan in your hand to reduce street home- lessness is to be arteriosclerotic. You are in great danger of a heart attack. Your arteries are hardened. You might as well be dead. Cynics also lose their tear ducts. They for- get how to sing, “You’ve gotta have heart. All you really need is heart. When the odds are sayin’ you’ll never win…”

So, de Blasio is doing something sincere. “The Journey Home” initiative intends to reduce street homelessness by 50 percent over the next five years by increasing the street outreach staffing, adding 1,000 new “Safe Haven” beds to the current 1,800, and by adding another 1,000 supportive housing units to the number of those now available to this population. This does not eliminate street homelessness so much as it makes a serious bite out of it. The application of well-developed effective services is also very heartfelt, genuine, sincere, and likely to work for some of the people who call the streets their home. Additionally, the project has relaxed the stringent rules that exist in most homeless shelters. People are sheltered close to the places where they have been liv- ing. They get to stay “home” in the after- noon and during the day. There are rooms with two or three people instead of dormi- tory style living. People get to live in the place they are currently in for longer periods of time and “park” out of sight.

The mayor is also putting the arm on many houses of worship—asking whether we can take people in if the city “retrofits” our spaces. It is not a secret that many houses of worship are sitting on land that could be used for the wider community as well as for its adherents. Moreover, if the city will help houses of worship to shelter, by putting in showers, beds, and privacy shields, mission consistency doubles. The city does what it can and should and do the religious groups. The strategy is to ret- rofit places that can accommodate at least a dozen people; and the better price point for the retrofitting is with small groups of 70 or so. The program is state of the art housing thinking.

“Housing First” is an idea that is being floated by many professionals. It argues that we should just stop social services for people who are not in permanent housing. Why? Because they don’t own any good. People who have to move all the time are not going to stop abusing drugs or alcohol. They are not going to be regular about their medications or their therapies. They are not going to stop using emergency rooms for their medical care. What is right about New Yorkers’ cynicism about the plan is that it is not yet clear how serious the city will be in respecting the right of a person to keep liv- ing on the street. Many reports indicate that the transit police, over whom the mayor has little control, are rounding people up and causing quite the ruckus. Many people who live on the street prefer being there to a shel- ter. Why? A shelter has no privacy, you can get abused in a shelter, you are forced to obey orders, and more. City police are not using coercion, or so they say, and so representa- tives for the homeless think. The only thing that will cure street homelessness is housing, not shelter. Until that happens—and by the way, please note how many working poor and middle class people also can’t find hous- ing in New York (take a deep breath and get extremity out of it)—the heart of mercy is to try to make the situation better if not perfect.

Poverty is not a crime and should not be treated as one by any policeman—transit or city.

My personal plan for street folk is to say “hi,” and look them in the eye and mean it when I say, “I wish I could help.” Indi- viduals cannot help but people working together can, a little. For now, there are some sweet things happen- ing. The general manager of the Hotel Wales is offering to give away new beds, lin- ens, pillows, blankets, and bath towels. His phone number is 212-289-6399.

Cynthia Chaffee and Mary Ann Miller are co-founders of the Stop Croman Coalition.
By Keith Michael

Since March seems to be the new May this year with a want of even mildly wintry weather, an unzipped windbreaker is a sufficient alternative to my usual coat, down vest, hat, and scarf. Though by the time that you are reading this I hope that the West Village is cozily buried in a late blizzard, Millie began her annual mid-winter shedding in early February, so as we walk along, tufts of fur on her bum are fluttering in the breeze yearning to fly free. Why, oh why, does a corgi find this time of the year perfect for refreshing her coat?

Millie’s glacial walking pace is conducive to pondering the subtleties of neighborhood birding. High above our heads in the still bare trees I hear the musical plink plink of birds. In the Cardinal species, the male is one of the few birds who recognizably sing back and forth to each other like this—improvising on a theme. Maybe it’s because it’s so lyrical that we refer to their songs as romantic harmonizing rather than whatever scuttlebutt is dished out when Blue Jays scream at each other. I can’t recognize the male voice as different from the female voice, though, since right in front of me I’m watching a male Cardinal throw his head back singing, I’m assuming the response in the distance is from the female he’s courting.

Millie is investigating the crocus leaves peeking out behind a street tree fence, “Look but don’t touch, and don’t…”

Perhaps Cardinals’ voices aren’t different, at least to us, but male and female Cardinals look differently from each other. The scientific name for this variation is called sexual dimorphism, but basically it means that girl birds don’t look the same as boy birds. In the Cardinal species, the male is all-over scarlet with a harlequinade black face mask and bright orange bill, while the female boasts an olive and taupe ensemble with classy personalized scarlet accents. Bold or nuanced, they’re both handsome birds. If they weren’t so familiar, crowds would gather in the street to catch a glimpse of this red-carpet avian pair.

The males and females of several other of our common birds obviously have “plumages of a different color” as well. The gentleman House Sparrow is the one with the jaunty black ascot and gray formal collar whereas the gentlewoman is a cornucopia of browns and grays. Likewise, the Mallard hen is a camouflaging panoply of earth tones while the drake has a gaudy iridescent green head. Other locals boast of a unisex fashion statement. Blue Jays, Mourning Doves, Starlings, Grackles, Robins, Chickadees, and Gulls all ascribe to the one-color-fits-all manifesto. Alternatively, one of the rarest species that I’ve seen in the West Village, a small shorebird migrating from the Arctic Circle that stopped by Hudson River Park one August called a Red-necked Phalarope, hangs all of these conventions out to dry: it’s the female phalarope that has the namesake brilliant red neck, and it’s the male with the sartorial subtleties of the two. Whatever floats your boat.

And now a newsworthy interlude from out of the West Village: In January 2019, while watching their backyard feeder, a birding couple in Erie, Pennsylvania noticed an unusually plumaged Cardinal that soon became a media sensation. The right side of its body had the red feathers of a male bird, and the left side was the olive of a female bird—nearly divided in a perfect line down the middle. Rare but it happens. Nature is tricky.

While I’ve been thinking about all of the theories for why these various strategies have evolved, my lusty crimson songster has flown away—possibly fatigued by his long-distance relationship, he left to do something about it.

Millie looks up at me as though her hundred-step marathon has fatigued her as well. Ooh, I hear the dueting pair again down the block. Maybe I can pull a tuft of fur from Millie’s bum to motivate her before we go to look for them.

Visit keithmichaelnyc.com for books, photographs, and the latest schedule of New York City WILD! urban-adventures-in-nature outings throughout the five boroughs. Visit his Instagram @newyorkcitywild for photos from around NYC.
A collaboration of design visionaries.
Volunteers Become Witnesses for Immigrants

By Stanley Wlodyka

Pablo was already an orphan when he decided to make his journey to the United States. His mother had died when he was seven and his father sometime before that, but he still had his brothers. It wasn’t until he crossed the border that he lost them too. He generously shared his tragic story with an audience of would-be volunteers for a program run by the New Sanctuary Coalition, the non-profit organization based out of Judson Memorial Church in Washington Square Park that advocates for undocumented immigrants. “Accompaniment Training” readies volunteers to accompany undocumented immigrants to a variety of different official government proceedings such as deportation hearings and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) check-ins.

Pablo’s native Honduras is perhaps the most dangerous country in the world, with the highest per capita murder rate anywhere. The abundance of natural beauty is offset by rampant political instability, widespread poverty, and atrocious violence committed constantly and indiscriminately. The assumption is that the drug trade is responsible for these horrors, but there are vested interests in and out of the country that have a stake in keeping Hondurans in a state of debilitating fear.

Pablo comes from a coastal city named Tela, known for its gorgeous picturesque beaches. Visitors come from everywhere to enjoy the white sand, palm trees, and warm waters, but always within the safety of gated, all-inclusive resorts. Outside of those gates the general population is terrorized. A large portion of Tela residents, including Pablo, belong to an ethnic group called Garifuna—who were brought to Central America from West Africa on slave ships. There is now a mass exodus of the Garifuna minority group are moving in to these gorgeous coastal areas and carving out a chunk for themselves that would officially be exempt from Hondurans’ laws and constitution, thereby enabling them to negotiate treaties with foreign governments.

This neo-colonial experiment, known as ZEDEs—Zonas de Empleo y Desarrollo Economico (Zones of Employment and Economic Development)—is popularly referred to by Hondurans “Model Cities.”

The Model Cities program was conceived by American economist Paul Romer. He is a 2018 Nobel Prize recipient, SVP of the World Bank, and member of an advisory group that has included Grover Norquist who started the Tea Party movement in the United States, which sparked an ultra-conservative fervor that many have noted ultimately paved the way for the election of American “billionaire” Donald J. Trump in 2016.

The Model Cities proposal was initially rejected by the Honduran Supreme Court in 2012, but a few months later, the country’s congressional body deposed four of its five judges. At that time, the president of the Honduran congress was Juan Orlando Hernandez, referred to, colloquially, by his initials “J.O.H.” (pronounced “ho”). The new Supreme Court promptly passed the Model Cities proposal, and tossed out a request for a recount of a presidential primary earlier that year in which JOH’s victory was contested by his party rival. JOH went on to win the presidency in 2014, and his subsequent re-election in 2018 aroused international suspicion of foul play.

Among many Hondurans, there is no question as to whether or not Hernandez stole the election. The question, rather, is whether it was right for JOH to steal the election. Some believe that the unwashed masses, who rarely have access to more than an eighth-grade education, should not be trusted with choosing the president. This is the same sentiment that led to the 2009 military coup that deposed Manuel Zelaya, the democratically elected leader who some feared was becoming too aligned with the majority of citizens, defending indigenous rights and related concerns, and, therefore, labeled him communist. The coup was rationalized from that standpoint.

So, while foreign interests are moving in, the Garifuna minority group are moving out, in a startling parallel to gentrification, as widespread violence and the effects of environmental degradation and climate change are making Honduras unliveable for Hondurans. This is proving to be a good investment for foreigners, however, as Honduras has some of the most precious coastal areas in the entire world. In fact, it has the second largest barrier reef after Australia, which is now seeing its extraordinary natural resources go up in smoke.

Pablo was part of the mass exodus. He, his older brother Pedro, and his younger brother Yasser crossed the border through the Arizona desert. While crossing, they encountered smugglers and were held against their will. Pablo’s older brother tried fighting but was killed. His younger brother attempted the other extreme and ran away, but Pablo fears the smugglers might have caught up with him. He hasn’t heard from Yasser since. He was helped to locate the remains of his older brother in the desert and has been campaigning for authorities to search the surrounding area for the remains of his younger brother, if there are indeed any to be found.

At a recent Accompaniment Training, a volunteer lawyer with the non-profit said that he believed immigrants die in the desert because of “a policy choice,” pointing to a 1994 Clinton-era immigration strategy, known as “prevention through deterrence,” which essentially uses the desert as a weapon. In an official progress report, issued following its implementation, “death of aliens” was seen as an indicator of the plan’s effectiveness. According to that criteria, it has been massively successful. The U.S. Border Patrol estimates that an average of 375 migrants die every year during crossing attempts, approximately 7,000 people since the mid-1990s; other groups estimate that the actual death toll is exponentially higher.

Accompaniment Coordinator Ambien Mitchell says that the New Sanctuary Coalition operates in accordance with the guiding principle that there should be no borders. Acknowledging that there are those who believe that borders are necessary because resources are limited, Ambien responds, “If you’re asking for my opinion, it’s primitive, it’s scarcity-mindset, it’s lizard brain stuff. It’s like, ‘If anyone else has anything, it takes away from my ability to have.’ Which is not true: we live in a world of abundance. However, that is a legitimate part of our biological programming that has to be reckoned with as we move forward as a species and attempt to find more humane ways of interacting with one another.”

To sign up for an Accompaniment Training Session, please visit: www.NewSanctuaryNYC.org/Accompaniment_Training.
Then & Now: West 10th Views from 7th Avenue South

By Brian J. Pape, AIA

THEN: Ever since the City used Eminent Domain to cut Seventh Avenue South diagonally through Greenwich Village’s established blocks in the early 1900’s, and covered up the trench for the new subway tracks, Seventh Avenue South, as well as 10th Street, were well-maintained cobblestone pavements, as seen in this view looking east from just west of the Seventh Avenue intersection in the 1960’s. Let’s explore what else we see in this GVSHP archive photo.

Most prominently, the “Women’s House of D” looms above the building facades on the south side of West 10th Street, its salmon brick and dark metal details soaring like a luxury high-rise, almost obscuring the fabulous Jefferson Courthouse Bell Tower. The House of Detention was built on the site of the open-air Jefferson Market, where farmers and merchants set up stalls to hawk their produce, just as we see at Farmers’ Markets at city parks today. The House of D was demolished in the 1970’s. “Your Father’s Mustache” is a nightclub that graced the corner of Seventh Avenue for many years. Many of the other buildings along West 10th are still extant, such as the tenements in dark red, and the Traveler’s Garage in white paint.

On the north side of West 10th in the foreground, a large vertical sign with neon ad-

vertisements a corner spot, and there is #185 on a canopy. To the left of that is #183, which our friend Robert Heide tells us was the cellar-dive bar called Lenny’s Hideaway, popular with many celebrities who enjoyed the friendly gay atmosphere under Lenny’s watchful eye (see the Jerry Herman obit in the HTN February edition). Finally, let’s not forget the muscle-cars, the station wagons, and the big, wide sedans that populated our streets, along with the big white garbage trucks. It really doesn’t feel that different from today.

NOW: The Women’s House of D is gone, replaced by a beautiful garden, but the Jefferson Courthouse was saved and repurposed as a NYC Public Library branch. Today, even in winter, it is almost obscured by the many trees that now shade our streets. On the south side of West 10th Street, as we look east, the parking garage has gotten a new paint job in clay over chocolate brown, while the attendant’s booth is still highlighted in white; “Your Father’s Mustache” was replaced by a commercial building of yellow brick, which housed the Gourmet Garage grocery until recently, when the building got expanded into a mixed-use building along Seventh Avenue South.

A dedicated bike path now runs in front of 183 and 185 West 10th, the pavement is now asphalt, Lenny’s is now “Small’s” jazz club, and the neon sign at the corner has been repurposed without the neon for BOBO’S Restaurant.

The sidewalks are still narrow, the traffic is light on the side streets, and the nightclub atmosphere still dominates this area. Despite a few new buildings on the odd-shaped lots along the cut-through avenue, and the spruced up townhouses between old tenements, the West Village has kept its charm, if not its grit.

Do We Really Need Newspapers?

The Chicago Tribune, for lack of ads, got sold last week, and the Times article cataloged other venerable papers cutting staff and being bought by financial dice shooters. The Village’s new Brooklyn owners indiscriminately display ads for a Bronx Bank.

It takes a Trump-like ego to think that WestView News can escape the arithmetic of high cost to print and distribute and the difficulty in getting ads when you can go online free. But we are going to try. We are going to try—that is—if you think it is worth the effort? We like the paper and as I keep saying it could become much better—more valuable to the West Village readers if we can better, more fully, report on what is important to us living here (I raised a family here over 50 years).

At about this point readers are skipping to another page—we have heard too many hard luck stories and, so what if another paper goes out of business—I get my news from TV anyway. And then I get a 96-year-old woman who had her life savings conned away from her over the phone from people who said they were a government office—she calls WestView. Politicians sit down for a cup of coffee at my kitchen table when they are running for office and they would rather not read a sarcastic appraisal of their legislative ideas.

What is more effective—sending an email to your City Councilman or seeing it printed in WestView where thousands can read it?

I feel, after 15 years, we are just warming up to what a community newspaper can be so I don’t want you to send us $12 to continue to get the old WestView—I want you to send it in the hope you will get a better and better WestView.

And then boy, we get a heart operating room—what newspaper has done that?

But wait, this is your newspaper, and you have lived a unique and interesting life and every once in a while what you have learned in your life time makes you stop and think “no, they got it wrong” and then write to WestView and straighten us out.

As I said, this is not my newspaper—it is your newspaper—but if you want my opinion, I think we ought to try and keep it.

☐ OK let’s try and keep it alive! Here is my $12 for one year.
☐ Here is $24 for two years.
☐ Here is my gift to WestView for a job well done $________________________

Mail to WestView News, 69 Charles St., New York, NY 10014 or online at westviewnews.org
News and Upcoming Community Events from the West 13th Street Alliance

By the West 13th Street Alliance

The Alliance began 2020 with a well-attended lecture titled The Underwater Life of the Hudson River and Beyond with West 13th Street resident John Delaney, Director of Communications, New York Aquarium. Feedback from audience members was positive, including such comments as, “Loved that this event was right near my apt.,” “Very informative and didn’t realize all the various kinds of marine life that exist right in our backyard,” and “This lecture was a highlight for me since winters in New York can be isolating.” And the wine tasting event with MCF Rare Wine owner Matt Franco on February 27 was also a lively and very sociable evening that sold out weeks before it occurred.

These two Community Events—and the schedule of several more through June—are evidence that on West 13th Street and beyond, the Alliance is helping to strengthen bonds among neighborhood residents.

Here’s what we can look forward to in the coming months.

Making Knowing: Craft in Art, 1950–2019, Lecture and Presentation by Jano Cortijo of the Whitney Museum, will take place on Tuesday, March 10th, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Lenox Health Greenwich Village, 200 West 13th Street in the 6th floor Community Room. A Free Family Pass for the Whitney Museum will be given to all who attend.

On April 22nd from 6:30-8 p.m. in the Sanctuary room of Church of the Village, 201 West 13th Street, The West 13th Street Alliance Community Meeting will feature an exciting announcement about the future of the three and a half year old Alliance. We urge you to come and learn about our new vision for our block and beyond.

Following the great reception for the holiday card making class in November, the Alliance is excited to offer a Landscape Painting art workshop on April 22nd at 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Chapel Room of Church of the Village. Art instructor Kitty Azhar, a New York City public school teacher, will teach us to use color and space to create a landscape painting. Information and handouts on the tools and techniques that artists use will be shared. Bring a picture of a landscape or use one of the stock photo images provided in class.

Free Adult /Accessible Hatha Yoga Classes for the MIND, BODY & SOUL

Free Hatha Yoga for the Mind, Body and Soul

By Marithelma Costa

People say that New York is not the best city for growing old. Baja California and Florida have better weather; México’s San Miguel de Allende is much cheaper; Madrid offers huge discounts at concerts, plays, museums, and films; and Paris is always Paris.

Nevertheless what can be true for most of the city, does not apply to Greenwich Village, where older adults can take five excellent elementary hatha yoga classes a week, at no cost.

New York Edge-Beacon sponsors four of them on Mondays and Wednesdays (5:00 pm-6:30 pm), Tuesdays (3:45-5:30 pm), and Saturdays (11:30 am-1:00 pm) at one of City School’s beautiful classrooms (16 Clarkson St.). The school provides the props.

Classes are led by Malka Percal and Michelle Brandt (trained at Integral Yoga). As both pay close attention to each student’s strengths and challenges, taking their classes feels safe and is a delight.

The fifth class (Fridays 11:15 am-12:15 pm) takes place at the historic Greenwich House, and a $1 donation is suggested. It is a sixty-minute class and Maura Nolan, a sensitive and experienced yoga teacher, leads it. Greenwich House provides props and its magnificent gym, built in 1917.

People who go regularly have commented on how they feel stronger, more flexible, and calmer. For Theresa, “The class is like taking a vacation for 1 ½ hours a day.” And for me it is a great gift.

Free Adult /Accessible Hatha Yoga Classes for the MIND, BODY & SOUL

Classes are led by Malka Percal & Michelle Brandt

Saturday Class at City-As-School:
Warrior Two practice. Photo credit: Marithelma Costa.
Karen’s Quirky Style

By Karen Rempel | Fashion Editor

This month’s look is a mixture of old and new, with contrasting textures and colors. The centerpiece is the striking, shiny black PVC pants by Andrea Thurlow of Engineered by Andrea T. I love their sleek edginess. The next step in putting this outfit together was to hunt through my closets for the perfect shoes to match the pants.

It took some searching through four closets, and then I found these slender patent leather Mary Jane “fetish” shoes in the darkest reaches at the back. I’d almost forgotten about these elegant beauties, which I’d purchased on a trip to Berlin to visit my sister, many years ago. They are called fetish shoes for a reason. They are duplicitous, capturing both ends of the SM spectrum. Although only 4.7 inches high, they are virtually impossible to walk in, the slope is so steep—making the wearer helpless prey. But the tiny spikes in the stiletto heels are tipped in metal. The force in the tiny tip is up to 1,600 PSI! These shoes can be formidable instruments of torture! Just saying…

The orange velvet hoodie has a long “elfin” hood with a bell on the end, softening the hard, shiny black impact with a touch of whimsy. I discovered this Black Forest fairytale garment on the same trip to Berlin, at a local designer’s store, but the name is lost in the sands of time, sadly. I couldn’t find anything similar online to look up the designer. The piece is truly unique. If any of you readers know, drop me a line!

Treasures from travelling—don’t you love them? They contain the special seed of the original journey, with petals of memory from subsequent wearings making these our dearest garments. Adorning the outfit with orange-speckled jewelry brings even more memories of friends and friendship. Style can root us in our connections with others, even as it expresses our unique personality.

I invite you to share a personal tale about one of your favorite garments in the comments section of this column at westviewnews.org. I can’t wait to hear your story!

For more stories, style notes, and fun photos, see karensquirkystyle.com and connect @karensquirkystyle.

Style on the Street: I’m Feeling Lucky!

All photos by Dusty Berke.
BOOK REVIEW

Call Sign Chaos; Learning to Lead

Jim Mattis and Bing West
Random House, New York; 2019; 300 pages

By Herbert W. Stupp

With purported “tell all” books emerging from most every White House, it is natural to wonder if the book penned by President Trump’s first Defense Secretary would offer a take on his former boss and presidential decision-making. But in Call Sign Chaos, Jim Mattis has not written such a tome, even though that might have sold more copies for him. Secretary Mattis’ two-page resignation letter is revealed in the book, but not much more about his 23 months in the Cabinet. Mattis declares in his prologue: “I’m old fashioned: I don’t write about sitting presidents.”

Opening Secretary Jim Mattis’ book, I was prepared for military jargon that would prompt me to call a relative to tap his mental thesaurus (family disclosure: the eldest of my ten brothers-in-law worked with then-General Mattis in the Marine Corps, and admires him).

But this is a readable, thoughtful and useful book about leadership, observed and exercised, with lessons for any MBA about success and occasional error in managing Marines, inter-agency jockeying and international diplomacy. Mattis offers scores of useful anecdotes and pithy quotes from those he worked with, nearly all teaching a lesson. The former secretary also demonstrates his deep grounding in the writings of the great generals, heads of state, philosophers and even economists to bolster his points. Jim Mattis is a genuine “soldier-intellectual.”

His Marine Corps requires officers to complete specific reading lists as they prepare for promotions to each new level of leadership. Those who eschew these assignments would risk “functional illiteracy,” says Mattis, and the book supplies his personal two-page reading list, for our further study. He freely quotes from Napoleon, Churchill, Lincoln, von Clausewitz, Einstein, Hayek, MacArthur and many other great minds.

Call Sign Chaos is co-written by Bing West, himself an estimable author and military analyst, who was an Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Reagan administration and a Marine combat veteran.

Throughout the book, Mattis’ humility is palpable and pervasive. He expresses differences with Presidents Obama and G.W. Bush, and General Tommy Franks. But he does so respectfully, and spares subordinates whom he disciplined from being named. Mattis reveals how his penchant for trafficking in ideas and alternative tactics led his staff to create his Marine Corps call sign of “C.H.A.O.S.” It stands for “Colonel Has Another Outstanding Solution.”

He faults Bush 43 for steering us back into Iraq, and for goals that were “too idealistic,” but blames Obama and Biden for a chaotic withdrawal, not enforcing their “red line” in Syria, and parsimony with the defense budget. “Rhetoric doesn’t end conflicts,” he trenchantly observes, with chapter 15 titled: “Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory,” a commentary on Obama policy.

Mattis identifies Iran as a relentless enemy, opining that the mullahs assessed the Obama administration to be “impotent,” with exhibit “A” being Iran’s brazen attempt to murder a Saudi diplomat a few minutes from the White House. Mattis would chart a confident course between “American uncertainty and messianism.”

The former Secretary has always been most at home among his fellow Marines, and revels in being their sentinel and advocate. If a senior officer can’t talk with his young volunteers, then he’s “lost touch.” Mattis objected to the new “rules of engagement” implemented during the Obama years as being “drafted by lawyers” and exposing his beloved “grunts” to potentially lethal danger in and around combat.

He supports rules of engagement that protect civilians, but argues that a “democracy… has a moral obligation to ensure that its soldiers are… encouraged to effectively carry out their appointed task of… destroying the enemy.”

Many schools of management advance a philosophy of “centralized planning with decentralized execution,” but Secretary Mattis demurs. He favors “centralized vision” development only, leaving strategies to decentralized implementation. He is “partial to studying Roman leaders and historians… whose grace under pressure and reflections on life can guide leaders today.”

Mattis stresses the importance of leadership in shaping an organization’s culture, and “culture eats strategy for lunch,” he adds. Contrary to some stereotypes about our military, the Marine Corps is home to many original and creative thinkers, with Mattis being an exemplar. Upon meeting our ally, King Abdullah of Jordan, then-General Mattis wryly asked: “What’s it like being king? I’ve never been one.” The king laughed and explained his priority of generating public support for his policies, especially fighting terrorism and aggression.

If I ever get to meet Jim Mattis, I might ask: “What was it like being Secretary? I’ve never been one.” For that story, we’ll have to wait for his next book. But in the meantime, Secretary Mattis’ Call Sign Chaos offers lessons in leadership, a heartfelt appreciation for those willing to serve in the Marines and our other armed services, and incisive reflections on policies that succeeded or failed.

Herbert W. Stupp is editor of Gipperten.com. He was a Commissioner in NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s Cabinet, after serving in the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush. Published with the permission of The Washington Times.
To step out of the elevator onto the fifth floor of the Whitney Museum into the newly installed exhibition Vida Americana Mexican Muralists Remake American Art is equivalent to walking into a time warp. One is back in Greenwich Village of ninety years ago when José Clemente Orozco was painting frescoes on the walls of Joseph Urban’s New School building on 12th Street, when David Alfaro Siqueiros conducted a workshop in experimental technology at Union Square, and Diego Rivera brushed a head of Lenin into his outsize mural for Rockefeller Center. Not only has the Whitney achieved a tour de force in replicating immovable (or destroyed) frescoes and unearthing little-known works by American artists responding to the Mexicans and unearthing little-known works by American artists responding to the Mexicans but its politics. The onset of the Cold War and the witch-hunting of the McCarthy era brought on a reaction that caused art promoting social reform to vanish from many walls. Congratulations to the Whitney for this belated historical adjustment. Vida Americana continues through May 17, 2020.
Maggie B’s Quick Clicks

A VERY SPECIAL TRIP. Once upon a time, in the early 1960s, when I was a brand new immigrant, I lucked out—big time. I got a job at the New York Times working on the picture desk of the Sunday Book Review—where, in those distant days, we used paintings to illustrate the fiction reviews. Which meant that every other Friday afternoon I got to go to the art galleries to raid their files for items we thought might come in handy one day. (We had cabinets full of them—and paid the galleries the princely sum of $10 if we ran one.) And so it was that I became familiar with the realists of the period, along with the WPA artists and others from the earlier eras—though out of style by that time, and sneered at by the Editor! And as I walked into Vida Americana there they were—the famous Mexicans I remembered and the Americans they’d influenced, Jacob Lawrence and Charles White, Thomas Hart Benton and Ben Shahn, even unexpected people like Jackson Pollock—all on this brilliantly colorful memory lane. And so, to cheer yourselves up in these doleful days, may I recommend you “Run Don’t Walk” to the wonderful Whitney to enjoy this truly exhilarating experience.

STONE SPARROW NYC proudly presents:

THE UNSEEN

an exhibition celebrating female artists, featuring:

CAROYLYnda MACDONALD, CHRISTING DUARTE, DANIELA KOVACIC, DORIELLE CAimi, ELLE GREEN, ELLEN MARIE MOYSONs, FRANCiEN KRIEG, GIgi CHEN, HALLIE PACKARD, ILONa CUTTS, IVANA STULIC, JODiE HERRERA, JULiE CAMPBiELl, LINDA MASON, LING LING MOORMAN, LiSA LACH-NIELSEN, MiCHELE MElCHEr, MiCHElLE KONCZYK, MJ LiNDO, OLYMPIA ALTiMiR, PAM HAWKES, ROSE FREMYTH FRAZiER, SHAHiA LEVENSON, SHANNON DOWNey, SHELH ORViTZ, SUSAN FAUMAN, SUSANAH ZUCKER, TEAGAN McLARNAN, XiMENa RENDON, ZIENNE BRUNSTED-STEWART

Opening reception 3/4, 6-9pm. Show runs until 3/31
Who Is William Sydney Porter?

By Richard Eric Weigle

Do you know Who William Sydney Porter is? Well, if you do not, you are not alone. Maybe some of you know him simply by the name O’Henry. He is the author of hundreds of short stories usually with an ironic twist or a surprise ending. The Ransom of Red Chief, The Gift of The Magi and The Last Leaf are three of his most well known. The Last Leaf is probably my favorite short story of all time. It begins with an unforgettable descriptive passage about our beloved neighborhood. “So to quaint old Greenwich Village the artistic people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs, a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue and started a colony.” It is a haunting tale of struggling bohemians and the healing power of art and love.

With its atmospheric setting in a quaint Greenwich Village apartment overlook- ing a brick wall covered in ivy, and its well-drawn characters who are incredibly vulnerable and real, it is a literary treasure. The fact that he wrote it while inspired by the wall of ivy he noticed in Grove Court has always been a source of great pride and interest for me.

What and where is Grove Court, you might ask? Grove Court is a private courtyard between 10 and 12 Grove Street with six quaint houses. It was built as housing for laborers and at one point it was so dilapidated that it became known as Pig Alley because of the pigs that ran loose in the courtyard. It was also known as Mixed Ale Alley presumably because its residents could not afford to buy a mug of beer from a local pub and would have to collect the leftover beer from numerous containers mixing it all together before drinking. Today it is one of the most sought after addresses in New York providing a small oasis of peace and pristine beauty for its lucky residents.

Before moving to New York, O Henry lived in Texas where he embezzled mon- ey while working in a bank and because of this, he spent some time in prison. He started writing stories while incarcerated, and a friend would submit his work to publishers under the pen name O’Henry so that they would not know the stories were written by an inmate. Why O’Henry? One theory is that Henry was the name of his girlfriend’s cat and that she was constantly calling out “O Henry, what did you do now?” However, in a 1909 interview with the New York Times, he confessed that he just picked the name Henry out of the Society pages of a newspaper and added the “O” on the front. Whatever the case, I am so grateful for his appreciation for Grove Court and for Grove Street, which has been my home for the last 45 years.

In the 1800’s Grove Street was first called Columbia Street, which was soon changed to Cozine Street after a prominent local family. It was then renamed Burrows Street after William Burrows, a local Navy War hero. Maybe the name was too close to neighboring Barrow Street and because the street already had a grove of trees alongside it, it finally became known as Grove Street. Hart Crane and Thomas Paine called Grove St. home, and writer Calvin Trillin still does. Bette Midler lived on Grove Street for a while as well as on Barrow St. Actresses Kim Hunter and Veronica Lake also lived here for short periods of time.

So Grove Street has and does play a big part in literary and pop culture. You can glimpse Grove Street in many films including Warren Beatty’s Reds, Woody Allen’s Another Woman, The April Fools with Jack Lemmon and Catherine Deneuve, the 2019 comedy Isn’t It Romantic? and in the final episode of Ryan Murphy’s new television series, The Politician. Which brings us to Monica, Chandler, Joey, Rachel, Phoebe and Ross and another television show, Friends. How does a television show that went off the air in 2004 still have that many fans from around the world who seem to make an almost religious or spiritual pilgrimage to Grove and Bedford to see the famous Friends Building? Maybe it is because it is about friends, and we in the Village know about close relationships with neighbors and relying on friends. Although not a huge fan of the show, I will say that I was always impressed by the way they loved and cared for one another. They were rarely if ever cruel to one another and the humor usually came from their own insecurities and personality quirks and not from crude and cruel remarks as is common on many other shows from the same era. Do fans really think that except for the exterior shots of 90 Bedford St. that the series was filmed here? How many bus tours stop on Hudson St to allow fans and television geeks the opportunity to have their photo taken in front of that building? How many walking tours can our tiny street and its weary residents put up with? How should we react? Should we be angry and bitter that our sidewalks are taken over with tourists from all over the world and that we actually can hear their laughter and conversations? Should we lament days gone by before there was a television series called Friends when the few tourists who found Grove and Bedford Streets were actually looking at the architecture of the quaint houses or had actually heard of O’Henry or Hart Crane? Well, I have been thinking about how lucky we are to live in an area where people from around the world actually want to visit. I personally do not wish to live where no one else wants to even set foot. Whatever the reason, they are here, and along with whatever else they came to see, they are experiencing our beautiful tree-lined streets, our tree wells abundant with flowers, colorful birdhouses, and a variety of architecture from federal to Art Deco. They often seem amazed to find residents planting flowers or watering plants, strumming guitars and sitting on our stoops reading a newspaper or a book. There are definitely downsides to gentri- fication, increased tourism and boisterous lines outside local restaurants, but there is also something exciting, vibrant and urban about it that you can’t get from living in a cul-de-sac in Connecticut. The fact is that people are here by choice and it is up to us to keep Greenwich Village as a creative, artistic place. Maybe we do not have as many creative types and as many struggling artists as we have had in decades past, but we still have residents who open up their homes for salon performances and intimate evening soirées. We have spaces where we can study piano, pottery or Tai Chi. We now have a film festival that is in its 5th year and we have the iconic Cherry Lane Theater which is the oldest off Broadway theater in New York as well as many other vibrant off Broadway and Off Off Broadway theaters. One day in the 1970’s while sitting on the stoop at 35 Grove St and reading James Baldwin’s Giovanni’s Room, I looked up to see James Baldwin, himself, walking down the street. He noticed me reading his book and we acknowledged each other’s pres- ence and smiled. It was one of those brief and intimate encounters that can only happen in a city like New York, a magi- cal moment that I will never forget. I was so starstruck, that I never even thought of asking for an autograph. I was a teacher at the time and had just taught his novel Go Tell It on the Mountain and there he was, on my street in front of my building. I found out later that his literary agent lived at 17 Grove Street and that he would often walk down the block to go there.

There are so many memories from each decade that I have lived in the Village, but my life seemed to improve when I stopped bemoaning restaurants and stopped bemoaning restaurants and shops that were no longer with us, and started to embrace the present and all the things that are so much better now than they were 25 years ago. I started to take the time to breathe and look around and enjoy the renovated buildings, the lower crime rate, the hundreds of new trees, the gorgeous waterfront promenades, the new homes for salon performances and intimate encounters that can only happen in a city like New York, a magi- cal moment that I will never forget. I was so starstruck, that I never even thought of asking for an autograph. I was a teacher at the time and had just taught his novel Go Tell It on the Mountain and there he was, on my street in front of my building. I found out later that his literary agent lived at 17 Grove Street and that he would often walk down the block to go there.

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Charles Busch—The Confession of Lily Dare

By Robert Heide

The melodrama play by the prolific writer, actor, director, novelist and super-drag performer and cabaret star Charles Busch produced by the production group known as Primary Stages entitled The Confession of Lily Dare stars Busch in the title role as Lily Dare. Primary Stages has presented many new interesting plays at the Cherry Lane Theatre at 38 Commerce Street and elsewhere. Founded by Casey Childs, the Primary Artistic Director is Andrew Leynse, and Shane D. Hudson is credited as Executive Director. The original production was first tried out and produced off-off Broadway in 2018 at Crystal Field’s Theater for the New City in the East Village. For the off Broadway production Busch has refined the work into a sharp-edged diamond production bringing in the costume designer Rachel Townsend who has created incredible sparkle-plenty costumes as well as over-the-top exaggerated high piled-up wigs designed by Katherine Carr. Jessica Jahn has designed special ‘Lily Dare’ costumes just for Mr. Busch, who runs the gambit in this parody of early 1930’s pre-code Hollywood tear-jeker movies such as Madame X (1929 with Ruth Chatterton) and The Sin of Madelon Claudet which starred a young, starry-eyed Helen Hayes in 1931.

The high - camp - low - camp - up - and - down-story and career of the flame-haired Lily Dare is first introduced as a shy but ambitious convent girl who transforms herself with the aid of entrepreneur Blackie Lambert (brilliantly enacted by Howard McGil-len). The artful set design by B. T. Whitehill includes a background replica created with red-twinkly-lights of the Golden Gate Bridge. The lighting design expertly lends a dreamy cinematic effect to the play wherein Lily Dare first stars as a cabaret chanteuse and later runs a bordello where she becomes known as San Francisco’s most notorious madame. There are many zany, hilarious one-liners in this work that in some cases are followed by low-level hitting below-the-belt punches. Busch does not hold back steam punches. His character openly shouts out foul-mouthed gut-wrenching sex talk. Explicit expletives abound and they are uproarious. Yes, there are super sad moments that I found very touching and expertly brought home by Busch, such as the down-on-her-luck tragic heroine when she sings the plaintive song It’s Only a Shanty in Old Shanty Town (“The roof is so slanty it touches the ground - Just a tumble-down shack by an old railroad track - In my shanty in Old Shanty Town.”) As Lily sang this dirty I noticed a young audience member wiping away a tear with a dainty white hankie.

The new Busch work certainly joins the performer/playwright’s other camp classics among those I’ve seen over the years. Among my favorites are Vampire Lesbians of Sudom, The Lady in Question, Shanghai Moon, Red Scare on Sunset, Psycho Beach Party, Div Mommie, div!, and his Broadway hit The Tale of the Allergist’s Wife. Attending a play at the Cherry Lane Theatre is always special. Run by the dynamic actress/producer Angelina Fiordellisi since 1996 this theater is what Greenwich Village was all about in the early Bohemian days. Of writers and artists there I saw many of my playwright friends’ plays produced including Edward Albee, Sam Shepard, and Joe Orton. One must add Gertrude Stein and T. S. Elliot to this list, and my own plays Moon and At War With the Mongols on a double bill first done there fifty years ago. Otto Preminger, the filmmaker, was one of the producers and it featured the television sit-com star Elaine B. Shore.

Back in 1964 the writer Susan Sontag wrote an important essay in the Partisan Review, Notes on Camp, which brought the word ‘camp’ into play along with the term used to describe many of the ‘new’ plays of Ionesco, Beckett, Pinter, and others. In Sontag’s essay she calls camp “A sensibility that revels in artificiality, stylization, theatricalization, irony and exaggeration rather than content.” I might add there is such a thing as High Camp and with that in mind I would say that The Confession of Lily Dare is a prime example as well as an outright laugh riot. I should add that the supporting cast, as well as Charles Busch in the lead, are ‘the tops.’ They include Nancy Anderson, Christopher Borg, Kendal Sparks, Jennifer Van Dyck and Howard McGillen. The whole shebang was directed brilliantly by Busch’s longtime collaborator Carl Andress. The play ends with the music—San Francisco, Open your Golden Gate, and I Left My Heart in San Francisco—and is a real love letter to that West Coast city.

Mr. Busch resides in an Art Deco apartment building in Greenwich Village across from Abingdon Square.

Karin Batten
New Paintings

JUNE KELLY GALLERY • 166 MERCER STREET, NY, NY
MARCH 6 - APRIL 14

March 2020 WestView News 29
SPECIAL EVENTS CITYWIDE.

Thursday March 5, 6:30 pm: Remembering the Women of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire
On March 25, 1911, 123 women and young girls died in a tragic fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory on Washington Place. Management had locked all the doors to the exits and staircases to prevent unauthorized breaks and thefts by the workers, so when the fire broke out, the women were trapped, and 62 of them jumped to their deaths. From high windows. A panel of speakers will discuss the women, the building, the fire, its legacy, and more. Judson Memorial Church’s Assembly building, the fire, its legacy, and more. Speakers will discuss the women, the building, the fire, its legacy, and more. Judson Memorial Church’s Assembly Building; enter at 239 Thompson Street. To attend, register at GVSH.org.

Saturday March 4, 4 pm: Ceremony in Honor of Slain NYPD Auxiliary Police Officers Nicholas Pekearo and Eugene Marshallik
Every year the neighborhood honors these two young men who were assassinated by a crazed gunman on Sullivan Street in 2007. This year, the event will take place starting at 4 pm, when Police Officers and people from the neighborhood will march from the 6th Precinct, down Bleecker Street to Sullivan Street, where a short memorial will take place.

SCREENINGS

Sunday March 1 through Sunday March 15: Children’s International Film Festival
Many award-winning children’s films and animations will be shown at various locations, including at IFC. For information on films and schedules, go to nyicff.org/2020.

Monday March 2, 6 pm—Screwball Comedies: Easy Living
(1937) Jean Arthur, Edward Arnold, and Ray Milland star in this movie about a banker who throws his wife’s fur coat off a roof, and it lands on a stenographer who can’t believe her good fortune and begins to flaunt the coat. This movie is part of a series of screwball comedies being studied in a class at Jefferson Market Library, 425 Sixth Avenue. Free.

Thursday March 5, 2 pm The Kitchen

Monday March 9, 6 pm — Screwball Comedies: Bringing Up Baby
(1938) Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant star in this comedy about a paleontologist pursued by an heiress with a pet leopard. Jefferson Market Library, 425 Sixth. This movie is part of a series of screwball comedies being studied in a class at Jefferson Market Library, 425 Sixth Avenue. Free.

Thursday March 12, 2 pm: Crawl

Friday March 13, 7 pm: The Beyond Sixty Project
An award-winning documentary by Melissa Davey, showing the relevance of women who are no longer young. The Westbeth Community Space, 155 Bank Street. Free.

Thursday March 19, 2 pm: Mata Hari
(1931) Greta Garbo stars in this movie about a beautiful dancer (not the infamous spy) working in Paris in 1914 before the outbreak of WWI. Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street. Free.

Saturday March 21, 2 pm: Harriet

Saturday March 26, 2 pm: Terminator: Dark Fate

Saturday March 28, 2 pm: The Good Liar

MUSIC

Saturday March 7, 6:30 pm: Piano Music for Four Hands
Michiyo Morikawa and Joel Nefalii Juan Qui Vega will perform pieces by Beethoven, Rachmaninoff and more, at Greenwich House Music, 46 Barrow Street. Admission $20.

Saturday March 21, 2 pm: Brilliance & Fervor: Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and Scarlatti.
Classical pianist SHIZKA to perform centuries-old music with a millennial twist at Revelation Gallery, St. John’s in the Village, West 11th Street and Waverly Place. Tickets $20 in advance, $25 at door, $10 off for seniors, students.

LITERATURE

Saturday March 14, 10:30 am: Book Discussion Club
Ocean Vuong’s book On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous. Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Wednesday March 25, 7:30 pm: 6th Precinct Community Council Meeting
A dialogue between the 6th Precinct and the community, discussing serious issues facing the neighborhood. Our Lady of Pompeii, Father Demo Hall, Bleecker and Carmine Streets. All are welcome.

LEARNING

Fridays in March, 10:30 am: Art Therapy Drawing Class

TALKS

Saturday March 14, 2 pm: Art Lecture by Robert Bunkin—The Life and Times of Lugwig Meidner
Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street. Free.

VILLAGE HISTORY

Tuesday March 31, 6 pm: Dorothy Day in the Village
She was one of America’s most ardent advocates for the homeless, a radical pacifist, a proponent of civil disobedience, a lifelong critic of US foreign policy, and unchecked capitalism. She was a resident of Greenwich Village in the 1910’s, and was romantically involved with playwright Eugene O’Neill. Her life and legend will be discussed at Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street.
KIDS
- Saturdays, 4-5 pm: Mozart for Munchkins KidsFolk is back! Tunes that will take you and your family back in time to the good old days. Children of all ages are welcome to roll, crawl, squeal, and dance to their hearts’ content, while adults relax. Each performance is followed by an “instrument petting zoo” where everyone is welcome to try the instruments and meet the performers. Admission $35, but kids under 12 free. Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow Street.

SENIORS
- Mondays in March, 3 pm: Creative Aging Exploring your story through poetry and prose with Sarah Stern. Participants must be 50+ and register by phone at 212-243-6876. Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street. Free.
- Fridays, 1:30-3 pm: The Grumpy Café Coffee, Tea, cookies and conversation (but no politics!) at the Judith C. White Senior Center, 27 Sixth Avenue.

MUSEUMS, GALLERIES, EXHIBITS
- Tuesday March 3, 7 pm: Opening of Shadow Play Karen Remple invites you to an artwork series consisting of several one-minute original compositions inspired by the artwork series. The music begins at 8 pm. St. John’s in the Village Revelation Gallery, 224 Waverly Place. Free, but registration is essential. Go to stjvny.org.
- Wednesday March 4-April 6: We’re Here The works of AK Jansen at Ivy Brown Gallery, 675 Hudson Street, 4th floor.
- Wednesday March 4 through March 31: The Unseen An exhibition celebrating female artists, at Stone Sparrow Gallery.
- Through March 7: Standing Rock Awakens the World The Anti-Imperial Poetry of Edgar Heap of Birds, at Fort Gansevoort, 3 Ninth Avenue.
- Through March 20: Clay is Just Thick Paint An exhibit of Jennifer Rochlin’s ceramic works at Greenwich House Pottery at Jane Hartsook Gallery, 16 Jones Street.
- Through March 31: Still Moments Photography exhibit by filmmaker Gayle Kirschenbaum. Her first solo photo exhibition shows her work of landscapes, faces of indigenous people, and more. Westbeth, 55 Bethune Street.
- March 2 through March 31: Prints, Paintings and Assemblages by Linda Dujack Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street. Opening party March 12, 4:30-6:30 pm.
- March 19-19 April, Wednesdays through Sundays, 1-6 pm: Sign of the Times An exhibit by eight Westbeth artists at Westbeth Gallery, 57 Bethune Street, Opening reception Thursday March 19, 6-9 pm.

ONGOING EVENTS
- Kids Mondays, 11:15 am: Baby Lapsit A time to introduce babies to the joys of movement, books, and song, and begin to build their early learning skills. For infants up to 18 months old. Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street.
- Kids Mondays at 4 pm: Family Storytime and Craft Children 4 and up get to make simple crafts and hear favorite stories at Hudson Park Library, 425 Sixth Avenue.
- Health and Wellness Mondays and Wednesdays 5-6:30 pm and Tuesdays at 3:45-5:15 pm: YOGA for Adults and Seniors Free Hatha I Yoga classes at City-As School Beacon Center, 16 Clarkson St., Rm 505. Arrive early to fill out application. Call 917-783-3166 for info.
- Learning Tuesdays 5:30-6:45: English as a Second Language An intermediate-level ESL class geared toward conversational practice, grammar skills, and vocabulary. Anyone from the community looking to improve their confidence in communicating in English is welcome to attend. First Presbyterian Church, 12 West 12th Street. Free.
- Health and Wellness Wednesdays, 10 am: Movement Speaks Celebrating moving in strong and creative ways with Dances for a Variable Population. All sessions recommended, but not required. For adults and seniors of all ages and abilities. Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, 1 Clarkson Street.
- Kids Wednesdays, 11:15 am: Toddler Storytime Interactive stories, action songs, finger plays and more at Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street.
- Crafts Wednesdays, 11pm-2 pm: Knitting Circle All created items will benefit a local charity—some experience necessary. Hudson Park Library. 66 Leroy Street.
- Kids Wednesdays at 4 pm: St. John’s Choristers Free Musical Education Training in music fundamentals and vocal technique for children 8 and up. The program is open to kids from all over the city, but is made up primarily of neighborhood children. As part of the program, they sing once a month at a Sunday Eucharist. St. John’s in The Village, 224 Waverly Place.
- Health and Wellness First and Third Wednesdays of Every Month, 5:30-7:30 pm: Northwell Health Caregivers Support Group 200 West 13th Street. Free.
- Arts Every Wednesday: Judson Arts Wednesdays Free meal/referrals served at 7:15 pm, followed by a free music, dance, or spoken word performance at 8 pm in the Meeting Room at Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Square South.
- Learning Thursdays Through December 12, 11 am-2 pm: You’re Never Too Old to Play a free acting workshop for seniors, 55+. Westbeth Community Room, 155 Bank Street.
- Learning Second Thursday of Every Month 7-9 pm at NYU. New York Amateur Computer Club (NYACC) Updates in software and hardware plus innovations within the computer industry. All welcome from skilled techs to novices. Please see NYACC.ORG for details. Free.
- Kids Thursday, 4 pm: Toddler Storytime Interactive stories, action songs, finger plays and more at Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street.
- Games Thursdays, 3-6 pm: Jigsaw Puzzle Night Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street.
- Trading Saturday October 5, and the first Saturday of every month, 11am: Free Book and Jigsaw puzzle Swap Hudson Park Library, 66 Leroy Street.

AND THE SEARCH GOES ON
Stephen Hall’s The Search for Intelligent Life on Earth is part of the group show, Sign of the Times, at Westbeth, opening on March 19.

Please contact Stephanie Phelan at sephelan@earthlink.net if you have any new events or have further information on something I’ve listed here or on westvillageword.com.
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