On the evening of Saturday, May 30th, The Village became the stage for what appeared to be a well-orchestrated demonstration against police for the Minneapolis killing of George Floyd, ending with the skilled firebombing of several police vehicles. Covered by WestView News photographer Chris Manis, he was struck by what appeared to be a core group that issued instructions both moving and haranguing the crowds. Manis followed the action to University Place, where he captured the photos for this article. His eyewitness account follows.

By Chris Manis
I arrived at Union Square around 10 p.m. to a line of approximately 200-300 riot police spanning from University Place to Broadway. Behind them, in the park, a large crowd of 400-500 had assembled. All seemed very peaceful and calm. Most people (including the police) were on their cell phones and looked quite bored. I then noticed, and apparently the police did not, that the crowd started quietly but quickly streaming out of the park in different directions—almost as if on cue. One group went down Broadway, another down University Place, and others headed toward Fifth Avenue.

I know the streets well and I know how to follow a story, so I walked down University Place to see what was going on. As I arrived at 13th Street, several large, loud, firecracker-type explosions occurred simultaneously. I heard breaking glass and more explosions, and spotted several police vans engulfed in flames. As they burned, protesters spray-painted them with slogans. Riot police came running down the street, causing panic in the crowd. But there was nowhere to run. In every direction, police vans and cars erupted into flames, with so much smoke billowing out of them that it actually became hard to see and breathe.

This attack appeared to be highly organized, with car fires erupting simultaneously in every direction. It was also clear that the persons who started the fires were long gone before the riot police arrived at the scene. I must give credit to the police, who were surprisingly restrained in their response as they formed a line and pushed the crowd away from the burning cars so that the fire department could get through and extinguish the blazes. Although several bank and store windows were smashed, the vast majority of damage was clearly aimed at police property. Also, as the police vans were burning, there were several loud explosions that came from inside the vehicles.

It’s my observation that the police were caught absolutely by surprise, and it took them quite a while to organize a response. It appeared that the police were up against a highly organized and capable group who knew how to incite mayhem.

WESTVIEW PHOTOGRAPHER CHRIS MANIS captured this photo on University Place on Saturday, May 30. For more exclusive images, visit www.westviewnews.org

On the invention that it would own, as Kambiz discovered, with car fires erupting simultaneously in every direction. It was also clear that the persons who started the fires were long gone before the riot police arrived at the scene. I must give credit to the police, who were surprisingly restrained in their response as they formed a line and pushed the crowd away from the burning cars so that the fire department could get through and extinguish the blazes. Although several bank and store windows were smashed, the vast majority of damage was clearly aimed at police property. Also, as the police vans were burning, there were several loud explosions that came from inside the vehicles.

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By Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D. and Christian Kopfl
We have heard about restaurants and their struggles in this pandemic, but few have heard about an atypical group of promising biotech companies that are private and in jeopardy. The unique biotechnologies these companies offer to help address COVID may perish as collateral damage.

We are two of the co-founders of such a private biotechnology company, called Chromocell Corporation. Kambiz originally invented the foundational biotechnology behind Chromocell when he was a 24-year old graduate student in a Nobel-Prize winning laboratory at The Rockefeller University. At the time, Kambiz’s research was encountering challenges as the then-used methods for engineering cells slowed down his main science project. He was desperate to find a solution and came up with an idea that had the potential to overcome the barrier. The university filed a patent application on the invention that it would own, as Kambiz was considered an employee.

Meanwhile, Christian had just gone from simultaneously completing his masters in law at Columbia University and his Ph.D. in law from the University of Zurich to start a brand new job as associate at a large law firm in New York City where he worked with many companies including some of that era’s most exciting start-ups. We were friends and when we started talking about the science and how it could help speed through and overcome obstacles in the lab, we decided to give it a go and start a biotech company together, with Christian as its
Suicide at 45
Christopher Street

I received an early call on Tuesday, May 18th, from an obviously alarmed elderly woman who said a neighbor at 45 Christopher Street had committed suicide by jumping out of a rear window of the tall apartment house.

The women who called lived near #45 and was alerted by the very early-morning appearance of police and an emergency vehicle. She would not give her name but was most anxious to talk and revealed that she was living in a five-story family building all alone; “I am getting it cleaned up,” she said.

I sent our photographer Chris Manis to the building where the unfortunate incident occurred, but by the time he arrived all was quiet. However, he did have a friend who lived nearby and had some information: the women who died had lived with her husband, had mental problems, and talked about having the coronavirus. Her death was reported by a neighbor who saw the body from her window and called the super who then called the police. The public information office of the police could not give me the victim’s name but did give me her age, which was 77.

— George Capsis

WestView
Correspondence, Commentary, Corrections

WestView Triumph
Dear George and WestView,
The May 1st issue is a wonderful gift from you George, and your writers, to our West Village community.

I have always loved reading WestView, but this was something more—a healing balm knowing our community will go on, and a testimony to all you and WestView provide for our neighborhood.

That WestView was not silent while our entire neighborhood was locked down facing a hundred year threat is an achievement not to be forgotten.

Many thanks George to you and the entire WestView team. I will both subscribe and make my small donation to your great effort.

—Steve Wilson

An Appreciative Contributor
Dear George,
I am so pleased with everything about how my article came out this May. The pictures framing it are so worthy. Like they say, pictures tell a thousand words. Thank you so much for publishing my heartfelt piece. Believe me, the response has been uncannily knowing how to place the piece of writing just so on a page. I also love the blue ink in the “7 p.m.” title.

It really draws a subtle attention to the article. I hope I get some offers from house-cleaners after the paper circulates. My place is still a ‘virtual’ mess—though I’m unclear as to what ‘virtual’ means anymore…. Anyway, I know for sure many will identify with me and my plight. I totally agree with the letter to the editor re: both the April and May issues.

They show a concern, a warmth of feeling, an invitation for a slow healing to West Villagers, and an empathy that disseminates to whomever opens the paper. Particularly great job, especially considering the enormous gravity of some of the material you are working with.

Kudos, kudos, kudos on a publishing victory in a time of unusual stress and woe.

Your words echo even clearer now—we NEED a local paper, in print if possible, to sew up the “holes” Governor Cuomo spoke of. That includes WestView’s guidance as to what and what not to open, and the paper’s ad regarding an upcoming All Bach live-streamed concert at St. John’s in the Village on May 25th, 2020. You and Emily Dickenson share something wonderfully inspiring, George. You both possess hope—whether or not it has feathers is beside the point. You and your paper CREATE hope and share it. Hope is a darn great commodity at all times. As a bonus, you allow us to air our suggestions and concerns by inviting us all to be a part of the WestView community.

Thank you and an incredible staff for always enriching our lives.

—Robertita Carley

Kudos to Kelton
To the Editor,
I was thrilled to see the May issue contained another personal story “Mom’s Lessons on Love” by Nancy Davidof Kelton. Her Washington Square and Wegmans pieces in previous issues showed her warm, authentic, funny voice. She did that again in this issue. Keep them coming.

—David Rose

A Very Short Letter
This will be the shortest article you will read in this WestView News issue. I planned to write about the problem of crowding, no masks, and little social distancing in the Hudson River Park. Mask-less joggers and bikers expel streams of microbes as they pass by. Large groups congregate on the piers. The NYPD declared a new policy to remedy these problems beginning in May. After repeated calls to the 6th Precinct’s community relations department, I have not yet been able to speak with anyone there to answer questions on how their new strategy is working. I still see no masks in the park. Stay tuned.

—J. Taylor Basker

LARRY KRAMER, 84
Godfather of AIDS Activism and the Force Behind ACT UP and GMHC

West Villager Larry Kramer, American playwright, author, film producer, public health advocate, LGBT rights activist and the principal founder of ACT UP and GMHC died May 27 at the age of 84. As the foremost and most vocal and pro-active leader in the fight against AIDS, he was a public foe of Ed Koch, New York’s closeted former mayor who refused to address the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. They were neighbors at Two Fifth Ave, where Edie Windsor and Bella Abzug had also lived.

Renowned as a playwright for The Normal Heart, an autobiographical play focusing on the early days of the AIDS crisis, Kramer was a firebrand and forceful leader who was known for posing the Hamletesque provocation—either we fight or we die—at the LGBT Community Center in March 1987, leading to the creation of ACT UP.

In Kramer’s own words, “I was trying to make people united and angry. I was known as the angriest man in the world, mainly because I discovered that anger got you further than being nice. And when we started to break through in the media, I was better TV than someone who was nice.”

—Bruce Poli

MIA SAYS: Forgiving prejudice is the best way to end it. Photo by Dusty Berke.

LARRY KRAMER, 2010. Photo credit: David Shankbone / CC BY 2.0.
Pride in the Time of Corona

By Chauncey Dandridge

One of the things heavily lamented by members of the LGBTQ community currently, is that this will be the first time in fifty years that there will actually be no organized Pride March conjured up to light up The Big Apple in rainbow colors. Considering that last year, New York City celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of The Stonewall Riots as well as played gracious host to World Pride festivities, the void left in the wake of coronavirus will be wildly omission and felt around the world. Pride season in Gotham City promises to be peculiar, painfully anti-climactic and disorienting. It will be a stark contrast to joyous, countless celebrations that stretched throughout every corner and borough of the city that never sleeps. Luckily, some of the positively resounding traits of the LGBTQ community are defiance, ingenuity and resilience. There have been too many successes, too much progress, too much climbing and resisting and reconciling to stop. Like the members of a church say, from the priest to the parishioner, you don’t have to be in church to experience God, because God is everywhere. This year, we will be reassured that Pride doesn’t need a parade to exist. Pride is everywhere, in everyone and every day.

Nostalgia is usually reserved as an emotion one feels about moments in their life that happened many years ago. In 2020, we will be forced to feel nostalgic about all the magic and madness that occurred simply one year ago. The entire month of June is usually chock full of events from rallies to fundraisers to circuit parties to outdoor concerts and everything in-between. It is a magical time for tourism, as people from around the world plan to spend their Pride in the city where Pride began and most revelers make sure their itinerary includes a journey to Mecca: The Stonewall Inn. I have the luxury and honor of being one of the resident DJs and event producers at the bar, and when I was hired back in 2013, I had no idea the sheer magnitude of excitement and glory that would reverberate within those walls and outside the front door when the anniversary of the riots grew closer in 2019.

Fast forward to March of this year, and New York City nightlife has been completely upended, the proverbial rug quickly and carelessly ripped out from under us. The static and chaos of uncertainty has filled the blank space where the music once played and has left dance floors barren and bar stools vacant. Remembering their inner divinity, the drag queens, the DJs, the musicians, the dancers, the activists and the audiences have not stopped creating, fighting, surviving or watching. Instead of the arts and nightlife community going underground, we have simply gone digital.

Immediately after the initial shutdown, drag shows and talk shows and DJ sets popped up everywhere and filled the vacuum. Fans adjusted and assimilated to this new way of experiencing queer art and performance as technophobes learned their way around a Zoom dance party and learned how to Venmo someone a tip. It has been quite remarkable to witness and participate in as well. I have found that I and many fellow artists are finding newer ways to express ourselves while discovering talents we were aware of but had never fostered before. Activists are leading by example, volunteering at food drives and soup kitchens, using the captive audiences glued to their phones to valiantly preach their political messages and somehow, despite the obvious physical and social distance, make stronger connections.

This ‘pause’, as they have dubbed it, has been obviously life changing, revealing much more about ourselves and others than we would have ever expected. It has been accompanied with great loss and death, financial uncertainty, hardship and resounding fear and anxiety, but perhaps it was necessary to stand still and regroup, and reinvent and reclaim our own Pride. We needed to reassess our value and values. We needed to relaim respect. We needed to remember our history and prepare for our future. We still do not have any understanding of how and when and if the nightlife community will rebound after this crisis and threat is over. Will our favorite watering holes survive? Will dance floor capacities be cut in half? Will Plexiglass stand between you and your bartender? Will your handshakes be rationed out? Will your hugs be looser or tighter? Will you have to find a dark corner in a dive bar to remove your masks and experience your first kiss? So, so many unknowns. This community has won many battles, survived many attacks, climbed many mountains and still continues to morph and master its techniques. And we do it in one of the greatest classrooms in the world, New York City. We have a current administration that is certainly not in our best interest, and as the letters in our acronym multiply so do our enemies. In solidarity, please remember that in November on Election Day. And this June, remember that, like God, Pride is everywhere, in everyone and every day.

Chauncey Dandridge is a DJ, event producer, multidisciplinary artist, author and activist in NYC. Currently enjoying a residency at The Stonewall Inn, Chauncey helps produce the annual Dance Parade and Urban Bear NYC Weekend as well as a weekly radio show and monthly variety show “Freak Out” which showcases local queer talent. He has lent his time and talents to countless fundraisers over the years. Follow him on Instagram @houseofdandridge and @djchaunceyd

The Day the Village Stood Still: Mayday

By Roger Paradiso

I remember they used to play this coin game, Three-card Monte. They played it over by the subway kiosk on Sixth Avenue and West 4th Street. You just need a cardboard box. Pull out the cards, shuffle the deck, and play Three-card Monte. Nobody ever won that game, right? I don’t know where those scam artists went; maybe to Washington D.C. They must be running the banks too. Right now, the question is: where’s the money to save the small business owners?

I check in with my friend Jamal who is facing the loss of his forty-year family business. It’s called Village Music World and is on the now-baren Bleecker Street. Jamal said, “I was turned down by HSBC Bank for both the PPP and the Disaster Loan. They say there is no more money left in the fund. They offered me a business loan at 2.5 percent at another bank, but a week later they called and said they can’t do it. I started yelling at them. What do you mean? I’m your customer! You make money off of me. You need to get me a loan. He blamed the government for not giving them more money.”

Brock Blake, CEO of Lendio, the largest-business lending marketplace in the U.S., stated, “Ninety-four percent of small business owners, many of whom have applications pending with Lendio and other lenders, have been left to fend for themselves. I estimate that nearly $850 billion is what it will take to get small businesses through this crisis.”

Jamal was checking in with me by text every other day: “So I talk to other business on Bleecker and they said they got nowhere with anything the government was offering. The PPP and all that. They’re thinking of shutting down. My landlord is pushing me for the rent. He wants all three months on June 9th. I have some very hard decisions to make in the next couple of weeks. Right now, I would say I am moving out.”

I emailed Nick, owner of Cinema Village (and two other theaters in the boroughs), and he responded, “Difficult times are here. Cinema Village is not looking for any grants, gifts that will be a burden to our city. All we are asking is help from anyone that can get

...continued on page 10
Where Have All the White Folks Gone?

By Alec Pruchnicki

There are numerous accounts of COVID infecting and killing more people of color (African-Americans and Hispanics) than whites in New York and other cities. This has come from health statistics, government agencies, and investigative reports on TV and in newspapers. There is one more strong source of evidence that I have noticed: the subways.

I usually get on the 2 or 3 Seventh Avenue express at 14th Street and take it up to my office near 110 Street and Lenox Avenue during the morning rush hour. At night, I make the reverse trip. Before this pandemic started, most of the riders from 96th Street to 14th were a mix of all different races. Although I wasn’t keeping a close count, retroactively I would estimate that there might have been a roughly 50-50 ratio of white to black with a smaller percentage of Asians. At 96th many school kids and elderly of all races would get on. At 42nd Street, what looked like office workers, of all races, got on.

After the quarantine was started, and the city went into widespread lockdown, all that changed. The total number of riders decreased dramatically during both rush hours. Sometimes I would get on a train with just a few other riders and there was almost always enough space to keep distance between us, if not exactly six feet. But the overwhelming majority of riders were black and Hispanic, with almost all white and Asian riders gone. This has been consistent throughout the quarantine.

The most logical explanation for this is that many of these riders where there because they had to be. Many of the essential jobs that require staff to come in because they had to be. Many of these riders where there consistently throughout the quarantine.

Not only does this put them at continued risk of contracting COVID on the subways, like the over 50 MTA workers who have died from it, and on their jobs where protective equipment might be in short supply, but they then go back to their communities where their potential infections can be spread even further.

There are many reasons why poorer people who constitute a disproportionate number of minority individuals can suffer from COVID. Poverty itself, poor housing, poor nutrition, higher rates of other diseases, inadequate health care service, and other reasons can all contribute to this. Going to work in the middle of a pandemic only adds to this.

Then, of course, there is the question of race. Poorer treatment of minority populations by the healthcare system itself has been documented over the years. How much of these poor outcomes (as we in medicine euphemistically refer to death and disease), are racial and how much economic? Healthcare statistics on income are sometimes harder to get than those broken down by race. I hope when this epidemic is studied, social scientists will look at morbidity and mortality broken down by income. What is the difference between death rates of poor vs middle class vs upper class people within the same racial group?

Meanwhile, for those of you who ride the subways or buses, let me know if you agree with these qualitative observations. I could be wrong in my perceptions, or explanations for them. I also hope that when this crisis has mostly past someone will study these questions so that we might be a little more ready for the next epidemic that will surely come down the road in the future.

Feel the Power

Vote on June 23

By Penny Mintz

There is a primary election coming up on June 23rd. For a while, it looked like the presidential primary was off—canceled by a decision of the New York State Board of Elections. But things changed when Andrew Yang, joined by more than a dozen intervening Bernie delegates and members of the New York State Democratic Committee, sued to maintain the right to vote even though there was no question, presumably, that Joe Biden was going to be the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party in November. I am one of those interveners who fought to preserve that right to vote because there are still important issues to be determined.

The Board of Elections claimed that the presidential primary was no more than a “beauty contest” because the nomination of Joe Biden was a foregone conclusion. A federal judge disagreed. In reinstating the election, Judge Analisa Torres ruled that the cancellation “deprived Democratic voters of the opportunity to elect delegates [to the national convention] who could push their point of view in that forum.”

Ordinary voters—you and I—have limited avenues of influence on big public issues. But, as Judge Torres recognized, one of the powers that we enjoy is the power to vote for convention delegates who share our views. Torres noted that, besides anointing the party’s presidential candidate, the delegates “influence the party platform, vote on party governance issues, pressure the eventual nominee on matters of personnel or policy, and react to unexpected developments at the convention.” That makes our votes meaningful and, because so few people vote in the primaries, much more powerful than a vote in the general election.

Some people argue that a vote for Sanders in the primary is effectively a vote for Trump. That is simply not true. A vote in the primary is not like voting for a third-party candidate in the general election. It does not reduce the number of general election votes for Biden. It cannot act as a spoiler. Nor does it divide or weaken the Democratic Party, which faces much greater danger of alienating young voters who might see the party as unresponsive to their concerns. As Judge Torres concluded, the presidential primary vote is an opportunity for voters “to express their support for delegates who share their views.”

I, for one, plan to take advantage of this opportunity on June 23rd to vote for the Sanders slate of delegates. I am one of those candidates—in the 10th congressional district. If I am elected I will work to motivate the national party to focus on issues that are important to us regular people: universal health care, environmental protection, shifting the tax burden to those who can afford to pay, and protection from corporate overreach.

If you live in the 66th State Assembly District, you will also see my name as a candidate for membership in the Democratic Party State Committee. The state committee is the governing body of the Democratic Party in the State of New York. While I have been part of the struggle to maintain the right to vote in NY and make democracy greater, my opponent in the race, Rachel Lavine, has been using her position in the state committee to limit voters’ effectiveness.

In recent years, Lavine has opposed fusion voting, which enables a minor party to run a candidate who is also running on other party lines. That gives people the chance to vote for a mainstream candidate while also expressing support for the policies of a minor party. So, for example, if you want Andrew Cuomo to prevail over his Republican rival but you would also like him to support strong unions, you can express that by voting on the Working Families Party line instead of on the Democratic Party line.

Lavine, as chair of the Progressive Caucus, proposed a resolution to the caucus that would have eliminated fusion voting. The caucus voted down Lavine’s resolution, and Lavine betrayed her own caucus by submitting the failed resolution to the full committee in her own name.

On the issue of fusion voting, Rachel Lavine’s resolution attempted to achieve exactly what the New York Board of Elections had tried to do in the presidential primary—reduce the voters’ opportunity to express their views. Lavine wanted to get rid of the opportunity voters have had to express their views by voting for a mainstream candidate on a minority party line. Without fusion voting, the voters’ voices are diminished.

I hope you vote for me on June 23rd. However you choose to vote, just be sure to cast that ballot. It is precious and powerful.
REALITY CHECK—COVID:
Into the Middle Innings

PROTECTED FROM THE VIRUS...BUT AT WHAT COST? Graphic artist: Genaldri Tjahjadi.

By Jesse Robert Lovejoy

For a starting pitcher, the most dangerous inning is the first. He isn’t really warmed up, and he doesn’t know what’s working that day. If his fastball has life and his command is good, he can settle in, begin to mix in the curve, and cruise the first two times through the order. But the third time through looms ominously. Batters have seen the fastball and the curve a few times. A starter needs a third and even fourth pitch. He’s going to have to throw sinkers, cutters and changeups. Andrew Cuomo is starting his third time through right now. We are going to learn a lot.

Cuomo’s first time through the order was all fastballs. He shut down schools and businesses, found ventilators and PPE, expanded hospitals by 50 percent, reorganized the state hospital system, and sparred with Washington about most of it. He spoke on TV for an hour every day to report progress. It was all cheese and strong command.

The second time through the order Cuomo mixed in the curve. He negotiated with Trump and got a lot of federal help, effectively and without partisanship. It was surprising, and it worked great. Cuomo asked, Trump delivered, Cuomo said thank you. Refreshing. A plus curveball.

But it is rare for a leader to make no mistakes, and Cuomo certainly made a few, including the brutal error of requiring nursing homes to admit COVID-positive patients, with tragic results.

The early surge was flattened, but now shutdown orders have crushed the national economy. Forty million Americans—including two million New Yorkers—are out of work. U.S. joblessness approaches 25 percent. Hundreds of thousands of small businesses are bankrupt, the owners’ life-savings are gone. The drop in second quarter GDP will be like a bottomless elevator shaft. This virus will be out there until we have a vaccine, but the American people have to get back to work fast or everybody is going to be bashed and starving.

This—right now—is Cuomo’s third time through the order. Is he just another strong-armed kid, or does he really know how to pitch?

With all due respect, the governor needs some perspective. He must recognize that he does not understand the suffering inflicted by the shutdown and the pain of being jobless and hungry. He has to stop talking about lives versus the economy. That is a phony issue, and the talk is disrespectful. The governor’s only job is to restart the economy as fast as possible with as little damage to health as possible.

There are tons of details to get right—like the criteria for reopening. The CDC has been wrong a lot. Their dictates for reopening need to be analyzed, not blindly adopted. Be incisive; throw a cutter. Does it make sense to set the same hurdles for reopening in the sparsely populated North Country as in the densest-packed city in America? How can people trace all contacts in a city where millions have already been infected? Can parents go back to work before the schools open? These issues need more analysis.

The governor will also have to work his way out of trouble. The virus is tough, and he will make mistakes. The State must keep moving forward when infections increase, because they will. Several states and nations have already seen it happen. Cuomo likes to quote Churchill: “When you’re going through hell, keep going.” Take that to heart.

Cuomo also has to get funding from Washington to fill the hole in the state budget. This is going to call for a changeup. You can’t sneak a fastball past Mitch McConnell. Put aside your party’s wish list of programs and its platform for November. Just ask for the actual costs and the actual lost revenues. That’s all.

Maybe the governor’s battle against COVID can even begin to reinvent an honorable role in public service—the guy who reaches across the aisle and gets things done. There was a time when eminent people did that. It could turn out to be important once again, and there’s zero competition for the job. If he does it all, that’s four plus pitches. Cooperstown? Let’s not get ahead of ourselves, but he gets the start next Tuesday.

Jesse Robert Lovejoy, a lifelong New Yorker, worked in Manhattan for over 50 years in law and finance. He now operates a personal consulting business. Edited by Felix von Muschziker

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C OM P A S S

We fondly remember the loved ones we’ve lost.
To our first responders and essential workers:
THANK YOU!
NYC is coming back.
Please support our local restaurants!

Visit www.westvillagebroker.com for information on staying safe and protected.
New info available on buying and selling in the West Village.

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For LGBT’s Future… Allies Make a Difference

By Bruce Poli, Executive Director, Equal Rights Foundation

In 1961, future U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark was sent to Mississippi for Civil Rights work by then Attorney General Robert Kennedy.

This was in anticipation of support for Kennedy’s political Civil Rights agenda, which led up to the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the latter two of which Clark drafted and supervised under Lyndon Baines Johnson.

They changed America.

In the following years, hundreds of ‘white’ men and women flooded the South following the murder of three young activist workers in Mississippi (depicted in the film Mississippi Burning), under Alabama Governor George Wallace’s racist white supremacy rule.

White people were allies to black people in the 1960s. Without their visible public support, the two Presidents would never have been able or had the courage to pass such important progressive legislation.

My wife Suzanne and I have been involved with and supportive of Heritage of Pride, the LGBT Center and the LGBT Civil Rights movement since the mid-1980s. I believe it is true that allies are as important to legislative rights for the LGBT community today as they were to Martin Luther King’s movement in the 60s. And it is time for allies to become VISIBLE.

Despite the right to marry, the momentous celebration of World Pride last year, and seeming acceptance in NYC in 2020, gays still face homophobia, job discrimination and a variety of social barriers and fears which of course influence young people and the psychological composure of an entire sexual orientation in our country that has never been seen as ‘right in God’s eyes’ by millions. Far worse, transgender people are literally being killed every month.

Racism, sexism, hatred, bigotry, name it what you will—the human condition—is to defend itself against those not like us. Unlike African Americans, Latin Americans or any other ‘immigrant’ group, you cannot see Gay, though there is something called ‘Gaydar’ (yes that’s short for Gay radar) which is being developed and promoted as an extra sensory perception.

One of the reasons I feel so supportive of LGBT rights is that I recognize a sophistication, intelligence and awareness that seems natural and inherent to the Gay community. Also, when we look at our culture, there have been hundreds of historic figures—from Leonard Bernstein to Edward Albee to Melissa Etheridge to Lily Tomlin—who have contributed to some of the greatest aspects of American culture, arts and science. We would not have the NYC / West Village character of America without our Gay and Lesbian pioneers, artists and cultural leaders who have shown the light of human intelligence and awareness progressively upward.

Frank Kameny, the historical Gay activist famously held the sign saying “Gay is Good.” Gay is more than good; it’s the fabric of our beautiful diverse nation and we allies are responsible for stepping up and making ourselves known in the more than half century fight for LGBT equality.

Notes From Away
Partisan Democracy (an Oxymoron)

By Tom Lamia

On the road to partisanship, we have traveled all but the last mile. If there is no off-ramp to be found before or at the November elections many, if not most, of our representatives in Washington, D.C., in our state capitals, and in the cities, towns and special purpose districts throughout the country will continue their accustomed role of serving their individual interest in winning their next election. I could include in this group the un-elected staff, aides and bureaucrats whose expertise in legislation and administration is fundamental to good governance. Their jobs, and careers too, now seem dependent on pleasing the President; and they are not just his political appointees.

Backed by the Attorney General, the President claims a free hand under Article Two of the Constitution to administer all executive power without constraint, whether of law or custom. Using that simple idea, and extending it as a shield against Congressional or Judicial oversight, he has hired, fired, demoted, transferred, humiliated, disgraced and sought the investigation and criminal prosecution of those who have crossed him—all without effective reprisal. This is not representative democracy; it is medievalism of the kind that existed in England before the Magna Carta. The heads of all who do not please the monarch are on the chopping block.

As a foreign observer commented recently in a London publication, “The pro-democracy cause [outside the U.S.] has been weakened drastically since Trump took office. How do you defend a system that gives power to a celebrity with no knowledge or appreciation of our form of government or of our founding principles and historic reliance on checks and balances within government—a person who does not respect public officials, other than himself—both we and our system have failed to protect the democratic republic entrusted to us. A system that has allowed this result is not a working democracy. It has fallen into partisan control in the most naked of terms: control no longer lies with the individual citizen; it has passed to the representatives of special interests. It has become a dictatorship of a partisan “base” (an electoral core for whom loyalty to a leader is the definitive issue). Such a “partisan democracy” is an oxymoron.

Devotion and loyalty to a person who holds power over others based on extortion and fear is not a basis for democracy. Our form of state and federal representative government has evolved over our history. It has never been stagnant, never perfect, always subject to and open to criticism. With the exception of the years immediately before and after the Civil War, the constitutional tenets of our federal republic, have been generally honored, if not always praised. When disagreements over...
**Even Without a March, Pride Marches On**

By Erik Bottcher

The LGBTQ community is as vastly diverse as humanity itself. Like a brilliant rainbow, we occupy every gradient in the spectrum of race, gender, nationality, socio-economics and more.

Yet, we are bound together by a common thread, a shared experience rooted in a feeling of “otherness” that is always there and will always be there. Our shared experience is also rooted in our sense of pride as a community.

For me, this sense of community was forged by my experience growing up as an isolated gay teen in the Adirondack mountains in the early nineties. Finding the LGBTQ community saved my life. Never could I have imagined that being gay would be a gift, not a curse, and a source of pride, not of shame.

In June of every year, our community celebrates LGBTQ Pride with events around the world that mark the anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall uprising. This tradition began here in the Village, one year after LGBTQ people fought back against oppression, when New Yorkers and LGBTQ people from across the Northeast gathered around the corner from the Stonewall Inn to demand their civil rights and to assert their humanity. Carrying banners and signs, they walked defiantly up Sixth Avenue to Central Park in the first Christopher Street Liberation Day March.

Year after year we’ve gathered as a community to celebrate the progress we’ve made, take stock of where we are, and forge ahead with renewed determination to rid the world of hatred and discrimination. This year is the 50th anniversary of New York City’s first LGBTQ Pride march, yet, paradoxically, for the first time since 1970 there will be no march.

Though we won’t be marching or rallying at the Stonewall Inn this year, we must still celebrate and commemorate pride. This will be a test of our creativity as a community, but it’s a challenge we must meet. That is why this special LGBTQ Pride issue of Westview News is so important. I want to thank the publishers and contributor Kambiz Shekdar for making it happen.

Somewhere, a young LGBTQ person will find this issue and know that not only are they not alone, but that they are also part of an incredible community.

Erik Bottcher is Chief of Staff to City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and a candidate for City Council, District 3.

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**Partisan Democracy continued from page 6**

slavery erupted in secession and war, the country was saved only by military victory that came at an appalling price. Lincoln’s assassination and the elevation of a Southern sympathizer to the Presidency side-tracked Reconstruction and led to the early removal of United States troops from the former Confederacy. The lesson was that neither the law on the books nor military victory, alone, can compel unity and rub away the resentments of defeat. A victory requires a defense of what has been gained.

As military victory brought power and control to the North and held the country together, allowing enactment and ratification of the Civil War Amendments (XIII, XIV and XV) to the Constitution, what might have been a regionally unpopular but peacefully enforceable mollification and law enforcement process of reunification, left the defeated South to nurse resentments and to deny full rights of citizenship to the formerly enslaved. These resentments linger “on both sides,” as our President likes to say. The Union Army folded its tents and the federal government folded its cards in 1865. Now we have rebels in every corner of the country believing that their resentments are also worthy of recognition and accommodation under the banner of Confederate flags and the paraphernalia of armed resistance.

Partisanship will keep us from our goal of peace, security and good government through representative democracy, unless we recognize the danger and defend against it. In January 2021, we could have a new President, one who can lead us out of the awful partisanship and mean-spiritedness that now engulfs us.

These combative factions—the white nationalists, American Nazis, hinterland anarchists, gangster militias, media trolls, and other “good people on both sides”—are a part of the solution because they’re a part of the problem. Somehow a way must be found to put the positive whole before the negative part. If we cannot do this we will have run out of democratic road and, finally, be consumed by partisanship.
Celebrating Gay Pride in Severe Times

By Robert Heide

In June 1961 my one-act play West of the Moon opened as an off-Broadway production at New Playwrights Theater, on West Third Street at Thompson. It was produced and directed by Lee Paton (later called Lee Nagrin) who had first introduced the early one-act plays of Eugene Ionesco at the Sullivan Street Theater. At New Playwrights, West of the Moon was paired with my play Hester, a work that starred Henrietta Strom and The Blood Boggle, an anti-war play written by Harry Tierney Jr. whose father had written the musical Kio Rit which had a long run on Broadway. The young characters in my play were cast with two top Broadway actors, Paul Giovanni who played a down and out street hustler named Luck, and Joe Ponezecki who played an innocent young man named Billy. The two meet in a Village doorway during a rainstorm. When the triple bill opened, the critics from all top seven newspapers arrived in the lobby. One of them, Judith Crist from the New York Herald Tribune, even before seeing the production, aggressively cornered the producer/director and asked her “where the hell did you get the money to put on these plays?” Word had gotten out that my play featured ‘homosexual’, i.e. ‘gay’ characters, and in those days such a subject was verboten. Newspapers, like the New York Times, and the others, never even used such words in print.

West of the Moon was singled out and condemned with one critic stating, “Robert Heide will never write another play again.” And another writing, “Heide should go home and break his typewriter over his hands.”

On the night of the day I read these attacks I went to the famous San Remo Tavern on MacDougal Street for a drink. There I encountered Edward Albee with his producer Richard Barr. Edward’s play The Zoo Story was running at the moment at the Provincetown Playhouse, and the play focused on a straight married man who stabs and kills a beatnik drifter in Washington Square. Barr said to me with a snicker, “Well Bob, what are you gonna do now?” I thought, “Yeah, what?” What I was thinking was that I probably never would write another play. Some time later I ran into Joe Cino, who said he had seen West of the Moon and wanted me to write another one just like it for his Caffe Cino which was on Cornelia Street. Subsequently I wrote The Bed, an existential time-warps special wherein the two men, drinking and drugging, could not get out of their bed for weeks. Surprise! This one got a great review from The Village Voice critic Eleanor Lester who wrote about it again in The New York Times Magazine stating, “Heide brings two singularly appropriate characters literally lying in the bed of their dissolution. Two men on a bed when ‘sex is dead’ and ‘God is dead’ is what the play is about. Here is the ultimate hang-up, psychologically and metaphysically, and the playwright focuses hard on the essence of the matter. The playwright clearly establishes that what we are witnessing here is the anguish of existence.”

Recent reviews: the first book about the 1969 gay revolution Stonewall, by historian and activist Martin Duberman, I found a quote from the author describing West of the Moon officially as one of the very first gay themed plays ever done off Broadway. I must add that Duberman’s book highlights many stories about one of WestView News’ editors and writers, Jim Fournart, and a young, handsome Jim in a striped shirt in a gay protest march is also pictured on the cover. A later book, entitled Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution, considered definitive and most comprehensive, was written by David Carter who, in addition to being a major consultant for a TV documentary about the Stonewall, also worked closely with the National Park Service on the Obama era designation of the Stonewall Tavern, Christopher Park and the surrounding area as a National Historic Monument. Like Duberman, Carter interviewed me about the events of the Stonewall riots that played out over several days and nights in late June, 1969, setting the stage for the new gay liberation. Sadly he passed away in early May from complications of a heart attack possibly related to the coronavirus.

In these Stonewall books and other written and verbal accounts, readers will find a wealth of information from the participants of those days and nights fifty-one years ago. It was then and there I became, with my partner John Gilman, a rebel with a cause (not to cast aspersions on the great James Dean in Rebel Without a Cause). You will come across the names of Marsha P. Johnson, also known simply as ‘Black Marsha,’ a cross-dressing man who could kick and fight like a superman if needed, and his friend Sylvia Rivera (memorial statues in Greenwich Village for these two are currently in the planning stages); Rollerina waving a wand as she sailed past on roller skates in a light blue chiffon gown with a flowered straw hat; Ruth Truth, the gay Statue of Liberty, dressed in pale green, walking on large wooden platform shoes with bright flame colored hair, a face covered with glitter and holding aloft a torch; fashion editor at the New York Times Robert Bryan, who like other gay men had been in other raids in bars but this time decided to fight back and really enter the fray; Village Voice ‘Scenes’ columnist Howard Smith who was actually barricaded inside the Stonewall Tavern with the police; Jeremiah Newton, writer and producer of the Candy Darling documentary Beautiful Darling; Albert Polan who co-authored the Off Broadway Book with Bruce Mailman and his own just published Singer: A Theater Memoir which chronicles his career as a veteran theater manager and producer of more than 90 Broadway and off-Broadway productions; and Doric Wilson, co-founder of the gay theater company TOSOS, a Caffe Cino playwright, and a bartender at the Christopher Street Tavern Boots and Saddles, who later marched in many of the annual Pride Parades held yearly since 1970 in commemoration of the Stonewall uprising.

For me this revolution was in the air starting in the early sixties with the civil rights movement in full swing, the beat poets Allen Ginsburg, Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso, Jack Micheline, Taylor Mead and the rest over at the Gaslight on MacDougal Street, and the rousing music of folk singers like Pete Seeger, Judy Collins, Peter, Paul and Mary (We Shall Overcome). Gale Garnett (We’ll Sing in the Sunshine), Bobby Darin (A Simple Song of Freedom), Bob Dylan (‘the answer my friend, is blowing in the wind’), Roger McGuinn and The Byrds, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, The Stones, the Beatles and so many more. One floor below me in my own building on Christopher Street I listened to my neighbor Zaf Yanofsky and his girlfriend, Jackie Burroughs, with John Sebastian and the rest of the Lovin’ Spoonful singing You Belie in Magic? Academy nominee Sally Kirkland and Fluxus founder Dick Higgins, who both lived upstairs, as well as John and myself, all belting in the magic of the Andy Warhol’s no-holds-barred Pop Art lifestyle acted out all over New York and the world, in the tabloids and in movie theaters (in 1966 Andy filmed my play The Bed which premiered at the Filmmakers Cinematheque) his gigantic silk-screens of Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Elvis Presley and Campbell’s Soup cans coming to life everywhere in imagined ways. PS—there is a big, fantastic new Warhol biography out this month by Blake Gopnik. Lots of drugs, marijuana and LSD included, added to these enhanced trips. And also, let us not forget, Judy Look for the Silver Lining Garland, the Somewhere Over the Rainbow girl who had coincidentally and tragically died June 22 in London and was brought to New York for her laying out. The body of the great singer and movie star went on display in a clear glass casket at Campbell’s Funeral Home, almost like Snow White, where long lines of gay men waited to have a last look at their idolized icon. In some strange way her death added to the gay revolution about to happen.

For now, self quarantined and in isolation, only going out for necessities in facemasks and latex gloves, we are told not to congregate and “Stay Home” is the motto—and, oh yes, it is officially—“Welcome to The New Great Depression.” The world community is stuck, and so are we—but then we all must persevere to have hope and cheer for better times to come.

The recently published volume Robert Heide 25 Plays includes The Bed and many essays and original production photographs. It’s available on Amazon.

JUNE 26, 1969: Robert Heide (left) and John Gilman on Commerce Street. Later that night, they joined the Stonewall Riots on Sheridan Square. Photo by Philip Cohen.
Caring for the Village takes a village

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Mayday continued from page 3

SBA to approve our pending loan application. Nick, who is his own landlord and tenant, emailed again, “I operate Cinema Village at 22 East 12th Street for all these years (since 1964). Although my credit is excellent, I am willing to give a personal guarantee and whatever it takes to get through this while all our revenue, 100 percent, has been wiped out by the NYC order to shut down, while we must pay full rent/property tax, and we will pay every dollar back.” I tried to help Nick, but he wasn’t getting responses from the people I referred him to.

James Drougas of Un oppressor News wrote in the Los Angeles Times: “The PPP is a Small Business Administration loan program designed to give small businesses financial relief. Businesses can apply for up to 250 percent of their monthly payroll: if your payroll is $100,000 per month, you can apply for a $250,000 loan. The loans are forgiven if 75 percent of the money is used to pay employees. Banks, naturally, will profit. Collecting fees ranging from one percent for loans over $2 million to five percent for loans under $350,000, they stand to make billions from the PPP.”

I check in with Torrie at the Half Pint on West 3rd and Thompson Streets. In desperation she has started a delivery service but explains, “there’s no one around, no kids in the dorms, nothing.” Torrie thinks that the insurance companies need a bailout so that businesses can collect on their losses due to the pandemic. A pandemic is an exclusion clause on every lease.

Regarding the actions taken by authorities concerning the pandemic, Romer continues to take the risk of his big ideas getting hijacked by less-than-genuine partners, because of what he fears stakes are on the line that are just too high. “Our job right now is to defend the things that are important to us.”

When there’s a sudden loss...people tend to go in a couple directions. One is denial: you just can’t believe it’s happened. Another is recrimination: whose fault was this? Who should be blamed? Denial is keeping us from responding to the presence of this virus effectively. Recrimination is going to lead to attacks on strangers. At least, the discourse of hostility towards those who are threats to us. That’s what happened last spring. That’s what is happening now.

When I called or emailed several owners of iconic Village businesses there was no May Day this year, which is the official celebration of spring. When I visited the Village later in the month, I thought of the post-coup government of Honduras as keen on the idea. However, when investors were lured to snatch up some of that Central American country’s famously beautiful coastlines, it turned out that the Transparency Commission—supposedly an objective third party organization that would oversee the rollout of charter cities in Honduras—was a sham. Romer resigned as Chair when he realized, along with everybody else, the irony of a Transparency Commission formed for the sole purpose of obscuring the economy’s death knell.

Romer feels that testing is the nation’s best hope of getting out of this unprecedented moment in history with the least number of wounds to lick. Test fast, test often, and test everyone! For some, these ambitions may bring up anxiety about a government with a license to kill, so to speak—Big Brother with a double-speak that extends beyond operationalization. People are worried about their civil liberties.

“That’s one risk that we face right now. There can be incursions of civil liberties. There could be a further erosion of privacy,” Romer concedes, but asserts, “Just to be clear, my plan [for testing] is designed to make sure we don’t need any kind of digital tracking.”

Who said the road to hell is paved with good intentions? Paul Romer is perhaps best known for a 2009 TED Talk about his Charter Cities Proposal. Not long after that went viral, Romer put his plans into action as the chairperson of a Transparency Commission for the government of Honduras, then the most murderous nation in the world and embroiled in political turmoil due to a coup right around the time of the famous TED Talk.

Criticized by some who viewed it as “neo-colonial,” the charter cities proposal called for developing nations to invite outside investors to build cities within their borders that would be exempt from the host country’s laws and constitution. The post-coup government of Honduras was keen on the idea. However, when investors were lured to snatch up some of that Central American country’s famously beautiful coastlines, it turned out that the Transparency Commission—supposedly an objective third party organization that would oversee the rollout of charter cities in Honduras—was a sham. Romer resigned as Chair when he realized, along with everybody else, the irony of a Transparency Commission formed for the sole purpose of obscuring the reality of how the deeply corrupt government was planning further oppress its citizens.

The devil was exposed in the details. Though post-coup President Lobo—who’s name, fittingly, is the Spanish word for “wolf”—signed a decree naming Romer and four other individuals to a transparency commission in 2011, the decree was never published in a Honduran newspaper. The revelation that the Honduran government failed to satisfy the public notice requirement for new legislation—a common enough legislative practice employed throughout the world, even in New York—and, more importantly, maliciously manipulated Paul Romer’s international celebrity to attract investor interest, led Romer to soberly report to the media at the time, “the Transparency Commission doesn’t even exist in the eyes of the law and the five named members have no legal basis for reviewing any agreements.”

Regarding the actions taken by authorities concerning the pandemic, Romer continues to take the risk of his big ideas getting hijacked by less-than-genuine partners, because of what he fears stakes are on the line that are just too high. “Our job right now is to defend the things that are important to us.”

When there’s a sudden loss...people tend to go in a couple directions. One is denial: you just can’t believe it’s happened. Another is recrimination: whose fault was this? Who should be blamed? Denial is keeping us from responding to the presence of this virus effectively. Recrimination is going to lead to attacks on strangers. At least, the discourse, the language, the discourse of hostility towards strangers, to foreigners, to those who are not like us, those who are threats to us. That’s what happened last spring. That’s what is happening now.

When I called or emailed several owners of iconic Village businesses there was no May Day this year, which is the official celebration of spring. When I visited the Village later in the month, I thought of the other definition of “mayday,” which is the international call of distress. If things don’t change with aid from our government, I’m afraid we will crash and there will be a lot of casualties. There is still time to prevent this crash by contacting your elected officials; or send a letter to the editor at Westview News, at geapsis@gmail.com, and we will forward it to local officials.
How We Survive

By Jim Fouratt

I am looking forward to celebrating the anniversary of the first Christopher Street March for Liberation. It is important to honor the 200 brave people (including myself) who left Sheridan Square and marched up to Central Park on Sunday, June 28th, 1970. By the time we got to the Park we were over 500 people. We marched into the Sheep Meadow filling it with what looked like thousands of New Yorkers sunning and picnicking on a perfect late June sunny day, but not too hot, day in the Park.

Yes, there were also Marches in LA and SF and a gathering in Chicago that I knew of that day, but New York’s was first. The language of the signage we carried reflected the politics of the early movement’s desire for liberation, equality, and freedom. We were amused that the New York Times said we were thousands, But the truth is our actual numbers, not counting all the sun-worshippers in the Sheep Meadow, was much less than a thousand.

But it was the beginning.

The person most responsible for organizing the March was the owner of the Oscar Wilde Bookstore, Craig Rodwell. We were friends before the Stonewall Rebellion. He had bravely opened the Oscar Wilde Bookstore, a lesbian and gay bookstore on a side street just above Washington Square and right in the heart of NYU’s campus. I remember I would visit frequently. We would sit around and talk politics. Sometimes Robert Martin, a Columbia University student, would join us. I was in my hippie anti-war organizing drug and Craig a cross between bookseller and beatnik.

We developed a close friendship. It was late October 1969 when he called me and said, “Come over to the store, I have something serious to talk to you about Digger, (Digger was my hippie name sometimes). I got there and he said right after he let me in. “We have to do something to celebrate our year of coming out and building a movement out gay people.”

I was very much involved in the Gay Liberation Front at the time. GLF had over a dozen active cells in the New York City chapter. They focused on everything from political actions to community outreach to reflect the diversity of who we actually are to cells for women, Hispanics; cells for consciousness-raising (gender-specific); cells for organizing our dances and other social events as an alternative to the bars and finally to publishing COME OUT, our newspaper!

Independent chapters were springing up all across the country, mostly on college campuses. I remember being in a cell that would go to other cities to help people form their own GLF. We held demonstrations in front of the Village Voice (because the liberal paper’s advertising director refused to take our ad announcing a gay dance); we demonstrated at the Women’s House of Detention in support of Angela Davis; we joined anti-war marches welcome or not. The lesbians targeted homophobia in the woman’s movement.

At this time “gay” was the word being used to include both men and women, GLF was co-gendered. It was agreed it had to be reflected in our language; it soon became a GLF principle that when we said gay it meant men, lesbian was used to signify women.

We were coming out across the country. We were becoming visible.

But we still had no job protection, we could be fired for being homosexual, for fulfilling our erotic desires.

Craig invited a small group again in mid-December and this time he was prepared, He stood up and unfolded the GLF COME OUT recruitment poster that Peter Hujar and I had worked on. It was to be a recruitment poster for GLF and published by the COME OUT newspaper. Peter and I had decided that COME OUT would be our theme.

We wanted to picture a world where we were liberated and not afraid. We invited over four weeks of announcements at the GLF weekly meetings that anyone who wanted to be in the poster should just show up. Peter had us running down a street (actually below Houston in what later became Soho). Peter took the photo (I was in it): Lesbians and gay men smiling and not hiding in shadows, a sharp contrast to the fear a closeted culture had built to defend itself against homophobia and misogyny.

Brenda Howard was active in the GLF women’s caucus and joined me at that meeting, When we finished we set a new date to meet. Craig announced he was going to ask the newly forming Gay Activist Alliance to join our organizing group. He did, and despite GLF and GAA’s heated political difference, we planned the March together.

History was made.

We marched without a police permit, not knowing if we would be arrested or attacked. Our energy was high because we were out and we were together.

Looking back, these marches have become quite different, reflecting not only our success at being visible everywhere, but also because we have become a market to be exploited.

In the 70s at one point, the Mafia took control of the march and named their bag man at the Stonewall Inn, Ed Murphy, an Irish gay thug, as Grand Marshall. They changed the name to parade, and the word stuck to the dismay of older activists. Murphy invited Marsha P. Johnson, a GLF member and co-founder, along with Sylvia Rivera of STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolution) to ride with him in his official convertible. Marsha did…

in complete male drag. Marsha had always identified as a gay man who liked to dress up and be pretty. Marsha told me that “Gay Day” was always the happiest day of his life.

The ‘80s and 90s brought the AIDS pandemic, parades became more militant with the emergence of ACT UP and became Marches for our lives.

The success of the LGBT labor organizing efforts over 30 years made it safe for corporations to publicly support their LGBT workers. This is a victory. The success of the commodification of our community as a market (meaning co-optation) and the money that flowed into the organizations that had rebranded liberation as PRIDE was self-evident. The tension between a celebration of some of our success, and the increasing issue of racism, police enforcement, gender expression repression, and elected officials’ actions or inactions, resulted in a break up of unity.

It meant that in the year of what should have been a celebration of 50 years of change and advancement instead brought about the creation of ReClaim Pride dedicated to returning to the radical roots that produced the Christopher Street Liberation March.

In 2019, in NYC, the birthplace of the Stonewall Rebellion, the “Queer March” took place in the very streets that had produced the Stonewall Rebellion. 40,000 LGBTQ+ people marched to show solidarity as out homosexuals and gender expression rebels committed publicly that we would fight against racism both in and out of our communities, fight for justice equality, fight for workers documented or not, fight for sane gun policy, and an environment where we can breath and all life is sustainable, and finally, and perhaps most importantly, the right to control our own bodies.

These are dangerous times: The Supreme Court will decide this year if we have the right to be different in gender expression and appearance, and whether neither will be the basis for being fired or not hired for work; the right for all citizens regardless of race, gender, age, ability, and gender expression to be treated equally under the law.

These are dangerous times: The attacks upon the separation of Church and State, a foundation of our Democracy and Constitution; the increasing success of the religious-nationalists who seek a theocracy, not a democracy. We have a Vice President who believes in conversion therapy. We have a Supreme Court now stacked with Justices who appear to let religious bias temper their rulings instead of equality and protection under the law for all.

These are dangerous times. It is time to WAKE UP, cast off fear and the feeling of powerlessness, take action, by any means necessary: I choose the vote, and you?
Society Is Ready for a Renaissance

By Calogero Salvo

During this reclusive period, my mind has been flying to other moments of my life where, similar to the current experiences, I felt fear. The fear I lived during the AIDS pandemic in the early 80’s when I was a young man was extraordinary. I thought death was imminent. My life and that of my partner, friends and the community where I lived seemed to be coming to an end as many of us saw no hope and no future. Forty years later, during the COVID-19 crisis, I have been experiencing similar feelings of panic, doubts and anxiety. Of course the actual situation is not exactly the same.

At the very beginning of the AIDS pandemic mostly gay men were pointed at, accused, attacked and in some cases killed. We were persecuted, fired and evicted from our homes. The information about the disease was scarce and people were fearful and looking for a scapegoat to blame for the crisis, which in that case was the Gay community as a whole.

This unfortunate reality has been common throughout humanity’s history. It happened with the imprisonment of Japanese American citizens who were placed in concentration camps in American territory; to the European Jewish people during WW2; to Muslims in Croatia, to the Kurds, to indigenous tribes all over the world, to the Nepalese, to the Indian Muslims and most recently to Mexican immigrants in the USA who were also placed in detention camps.

The weak, the different, the so-called “black sheep” have to pay for the ignorance, racism, classism, bigotry, sexism and homophobia that continues to be rampant the world over.

These are our constant plagues that have no end in sight.

As we continue to quarantine in our isolated homes I cannot stop thinking about what will it be like when all of this is over.

Will society really change? Will individuals lose their narcissism and give to society more than they take? Will the economic turbulence subside and life will be restored to “business as usual”? Will poverty, disenfranchisement, homelessness, sexism, sexphobia, bias, bigotry or apartheid cease to exist?

At this instant I am sad to admit that I have doubts there will be major changes.

For a moment during these long days enclosed in our cocoon together with my husband, I dreamt of a better future, a coming of age for a new world, a rebirth of our cruel and unfair society where capital accumulation and selfishness dominates every aspect of it.

I thought for a time, that when we resumed our lives, we would be stronger and healthier and look at these devastating times as a point of departure for the birth of a new civilization.

A place where people would be respected as individuals and not just as numbers; where women will be equally valued; where all minorities would have a chance to control, and reshape their communities; where LGBTQ+ people would be able to safely come out everywhere; where medicine and education would be available for everyone no matter their social status; where economics would be seen as a tool to create growth and betterment for everyone and not just the typical status quo; where government’s functions would be to ameliorate our communities and not as a never-ending, dishonest, distorted, ugly and absurdly expensive blah blah blah of political campaigning.

But as the days of confinement became longer, my dream dissipated and I grew angrier and restless as I kept realizing that whatever we had before the pandemic was already unstable, decrepit and filled with false expectations.

What would become of the homeless, the poor, the migrants, the sick, the disenfranchised and the ecosystem itself?

I was disturbed and scared because we continue to be unprotected, we continue to lack humanity in our decisions. We do not see beyond today’s weather report. We are blind, deaf and absurdly primitive in the way we approach and tend to solve problems. What this pandemic is obviously depicting is how disparaged our society has been toward the have nots who happen to be the vast majority.

These are difficult times for all of us. These are moments of majestic importance for our well-being and that of our communities as we collectively face a rollercoaster ride that is impacting the whole planet in ways we never imagined.

This global pandemic is making us realize how interconnected we all are and how similar our trajectories are across the world. I believe it is of paramount importance to react with serenity but with courage because such is needed to regroup, rethink and relaunch our new society. If we ever had a chance for change, perhaps this is the moment—carpe diem.

A quote by Confucius has been stuck in my mind: “When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don’t adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.”

Now more than ever we need everyone’s vision, diligence, guidance, smartness and toughness to help us move forward and overcome these arduous and painful times.

It will not be easy and it will not be fast but the opportunity is before us. Society is ready for a renaissance.

Calogero Salvo, is an independent filmmaker living in NYC. Originally from Venezuela, Salvo has been part of the independent film community since the beginning of his career and has served on the Boards of Directors of many organizations.
Pride Inside

By Ed Chinery

Do you know that feeling that everything’s okay? When you’re safe and loved? Feel like you belong? And the opposite. A sense of foreboding. Uneasy in mind, body or spirit. What difference do these feelings make in your thinking and behavior?

I was born in 1957 and have known since age five that I’m gay. I didn’t have a name for it then, but I knew I wanted what mom and dad had, except with a boy. It didn’t take long, even as a child, for me to realize that because of who I was, there was less belonging for me and less safety. Both at home and in the world.

In my teens, though, things began to change. Women, blacks, gays—no longer able to remain ashamed and hidden—we stood up, one after another, with what seemed a newly invented brand of pride. Pride was declared in both speech and action, and it was breathtaking. A new enlightenment was making for fresh understanding of common humanity, and it was happening just as I began to feel grown-up. Best of all, it meant I no longer felt I had to keep running to get away from that foreboding that comes of not belonging. My otherwise loving family hadn’t known how to help me, but what was going on in the world did. I still cherish those first inklings of pride in who I truly am and how that changed the world and me.

The fears I had as a secretly gay boy don’t live in the front of my consciousness any more. And, honestly, I don’t think so much about ‘pride’, either. Sure, I totally work the Pride Parade in June. It marches right past the Episcopal church on Fifth Avenue where I currently serve. But for me—and I mean no disrespect—the parade has become about entertainment and marketing. Sure, there’s tons of belonging, which is great, but questions sometimes hang over it, for me, about how the event helps make connection with deeper meanings of love and safety.

Then maybe that’s the best part of the Pride Parade. It’s a celebration, the living energy of which also wants to spill over into all of life, so attendees will go forth empowered by our own pride inside, and know we can always draw from that well. I probably wouldn’t be making observations like this if it weren’t for quarantine. It has me considering lots of things differently and has led to hidden wonders about layers of pride deep within me.

“Pride inside” is partly my response to social movements that have wrought change. But the underlying longing to make manifest or strengthen safety, feeling loved and belonging—that longing is like a living energy field that won’t be contained. Experience of it is very personal, yet it’s definitely not something that can be mine alone. Neither can my pride be over and against yours. That living energy wants to expand and come to characterize all of humanity. Wants to be communicated in the world in ways that affirm shared vulnerability in the human need to feel loved and safe and that we belong.

Then maybe that’s the best part of the Pride Parade. It’s a celebration, the living energy of which also wants to spill over into all of life, so attendees will go forth empowered by our own pride inside, and know we can always draw from that well. Know we can adopt, as a result, kinder ways of thinking and behaving that generate and share the living spirit of pride, in our homes, neighborhoods, and city.

The faith community I serve celebrates being about 40% LGBT+. And our collective pride inside steadily leads to various hands-on ways of growing that living energy in ourselves and others. Whether it’s hunger relief (pantry program), subversion of immigration injustice (hosting New Sanctuary Coalition trainings), combating voter suppression (film program/postcard campaign) or supporting local efforts to cure AIDS (go RFTCA)—we’re all about joy-filled inward recognition and outward demonstration of making safety, belonging and feeling loved the reality for everybody!

Ed Chinery is Associate Rector of The Church of the Ascension – 5th Avenue and 10th Street. For further information on their programming: 212-254-8620, fatherschinery@ascensionnyc.org, info@ascensionnyc.org

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Joy Pape, Family Nurse Practitioner

joypape@mac.com

917-806-1945
Tipping the Balance of Power

By James Roman

Discrimination was legal in the early 1980s. Gays could lose their homes, jobs, custody, you name it, because there were no laws to prevent it. New York City had an Ordnance: No discrimination based on race, color, creed, age, gender, or disability. To that list, gay New Yorkers requested three more words: “and sexual orientation.” For eleven years, those three words incited some of the angriest, ugliest debates in the City Council, where the “Gay Rights Bill” consistently failed to earn votes by a two-thirds majority to secure its passage.

I attended those hearings. I saw who voted against gay rights. In 1983, when the bill’s passage failed for its tenth consecutive year, I took action. Out of my own pocket, I hired an attorney and registered a political action committee that could raise funds in New York City and State. I invited nine friends with money, responsibility and enormous rolodexes to join me in forming FAIRPAC, to “support the friends and defeat the enemies of gay rights legislation.”

In that pre-Internet era when most organizations kept records on paper, FAIRPAC had a computer. We pooled our rolodexes, and our computerized mailing list was born. From my midtown office, we printed slick solicitations, then rallied an army of volunteers to stuff envelopes; we convinced donors to send our solicitations to their mailing lists too. As persistent mercenaries raising money within gay networks, we succeeded promptly.

Next task: locate the incumbent enemies, then identify candidates who are “friends” to replace them. It was shocking to discover how far a small donation could stretch. We were legally permitted to donate a nickel-name for every registered voter in each district. A one-time donation of just $2500 to the candidates for three of our nine boardmembers, the politicians who blocked gay civil rights needed to feel an indignant itch-slap from the gay community. Could thousands of gay dollars tip the balance of power? We were the first ones to try.

City Council races were two years off. Our test run came one year earlier, as FAIRPAC supported candidates for State Assembly. In the photo, FAIRPAC contributed to the 1984 campaigns of Bill Thom, a gay Civil Court Judge, Larry Seabrook, a candidate for Bronx State Assembly, and Chuck Hitchcock, a gay State Assembly candidate from Long Island. (FAIRPAC Boardmembers appear in the back row.) (Author: back row center.) Photo credit: Roberta Raeburn.

By Anthony Paradise

NYU Graduate Student Workers Sick-Out Protest Due to COVID

On Mar. 9, New York University moved all of its classes to remote learning and on Mar. 13 NYU officially closed its campus buildings due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the graduate student workers, who help teach classes as teaching assistants at NYU have lost their jobs and become dependent on financial assistance from the University to make ends meet.

“NYU Sick-Out” was a three-day-strike organized by a group of NYU graduate students who wanted to protest what they felt was a lack of financial support from NYU to address the needs of its students during the pandemic. On Mar 31, the Sick-Out sent an open letter to NYU’s Provost outlining the demands they wanted the University to meet. Those demands include providing graduate students with “three months of emergency summer funding in the form of a living wage” and the “option of a degree extension for all graduate students.” The letter also demands the University provide “immediate support for international and undocumented students,” who are facing the end of their Student Visas.

Jackson Smith is a doctoral student at NYU, who was among the core organizers of the Sick-Out. Smith described how graduate students at NYU came together to start the Sick-out in late April.

“A group of us got together at this town hall last Wednesday to talk about how we could escalate this campaign and our demands,” Smith said. “Then someone brought up the idea of having a sick-out and using our guaranteed sick days in our contracts as TAs to withhold our labor as TAs. So we decided to get the ball rolling on that there.”

The graduate students who met at the town hall on April 30, held a vote to decide if they should follow through with the Sick-Out. Smith said, “we voted on [the sick-out] and it was supported by more than 95 % of the attendees.”

Nevertheless, NYU has not been stirred by Sick-Out’s momentum.

“The provost didn’t really respond to [Sick-out] and said that we’d have to wait longer for any response. Meanwhile the semester is coming to an end and NYU graduate students, most of whom can’t pay over the summer and instead rely on jobs and sources of academic funding for research and teaching that is now not available or less available due to the current economic crisis.”

On Mar 31, 2020, NYU Spokesperson, John Beckman responded to Sick-Out and said, “a job-action by graduate workers would be a violation of the contract they signed and agreed to.”

Beckman does not acknowledge the fact that the student workers decided to organize the Sick-Out because they were desperate for help from the University during the unforeseen circumstances that the pandemic has set forth. Beckman glosses over NYU’s responsibility to assist its graduate student workers during a pandemic that has left most of them poorly equipped to continue their studies and unemployed.

NYU says on their website NYU.edu that they have not received the “Federal CARES Act funding” they are supposed to get. NYU goes on to say “If and when NYU takes possession of the funds, the University is committed to using all the money it receives for direct student assistance, including continuing the COVID-19 emergency grant program through the rest of the spring, the summer, and the fall for students with financial need.” According to an article in Forbes titled “The Colleges Getting The Most Money from the Stimulus Bill” NYU will receive $25 million from the “coronavirus relief package” that Congress has designated for higher education institutions. The article also shows that the relief funding designated for NYU is the second highest among private, non-profit higher education institutions in the United States.

According to a resource document detailing NYU’s finances, these are the three highest level administrators at NYU, who make the richest annual salaries: President Andrew Hamilton’s “annual compensation” is $1.9 million, NYU’s Chief Investment Officer Jacobs’ annual compensation is $1.5 million, and NYU Law Academic Director R. Stewart’s annual compensation is $8.7 million. According to the document, NYU pays its graduate students a stipend worth $28,145. Meanwhile the document estimates that the cost of living in New York City is $37,000. The document also reveals “In 2018, NYU’s President received the equivalent of 67.5 graduate student stipends.”

According to the document, NYU has a $4.264 billion endowment, which it can use with respect to “donor restrictions,” so it is not completely available. The document also says that NYU is receiving an estimated $25 million in federal bail out money, and that 50% will be used as emergency financial aid student grants for expenses due to campus disruption.” It remains a mystery where the other 50% of that federal bailout money will be used. NYU has campuses across the globe and may need it to prop up its expansion plans.

Jackson Smith described how NYU could change the way it handles its finances in the future to provide better financial assistance to its student workers during the pandemic.

“We think this is time for NYU to shift some of the wealth it has away from its capital plans, away from its real-estate portfolio and towards student workers that rely on this institution to make a living in New York City.”
Let’s Get Real About Aging:
COVID-19 and Ageism

By Gail Evans

“The pandemic has amplified ageism,” read the headline in the May 1st Los Angeles Times. “It’s open season for discrimination against older people.” If anyone can speak to ageism, it’s my friend Jack Kupferman, I thought. So, I called and asked him to weigh in. Jack is President of New York City’s Gray Panthers, an advocacy organization that’s been fighting for the rights of older people since the early 70s. Working with the Florence Belsky Foundation, Gray Panthers recently developed Senior Strong NYC (www.seniormstrongnyc.org), a Resource Guide with sections on how to live well and, yes, even thrive, despite being shut-in by the coronavirus.

Jack agreed that we’re seeing more instances of overtly ageist behavior and rhetoric. But he is less concerned about the flare-up of anti-elder sentiment than about the deeply embedded institutional ageism uncovered by the pandemic. As with homophobia, racism, and sexism—the other “isms” that plague our society—there are personal and intentional acts of ageism, and then there are the more insidious and pernicious institutional biases. These pervade our social structures and affect how we distribute resources, power and opportunity. Systemic and diffused, they are hard to eradicate. And because their noxious nature is disguised as societal norms, we unwittingly accept and even subscribe to them. Ageism perpetuates inequalities in the workplace, housing, medicine, marketing, advertising, entertainment, the media—the list could go on. It works by devaluing older people as a group, shunting their interests aside in policy and practice decisions, and treating them either with pity, or with contempt and neglect, solely on the basis of their age.

Institutional ageism in long-term care has now come home to roost in the horrific spread of the virus in nursing homes, Jack pointed out. “Profit has won out over people, time and time again,” he said bitterly. “Nursing home residents are mostly old, shut away, have no voice, and are literally invisible, so they’re easily expendable. Even before the pandemic, many homes run by for-profits were cited for poor infection-disease control and inadequate and ill-prepared staffing. But the operators didn’t care. They continued to underpay staff and ignore quality of care concerns because fines and penalties were low, and, anyway, they could count on society turning a blind eye. Now, we are horrified at the deaths. But where were we when alarms were raised decades ago? Things now may not be as bad as they used to be, and I’m not saying all nursing homes were a disaster. Nursing homes being petri dishes for infection, we probably would have had this terrible outcome no matter what. But there needn’t have been this dramatic and excessive loss of life.”

Jack cited other examples of institutional ageism. “Home care workers are notoriously underpaid because we don’t value the lives of the elders they care for. We have yet to learn how to get the best from older employees in the workforce, overlooking their experience and institutional memory in favor of technological expertise. Older people are under-represented in medical clinical trials. In fact, data collection about older persons lags across the world, so we don’t have enough research to suggest evidence-based solutions and approaches to improve not only elders’ health care and economic welfare, but to create opportunities for them to fully participate in their societies. Even in social services, elder abuse is only beginning to get the attention given to domestic abuse.”

If the economy continues to falter, age discrimination will be emboldened, Jack believes. “The idea of a fair share for seniors will go on a back burner. It’s been a battle to get senior housing, and that push will weaken. There will be retrenchment and competition for resources, so retirees who use their expertise as consultants in a gig economy won’t have a chance. There will be cutbacks in senior services.”

I asked Jack how we fight ageism. “By re-envisioning the relationship between the generations and creating partnerships,” he answered, “and by seniors themselves not yielding to marginalization and invisibility. Our Senior Strong NYC Campaign is a good example of how to stand up to invisibility. Especially in these times, it’s critical that every older person has the resources to ensure health, love, security, dignity and rights. Living your best life, even when shut-in, is the best antidote to ageism.” The campaign (@SeniorStrongNYC) is on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.
COVID-19: Tales from the Frontline

By Matt Razon

Before I get to telling you all about my experience as a frontliner in the fight against COVID-19, let me tell you a little about myself. I am a Physician Assistant and have been practicing in Emergency Medicine for almost 20 years. I currently work in several locations. I work in a Level I Trauma Center, a Critical Access hospital and an Urgent Care Clinic. Therefore, what I have seen varies greatly.

I have to say however, I have been extremely lucky that all my locations have supplied me with great PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). Some better than others, but nonetheless, I have been extremely well protected and I feel for those that haven’t been. My PPE has varied from N95 masks and Tyvek suits, and helmet and face shields to N95, paper gowns and plastic shields.

I think the best way to share and paint this crazy picture is to separate my clinical settings. My main clinical setting is an intercity Level I Trauma Center Emergency Department. Sometimes here it feels like anger painting. Things are just insane and all over the place as we see about 135,000 patients per year. Oddly enough, until recently our numbers have been down. I think people were and still are just afraid to come into the department. This is a “be careful what you wish for” type scenario. At times, we have hoped that some people wouldn’t come to the ER. The runny noses, belly pain for a year, and hangnails. However, now the folks that aren’t coming are the chest pains, facial droops, and appendicitis that has been going on for four days and now has burst. I worry what the long term ramifications of COVID-19 will be for these patients.

Now, what have you all been waiting for. What about the COVID-19 patients? They are sick!!! Intubated (on breathing machines), proned (on their stomach), and on high-flow oxygen. Now we have all heard that the old and people with pre-existing conditions are at most risk, but everyone is sick. Young and healthy are sick as well. People are dying that shouldn’t be.

It has changed the way things are done. Rooms are closed with signs not to go in without PPE. No one is in the hallway anymore. They are holding ICU (Intensive Care Unit) patients in the ED because there isn’t room for them upstairs. Everything is wiped and sprayed down with a bleach solution. It is then not used for at least 10 minutes and another cubicle is utilized. Once the nurse or other clinician is finished in the tent they undergo a 10-15 minute rigorous sanitizing process which includes being sprayed down with a bleach solution. Lastly, it is wiped.

The Urgent Care Center. I never thought when I chose a career in medicine that it would be hard to find work. The Urgent Cares were hit hard and many closed their doors. It wasn’t until recently that I returned to work there.

Many Urgent Cares are again starting to see an uptick in volume. Many are offering drive through COVID-19 swabbing, and where I work they offer bloodwork for antibody testing. It has become our bread and butter. I am starting to see the simple things again. For example, sprains/strains, lacerations, pink eye, etc.

I have seen a lot of interesting, crazy, and amazing things over the last 20 years. Nothing at all compares to what I have seen since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In an ever-changing world, I am grateful that one thing hasn’t changed. Every day that I go to work, regardless of where, I am able to put my PPE and do my best to make a difference in people’s lives. This is more important to me then ever, as patients are not allowed family or friends to accompany them. We will get through this but we have to do it together. Stay safe!!!

MATT RAZON MS-C is a Physician Assistant with 20 years of experience in Emergency Medicine. He currently works in a Level I Trauma Center, a Critical Access Hospital and Urgent Care Clinics throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut. Matt also has experience and expertise in Wilderness Medicine and is part of Wild Med Adventures, www.wildmedadventures.com.

Find Your Sparkle and Supercharge Your Immunity

By Timothy Stahl

COACH TIM, CHHC, AADP, HI-Vegan

HIV/AIDS, once an obvious killer, is now quiet and subtle. I don’t know about you, but I’m tired of hearing about PrEP, viral suppression, meds, doctors, etc. After all, we’re adults and should have the basics under control. That’s where I come in as your health and wellness coach, guiding you through what comes next. When learned I had HIV in 2004, I wanted to know more about how to control my own health and thrive with HIV. Something told me there was a part of my health and my doctor became part of my tribe. It takes a village. My t-cells tripled, my meds remained the same, and I was last there was 12. It’s been an incredible journey.

I call this the quiet killer. It can be a part-time job keeping things together and many fall miserably. You don’t have to. I want to help. In 2013, nearly nine years after being diagnosed, I was suicidal, with brain fog, insomnia, acne, stomach issues, endoscopies and colonoscopies, eye exams, throat exams, etc. I went through it and you don’t have too. Nothing helped, not switching meds or specialists. Although my numbers were ok, I suffered with wanting to stay alive, depression, anxiety, loneliness and depression. Little did I know a holistic approach to life and nutrition could help me thrive with HIV. I wish someone had told me in 2004 what to expect and what was possible.

Doctors are good at the basics but less so at discussing nutrition and a holistic approach to HIV regimens once meds are controlled. I don’t blame them; our healthcare system only allows so much time to spend with us and much of that is paperwork.

My life changed when I took control of my health and my doctor became part of my tribe. It takes a village. My t-cells tripled, my meds remained the same, and everything melted away. I still have hard days, but now I know I’m doing everything I can to stay healthy into my fifties, sixties and seventies. You should be doing the work now, reducing inflammation, so your body will hold up for decades to come.

If you are coachable, let us set up a free twenty minute immunity consultation by phone or computer and discuss how I can assist you towards better health; physically, mentally and emotionally. Check our website at www.timothysterionutrition.com. You can also sign up for an appointment on my Facebook business page at TEN, Timothy Eric Nutrition.

I have one goal, to share my knowledge with you and support you anyway I can. To be a friend and mentor in this crazy world, while living with a shitty dis-EASE. To be a part of your village.
The Last Stand of St. Vincent’s: Healthcare Heroes in Another Pandemic

By Drew Davis

Pride will feel different in the West Village this year, but the LGBTQ community has persevered through hard times before. Our vibrant pocket of New York City stood first, and stood tall, for the gay community in the midst of another pandemic 40 years ago. At that time, staff at St. Vincent’s Hospital, a flagship of New York City healthcare from 1849 to 2010, showed that heroes tend to wear scrubs more than capes. Dr. Victor Keyloun, a physician at St. Vincent’s in the early 1980s, shared this story.

In the late 1970s, medical journals began to describe case studies of young, previously healthy men across the nation who’d been afflicted with uncommon disorders like Kaposi’s sarcoma and pneumocystis pneumonia. Before long, the epidemic reached New York City, and young gay men who’d suddenly become very ill showed up at hospitals, often having been turned away by family due to phobia about their sexual orientation and the pathogen they carried.

“By 1981, it became pretty obvious that whatever was infecting this group of people was devastating, because they were dying very quickly.” Although hospitals were mandated to take in the sick, many did so reluctantly. They found various excuses for why they couldn’t treat patients; at the time, unabridged homophobia and fear afflicted some healthcare workers too. But word began to spread through the gay community about a place to go if you needed help.

“If other hospitals could find a way to delay, postpone, or obfuscate the symptoms, saying ‘we’re not capable,’ the word got out that St. Vincent’s would take you.” Under the compassionate leadership of the Sisters of Charity nuns, the healthcare workers at St. Vincent’s took in those who had nowhere else to go. No matter how sick, gay, or poor they might have been, St. Vincent’s welcomed them. And as people with AIDS gravitated to this sanctuary West Village hospital, the doctors and nurses there, only five blocks north of the Stonewall Inn, became increasingly adept at caring for these tragically sick individuals, evolving into national leaders in the charge against AIDS. Of course, compassion and spirit alone weren’t a cure; these were heartbreaking times. But day after day, the dogged St. Vincent’s staff came to work, put on their scrubs, and provided care as excellent as existed anywhere. Patients weren’t patients, they were family.

“From a personal point of view and from an institutional point of view, it was a devastating time. But through it all, the entire AIDS epidemic, they were heroic.” As the years passed, therapies emerged that could slow the advance of AIDS and, finally, combination therapy replaced palliative care. And while people with AIDS desperately needed this treatment haven, St. Vincent’s had also relied on AIDS patients out of financial necessity—another reason they took in these sick young men without judgement. This hospital that had served the city through disasters like the sinking of the Titanic and the 1918 Spanish flu was running out of money before AIDS emerged. Even with the financial support that came from caring for people with AIDS, the hospital entered a financial hole it never emerged from and finally shut its doors in 2010. Today, all that remains is the New York City AIDS Memorial located in the park on Seventh Avenue across from where the hospital stood.

Those days passed, and the perseverance of the LGBT community during subsequent challenges is one reason why Pride holds such a special place in so many hearts. This year, even though rainbows may shine through our screens instead of in our streets, there’s still cause to rejoice. The story of St. Vincent’s reminds us that acts of kindness for those in need can outlast any virus. That’s something worth celebrating.

Drew Davis is a copywriter entering medical school in the fall. Originally from Maryland, he moved to New York City in 2018.

WHAT IS MULTISYSTEM INFLAMMATORY SYNDROME IN CHILDREN?

Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) is a new health condition associated with COVID-19.

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IF YOUR CHILD IS SEVERELY ILL, GO TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM OR CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

For more information, call 311 or visit nyc.gov/coronavirus.
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We Don't Need
WestView.
We Need
Good Neighbors.

Of course we don’t “need” WestView News, and if, like the several other vanished Village newspapers, it evaporated tonight there might be just a momentary regret at not being able to check the In and Out column to once again re-mind ourselves that our Village memo- ries are disappearing faster than they can become a memory.

Of course I like WestView, it gives me something to do and when I have an opinion I don’t have to make the TV re-pairman listen to it. I can write it in the paper and maybe 10,000 people will see it and a hundred even read it.

And of course our regular contributors love it—Brian Pape, our Architectural Editor, can have as many as four excel-lent articles in each issue. Nearly all our regular contributors live in the West Vil-lage—they walk to our regular monthly contributors meetings. If you write for us you will be invited to attend.

But Sarah Jessica Parker was right—the April issue was our most important and hence our best issue because it reported on the virus. We printed two full pages of drawings from Northwell on how to deal with it, and our readers can keep those handsome clinically correct drawings around as useful reminders.

And, if you were going to ask “do we really need a local paper,” look at the January issue when we discovered that it is legal for a lawyer to pay somebody to allo-cate a crumpled $100 bill. (We printed one—so they mail us a check or they don’t even know a neighbor who has one—so they mail us a check or perhaps a handwritten note saying how much you love it and a hundred even read it)

In and Out articles—something to do and when I have an opinion. I can write it in the paper and maybe 10,000 people will see it and a hundred even read it.

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The Bicycle Thief

By Brian J. Pape, AIA, LEED-AP

Ever since the pandemic created stay-at-home recommendations and closed shops, theaters, gyms and restaurants, looking for recreation can become very limited and boring.

Discovering bicycle rides, with full protective gear, turns out to be fully compliant with social-distancing guidelines: I go for long stretches speaking to no one, touching nothing but the bike, and getting close to no one, even when passing other bikers.

My usual ride has been over the East River bridges to Brooklyn and Queens, and on or around the 9/11 Memorial-Battery Park greenway, or up to Central Park.

With more time for these outings, I challenged myself to go on longer rides. One cool sunny day, I determined to complete the circumference of Manhattan Island, about 33 miles in four hours. Approximately 75 percent of Manhattan's waterfront provides bike paths or greenways; the other 25 percent is city streets and stoplights. This means that leaving the shoreline route is an uphill climb; in some places, like the George Washington Bridge or the Highbridge Park areas, the hills are as high as 10-story buildings.

Several such long rides, and longer ones deeper into Queens, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and even Staten Island (masks are required on the ferry, though it's almost empty in both directions!), really felt rewarding, and I looked forward to more.

Then in early May, on a mid-day ride up to Central Park, I stopped on Eighth Avenue to check out a green grocer cart on the sidewalk; the carts had disappeared in my neighborhood, so I took notice of this one. I leaned my bike against a post so I could look at the produce, turning my back but a moment, and when I turned to go back to the bike it was gone, nowhere in sight. Just like that, I was deprived of my reliable transportation (I was reminded of the wild west, where horse thievery was a capital crime!).

Thus began my exposure to one more side-effect of the pandemic—the insane demand for bicycles! I immediately set about shopping for second-hand bikes, hoping for a quick replacement. First, I stopped at local bike shops, but all they had were their used rental bikes, bare bones. I soon discovered, even on Craigslist online, the prices for lesser bikes would add up to the cost of a new one if I added fenders and backrack to match my old Trek bike. (Speaking of online shopping, how would I know if those offerings were not stolen as well?)

So, the decision was made to look for a new bike, but not too fancy since I didn't want it to attract too much attention. Once again I made the rounds of my local bike shops: Waterfront Bikes, Echelon Bikes, Bicycle Habitat, Trek Bikes, Specialized Bikes.

Enter the world of Supply and Demand! The supply chain is all centered in China, even for American manufacturers like Trek, Specialized, and Jamis, so you can guess that those factories have been shut down for awhile! And the demand? I confirmed over and over that it was "through the roof!" That makes for a very difficult market. Shops can't get deliveries, warehouse are running out of every style, prices are going up. Though the bike shops are labeled "essential businesses" and are open, they are all very cramped, packed with bikes and parts, so only one or two people at a time can enter, slowing any service you can get. Lines form quickly.

When I got my chance, I ordered from a local dealer's in-store catalog for the perfect, in-stock (at the warehouse) American manufacturer bike, promised to arrive and be assembled for me in two or three days tops. I was thrilled!

Two weeks later, despite my repeated calls, visits, and pleading, the dealer has yet to receive delivery and the warehouse is too busy to return calls and can't be certain when it would ship!

I'm using the heavy Citi Bikes, but just for short rides.

Oh well, I am thankful I can breathe and still enjoy the fresh breeze as I ride.

Brian J. Pape is a LEED-AP "green" architect consulting in private practice, serves on the Manhattan District 2 Community Board, is co-chair of the American Institute of Architects NY Design for Aging Committee, and is a journalist.
Recently Re-opened

The Corner at Bar Sardine (183 West 10th Street at the corner of West 4th Street) has opened in the Bar Sardine space. Their theme is “Stayin’ in the City? Us too. Let’s have some fun. Like Montauk in Manhattan,” and their dinner menu has lobster rolls, shrimp rolls, cold fried chicken and shrimp cocktail. Breakfast and lunch are still to come. Gabe Stulman, the head of Happy Cooking group (formerly Little Wisco) which includes a number of local spots such as Joseph Leonard, Fedora, Fairfax, and Jeffrey’s Grocery recently wrote a letter to local officials encouraging them to support Bill 1320-2020 which would “temporarily prohibit the enforcement of personal liability provisions in commercial leases or rental agreements involving a COVID-19 impacted tenant.” This would apply to businesses that were impacted by mandated closures and service limitations in the Governor’s Executive Orders. In his letter, Stulman elaborates: “We have applied for every loan and grant that we’ve deemed worthwhile…To date, we have not been approved for a simple application. Without aid (whether private or government funded)—specifically in the form of GRANTS—we will likely close our doors, pantry staples and an impressive selection of wine, mostly French Burgundies. Ordering from the shop must be done by 3 PM on Wednesday for 3-5 PM pick-up on Thursday. This arrangement reminds me of a trip to Tel Aviv, where we saw that on Fridays, many vendors offered prepared food that people could pick up in advance of the Sabbath.”

Roey’s (1 Perry Street at Greenwich Avenue, the all-day dining replacement for Rosemary’s Pizza and part of the Casa Nela group which includes Rosemary’s, Bobo and Claudette has re-opened. The founder, Carlos Suarez, explains: “Casa Nela restaurants suspended delivery service in March, we did so for the health and safety of our teams. With the restaurants closed, my team and I invested our time in developing Casa Nela Commits—our plan to ensure that your next order from our restaurants will be easy, safe, and delicious. With our safety plan in place, I am pleased to announce that we are beginning the process of reopening for delivery and take away, starting with Roey’s, which has re-opened for delivery as of Wednesday, May 20th. Bobo, Rosemary’s, and Claudette will also reopen for delivery and take away within a few weeks.” If you order directly through the restaurant website you can get a 10% discount with code “ROEYS10.”

Jeju Noodle Bar (679 Greenwich Street at Christopher Street) has recently re-opened. They are offering two multi-course tasting meals, but no ramyun (Korean ramen noodles), their signature offering (the owner felt they would not travel well). We have heard from people who’ve tried the food that the portions are large and can be eaten over two meals. A drink menu with wine, beer, barley beer, soju, and other Asian beverages is also available. In mid-April, anti-Asian graffiti appeared on the restaurant, “messed me up of a trip to Tel Aviv, where we saw that on Fridays, many vendors offered prepared food that people could pick up in advance of the Sabbath.”

Also Re-opened

There are suddenly many more options for delicious Mexican food: Los Tacos No. 1 (Chelsea Market, 75 9th Avenue) is back, and in addition to their usual offerings, they are featuring a “Make-Your-Own-Taco Bar” which can be ordered for 2 to 10 people. Each serving comes with a protein or vegetarian option, sides, chips, salsa and guacamole and four warm tortillas. Los Caminos Meatpacking (675 Hudson Street at 14th Street) has also re-opened, and Taqueria Empellon (230 West 4th Street at West 10th Street) opened for one day only, on Cinco de Mayo and offered a taco bar option as well. While the West Village location remains closed, sister restaurant Empellon al Pastor in the East Village has re-opened with delivery available through Caviar. Most Starbucks were open at the beginning of the pandemic, but May 2 months ago the company decided to close all its non drive-thru stores as it felt they were too crowded. Now, a number of them have re-opened, but customers must order in advance with the Starbucks phone app. The store at 122 Greenwich Avenue (at Bank Street) remains closed, but the newish Starbucks Reserve at 1 7th Avenue (at 11th Street) will open again after Memorial Day. Café Kitsuné (550 Hudson Street at Perry Street), the Kitsune bar affiliated with French fashion brand Maison Kitsuné reopened towards the end of May. Its Paris location re-opened on May 11th. Pastic (52 Gansevoort Street between Greenwich and Washington Streets), which had re-opened in its new location last summer, closed again in mid-March, but is now offering its menu of French comfort bistro food for take-out and delivery, with wine and cocktails available too. Mémé Mediterranean West Village (581 Hudson Street at Bank Street), a West Village favorite is now open as well. Three Owls Market (800 Washington Street at Horatio Street) has re-opened, offering their prepared foods and salads, as well as a new HUNGRY OWL BOX which is a rotating selection of dishes meant to last for a few days. The store is open for pick-up, delivery can be arranged through Mercato and the HUNGRY OWL must be ordered at least 48 hours in advance. Some Three Owls recipes, including their delicious shal lot jam, can be found on the Meatkraft District website. Finally, for those of you following the chronicles of Myers of Keswick (634 Hudson Street, between Horatio and Jane Streets) by WestView photographer Maggie Berkevist, you’ll be happy to know that after a closing in mid-April, they are back, offering savory pies, sausage rolls, and a selection of British favorites.

Re-opening Soon

Via Carota (51 Grove Street, between 7th Avenue South and Bleecker Street) will, according to Grub Street, begin offering take-out and delivery, hopefully by the end of May. The owners, Ruta Sodi and Gary Williams are Village denizens and in addition to critically acclaimed Via Carota, continued on page 54
A View From the Kitchen

By Isa Covo

Still quarantined, or confined which I like better. So what I observe from the window are sunnier days, more (but not excessive) car traffic, a bit more pedestrian traffic depending on the time of day. At night the streets are still empty of people and the number of cars decreases. Also, for the first time a couple of days ago, I saw taxis—not many, but it was something I had not noticed recently.

In midtown, where I had to go this week, I was surprised at how dreadful it looked. If not for the presence of a few cars, you would have thought that it was a ghost town. Very few people, and those were mostly essential workers such as utility repairmen, guards, and a few pedestrians as well as some homeless and their possess-

sions. The post office, FedEx, and a couple of small delis were open, so I assume that some offices were also busy. There was a Whole Foods that seemed open, but would not accept walk-in customers, only pre-orders and deliveries. Strange. Everything else was closed, dark, boarded, neglected. Surprisingly, there were two or three small clothing stores, with their lights on, their windows displaying dressed mannequins, but they were closed. I passed a well-tended vest-pocket park that was completely empty. A couple of kiosks were selling their wares at price-gouging prices ($2.99 for a small bottle of water).

Out of nostalgia I have been looking through some art books with works by painters depicting, among other sites, New York. As many do, I like Edward Hopper, and I was surprised to see something I hadn’t noticed before: Hopper was painting distancing. Such is the lone woman at the Automat, here is the waiting room with people sitting away from each other, here is the famous Nighthawks where except for a couple close together, the third customer is seated well away, and even the counterman does not lean towards the couple. And so on.

On the other hand, the Ashcan School painters parallel the French Expressionists, and I think that some may have visited France and very likely admired their works, but the Americans painted with more realism, especially regarding New York and they are worth discovering all of them, for those who haven’t done so yet. Next time we meet, I hope we will all be out of our homes.

Scallops are one of the quickest foods to prepare, they can also be served as a first course or a main course if doubling the quantity. If you do not have a skillet large enough to contain the scallops in one layer, use two. Photo by Isa Covo.

Scallops Sauteed with Fresh Herbs

20 to 24 scallops
2 garlic cloves
3 medium shallots
3 tbs. unsalted butter
1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
1 pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
2 tbs. dry Vermouth, brandy, or white wine
Salt and pepper to taste
8 sprigs of chives, snipped

1. Peel and chop the shallots and garlic cloves finely.
2. Heat the butter over medium high heat and add the minced shallots and sauté a few minutes until the shallots become transparent.
3. Add the thyme and garlic, then the scallops, salt and pepper. Stir and cook until the moisture of the scallops has evaporated.
4. Turn the scallops over and add the vermouth, stir and cook about one or two minutes.

Distribute the scallops equally to individual plates and sprinkle with chives. Yield: 4 Servings as a main course.

Halve servings for a first course.
A CALL TO DUTY:
Feeding Our Frontline Workers

By Joyce Appelman

When our local government ordered a shutdown of all in-room dining at restaurants to stop the spread of COVID-19, our chefs, restaurants and foodservice colleagues rose to the challenge by shifting to take-out and delivery and mostly feeding first responders and food-insecure New Yorkers.

Many chefs are finding ways to give back to health care workers and other essential employees. Barbara Sibley of East Village La Palapa and La Palapa Tacos at Gotham West Market, has been delivering meals to healthcare workers and food-insecure New Yorkers. In one week, her team served 2,000 meals. She’s had the support of her team, World Central Kitchen, Gotham West Market and Hospitality Workers United to make it all possible. She also partnered with Dr. Meryl Rosofsky for a weekly donation to three departments at Mt. Sinai Hospital. She’s launched https://www.gofundme.com/f/la-palapa-meals-for-hospitals and the food insecure.

Piatto, Blend on Vernon, Centro Italian Kitchen, Vernon Grille, Manetta’s, Bella Via and Little Chef, Little Cafe in Long Island City have been providing free grab-and-go meals on weekdays in partnership with LIC Relief to students and families. To support residents in the borough, LIC Relief is currently collecting donations to continue providing free meals. For each meal a restaurant provides, LIC Relief gives $5 in relief to a local business. The organization’s goal is to provide meals until New York City schools reopen. To donate: https://www.buunnicoffee.com/products/pick-me-up

Jessica Taige of Jessie’s Nutty Cups delivered over 1,300 two-packs, which were distributed to Brooklyn Methodist, Lenox Health Greenwich Village (Northwell Health), Weill Cornell, and Beth Israel. She was matching the value of all orders that came in through her website. Susan Palmer of Little Red Kitchen Bake Shop has been donating her amazingly delicious Chocolate Chip, S’mores, and Lemon Sugar cookies. Both Jessica and Susan are involved with Founders Give, a streamlined approach to donate to hospitals. They act as the middleman for distribution to hospitals by providing warehouse space and trucks for delivery, all of which is being donated. Learn more on their website: https://www.foundersgive.co/our-story.

These are just some of the businesses and people that have quickly responded to support our community and help get through this crisis.
You can join their causes where your donations, not only help feed healthcare professionals, but also supports participating businesses.

Joyce Appelman is an award-winning writer, communications and public relations consultant supporting culinary education, training and scholarships, and has been instrumental in opening career opportunities for many young people in the foodservice and hospitality industry. She was the Communications Director of C-CAP, the nonprofit she helped found, and is a board member for New York Women’s Culinary Alliance (NYWCA) and Association for Training and Success (AFTS Mentors.org). She is a contributing writer for Total Food Service, a B2B foodservice publication.
God’s Love We Deliver:
Proudly Making a Difference, One Meal at a Time, since 1985

By Emmett Findley
Director of Communications
God’s Love We Deliver

God’s Love We Deliver was founded in 1985 at the height of a health crisis. The AIDS pandemic was forever changing the fabric of NYC, and many of our clients—homebound individuals living with HIV/AIDS—were living alone facing stigma, illness, and hunger. In those early years, when many of them were turned away by others, we brought food, love, and dignity to neighbors, friends, family members and total strangers who were dying of this disease. In 2020 so much has changed, as we now cook and deliver more than 50,000 medically tailored meals every week to clients living with more than 200 different diagnoses. But as much as things have changed, our concern that every person should receive a beautiful nutritious meal cooked and home-delivered with love has not.

Over the last 35 years, we have played an essential role for New Yorkers who are living with serious illness. We provide life-affirming meals and nutritional therapy that help our clients stay strong and face their treatments. Many of the thousands of New Yorkers who rely on us for food spend much of their time at home and alone—but our daily meals are a reminder that the broader New York community cares.

We know that food is love, and we also believe that food is medicine. Our meals are designed by our registered dietitian nutritionists to keep our clients strong, comfortable, and more in control of their lives. Studies conducted by the national Food is Medicine Coalition, of which God’s Love We Deliver is the convener, have shown that medically tailored meals (MTM) can reduce in-patient admissions by 50 percent, allowing people to remain in their own homes. Recipients of MTM experience better mental health, lessened food insecurity, and dramatically reduced medical costs. Ours is an intervention that improves the lives of recipients and reduces the strain on the healthcare system.

This year, once again, we are facing a healthcare crisis and are at the frontlines. In March and April we added 1,000 new clients to our program and we anticipate that we will add an additional 1,500 by July. We are honored that the city has named us an essential services provider because in this current climate, when a highly infectious virus is once more changing the fabric of our city, our intervention keeps everyone safer. Medically tailored meals relieve some of the pressure on a heavily burdened healthcare system and keep some of the most vulnerable to this illness in their homes.

June is usually a moment of immense joy at God’s Love We Deliver. We take the month to reflect on Pride, and we observe how far we have come as a community. We celebrate our history, our future, and our unwavering commitment to those living with HIV, to diversity, to LGBTQ+ rights, and to our entire community.

This year, our celebration will be changed. The Pride March, an annual moment of physical togetherness, will happen at a distance. However, the strength of our community has always existed in more than a gathering or a physical space. It lives in the reaffirmation that we will continue to “be there” for each other, even if, for the time being, our “theres” are separate.

From our kitchen to yours, we’re wishing you health and happiness during these difficult days, understanding all the while that we’ll get through this once again, together.

ODE TO CORONA

By Randee Mia Berman

Was planning a trip to Verona
But now we’re trounced by Corona
We’re all in a panic
We’re getting quite manic
Next year in Barcelona?
The virus wickedly spreadin’
So where in the world is this headin’?
Some stay quite calm
Like we’re in a sitcom;
Others feel it’s like Armageddon.

Optimism starting to sink?
Try an opposite think
Reverse the brain
Against gluten grain
Turn charcoal gray to pink!

The glass is 1/2 sipped
The wires 1/2 tripped
The light beams fantastic
Though measures are drastic
The globe is 1/2 gripped
The path is prickly clear
But I choose to persevere
Just look up at the moon
Dancing over the Dune
Half full she doth appear.

Celebrate NYC Pride
#FeedYourPride
GLWD.ORG/FEEDYOURPRIDE

GOD’S LOVE WE DELIVER®
Goodbye Edwin Rose. Monday, April 4th: phone rings just before midnight. “Dr Kim, Beth Israel/ Mt. Sinai...” Angel... “I am treating Edwin ‘Rose Royale’ Shostak.” I scramble, and within fifteen minutes I’d gathered many of Eddie-Rose’s friends on a conference call, to go “live” and say a hasty, final goodbye. Veteran New Yorker—active painter, first Warhol factory crowd. Exhibitions at MOMA. One of Andy’s first Boyfriends. Recent years: Jackie 60 stalwart; host at Sweetie-B’s Cheez Whiz (a Scissor Sisters launchpad); host at Lucky Cheng’s. No hugs, no handholding, or kisses—no last looks. Dies alone. I thought we done with this shit.

Into the Groove, 1987: I was adopted by the old Danceteria/Hurrah/Factory crowd. Haoui Montaug kidnapped me from Uncle Charlie’s, far from my Dad’s midtown world. I was tossed in the middle of nameref, nameref. With this crowd, Pride was ubiquitous—straight, gay, type, income, race, gender (or none of the above)—welcome. No size fits all.

They, and Eddie-Rose, accepted me before I could even consider what Pride really meant. Boy Bar to Wigstock. Dean John-so’s Rock’n Roll Fag Bar to eye-opening Edelweiss. Deep in vogue uptown, deep in dick downtown. All in the face of a colossal die-off: Where’s Haoui, Marty, Billy, name, name? Still dead. Long live the names.

I relish the old days. When some freak got onstage and pushed the boundaries, for a brief moment you got to not be so freakish. This is why the corporatization, victimization and drugification of Pride is problematic.


By ’95 or so, ActUP floundered: government infiltration and special-interest controversy. The younger AIDS-untouched trickle-down from OhioSainvan- niaconis, and embraced Dorian Corey’s body-in-the-cupboard theory: “The old school is interested in what you can create, the new school is interested in what you can acquire.” Who failed whom?

These days, it seems keyboard warriors, rainbow flag revisionists and pronoun proto- gonists have chewed the flavor from a worn-out piece of gum. Who needs Westboro when you’ve got word police? Someone always gets pummeled.

The facts are: new HIV cases are still a “thing.” Queers are still being lynched; addiction and alcoholism are still rife. Queer kids still have the highest suicide & homelessness rates and need healthcare and employment. Queer people are being herded and killed by fascists—Hitler style—in Russia, Chechnya, and Uganda. Pride floats? Try trucks to concentration camps.

Gay marriage hasn’t solved any of this. Nor did log cabins, chemsex, circuit parties, identity politics, new flags, baby adoptions, PreP or pronouns. Nor have new episodes of Will & Grace, Pose, or RuPaul’s Drag Race. The revolution will not be televised, remember?


What’s good, you may ask? A lot. Very short list: Trevor Project (USA), CALM (UK), Beyond Blue (AU), Every Life Matters (Scotland) suicide prevention. God’s Love We Deliver (NYC), Food Chain (London) food. Pôle Jeunesse (Paris), Het- rick-Martin (NYC) young people. Aging in Place (LA), SAGE (NYC) senior people. A personal favorite: Research Founda- tion to Cure AIDS. And all’s not rotten on TV. Big props to Bob, Eureka and Shange- la in HBO’s “We’re Here” series. Takin’ it to the streets in six-inch heels, staring hate in the face and respiratory to a party.

I once met Clarence B. Jones, author of part one of MLK Jr.’s “Dream” speech. They protected Bayard Rustin, gay super- mind of black civil rights. I asked, what’s their secret to success? “We realized, early on—in order to get those in power to cede any power, we had to first convince them that it is in their best interests.” Worked then...what might this look like now? First, bring the history; which began long before 1969. Use it for a new, deeper, more or- ganized, formidable Pride.

Keep it simple. Catch bees with honey. Focus on the similarities. We all need healthcare, homes, food and employment. Start over, start there. Include Kalamazoo. Talk to people, take a pass on clickbait squabbles. Listen.


My dream? Locally grown, internation- ally active—but sensitive to other cultures. Create teachers, not targets. Something that sidesteps armchair narcissism and pop-shop celebrities and would make Larry Kramer or Audre Lorde proud.

That’s my two pennies. The astrology is Pluto in Capricorn. Last time this happened—so did the American and French Revolutions. Too far? FOMO, patron saint of millennials, help you. A reality TV show “star” and Roy Cohn protege is president now. Too much? Sue me. Gore Vidal taught me how to palimpsest. Silence (still) = Death.

It’s 3:00 a.m. I wish I could call Eddie-Rose.
Thanks to all our friends and the many businesses and organizations who filled the pages of the June Pride edition of WestView News. We’re all New Yorkers and this is how we roll: Pride-in-Quarantine!

— Kambiz Shekar, President, Research Foundation to Cure AIDS & WestView News
— Bruce Poli, Pride-in-Quarantine Community Liaison
— Dusty Berke, Community Outreach
— George Caparis, Publisher

I don’t know WHAT we would do without our small but mighty WestViewNews. New more than ever. They are keeping us informed, finding ways to support small businesses and making certain our seniors and most vulnerable neighbors have all the information they need to feel safe.

— Sarah Jessica Parker, Friend of WestViewNews

AIDS is the gift that keeps on giving to Big Pharma and the Insurance Industry. Truvada and similar prophylactic treatments are NOT a cure for HIV. Pharmaceutical companies profit irrationally from HIV-positive Americans who depend on the medications forever. As president, how would you finance a CURE and scale back the avarice of pharmaceutical companies?

— Larry Kramer, Founder, ACT-UP & Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC), question as submitted by Larry and asked by James Roman during CNN’s Oct 2019 Presidential Townhall

Larry Kramer was a giant in our movement. He was the grandfather of AIDS activism. All of us learned from him even when we didn’t always agree. He was there at the founding of institutions such as GMHC and Housing Works. And, his cultural contributions, particularly Normal Heart, spoke eloquently to not only our minds but in our hearts. Larry, you will be sorely missed.

— Michael Weinstein, Founder and President, AIDS Healthcare Foundation

My community endured centuries of the quarantining of our desires, And we survived. Love flickers even in darkness friendship is the antidote to isolation. We have lived through pandemics and survived.

— Jim Fouratt, LGBT Pioneer & WestView News Contributing Writer

We saw what happened when AIDS was politicized. We are watching COVID-19 be politicized. We must demand active democracy and be treated as citizens not consumers. The future is now.

— Penny Arcade, Writer, Theatre Maker, Cultural Critic

I remember how the AIDS epidemic fueled my own activism in my twenties and how it turbocharged the movement for LGBTQ equality. As we celebrate Pride in the middle of another pandemic, I have to believe that the country that emerges from COVID-19 will be more fair, more just and more equitable than the country that went into the pandemic. If we use this crisis as an inflection point to demand greater justice and equality and transform our society, that might be a silver lining in the end.

— Anthony D. Romero, ACLU Executive Director

Karma is a bitch—now everyone understands how gay's felt during AIDS outbreak.

— Jacqueline Taylor Basket, Contributing Writer WestView News

I am always filled with tremendous gratitude for a community that reached out and embraced our family during our darkest and most difficult time of grief with support for the Tyler Clementi Foundation from the very beginning. This year’s Pride Festivities will certainly look and feel very different as we live through some very challenging and difficult times of physical distancing, illness and death. But the strength, vibrancy, courage and love of the LGBTQ+ community that I have found cannot be silenced, it will shine through and be celebrated even in these most challenging moments.

— Jane Clementi, Co-founder & CEO Tyler Clementi Foundation

My first boss in the AIDS field told me early on: “THIS IS A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT. USE YOUR RESOURCES ACCORDINGLY.”

— Bruce Anderson, Former President, The LGBT Community Center

At certain times of the year, particularly during Pride, there is a strong, broad focus on the urgent need for a cure for AIDS. The Research Foundation to Cure AIDS is focused on that goal on a daily basis, year in, year out, and we ask you to join it in its efforts to reach that goal.

— Karen Hagberg, Board Chair, Research Foundation to Cure AIDS

The pandemic is unprecedented but it will pass, too. What will be remembered is the courage and creativity that we mustered in this time.

— Christian Kopfler, CEO, Chromocell Corporation & Board Member, Research Foundation to Cure AIDS

Although the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our lives and livelihoods and pose tremendous challenges on all of us, New York City’s true character has only grown stronger. Why? Because we are confronting these challenges together. This LGBTQ Pride, although we are not together physically, we are coming together to celebrate our pride, determined to take on all challenges that come our way. I want to thank WestView for this special edition. To all New Yorkers, have a safe and happy Pride!

— Corey Johnson, NYC City Council Speaker

The Center has a long, rich history of helping people find community in both the most challenging and most celebratory of times. We’re offering all of our services virtually and are here to uplift our community 365 days a year, so that no one has to feel alone before, during or after Pride. It is our connection to each other and the affirmation of all of our diverse, vibrant identities that makes us so special, and that always deserves celebrating. Happy Pride!

— Gini Edes Testone, Executive Director, The LGBT Community Center

Thank you for voting Club Cumming best LGBTQ bar in NYC. I wish we could invite you all to join us during Pride. Let’s remain united in the virtual world and the pages of New York City’s WestView News!

— Alan Cumming, Actor & Founder, Club Cumming

Gay Pride has been a powerful source of strength in our community. From it and with it, the earliest LGBTQ+ community that I have found cannot be silenced, it will shine through and be celebrated even in these most challenging moments.

— Jane Clementi, Co-founder & CEO Tyler Clementi Foundation

The aloneness was not only my share, but also their share. I lost 23 friends in one year. They are in my blood. I pain them with my own pain. I have no reason for my pain. I am no longer in pain. They are not in my blood. I have no reason for their pain. They are not in my blood.

— Zee Strong, Founder, The Digital Quilt, @zeestrong

Hello Quarantine
This solitude cannot compare to The aloneness of society’s mask decree of “normalcy” This pandemic cannot Take away the memories The bittersweetness of June Of a system already broken Told you so Over some Zoom disco ball As we jump rope with the rainbow

— Karen Finley, Artist @the_yam_mam

During times of crisis you see the best in people. We have come together in unity and solidarity from all different walks of life to battle this invisible enemy. This is a war like any other and we have suffered casualties, but we will come out stronger on the other side of COVID-19. We are New York Strong!

— Alex Hellinger, Executive Director Lenox Health Greenwich Village / Northwell Health

Though we won’t be marching through the Village or rallying at the Stonewall Inn this year, we must still celebrate and commemorate pride. This will be a test of our creativity as a community. But it’s a challenge we must meet. That is why this special LGBTQ Pride issue of WestView is so important. Somewhere a young LGBTQ person will find this issue and know that not only are they not alone, but they are part of an incredible community.

— Erik Bottcher, Chief of Staff to City Council Speaker Corey Johnson & Candidate for City Council District 3

We’ve been thru horrors like AIDS, Guillain, 9/11, Hurricane Sandy and now, COVID-19 and we will, as always, rebuild and create, create, create as we always have. I can’t wait till I can raise a glass to my fellow gays, laugh, dance on Fire island, love, hug and smile without a mask.

— Daniel Nardioco, Owner, Club Cumming and Club Cumming Productions

NYC Pride is thankful to all those who are working to keep New York strong. We are especially thankful to the dedicated volunteers, members and staff who continue to work hard to keep the mission of our organization going.

— David A. Correa, Interim Executive Director, NYC Pride, Heritage of Pride

They don’t see me coming. I look like a good old boy. I talk like a good old boy. I pray like a good old boy. It helps me get their guard down, it gets me in the door. I hold that door open and I make sure they see me do it. White, Irish-American, Catholic, Cap and Queer as F*ck. The establishment will remember me. I infiltrated their system, and I will destroy it.

— Brian Downey, President, Gay Officers Action League (GOAL)

Meow!

— Sherry Vine, Drag Legend
LGBTQ Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

1665-1969

1665 New York colony laws make sodomy a capital offense
1867 Julius bar opens in the West Village
1867 Homosexuality is defended publicly before a government body for the first time
1895 Oscar Wilde is sentenced to prison
1895-1929 First large-scale black/urban LGBTQ enclave in the U.S. is established during the Harlem Renaissance
1924 Society for Human Rights is established as the first legally-recognized gay rights organization in the U.S.
1928 Well of Loneliness is published as a novel about lesbian love
1933 Nazi forces destroy Institute for Sexual Research
1933-1945 Homosexuals are prosecuted under Germany’s “Paragraph 175,” forced to wear a Pink Triangle and sent to concentration camps
1950 Mattachine Society is formed as one of the first LGBT organizations in the U.S.
1958 U.S. Supreme Court upholds the right to send LGBT-related literature in U.S. Mail

1966 First “Sip-In” at Julius bar is staged by Mattachine Society to challenge laws barring drink service to homosexuals
1967 Oscar Wilde Memorial bookshop opens in the West Village as first gay bookstore in the U.S.
1969 Patrons of the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village refuse to cooperate with arresting vice-squad officers, triggering a four-day riot

1970-1979

1970 Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) is formed
1970 Police raids at the Snake Pit bar in the West Village result in 167 arrested
1970 First Christopher Street Liberation Day march goes up 6th Ave. to Central Park
1970 Gay Liberation Front (GLF) is formed
1973 Lesbian Herstory Archives is formed
1975 American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its list of mental disorders
1979 First National March on Washington for LGBT rights

1980-1989

1980 First year the Christopher Street Liberation Day marches up 5th Ave.
1980’s AIDS pandemic emerges
1980s Pink Triangle is adopted as a symbol by the gay community
1981 St. Vincent’s Hospital becomes the center for compassionate care of AIDS victims
1982 Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC) is formed

1983 The LGBT Community Center opens
1984 Heritage of Pride is formed
1984 Outdoor annual drag festival Wigstock begins
1986 U.S. Supreme Court effectively renders gay sex as illegal by upholding sodomy laws
1987 ACT-UP is formed
1988 World AIDS Day is commemorated on December 1st for the first time

1990-1999

1990 Deborah Glick is elected as first openly gay NY state legislator
1991 The Red Ribbon is created to raise awareness for HIV/AIDS
1991 Henrietta Hudson bar opens
1993 President Bill Clinton signs “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” into law
1993 Drag cabaret begins at Bar d’O in the West Village
1995 Life-saving HIV/AIDS drug cocktail is developed
1996 Club kid Angel Melendez is murdered

1998-2000

1998-2000 Christopher Street Liberation Day marches up 5th Ave.
2000 National March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights
2000 First National Gay and Lesbian Rights March

References:

- 1665: New York colony laws make sodomy a capital offense.
- 1867: Julius bar opens in the West Village and homosexuality is defended publicly.
- 1895: Oscar Wilde is sentenced to prison.
- 1924: Society for Human Rights is established as the first legally-recognized gay rights organization.
- 1928: Well of Loneliness is published as a novel about lesbian love.
- 1933: Nazi forces destroy Institute for Sexual Research.
- 1933-1945: Homosexuals are prosecuted under Germany’s “Paragraph 175,” forced to wear a Pink Triangle, and sent to concentration camps.
- 1950: Mattachine Society is formed.
- 1958: U.S. Supreme Court upholds the right to send LGBT-related literature in U.S. Mail.
- 1966: First “Sip-In” at Julius bar.
- 1967: Oscar Wilde Memorial bookshop.
- 1969: Patrons of the Stonewall Inn refuse to cooperate.
- 1970: Police raids at the Snake Pit bar.
- 1973: Lesbian Herstory Archives.
- 1975: American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its list.
- 1980: First year the Christopher Street Liberation Day march.
- 1980s: Pink Triangle adopted.
- 1981: St. Vincent’s Hospital.
- 1983: LGBT Community Center.
- 1984: Outdoor annual drag festival Wigstock.
- 1986: U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1987: ACT-UP.
- 1990: Deborah Glick elected.
- 1993: President Bill Clinton.
- 1993: Drag cabaret.
- 1996: Club kid Angel Melendez.

Photo credit: Fred W. McDarrah
Photo credit: Laura Rubin
Photo credit: © Suzanne Poli
From oppression to achieving the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, we are proud to present our selection of LGBTQ historic milestones, events and accomplishments. We did not aim to provide an encyclopedic overview but rather a scenic tour where we aim to convey the arc of LGBT progress with a lens on the West Village. The AIDS pandemic and club culture, two forces that continue to shape the LGBT experience, are also reflected.

WestView News invites you to send in additional milestones to expand our timeline so that it reflects the full lens of our rich LGBT heritage and foundation. You are also welcome to submit photos for our pages and video montage. We prefer photos that give you goosebumps or ones that grab your attention. Include photo credit and a brief caption. Send all LGBT Timeline and Milestone submissions to: kambiz.shekdar@rftca.org.

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President & Founder,
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2007 The Limelight (a.k.a. Avalon) permanently closes
2007 First AIDS patient is reported cured of AIDS (“Berlin Patient”)
2010 U.S. Senate repeals “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”
2011 President Barack Obama signs order to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”
2012 Truvada / PrEP is introduced as an AIDS medication to help prevent HIV infection
2015 U.S. Supreme Court legalizes same-sex marriage
2016 The NYC AIDS Memorial opens across the former St. Vincent’s Hospital
2018 Corey Johnson is elected as the first openly gay and HIV-positive NYC City Council Speaker
2019 Second AIDS Patient is reported cured of AIDS (“London Patient”)
2020 Larry Kramer, playwright and co-founder of ACT-UP & GMHC dies

Future Milestones
Conversion therapy is outlawed worldwide
No one is bullied or killed for being LGBTQ
Immigration equality is achieved
LGBTQ rights are established worldwide
HIV/AIDS is eradicated for good using broadly-available vaccines and cures
Equal human rights for all are achieved
All people achieve life, liberty and happiness
The LGBTQ community wishes #BLACKLIVESMATTER equal success
A Vodka Bottle with an Important Political Message: Sex and the West Village: Her Shoes Could Be Yours!

The fate of local community newspapers is, ultimately, in the hands of the reading public. When the public supports its local paper it thrives and the community benefits (and by support, I'm talking about subscribing). WestView News is a paper that is valuable to our part of New York: interesting, well written, informative and feisty. But it is not well-enough subscribed to, and it may not be long before the West Village is without its local voice. On the 50th anniversary of Gay Pride our WestView News, along with its gifted staff and publisher George Capsis, is taking the bull by the horns and going directly to the neighborhood with a fundraiser to keep the paper afloat! We’ll be raffling off valuable and (in many cases) locally produced items and celebrity fare to qualified ticket holders. And, when we say qualified, we mean those who are subscribers. You have to subscribe or make a donation of any size by June 30th to win. Donations may include raffle items. Examples of raffle items: art objects, high fashion clothing, collectibles, house tours, meals (safely prepared and served). Winners will be announced by name in the July issue.

By Robert Kroll

Artists, television and movie notables, musicians, and vodka moguls, among others, will be offering their products, their merch, their time, their energy and creativity to the cause of local journalism. Vive la WestView News. Roll the presses.

Here are the items that will be up for grabs in the June raffle:

**A STOLICHNAYA VODKA LIMITED EDITION HARVEY MILK TRIBUTE BOTTLE**

Stolichnaya Vodka, a product of Latvia produced with the raw ingredients from the original Russian recipe, has issued an edition of vodka bottles honoring the late Harvey Milk—an LGBTQ icon—on its label.

This collectible bottle was released on Harvey Milk Day 2018, to commemorate 40 years since Milk was sworn into office, at an unveiling of a mural in San Francisco’s Castro District of San Francisco.

Manchester bartender Yusuf Austin of the Boom Boom Room will supply his special cocktail recipe using the vodka, and will present a personal Zoom call on preparing it to the winner of the Milk bottle. He has created CBD, health and wellness, and mocktail recipes to elevate and sharpen people’s minds. He uses ayurvedic spices and herbs for unique-flavored cocktail recipes.

Quarantine Cocktail
2 oz Stoëi
1 oz Passion Fruit Juice
3/4 oz. Star Anise and Cardamom Syrup* 1/2 oz. Fresh Lime Juice
Pink Peppercorn Dust
Martini Glass

Shake all ingredients and strain into a Martini glass. Light dusting of pink peppercorn as garnish.*NOTE: Take 10 cardamom pods and 5 star anise to 16 oz. of simple syrup and let simmer for 15 minutes. Let cool. Strain. (Simple syrup is equal parts of sugar to water. Get the water boiling. Add the sugar. Mix until it’s clear and all sugar is dissolved.)

SARAH JESSICA PARKER—HER SHOES COULD BE YOURS

Long-time very ardent WestView News subscriber and supporter, actress Sarah Jessica Parker, has donated a pair of her SJP by Sarah Jessica Parker line shoes to the WestView News raffle. The winner will be able to pick any pair from the Evergreen line.

Ms. Parker has said that she reads WestView every month, cover to cover, and cherishes the value it provides to creating a community in the West Village through shared information and memories. She is also a supporter of LGBTQ+ causes.

PRIVATE BACH CELLO SUITE CONCERT PERFORMED BY A FOUNDER OF THE KNIGHTS

Eric Jacobsen, a highly talented co-founder of the Knights chamber orchestra, will perform the Bach Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, first movement, in a special Zoom performance for the winner of this raffle.

Jacobsen and his brother Colin Jacobsen, first chair concert violinist, founded the Knights orchestra soon after graduating from the Juilliard School in Manhattan.

The Knights have performed and recorded with Yo-Yo Ma, Dawn Upshaw, Bela Fleck and Gil Shaham. Recently, they have performed at Carnegie Hall, Tanglewood, and the Vienna Musikverein. Their talents are voluminous and prodigious and cover every medium of entertainment and musical style.

This live performance will be inspiring and provide a long-lasting memory of a musical event that will dazzle.

**BRUCE AND HIS HANDBAG BY KAREN REMPHEL**

Mixed media ink on canvas with sparkles—32”x24” framed in black and silver—by artist Karen Rempel. WestView News fashionista Karen Rempel is not only a photographer and videobblogger, but also an accomplished photographer and mixed media artist. She produced and donated a fascinating image entitled “Bruce and his Handbag” with neon tones, curved chairs, and stark outlines that evoke a simpler time.

Her work has been on solo exhibit in Vancouver in 2015 and in March, 2020 in the West Village. Her photos have been published in Ripe Magazine (2000), Circles of the Mountain, and other publications.

"LIFETIME" MARBLE SCULPTURE BY ROSE M. RAY

Local sculptor Rose M. Ray has produced a sculpture, Lifetime, a white marble piece suitable for a shelf or cabinet.

Rose Ray is a visual artist who works in drawing and sculpture. She uses paper, pencil, and ink to create documentary sketches of her daily life. Stone carving is her primary sculptural medium. Current interests include incorporating mathematical themes and tools, which she has used in her 40 years of work as an applied statistician, into the subject matter of her pieces, and creating a visual expression of the kinesthetic sense that she experiences while creating with her hands. Her goal is to create works that are meant to be touched, picked up, and handled. In this way her audience will experience the work through their own kinesthetic sense.

Dr. Ray has studied stone carving at the College of Marin and at the Complet Sculptor in NYC, 3D design at Berkeley City College, experimental drawing at Cooper Union, and basic drawing at the Educational Alliance in NYC.

Robert Kroll, contributing writer for WestView News, is a journalist, retired lawyer, and Japanese woodworker.
Our Mission

TransNewYork’s mission is to bring awareness to the issues facing the transgender non-conforming (TGNC) community and give guidance and support to individuals and their loved ones within an open and safe environment. We provide individual and group counseling and monthly meetings, in which we address issues such as gender dysphoria and encourage transgender individuals to share their stories. We wish to be an informative source for transgender resources, activities, and events.

TransNewYork is implementing the following Digital services to help the LGBTQI Community cope with the Mental Health effects of Covid-19:

- We are establishing a 24/7 Mental Health Hotline/Chat to help members of the LGBTQI community cope with the effects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- We are implementing a Tele Counseling Video Platform
- We are implementing a Virtual Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Treatment plan for the LGBTQ community
- We are developing a Workforce Development plan for the LGBTQI community to help them establish employment

To support our organization go to:

www.transnewyork.org
Everyone who loves fashion knows that The First Monday in May is the highlight of the year, when the glitterati put on their most fantabulous creations and head up the red carpeted steps into the Met. (Check out the wonderful film Ocean’s 8—which premiered at Alice Tully Hall in 2018—to see how it’s done behind the scenes.) The official theme for this year’s gala fundraiser at the Metropolitan Museum of Art was About Time: Fashion and Duration. Although the gala event was cancelled, the Costume Institute’s exhibit is scheduled to open on October 29, 2020. My birthday! Fingers crossed! This year’s theme is meant to show how fashions from different eras weave in and out, combining and influencing each other.

Since the gala was cancelled, a group of twitter fashionistas @HFMetGala decided to host a virtual event that we could all participate in. Using items found in our closets! To be environmentally friendly and to protect our peeps, buying new clothes was frowned upon. This was a chance to play dress-up like a kid. Having dreamed of attending the Met Gala, but knowing it is out of reach to this humble fashion writer, I was delighted to throw off my home isolation routine and put together a Met-worthy outfit. Though the stakes were not as high, and in fact formal attire was not required! Combining harmonious numbers with my wish to cause a collision between time periods, I contrasted a 70’s look with shoes that are reminiscent of an earlier century (1770’s maybe?). The dress is actually a scarf, draped to look like a dress by tucking it in my bra! (And it’s open at the back!) This is the illusion of style... Fantasy all the way.

The scarf is a creation of New York design house Cityzen by Azin. Does the purplish line curving down the dress look familiar? It is the East River! I am actually wearing an aerial view of New York, with Manhattan on the left and Brooklyn on the right! This scarf is one of a stunning collection of wearable art featuring beautiful cities from around the world. The collection is also available as framed art. The scarves come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Mine is a blend of modal and cashmere. Modal is a super-soft fiber from beechwood trees, made into fabric using an environmentally-friendly chemical process. Aerosoles have long been known for their comfort and style. These vivid purple suede shoes with latticework across the vamp are especially appealing. The shape of the shoe with its blocky curving heels reminds me of King Louis XIV’s aristocratic court shoes. Our current consumer habits are non-sustainable for the planet, and the fashion industry is especially guilty of planned obsolescence, so I was glad of a fancy dress-up event that allowed me to raid the closet (again) for existing treasures.

On May 4, as the DIY Met Gala lit up the Twitter-sphere, I loved watching other style genii posting their creations all day long. So inspiring and over the top! Check out the fabulous fashion at @HFMetGala and #HFMetGala2020. For more details and photos of my Met Gala outfit, including 70s makeup and tattoo, see karensquirkystyle.com and connect @karensquirkystyle.

**STYLE NOTES**

- **GOLDENROD, PUMPKIN, AND MULBERRY MODAL AND CASHMERE SCARF**, draped into a dress. Cityzen by Azin, New York-based, online only. Gift from a friend.
- **INDIGO-PURPLE SUEDE SHOES** with lattice cut-outs. Aerosoles, 63 E. 8th Street.
- **COPPER OPEN-COLLAR NECKLACE WITH CUBES**. Barre3 West Village Studio, 63 W. 8th Street.
- **“VERSAILLES PARIS LUMIÈRE” HAIR COLOR** by L’Oréal Paris Superior Preference, self-applied. From a box!
NYC Drag Queens Throw Their Own Met Gala

By Alexey Kim

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, one of the most-anticipated fashion events of the year, the Met Gala helmed by Anna Wintour, that usually takes place on the first Monday in May, has been officially cancelled. Leave it up to the NYC drag queens to take matters into their own hands and keep the fantasy alive.

CT Hedden, one of New York City’s prominent drag nightlife personas, came up with an idea to throw his own version of the Gala, inspired by social distancing.

“I feel like as an entertainer, it’s our job to entertain even in tough times,” says CT on the idea of throwing an apocalyptic homage to the actual Gala, “people look to us to lift their spirits. I’ve been doing live shows and I had this woman talk about how she was going to have elective surgery for cancer, and she’s been watching my shows and laughing about it. It’s about expressing art and just making people smile.”

During the five-hour shoot on the steps of The Met, countless numbers of people stopped by to say hello to the queens dressed in their best “QuarantQueen” looks and just making people smile.

“Keep the fantasy alive,” says CT, “as human beings, and if anyone knows how to adapt, it’s drag queens. We are constantly adapting, we don’t fit in a social norm—I don’t care how big a television show gets. We are still ridiculed, we are still a minority, but it never stops us. That’s the thing—we are resilient people,” says CT.

In 2019, the first people to attend the Met Gala in drag were Violet Chachki and Aquar-
Sherry-in-Quarantine

By Sherry Vine

Girl, as a live performing artist, how are you surviving COVID Quarantine? Well, I’ve always had a strong online connection since my early YouTube days. I put a “pause” on making videos about a year ago because I wanted to do different things, but since Covid I have been turning out at least one video a week. Plus doing a series of videos like Golden Girls in Quarantine and also doing live online shows and Zoom events.

As with every other artist, from Madonna to local drag queens, we are all evolving so we can make enough money to pay rent by becoming virtual artists. I am usually on tour around the world and this is the longest I’ve gone without being on a plane in about 20 years, lol! The important thing, for me, is to keep my creative mind active. I wake up each morning with, “What can I do today?” And I work hard all day until the sun goes down then I pour myself a glass of wine and watch TV!

The best thing anyone can do to support me, or any other artist, is to watch their shows. I do a live online show every two weeks and have a lot of fun parodies online at www.sherryvine.com. I give a portion of all my tips to various charities. OR when a performer does a video or Instagram/Facebook show, people can tip via PayPal or Venmo. It really does help and I feel like they are getting entertainment in return. It’s less money than if they went to a theatre or club and had a drink.

The only words of hope I can offer is to remember we are all—GLOBALLY—in this together. Wake up each morning and ask yourself, “What can I do today to make me happy?” I am taking each day one at a time. It’s easier to end each day happy, satisfied and fulfilled than freaking out about two months from now. Sometimes binge watching Absolutely Fabulous all day is a legitimate, guilt-free way to satisfy oneself.

International drag darling, Sherry Vine, has 30 years under her sequined garter belt. Sherry has a variety show on Hulu called Sherry Living For This, performs her all live singing and comedy shows all over the world and her parody videos have over 19,000,000 views on YouTube.

An LGBTQ+ Ambassador’s Quarantine Life Perspective on Social Distancing

By Patrik Gallineaux

When the seriousness of COVID-19 took effect and the country’s first stay-at-home orders were issued, I had just left Philadelphia for my home in San Francisco. I’d just completed only the second of 15 city events included in the 7th annual Stoli Key West Cocktail Classic, the brand’s annual LGTBQ+ nightlife celebration and bartender competition that champions the legacy of gay bars as the original community centers and the bar stars who continue to serve pride today. For two days during the first shelter in place orders in California, I will admit I felt a panic unlike anything I had experienced in a very long time. It felt almost like I might wake up and find my whole life had been merely a dream. And then it hit me, as the LGBTQ+ Ambassador and Manager for Stoli Group for over a decade, I had been living a ridiculously magical life.

I have visited almost every LGBTQ+ community in North America on a rotating basis, keeping lists of as many gay bars as I could discover. I’ve had the great privilege of becoming familiar with vital Pride Centers, non-profits, activists and leaders from as many LGBTQ+ communities and Gayborhoods as I could make my way to, again and again, for years at a time. When the world stopped, and especially in the internet age, I was anything but alone; in fact, I had already survived what in my life had been the worst form of social distancing possible, growing up in a small town in Western NY during the Reagan Administration.

I remember looking up at the sky as a kid wondering if there was even one other kid like me. I had heard the name of only one important and publicly known gay person during my early years, a man named Harvey Milk. I had heard of Milk on television in relation to something about a “twinkie defense,” sparking a brief conversation with my father who always taught acceptance of others but probably lacked the language to properly engage me about LGBTQ+ issues and identity. However, I do recall my father’s one offering; mentioning an event from 10 years prior to a New York City bar, that made me think there might be a community for me out there. How magical that fast forward 40 years and that kid somehow had the honor to befriend Harvey’s nephew Stuart and help bring to life Stoli’s first LGTBQ+ Limited Edition bottle, the Harvey Milk Tribute in 2018. The next year the “Spirit of Stonewall” 50 year commemorative release Stoli Vodka bottle followed.

I pushed through teen years that included the suffocation of bullying, denial of being able to hold a hand or have a first kiss or dance…social distancing of a different kind. Those years included invisibility through studying hard, joining every club and theatre group, and despite graduating at the top of my class, being told by more than one adult that I was too obviously...

PATRIK GALLINEAUX AND THE SPIRIT OF STONEWALL STOLI PRIDE EDITION BOTTLE: Sellef, on the fire escape of fabulousness.

"different" to achieve success in professions I had considered such as law, politics or medicine. So, I did what every other way too gay kid did in the 80’s and pursued a musical theatre degree, which naturally led to a trifecta career in hospitality, promotion and event production.

The discovery of my first gay bar, the now-closed Ladd’s in Purchase, NY, revealed a world where for the first time I felt attractive, seen and at home. Over the course of the next many years—with adventures saved for a future book—I was buoyed by the arts and nightlife, holding on long enough until the world had changed enough for a little company named Stoli to really see ME. Stoli offered a once way-too-gay kid a rather exceptional job and career path previously denied.

Today I believe that those who find the strength to hold on become the ones who continue to change the world. Beyond the funds, there has been authentic support from Stoli Group to LGBTQ+ communities for programming, charities and nightlife events. I am personally the most grateful that this company has also authentically supported me. It is my responsibility to return the favor to my community and try to make sure every person has the opportunity to be seen.

And so, it took a pandemic to make me realize the full gratitude for the work I have been blessed to do the past 10 years. This work has built and connected communities. This hard work for visibility from each and every activist, event producer, Pride festival and parade organizer, entertainer, bar staff member and community leader over the past 50 years is living energy. This work will carry us through this unanticipated change to originally planned programming. And because of this work, we will never again being truly socially distanced.

Patrik Gallineaux is Stoli Vodka LGBTQ+ Manager and Ambassador.
Henrietta Hudson Queerantined

By Lisa Cannistraci

Henrietta Hudson has been serving the West Village as a haven for the lesbian community in NYC for almost three decades. The history of the West Village exemplifies the struggle for LGBTQ rights, and Henrietta Hudson, a lesbian-centric queer human bar that is known world-wide, has been a beacon for that cause, offering a safe space to the LGBTQ community at large.

We shuttered our doors at Henrietta Hudson on Sunday, March 15th. The decision was made a day before Governor Cuomo’s mandate as we saw the writing on the wall and could not, in good conscience, remain open. On Friday, March 13th, I called my staff in and had “the talk” about our imminent closure. Questions were asked and answered. Emotions ran high.

We talked about Henrietta Hudson and what it meant to each of us. Stories were shared and tears were shed.

I assured everyone that we would, in fact, open when it was safe to do so. I stand by that statement and remain committed to doing whatever it takes to reopen our sacred space. I mandated that each of the staff members apply for unemployment benefits before they started their Friday night shifts. Although they were still stunned by the information, they obliged me and applied in real time. When the NYC unemployment site crashed on Monday they called to thank me for encouraging them to be preemptive; they were now safe and cared for.

It was time to pivot to the survival of the bar. As I was about to start researching grants and loans I received a call from Erik Bottcher, chief of staff to City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, asking what the council could do for us. He apprised me of an interest-free 15-year loan of up to $75,000 offered by the NYC SBS (Small Business Services) and sent me the link. I promptly applied. I found out six weeks later that my application never even made it to the review process and the funds had run out. I asked the gentleman, Michael, “Does that mean I am not getting the loan?” He replied, “Yes, you are not getting the loan.”

Erik has since been very helpful in providing other resources that we are now pursuing. (The problem with any loan is that we do not have any income and therefore no way to pay it back. How can we borrow money when our business is closed?)

We have applied for the PPP with SBA but were not privy to those funds either. Even if we got a loan, which we did not, it would not be a forgivable grant unless we adhered to the very rigorous guidelines that are not friendly to establishments in NYC. I would have to offer my staff their jobs back and they would make far less than they are now making on unemployment. I refuse to hurt their quality of life more than they are making on unemployment benefits.

I cut to: fundraising for the bar. With hat in hand I started a GoFundMe campaign (https://www.gofundme.com/f/henrietta-hudson1) to facilitate raising money to pay rent for the bar while we are closed. The response from the LGBTQ community nationally and worldwide towards saving our iconic little bar in the West Village of New York City has been monumental!

Lisa Cannistraci, co-owner of Henrietta Hudson, is a lifelong community activist. She served on Community Board 2 in the West Village for over 15 years and has been involved with hundreds of nonprofits during three decades as a fixture in her community. She will always go the distance to shed light on discrimination of any kind, and take action to try to make things better for the LGBTQ community. Her bar is known around the globe for its welcoming atmosphere and embracing all the colorful aspects of the gender-binary spectrum. It is one of NYC’s true cultural establishments.

INSIDE HENRIETTA HUDSON, NYC’s longest running lesbian bar for 29 years. Photo credit: Molly Adams.

Club Cumming in COVID

By Darren Dryden

Owning a bar in the age of Covid-19? Tricky. I wonder how many LGBTQ+ bars and small businesses will survive this awful pandemic. Every day I read about big corporations filing for bankruptcy, and then there are us little guys. As with most small business there isn’t a huge amount of savings to stay afloat indefinitely. Landlords still want rent, and there are still bills to pay.

Fortunately there has been some relief through loans like the Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan. Club Cumming is in good shape—we will survive this and re-open when it is safe, although who knows what that will look like. Opening with 25% capacity for a small bar such as ours? Again, tricky. But we will navigate that when the time comes. Bars are going to have to get creative, but gay people are nothing if not creative. I’m confident our community of businesses will rise to this challenge. We certainly have before.

In the meantime, I worry about our staff and all the performers who are not working and unable to make money. From porters to the tech crew, dancers and drag queens there are a lot of people who contribute to the success of Club Cumming.

For our staff and performers we were able to set up a community chest to help out those in need. Some very generous friends of Alan Cumming have contributed to our online auctions: a dress of Mindy Kaling’s, a John Waters signed movie poster, a zoom coffee with Monica Lewinsky or Parker Posey or Jane Lynch and more.

You can donate or bid on one of the auctions on the Club Cumming website: www.clubcummingnyc.com.

Also in the works is a virtual telethon, Jerry Lewis Style, where we will be raising money for the Club Cumming staff and performers but also for ROAR NY, a foundation offering financial relief opportunities for NYC restaurant workers (www.roarnewyork.org), as well as Robin Hood, an organization that helps the poor (www.robinhood.org). The telethon will kick off the evening of Friday June 19th. Check our website for more details.

Many of our performers and DJ’s have taken over our Instagram page on their regularly scheduled nights to stay connected to our customers. My DJ partner, Sammy Jo, and I have been doing livestreams of our Saturday night party, Haus of Cumming. Navigating newer technologies such as zoom and twitch has proven tricky for an old dog like me but I’m learning. It’s a new world.

Like all of us, I can’t wait until this is all over. I can’t wait to hear Lance Horne on the piano, Amber Martin belting out a song, Catherine Cohen telling her hilarious jokes, William Francis slaying a house set, or just having a drink with friends and familiar faces at the bar. I can’t wait to see everyone who works at Club Cumming and all the amazing people who have supported over the last two and a half years. I miss New York.

Darren Dryden is co-founder of Club Cumming and Eastern Bloc, its predecessor, gay bars in Manhattan’s East Village.

DARREN DRYDEN WITH DAPHNE ALWAYS

Photo credit: Jeffrey Campagna.
Where Have All the Bohemians Gone?

By Donna Schaper

Larry Kornfeld, Founder and Director of the Poet’s Theater, long at Judson Memorial Church, turns 90 on May 21. He lives in California with his wife, Margaret and his daughter Sarah. Sarah has written a very fine book about growing up with nudity in plays in a church. Front row seat, age seven. The Kornfeld family represents the village of yore—Bohemian, edgy, irreverent. Judson maintains that brand as well as we can but truth to tell, we lost some of it to Brooklyn a couple decades ago. Manhattan, people say, is now a suburb of Brooklyn. Brooklyn is where the action is and a few of us aging hippies hang on in the Village, while wondering how to stay Avant while aging. Here I poke at that subject, in honor of Larry, who left NYC because of air pollution when he was 80 or so. Many left the village because of the high rents. It is WONDERFUL HERE but also terrifying, simultaneously.

Just recently, as we are all morning towards virtuality and virtual life, I came across something genuinely hip that the Brooklyn Rail is doing. Thursday lunches with unusual conversations promote ideas you’re not supposed to think and spontaneous thoughts very few people have. Curiosity is its theme, Judson’s main worship service has also gone online, and we have quadrupled our usual 200 or so worshipers in the “real” space to averaging 800 now, including lots of the people who have moved to Brooklyn (www.Judson YouTube). We are also doing Sunday School online at 10 a.m., worship following at 11, coffee hour by Zoom on Sunday following worship and then Q and A about the virus led by Dr. Allison Stokes from NYU nursing school. Wednesday nights we are doing virtual Judson Arts Wednesday. We really regret we can’t serve the free food online. Can you be hip and avant while on a Zoom call or facing a screen? Stay tuned. We don’t know yet but we are trying. How can we be Bohemian on line?

What is Bohemian? It is the permission giving, judgement free zone where things that are normally discouraged are encouraged. Ordinary motion that dances. Nudity. Free Thoughts. Conversations. Stories that disrupt. Art that thinks. Thoughts that find music or movement or paint or canvas. Bohemian is also something that can’t get too cozy with history as it is much too flirty with the future. Its orientation is forward, not back. It may have a history and even have books written about it. But it leans young and forward and new and next.

I just read The Greenwich Village Reader and got to the poem written by John Reed called “The Day in Bohemia.” He called Judson the “purest of hostelries this side of the Hudson.” Bohemians need hostelries and we don’t mind crossing the East River to get to them either. What’s a boundary to a Bohemian? So, here is my conclusion—Brooklyn needs Greenwich Village and Greenwich Village needs Brooklyn. We wouldn’t mind the cheaper rents either but that is the subject of another article. And virtual worlds, where you don’t have to cross rivers or ride subways, can find each other much more easily.

Bohemians are fundamentally folk who host. They don’t behave as guests in the universe. They behave as hosts, glad to be here, now, with. We can also host virtually or so it appears. Thank you, Brooklyn Rail.

100 Years Old, Gay, Black, Proud and Still Singing

By J. Taylor Basker

On June 22, 1920, Salvador Pius Thoms- as, aka Tomas, was born in the county of Harrison in Mississippi. On June 22nd he will turn 100 years old. Peter, as we know him in the Westbeth artists community, is a delightful and talented gentleman with a wicked sense of humor that is still sharp. He is an African-American whose achievements have been awesome. He was an opera singer and actor, and has graced our hallways with dignity and pride. He always celebrated his birthday on Gay Pride Day so we could view the fireworks after his party in his close friend Edith Stephen’s river view apartment. Edith, 101 years young, describes Peter as full of joy and jokes, always looking to help his neighbors. After 9/11, when he witnessed the collapse of the towers downtown, he cooked meals for the 6th Precinct for months. His ascent in the professional classical music world was difficult as an African-American, but he persisted and developed a vast and impressive repertoire and reputation.

Schooled in NYC, where he began developing his extraordinary vocal talents, Peter was drafted into the army during WW II and served under dangerous conditions in North Africa and Europe. To complete his military duties he was sent to upstate NY. The black soldiers, despite risking their lives for their country, had to ride in the back of the bus. After discharge he studied music and acting at Trinity College in London and at the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts in Paris. When he returned to New York he attended the Juilliard School and Columbia University Teachers College. As a trained opera, oratorio and concert singer with a rich bass-baritone voice, he performed challenging roles as Scarpia, Amnonasor, Papageno, Schicchi, Figaro, and Elijah, oratorios of Bach and Handel, and Amahl and the Night Visitors at Alice Tully Hall. He also sang in important premier performances of Moses and Aaron and The Enchanted Fairy with the Boston Opera, the Bel Canto Opera, Opera Buffa Company, and New York Lyric Opera.

Peter’s speaking voice was deep and distinguished and his narrations included The Siege of Corinth, Peter and the Wolf, Oedipus Rex, Abe Lincoln (The Little Black Train), the riveting St. Matthew Passion, and Black Cowboys with the Rod Rogers Dance Company. However, he was most known for his performance in Honegger’s King David that he narrated in major venues; he performed it at the Church of the Ascension on Fifth Avenue for over 25 years. George Rose of the Waldorf School wrote that, for weeks “the audience is still shaken by your art.”

Peter appeared as a classic and comic actor in off-Broadway, Shakespeare, summer stock and dinner theater. He was a close friend and collaborator with Clara Burling Roesch who founded the Women’s Symphony with the support of Dimitri Mitropoulos. He was an ardent theosophist, and master healer.

As a Westbeth resident, he was active creating many events with an alternative tenants group he helped found—Westbeth Artists in Residence (WAIR)—which held a large celebration for Black History Month, including performing and visual arts, film and poetry. He helped plan and perform with WAIR’S “50 Years of Global Arts at Westbeth” that included events from dance, hip hop, poetry slams, films, jazz and opera. We produced and appeared in the film Aftermath: 9/11 and New York Artists that examined the profound effect 9/11 had on Westbeth and the NYC art scene.

Two years ago, the day after narrating for my film A History of Jerusalem through Art Peter had a fall and was placed in the Veterans Administration Community Living Center in Queens. He still hopes to return to Westbeth. He has survived discrimination, the Nazis, and homophobia for 100 years. He should also survive being surrounded by COVID-19! (although a recent leak from staff has disclosed 48 unreported deaths at the facility).

And he is still singing.

Jacqui Taylor Basker is an artist and film maker who lives and works at Westbeth Artists Housing in New York City.
June Community Events from the West 13th Street Alliance

By Birgitte Philippides-Delaney and Chandra/Jo Sgammato

As the pandemic crisis continues, the West 13th Street Alliance also continues to provide support for our neighbors and for residents throughout the city and state through Virtual Community Events. This month, we are bringing back two popular events that attracted more than 50 people in May and offering two wonderful new ones.

The mission of the West 13th Street Alliance is to help improve the quality of life on West 13th Street between 7th and Greenwich Avenues and beyond. They were just awarded a Citizens Committee for New York City All In Neighborhood Grant that will enable them to expand their already popular community programming among other things. The West 13th Street Alliance is working hard to help our neighbors at this time of crisis and are grateful for the support from Citizens Committee of NYC.

Community Sharing Zoom Gathering
Wednesday, June 3, 6:30-7:30 pm via Zoom
How Do You Feel? Come together for support and connection at this time. You may express your thoughts and emotions, or just listen.
Facilitated by Chandra Jo/Sgammato

Virtual Drag Queen Story Hour
Saturday, June 6, 3:30-4:15 pm via Zoom
Co-sponsored by The Church of the Village and The West 13th Street Alliance
Virtual Drag Queen Story Hour is a live-stream storytelling program designed for children ages three to eight. A drag queen will read picture books, sing songs, and introduce the concept of drag as a form of dress-up and self-expression—something all kids can relate to! Through storytelling and creativity, DQSH teaches children about gender diversity and all forms of difference to build empathy and give kids the confidence to express themselves however they feel comfortable.

Do-It-Yourself Hand and Foot Massage
Wednesday, June 10, 6:30-7:30 pm via Zoom
In this one-hour session you will learn simple hand and foot massage techniques that you can do on yourself. Suggestions will be given for how to create a relaxing, spa-like atmosphere with materials that are readily available in your home.
Taught by Nina Priya David, MA, longtime West Village resident and Integral Yoga instructor who is also certified in Reiki, Reflexology and Natural Foods.

Birdwatching 101: A Primer on Enjoying Birds in New York City
Wednesday, June 24, 6:30-7:30 pm via Zoom
This virtual workshop will help NYC residents enjoy local birds in an informed way through pointers on basic visual identification of birds along with sounds and behavior. The workshop will also provide participants with online resources for getting the most out of this fascinating hobby during the pandemic lockdown.
Taught by John Delaney, MA Biology, who is an avid birder who has given bird tours and talks in Central Park for The American Museum of Natural History and The Wildlife Conservation Society where he has worked in communications for over twenty years. He’s also a West Village resident.

To RSVP for these events, please email Wayne Kawadler at Wayne@TheProjectNYC.org. You will receive an email response with the Zoom link. Please also email Wayne with any questions about using Zoom.

Join our email list at w13thstreetalliance@gmail.com

An Epic Tale for an Epic Time
Ridiculous Theatrical Company, Yorick Theatre, and Theatre at St. John’s present

Charles Ludlam’s
DER RING GOTT FARBLONJET
A Live-Streamed Reading Series Celebrating PRIDE

Directed by
Everett Quinton

Sundays in June at 8 PM (EDT)

This hilarious treatment of Wagner’s four opera Ring Cycle, will be presented over the four Sunday evenings of June (8:00 PM EDT) celebrating PRIDE. This is a special presentation to raise funds for Heritage of Pride, Inc (HOP).

Join us on Facebook at: St. John’s Lutheran Church, NYC

Make a donation to Heritage of Pride in honor of this event at GoFundMe (See: Pride Month Production for HOP)
LEONARD BOPP. Photo courtesy of Leonard Bopp.

By Nate Holley

As soon as Mr Bopp answered the phone, I knew that this was going to be a lively, fun interview. He answered right away, and after my recording setup was ready, we jumped straight into it.

Leonard Bopp is 23 years old and is originally from upstate New York. Today, he lives in Ann Arbor Michigan where he is currently enrolled in graduate studies at the University of Michigan. Leonard, if I may call him that, is quite an accomplished musician and is pursuing an advanced degree in orchestral conducting. In my humble opinion, this is probably one of the more intense musical endeavors. But, he doesn’t seem stressed or phased by it at all. His voice is upbeat and chipper, and listening to him, you can tell right away that this is what he loves. Music is not a career path, it’s part of his identity. His voice is upbeat and chipper, and listening to him, you can tell right away that this is what he loves. Music is not a career path, it’s part of his identity. His voice is upbeat and chipper, and listening to him, you can tell right away that this is what he loves. Music is not a career path, it’s part of his identity.

Leonard remembers loving music from a very young age. He began his journey playing the trumpet and initially had plans to go into another field. As soon as he knew he wanted to start writing music in undergrad, he began taking courses in composition and now has a solid foundation to present himself as an artist.

Leonard says this as a great opportunity and agreed to whip something up. But all of this confidence doesn’t come from nowhere, as soon as he knew he wanted to start writing music in undergrad, he began taking courses in composition and now has a solid foundation to present himself as an artist. But, he doesn’t seem stressed or phased by it at all. His voice is upbeat and chipper, and listening to him, you can tell right away that this is what he loves. Music is not a career path, it’s part of his identity. His voice is upbeat and chipper, and listening to him, you can tell right away that this is what he loves. Music is not a career path, it’s part of his identity.

With this new opportunity spurring him on, the idea to compose something based on an event flyer was born out of the intentional blending of his broad interests. He wanted the piece to feel like it was tied to the neighborhood and tied to the history of gay liberation. Usually, composers look for inspiration in poems or literature, but Leonard wanted to use something less common. He wanted this piece to stand out. While rummaging through the online files of the one National LGBT archive located at the University of Southern California, he found a flyer for the inaugural Christopher Street Liberation Day parade.

The flyer itself has some special qualities that jumped out at Leonard and helped him shape the concept for the music. He loved how the flyer felt innocuous or hidden in plain sight. It was the type of flyer that you might see taped to a lamp post or street sign outside of St. John’s today. As part of his process, Leonard likes to read the material out loud and just listen. He listens to the words, the way it feels in the room, and slowly, the music begins to build itself around the inspiration, organically. Of the melody, Leonard says: “All of the melody came out when it’s read aloud? What notes appear? Leonard says it all starts with the melody. This flyer had that unique quality that makes a piece of art simple but multifaceted at the same time. The language on the flyer is very celebratory at first and then morphs into something more exciting as it talks about the gay liberation movement. In the end it soars up and becomes more profound, stating... what this will come to, no one can tell...”

Leonard has put a lot of thought and personal attention into this piece, which he hopes will be transferred into the audience when they hear the performance. In our discussion, he made it a point to tell me that this flyer wasn’t just written by people promoting an event. There was more than one group of activists and LGBT community members fighting for justice at the time, but they all could essentially be divided into two camps. One group believed that to make progress and gain traction, the ‘gay’ movement needed to focus on gay issues first and foremost. The other group believed that there could be no gay liberation without the liberation of all disenfranchised communities in America, women, people of color, disabled people, poor people, everyone. Leonard knows what group he wants to keep alive and represent. He says that we need to bring attention to the immense stratification that still exists in the LGBT movement. Race, gender, and class still play an important role in how activism plays out today. The murder of black transgender women and encarcerated LGBT people is something we have to acknowledge, hunt down and destroy in order to join that group of people who believed that liberation for one can only come with liberation for all, the group of people who wrote the flyer that Leonard Bopp chose for his composition.

Leonard says he wants the audience to feel all the emotions he’s baked in. “I want it to lift their spirits...But they still need to feel the pain of the people who wrote it...”

Truly, we are on the same journey that those men and women who were just starting the LGBT movement were on. It’s not over. We need to apply the message of liberation to our most vulnerable populations. On June 28th, 2020, the LGBT community will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Gay Pride March and Christopher Street Liberation Day. Through an online portal, viewers will be able to purchase tickets and experience Leonard’s amazing musical piece that honors the memory and the goals of the leaders of the gay liberation movement.

By Denise Marsa

Early Saturday morning on June 28, 1969, police staged a raid at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City’s Greenwich Village neighborhood. Unlike the many previous raids that had taken place at the Christopher Street establishment, this one inspired the bar’s patrons to fight back. The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was formed shortly after the riots. On June 28, 1970, a year after the riots, the Christopher Street Liberation Day in New York and the Christopher Street West Association in Los Angeles, a part of the GLF, marked the anniversary of the Stonewall riots, with the first Gay Pride Parade in United States history. The Stonewall Riots, as the days-long protest became known, is credited as the spark that ignited the modern-day LGBTQ+ rights movement. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first NYC Gay Pride March on June 28, 1970.

To celebrate the anniversary, composer, conductor, and trumpet player Leonard Bopp has composed Christopher Street Liberation Day 1970, using the text from an archived GLF flyer as the libretto. The flyers were handed out prior to the historic first march. Leonard Bopp’s Christopher Street Liberation Day 1970, written for counter-tenor and string trio, will have its premiere broadcast on Sunday, June 28, 2020, at 8pm EST. It features counter-tenor Luke Paulino, Jeff Pearson on violin, Jay Julio on viola, and David Newtown on cello.

The program on June 28 will start off with newly recorded interviews featuring Fra. Graeme, Mr. Bopp, and longtime West Village resident, owner, and publisher of the highly regarded WestView News, George Capis. The three will discuss the Gay Pride movement and its growth over the years as well as the working process for the young composer. Tickets and links to watch the event are available through the WestView News website.

Composer Leonard Bopp’s “Christopher Street Liberation Day 1970” Premieres Sunday, June 28

Music Celebrating 50 Years of Marching for Equality and Gay Rights

For more information, visit Leonard Bopp’s website: LeonardBopp.com

Please note, all ticket purchases for $25 or more will receive a free copy of the music recording (MP3) upon purchase.
Hoop Dreams and Quarantines

By Maggie Kneip

Graceful, sinewy, jump, glitter and cool: nothing like a little of that to relieve my COVID-19 anxiety.

I watch ESPN’s documentary series about Michael Jordan and The Bulls nightly, wondering how it is I know so little about “MJ”s remarkable athletic artistry, or this championship “Team for the Ages.”

True, I’d never been much of a sports fan, but back in the 90s this had to have been “The Greatest Show on Earth.” Where was I?

Tonight it’s Game One of the 1991 NBA Championship. Chicago’s stadium is packed to the gills with yelling, coughing, spitting fans in seats so close they’re in each other’s laps. No six-foot distancing, no masks, no quarantine. Those were the days.

And tonight, “MJ” is, apparently, meeting his match, the other legendary “MJ”: Magic Johnson of The LA Lakers.

Suddenly, I remember where I was during this 1991 game: in a church, with other HIV-Negative moms, “The First Presbyterian Church” on 11th Street, to be exact. We were holed up there considering how to keep our children free from the stigma that was killing their fathers: AIDS.

People couldn’t know our husbands had AIDS or they’d quarantine themselves away from us: not touching us, not walking with us, not even talking to us—though, doing none of those things, could you get AIDS?

We knew, if people knew the truth about our husbands, our lives would never be normal again. And for us, normalcy was at a sky-high premium. The “straight men” we’d married were dying of a “gay,” sexually transmitted disease. How to tell the truth about that, without people thinking you and your kids were sick, too, not to mention...God knows what.

So, in November, 1991, when a straight man named Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Jr., a mega straight man, an ultra straight man, a pro basketball playing straight man, announced—his wife by his side—he, too, had contracted HIV/AIDS, we wined in the church thought, for us, things might get just a little bit more “normal.”

But there was nothing normal about Magic Johnson, a celebrity and athletic super-star, who blithely pawned off the reason for his unfortunate diagnosis on, “being a member of the sexiest, most glamorous team of all.” About his NBA player’s life on the road, Magic said, “There’d be 40 to 50 women waiting in the hotel lobby to meet us.” Nothing gay about him!

Celebrity and its trappings allowed Magic Johnson to keep playing basketball for a short time even after diagnosis, including on the U.S. Olympic Team. It also likely helped keep him from the horrific ravages of an illness that, in just nine short months from his diagnosis, in 1991 took the life of my husband, and that of more than 150,000 other mostly gay, young American men.

So when I see Magic Johnson shooting hoops, let’s just say, I don’t see basketball.

After my husband died, I embarked on a self-styled sort of “emotional quarantine” designed to keep me separate from AIDS, and by association, my late husband. For the kids and me, it would just be clear sailing, here on out.

It’s a long time since. The kids are adults. LGBTQ activists speak, and are heard. I’ve found my voice, too, allowing me to openly recall my beautiful young marriage, my beautiful young husband, and the tragic pandemic that brutally ended both. My emotional quarantine is over.

Best of all, science has found a way to save the lives of people with AIDS.

But we’re facing another pandemic now, one requiring a serious quarantine effort from us all. Unlike AIDS, this one, COVID-19, you can get walking down the street. Like AIDS, it is highly lethal.

As with AIDS in its early days, they don’t know enough about COVID-19 yet, either.

I have faith science will, again, prevail. It’s scary, though, certain people, including several running the government, don’t seem to agree. Nearly thirty years after his AIDS diagnosis, maybe they should check in with Magic Johnson on this, in large part, thanks to science, alive and well. He can set them straight.


A Guilt-Filled Gift

By Eric Jacobsen

I am a touring musician, married to a touring musician, with a two-year-old-daughter. We spend about seven months on the road, apart. We maintain calendars for each of us and for our daughter, with entire days planned months or even years in advance.

We both love what we do, and neither of us planned months or even years in advance.

I am a touring musician, married to a touring musician. My wife, Aoife O’Donovan, and I had lost or were losing our work load of a truckload of audio equipment to create something to do with wanting to seize the moment.

A week or two into the lockdown, we reached out to a friend who is on the cutting edge of recording technology. He sent us a truckload of audio equipment to create our own Brooklyn recording studio. And with his help recording us from 100 miles away, we have ramped up our work load over the last few weeks—so much so that we feel as busy now as we were before the lockdown (but with Legos and obsessive daily re-mountings of Swan Lake, Peter and the Wolf, and Coppélia by our daughter and niece).

So—for me, life in Covid is a guilt-filled gift. It’s like a glass of wine at lunch. That glass tastes even better than at night, because it’s wrong, and you know it’s a rarity. It’s a glass of wine at lunch. That glass tastes even better than at night, because it’s wrong, and you know it’s a rarity.

It’s a long time since. The kids are adults. The kids and me, it would just be clear sailing, here on out.

I can’t conduct right now, as there is yet to be a socially distanced orchestra in America—but it’s coming. In the meantime, I’ve had the luck of being in a house with my wife and kid, and upstairs, my brother and his family. We’ve isolated together, and we have found a way through.

Conductor Eric Jacobson is Co-Artistic Director and conductor of The Knights, and also serves as the Music Director for the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra and the Greater Bridgeport Symphony. Also in demand as a guest conductor, Jacobsen has led the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Detroit, Virginia, Alabama, the New World, Naples, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, and the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck. Photo credit: Dario Acosta.
Teaching in the Time of Coronavirus

By Dennis Bogusz

Education reformer Horace Mann once said that education “is an organic necessity of a human being.” As a teacher at the school that bears his name, I suspect Mann would marvel at our ingenuity and adaptability to teaching in the time of coronavirus. Since the shutdown, teachers have quickly moved classrooms online, learning new technologies like Zoom while relying even more on email to follow up on homework. We’re also teaching students how to be responsible technology users. However, I suspect Mann would find that despite our best efforts, we simply can’t recreate school online.

Technology hasn’t made teaching any easier than it has parenting. We’ve shifted full responsibility for daytime childcare back to parents and caregivers, who now realize how difficult teaching can be. Having greater expectations of them has made it clear that online learning is as much a problem of work-life balance as a solution.

Online classrooms have also made inequality among students more apparent. While some have reliable internet and a computer and spotty internet with family members. Some are even joining class from different time zones—a class I teach at 11:00 a.m. takes place at 11:00 p.m. for one of my students.

The newfound familiarity of seeing the homes, babies, and pets of students and colleagues, though welcome, reinforces the irony of online learning. We meet face-to-face but we’re still distant because an online community lacks the connections a school provides.

In addition to teachers, students miss connections with the cafeteria staff who nourish their bodies, the school librarian who helps nourish their minds, the bus driver we trust with our kids’ lives, the public safety officers who put our kids’ lives first, and the school nurse who has always been important to their health and will be even more so now.

There are also coaches, advisors, arts instructors, yearbook editors, psychologists, learning specialists, college counselors, technology experts, club supervisors, choreographers, band leaders, grounds keepers, maintenance staff, administrators, assistants, and more.

The physical space is missed as well—classrooms, hallways, science labs, auditoriums, football fields—and the posters, trophies, and songs and dances that showcase student achievements. All these make education feel human. We’re right to miss connecting with this “organic necessity.” Nevertheless, this end of the school year is an opportune time to reflect on how we’ve helped students manage during this health crisis.

We need to figure out how to protect the health and safety of our students as we consider what returning to school will mean. Schools have been where students can better balance their school and home lives, be treated as equally as possible, secure their health and mental wellbeing, and, most importantly, where they learn to be members of a community. Online learning does not offer this. I hope the new normal will make the space for these connections once again.

A Good Smoke

By Gordon Hughes

Rudyard Kipling once wrote, “And a woman is only a woman but a good Cigar is a Smoke.”

Now, reciting that line today will lead to one of a few results: it will get you tossed out of most social functions, confuse the women you are with, or get you sued in today’s litigious society (probably by a snowflake that has no sense of humor). Keep in mind this was written in 1886. So perhaps we shouldn’t get too worked up about it. Can’t wait to read next month’s letters to the editor. Watch out George…

All that said, one evening Kipling’s quote came to mind as I exited the subway at Seventh Avenue and Christopher Street. I always see the same setting and I hate say it but I take it all for granted. I shouldn’t, because there before me is a venerable old building that has been in place since the early 1920s. The building has housed Village Cigars since 1922.

There is a great deal of myth surrounding that plot of land. Now, there are far better historians and reporters than I that have reported that history, and probably in this very paper. However, I think it is worth a tell once again because Village Cigars is one of the last standing landmarks in our West Village. With buildings becoming torn down and new people moving in, history can get lost and forgotten.

The short version is that before the turn of the last century there was a five-story building, at what was the corner of Grove and Christopher Streets. This building was the Voorhis, an apartment house owned by the Hess family from Philadelphia. This is where the story of Village Cigars begins to make Village history. The first street grid for Manhattan was developed in 1811 and its design plan shows Seventh Avenue ending at West 11th Street and Greenwich Ave. According to old city records it stayed that way for the next 100 years, until 1911. Prior to then the Village had no real streets, not as we would think of them today. There had been Native American and animal trails which the Dutch and English had made into roads.

So, 100 years after the first city grid was developed the city planners developed a new street plan that would extend Seventh Avenue from Greenwich Avenue to Varick Street, and eminent domain would raze over 200 buildings, including the Voorhis Apartment Building. That was the shot heard ‘round the world, or at least in the West Village. Mr. Hess fought the city tooth and nail but by 1913 the battle was lost and the building was torn down; and the path was clear to make Seventh Avenue wider for commerce and room for the IRT subway to be constructed. Here is where the story becomes epic. In 1922 Hess discovered that the city engineers had miscalculated the dimensions of the lot where the Voorhis had stood and left a 25.5-inch by 27.5-inch part of the parcel unaccounted for, which meant that little part of Manhattan still belonged to Mr. Hess. Hess sued the city and won. It was now legally his. When the city asked him to donate the plot he said something that not even Rudyard Kipling would say. Not only did he keep it, but he erected an isosceles triangle tile mosaic in front of Village Cigars claiming the land as his. The triangle remains there to this day. After Hess passed away the family sold the small parcel to the store in 1938 for $1,000. So, what had been the smallest owned piece of Manhattan real estate was now a part of the store’s property. The store itself, which has celebrated its 98th birthday, is a true gift to our Village. You can drop in and by a hookah and a can of soda.

Personally, I prefer a mild cigar, but there are plenty of others to choose from.

I wonder which cigar Mr. Kipling would select?
By Michael D. Minichiello

This month’s West Village Original is photographer Suzanne Poli, born in Gowanus, Brooklyn. Poli’s photographs are represented in the collections of numerous institutions and have appeared in film and on television, including the seminal drama “Stonewall!” by Roland Emmerich. This month, NYC Pride is using her photographs of past Gay Pride parades for an online story. Poli has lived on Christopher Street for over 50 years. View her work at www.suzannepoli.com.

“I’ve photographed ever since I was little,” says photographer Suzanne Poli. “I took the family pictures for birthdays and holidays. All of the ones we have, in fact. Then I began to paint and I loved it. I was really good at it. But I started to use the camera as a means for recording my daily life. It was very exciting and gradually I stopped painting and began photographing every day.” Suzanne’s parents tried to nudge her along a different path, however. “There was a cultured quality about father that I really admired. He was elegant and descriptive. She had a dark side, as well, from a life that hadn’t been easy. This is where I got a lot of my talent from.”

To support herself, for many years Poli worked as a waitress in a Village restaurant called Kenneret. “I didn’t particularly like it. It was really hard. No wonder I made sure my daughter got an Ivy League education,” she says, laughing. “But through all of that I had my own dark room and studio, which was my passion and kept me alive and connected. I can only thrive if I have a special place. It would have been better if I had gone to school, but I didn’t have the support structure. It would have given me more confidence to take things for myself. But the journey has been worth it. My life was so full and rich anyway.” As for the “artistic moment,” Poli claims the best one is when she’s creating the image. “That moment is a very spiritual place to be. It’s a place that keeps evolving, a very soothing and healing place. It’s often said that my images are very thick with feeling. I work really hard on an image. I’m composing and crafting it as I look through the viewfinder. I like to say that’s a moment when I’m actually focused.”

Since the very first Gay Pride parade fifty years ago, Poli has been photographing it, both from her window and on the street. “I feel when I’m photographing that I’m actually moving a cause forward and creating the change that is happening,” she says. “Christopher Street was always a place for protest and the march started as a protest against ill treatment. In a way, I feel I helped create the movement. I was very involved with gay rights because I thought that everybody should have the right to be who they are. I was also deeply involved with the AIDS movement. But whether the fight is about race, gender, or sexual preference I have to support it because this is who I am. I live for social causes and have very strong political feelings.”

Having lived on Christopher Street for over 50 years, Poli has seen her share of changes. “It was very special and different when I first lived here,” she says. “There were wonderful individual shops on the street. I suppose all the fancy haute couture shops that eventually moved in made it ‘nice’ in that everything got gentrified and cleaned up. It made the neighborhood more upscale, but I don’t know. It’s still lovely and even today there’s a very thick palette of passion here. The change, though, is pretty drastic. I don’t know where it’s going but I’m sure it will always sustain itself in some way. It will always be a special place. When people come to the West Village they have a different way of treating the neighborhood. They have a certain kind of respect for it and find it very special.”

“My father was very sweet, gentle, and kind,” she says. “There was a cultured quality about him that I really admired. He was elegant even though the work he did was bad for his health. My mother was very feisty, vivacious and descriptive. She had a dark side, as well, from a life that hadn’t been easy. This is where I got a lot of my talent from.”

Photographer Suzanne Poli and WestView News are proud to offer twenty 8” x 10” and five 20” x 24” archival quality prints honoring the birth of the modern LGBT rights movement ($212 small, $1012 large). The artist and her husband Bruce epitomize allies of the LGBT community. Each print includes a $12 subscription to your own copy of WestView News at $1 per issue plus your chance to win a selection of prizes as part of our inaugural Subscriber’s Raffle. If interested, contact suzannerosepoli@gmail.com. Instagram @suzannepoli.
The June 1969 rebellion against police harassment by the patrons of the Stonewall Inn, at the eastern end of Christopher Street, helped to launch a national gay rights movement and make Christopher Street the social and cultural center of New York's lesbian and gay community. Today, almost all of the attention to the historic gay scene is focused on the east end of Christopher Street, but there is another important area of Christopher Street that deserves attention: the west end.

**Then & Now:**

### An Overlooked Christopher Street Gay Scene

By Brian J Pape, AIA

**THEN:** This stretch of West Street, looking northeast from its Barrow Street intersection, represents several phases of construction spanning a century of development (from 1830 to 1938) along Greenwich Village’s Hudson River waterfront. The architecture illustrates the area’s long history as a place of dwelling, industry, and commerce, much of it maritime-related, and is a rare surviving example of this once typical development pattern on Manhattan’s west side waterfront. On the far right in this 1929 photo, at the corner of Christopher Street, is the Keller Abington Hotel, with the Christopher Hotel to its left. The tallest buildings were the Keller and Bell Labs (now Westbeth) in the misty far-left background. The City of New York reserved the block of West Street between Christopher and West 14th Streets, left-center in the photo, as the site of the Greenwich (Weehawken) Market. The Keller Abington Hotel, with the Christopher Hotel to its left. The tallest buildings were the Keller and Bell Labs (now Westbeth) in the misty far-left background. The City of New York reserved the block of West Street between Christopher and West 14th Streets, left-center in the photo, as the site of the Greenwich (Weehawken) Market. Several buildings are the Keller and Bell Labs (now Westbeth) in the misty far-left background.

**NOW:** On this recent photograph, looking northeast from West and Barrow Streets to the Weehawken Street Historic District, we highlight the histories that once occupied this waterfront scene at the west end of Christopher Street. Credit: Brian J. Pape, AIA.

- **#1:** 150 Barrow Street (384 West Street), built as the 6-story Knickerbocker Hotel in 1897-98 by architect Julius Munchwitz, was landmarked in 2007. From 1911-1929 it was the New Keller Hotel, then it became the Keller Abington from 1929 to 1993, at which time the city transformed the hotel into a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotel for the indigent. Keller Bar, which occupied the West Street storefront (c. 1966-1998), was reputed to be NY’s oldest gay “leather” bar. Owned by the estate of William Gottlieb since then, it is finally undergoing complete restoration work for residential mixed use, complete with the iconic “hotel” corner sign. Will a Keller Bar return?

- **#2:** 180 Christopher Street (387 West Street) was built as the Hotel Christopher prior to 1920. Remodeled as the Bailey-Holt House of supportive housing by New York City’s HIV/AIDS Service Administration (HASA) in 1986, it was the nation’s first residence for people living with HIV/AIDS.

- **#3:** 388-390 West Street (14 Weehawken Street) was built as a one-story commercial corner building for Benjamin Gottfried in 1937; it became West Beach Bar & Grill (c. 1970-80) and then Badlands Bar (c. 1983-91), both bars catering to a gay clientele. It has been an abandoned eyesore since 1992.

- **#4:** 391 West Street (8 Weehawken Street); this five-story neo-Renaissance tenement (ca. 1902) was built for Solomon Lent; the ground floor commercial space was first a men’s furnishings store. Waterfront Bike Shop has operated out of here for many years now.

- **#5:** 392-393 West Street (6 Weehawken Street); Jane Jacobs wrote of this wood structure in her 1961 book: “The quaintest building in the general popular view, the old wooden building (392 West Street) is not the oldest. This is apparently the remnant of the City Market erected in 1834” (an open wooden shed once covering most of the block). The earliest documented liquor/saloon business (c. 1849-1867) in the historic district was here. Choo Choo’s Pier (c. 1972), then Sneakers (c. late 1970s-90s), bars catering to a gay clientele here. It is now used for storage.

- **#6:** 394-395 West Street (2-4 Weehawken Street); built as three-story brick multiple dwellings (c. 1848), with commercial ground floor use, is now under William Gottlieb ownership. Charles Chabal’s Bar (c. 1950-60) and Sea Shell restaurant (c. 1960-76) preceded the Ramrod Bar (c. 1976-83) which catered to a gay clientele. Currently, Bongo bar is the tenant.

- **#7:** 396-397 West Street (305 W. 10th Street); north of 10th Street, this three-story neo-Renaissance Holland Hotel (ca. 1903-04) was built for restaurateur/saloon operator Albert A. Adler, later named the Clyde Hotel. The Peter Rabbit (c. 1972-88), catered to a gay clientele. The Antica Venezia Restaurant, which occupied the ground floor under William Gottlieb’s ownership until Storm Sandy ruined it, is abandoned now.

- **#8:** 185 Christopher Street (13 Weehawken Street); built in 1837 as a warehouse, it was enlarged in 1871 to be a three-story tenement building. The O’Net family operated it as O’Nei’s Hotel and Saloon (c. 1912-1920), then as a boarding house. The Dugout Bar (c. 1985-2006), and now the Rock Bar (c. 2007), are bars catering to a gay clientele on the ground floor.

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**Charlie Caruso’s Quips**

Never flirt with the boss’ girlfriend.

You must ask the right question of the right person at the right time.

Great books usually make lousy movies.

A father cannot be the friend of his daughter’s lover.

Some people are tea, some are coffee.

Football will end as inevitably as the June 1969 rebellion against police harassment by the patrons of the Stonewall Inn, at the eastern end of Christopher Street, helped to launch a national gay rights movement and make Christopher Street the social and cultural center of New York’s lesbian and gay community. Today, almost all of the attention to the historic gay scene is focused on the east end of Christopher Street, but there is another important area of Christopher Street that deserves attention: the west end.

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Youth is life on a roll—until it’s toasted.

Great books usually make lousy movies.

Ice cream without the D makes no sense.

“Ice’d” cream. Is that the proper spelling?

Youth is life on a roll—until it’s toasted.

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Youth is life on a roll—until it’s toasted.
Modernism lives in Tribeca.

A collaboration of design visionaries.
Kushner Real Estate in the Village: Another Slumlord

You may have heard that Steve Croman, the notoriously abusive slumlord owner of many Village apartments, is back at work as an ex-convict. He seems to be joined by another landlord organization of questionable reputation, the Charles Kushner family.

According to Wikipedia: Kushner Companies LLC is an American real estate developer in the New York City metropolitan area. The company’s biggest presence is in the New Jersey residential market. Its founder, Charles Kushner, was convicted of tax evasion and witness tampering in 2005 and served time in federal prison. As a result, he handed over the management of the company to his son Jared Kushner. In 2017, Nicole Kushner Meyer joined her brothers Josh and Jared in Kushner Companies, serving as a principal.

A study published by Bloomberg News in December, 2017 indicated that Kushner Companies owns a stake in over 60 buildings in New York City. Major holdings in the city include the Puck Building, the retail space at 229 West 43rd Street, and 666 Fifth Avenue (until its 2018 sale of 49.5% ownership to Vornado). Kushner Cos. was fined $210,000 by city regulators last year after an Associated Press report found that the company had submitted paperwork to regulators that claimed it had no low-paying, rent-stabilized tenants in dozens of its buildings when, in fact, it had hundreds. The false paperwork, which allowed the company to avoid inspections and other scrutiny during construction work, has been noted by critics who have said that it is often used by landlords to chase low-paying renters out.

Sadly, this corporate pattern of squeezing out rent-protected tenants is shared by the Kushner Company’s relentless construction, along with rent hikes of $500 a month or more, was part of a campaign to push tenants out of rent-stabilized apartments and bring high-paying condo buyers in. “The Kushner Cos. is in the New Jersey residential market. Its founder, Charles Kushner, was convicted of tax evasion and witness tampering in 2005 and served time in federal prison. As a result, he handed over the management of the company to his son Jared Kushner. In 2017, Nicole Kushner Meyer joined her brothers Josh and Jared in Kushner Companies, serving as a principal.

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Sadly, this corporate pattern of squeezing out rent-protected tenants is shared by too many landlords. Only strong laws will protect such abuse.

Brian J. Pape is a LEED-AP “green” architect consulting in private practice, serves on the Manhattan District 2 Community Board, is a LEED-AP “green” architect consulting in private practice, serves on the Manhattan District 2 Community Board, is a Jury Member of the American Institute of Architects NY Design for Aging Committee, and is a journalist who writes about architecture subjects.
The Dark Side of ADA Litigation

By Samuel G. Dobre, Esq. and Mallory A. Campbell, Esq.

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits disability discrimination and ensures that disabled individuals have equal access to public accommodations. Some plaintiffs’ attorneys are abusing Title III’s admirable intent by “stick-up” businesses and lining their pockets rather than seeking to help the disabled. The ADA permits the award of attorneys’ fees to successful plaintiffs, which has created an incentive for some attorneys to file nuisance Title III lawsuits even when the plaintiff has suffered little, if any, monetary damages. These lawsuits are on the rise as the plaintiffs’ bar recognizes that it may navigate through new avenues of the law.

The trend of abusing ADA regulations and allowances began by focusing on physical barriers. The ADA Accessibility Guidelines are complex and must be rigidly followed, which makes it difficult for many establishments to comply with them. Complaints under the ADA have alleged minor violations such as a toilet paper dispenser being a few inches too high or too low.

The next wave of ADA lawsuits focused on websites. Thousands of lawsuits have been filed by blind persons alleging violations of the ADA because websites were not accessible to them. The latest trend of ADA lawsuits involves the failure to print braille information on gift cards. During the past few months, hundreds of class action lawsuits have been filed against restaurants, retail merchants, and other businesses claiming discrimination against the visually impaired or blind due to the unavailability of braille gift cards. At this time, it is unclear how the courts will respond to braille gift card lawsuits.

ADA lawsuits are mostly filed by a handful of the same lawyers. Typically, a few attorneys select one person with a disability to file hundreds of the same boilplate complaint against different entities. Even worse, however, is an attorney who posed as a representative of disabled plaintiffs who weren’t his clients in order to profit from the ADA. In November of 2019, a New York lawyer living in Florida was arrested on charges of mail fraud, aggravated identity theft, obstruction of justice, and making false declarations to a court. From October, 2013 through May of 2018, this attorney stole the identities of two individuals and filed more than 300 fraudulent lawsuits under the ADA, falsely alleging that the individuals were unable to access certain public establishments. The two individuals were unaware of the ADA lawsuits filed in their names and had never visited the entities that were sued.

Businesses should ensure compliance with the law and get ahead of potential ADA lawsuits. Every business that operates a place of public accommodation or a website, or distributes gift cards is at risk of future litigation and should seek experienced legal guidance to best avoid and protect against ADA Title III lawsuits.

If you have any questions, please contact Bond, Schoeneck and King’s Labor and Employment practice: Samuel G. Dobre, Esq. at sdobre@bsk.com or (646) 253-2320 and Mallory Campbell, Esq. at mcampbell@bsk.com or (646) 253-2339.
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Real Estate Goes Virtual

By Shelly Place

All of us are spending a lot more time at home lately, giving us more reason to love and appreciate how incredibly important our homes are to us. It’s no wonder that in-person apartment showings have been the activity that the rest of the home-buying process has typically revolved around. A home has to “feel right” for the buyer, after all.

The process of buying or selling a home has traditionally been a physical, tactile one. You meet a lot of people, shake a lot of hands, touch a lot of doorknobs. On March 22nd, Governor Cuomo put a ban on non-essential work in NY that included in-person real estate showings and open houses. Although this was unsurprising (most agents were already working from home), this ban was a blow to the real estate community and anyone who had plans to move in the foreseeable future. In some ways though, the ban brought me a huge sense of relief. The message to all of NYC’s 30,000+ agents and their clients was clear: We were all in this together. We were all to stay home. No grey area.

There’s a culture of action and toughness amongst NYC real estate agents that makes sitting on our couches counter-intuitive. We’re out on weekends and holidays. We’re out in 105-degree weather and in negative 10-degree weather. We’re out in blizzards, thunderstorms, and hailstorms. I personally have shed real blood (usually from blisters), sweat and tears for this job. The same morning I found out my grandfather had passed away, I rode the 2 train for an hour each way to show a buyer an apartment uptown. I was OK with doing this because my client needed a place, and I loved the job and needed to be able to continue to justify (both financially and emotionally) doing it. I ended up getting stood up. She forgot about our appointment. It happens sometimes.

The famous line for performers is “the show must go on!” The saying for agents could be “the deal must get done.” Before COVID, that might have meant taking a packed subway ten times a day or traveling great distances to show a place or meet with someone. COVID changes all of that though. Now, the most important thing I can do for my community is to stay home and continue to find creative, innovative ways to help and support my buyers, renters and sellers.

Sometimes that’s as simple as providing information and reassurance. For the first few weeks of this, I spent a lot of time simply assuring clients with pending deals that their moving plans wouldn’t be dead in the water. Eventually the city’s brokerages, attorneys, bankers, and moving companies collectively figured out new processes for getting work done with as little face-to-face contact as possible. It took a couple weeks, but we’ve been chugging along (albeit, more slowly) since, with virtual home showings and closings.

I’ve actually been impressed with how much we’ve still been able to do. Some New Yorkers have had to put plans on hold, of course. But for others, this has been an opportunity and they’ve found silver linings in a scary, uncertain time.

Home buying is bound to look different after this pandemic though. I expect buyers will do a lot more vetting of properties online, and I expect sellers to spend a lot more time vetting buyers before they open their homes to strangers. I expect technology to get better through all of this and for virtual showings to be embraced more. But in the words of Marvin Gaye, “Ain’t Nothing Like the Real Thing.” No matter what shape the search process takes from here, people need to feel like they’re at home when they walk through those doors.

Shelly Place is residential real estate agent working in Manhattan and Brooklyn.
Then vs. Now

By Bruce Anderson, MSW

In 1986, I changed my life. Didn't need to, wasn't desperate, had nothing to run away from. My life in Denver was pretty great. Nonetheless, NYC called to me. Had an MSW from Denver University and about five years of practice under my belt. No job awaited me in NYC. Nor did I have an apartment. Nor a boyfriend! Just good friends back there who encouraged me to follow this dream. Not without significance, I'd also navigated a divorce with a woman from undergrad school and (due more to their mindfulness than my own), had left family and friends basically intact after coming out to them all.

Work in Denver had been in the disabilities community, that connection coming from growing up on a farm in Nebraska with a neighbor child who had Down's Syndrome. Colorado and Nebraska family and friends expressed shock regarding my choice of going to NYC and, it being the mid-80's, worried that New York was a dangerous place for a "boy" like me to move. HIV testing was still an iffy proposition, and I'd left Denver not knowing my status. Only a couple of friends there had passed.

In NYC, however, the AIDS crisis was in full swing, and I landed a very interesting job at one of our city's AIDS Service Organizations. Pre-internet and social media, my life as a friend and close family relied mostly on the phone to be in touch with me back then. All had questions/concerns about my life and happiness, and all were of course interested in the AIDS epidemic here and my work at GMHC. None, however, asked about my own health and wellness. These were my nearest and dearest, including many trained professionals. And yet, and for whatever reasons, nobody worried openly and directly that I could become ill, be ill, or worse.

Spring of 2020 is quite different. We're all 35 years older and so maybe life seems more precocious to my cohort. What I'm curious about though, is that I now get daily texts, emails, and even old-fashioned phone calls about my personal wellbeing and health. Am I okay? Am I safe? Of course, these expressions are precious to me and greatly appreciated. But, they also prompt inquiry: why now, and not back then? My risks then were equally great, and I probably felt more precarious with my health than now. AIDS was lurking. I don't know what personal and immediate concerns other men in the city received from back home, but mine were negligible. Distant siblings, relatives, and dear friends are certainly worried about us here and more importantly, about my personal vulnerabilities. But I wonder: why does being a New Yorker elicit more concern and support in 2020 than being a gay New Yorker meant back then? And would AIDS, in and by itself, prompt a different response now? Maybe it only matters that we continue to practice what used to called "safer sex" and we now call "social distancing."

Former President, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center, NYC.

HIV+ and Brain Cancer: A Marathon Runner and His Wife Celebrate Life

By Richard Brodsky

Imagine having it all: the perfect wife and family, a successful architectural career, and athletic prowess as a marathon runner. Then imagine having to tell your wife that your life is a myth and that you are not only bisexual but HIV-positive, too. That was back in 1997. My wife chose to remain married to me and 15 months later I ran my fastest marathon, 3:23:23. In 2002, I wrote the book, Jodi, the Greatest Love Story Ever Told, a gift to my wife for keeping our family loving and whole, plus a plea to get AIDS medicine to AIDS sufferers all over the world. I had a seizure at my Barnes & Noble book signing in Greenwich Village and was rushed to St. Vincent's Hospital. A few weeks later I was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. A year later I finished the New York Marathon.

In 2004 I established the Richard M. Brodsky Foundation, which sponsored its 14th annual World AIDS Marathon on Dec. 1, 2019 in Kisumu, Kenya. In conjunction with the marathon, the foundation has sponsored 37 orphan dinner dances for 10,514 Kenyan orphans, and provided medical care, oftentimes lifesaving, for 2,511 orphans and caretakers.

The foundation will be sponsoring its 13th annual 5K AIDS Cancer Run Walk on October 4, 2020 in Baldwin Park, Long Island. There is never a charge for people living with HIV or cancer. Running has saved my life and I want others living with HIV or cancer to get a similar benefit.

According to the Internet there are no other runners in the world who run marathons and are living with HIV and brain cancer. Having a marathon-running, loving wife who ran seven marathons in 2019 helps a lot. I'm 67 and just ran my 67th marathon in Kisumu, Kenya. I ran five marathons last year to raise awareness about HIV+ people leading productive lives. Since the Foundation's inception, more than $500,000 worth of cash, toys, clothing, meals, medicine, homes for orphans and concerts has been donated. For more information, visit www.richardmbrodsky.org, www.5kaidscancer.org, or www.worldaidsmarathon.com, or write me at richard.brodsky@gmail.com.

To register for the 5K race click on the link above. There will be a link to register for the World AIDS Marathon in August.

My wife and I never say IF WE CAN; it is always WE CAN. In fact, she agreed to run a marathon with me for my 100th birthday. I really believe if you want something badly enough and you work hard and visualize it happening, it will happen. Jodi and I will do everything we can to help eliminate the stigma of AIDS. Some people think that if you are HIV+, you cannot be a productive member of society. Recently, the president of the Greater Long Island Running Club wrote, "there is no harder working team of race directors on Long Island than Richard Jodi Brodsky." Donations are greatly appreciated and can be made online via any website noted above.

Richard Brodsky, with the assistance of his wife Jodi Brodsky, is the only HIV/AIDS and cancer survivor who runs and organizes international marathons.

West Village Exile

By Spencer Wolff

On July 27, 2009 a group of some sixty refugees, armed with rocks and makeshift weapons, assaulted the UN refugee bureau (UNHCR) in Rabat, Morocco. Windows were shattered, guards and police injured, security cameras smashed to the ground. The Moroccan army was forced to intervene. Those of us in the building were shattered, guards and police injured, directly and indirectly, to intervene. Those of us in the building were shattered, guards and police injured, directly and indirectly, to intervene.

Eventually the Moroccan army was forced to intervene. Those of us in the building were shattered, guards and police injured, directly and indirectly, to intervene. Those of us in the building were shattered, guards and police injured, directly and indirectly, to intervene. Those of us in the building were shattered, guards and police injured, directly and indirectly, to intervene. Those of us in the building were shattered, guards and police injured, directly and indirectly, to intervene. Those of us in the building were shattered, guards and police injured, directly and indirectly, to intervene. Those of us in the building were shattered, guards and police injured, directly and indirectly, to intervene. Those of us in the building were shattered, guards and police injured, directly and indirectly, to intervene.

In 2009, the UNCHR in Rabat tended to the kindly wrinkles in our neighbors' faces that our family loving and whole, plus a plea to get AIDS medicine to AIDS sufferers all over the world. I had a seizure at my Barnes & Noble book signing in Greenwich Village and was rushed to St. Vincent's Hospital. A few weeks later I was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. A year later I finished the New York Marathon.

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The Fire in His Wake (McSweeney’s, 2020) is Spencer Wolff’s first novel. It will be published on June 23, 2020.
“I’m grateful for the people who stood up at Stonewall in 1969, and I’m proud to be among the people who are standing up right now.”

Brian E. Downey
President, Gay Officers Action League

Please visit www.goalny.org to support our work for the next 50 years of Pride.
**THE VIRUS**

By Alec Pruchnicki

First, the virus came for the Chinese, but I did nothing because I wasn’t Chinese.

Then it came for the New Yorkers, but I did nothing because I wasn’t a New Yorker.

Then it came for the nursing home residents, but I did nothing because I wasn’t a nursing home resident.

Then it came for the minorities, but I did nothing because I wasn’t black or Hispanic.

Then it came for the prisoners, but I did nothing because I wasn’t a prisoner.

Then it came for the slaughter house workers but I did nothing because I wasn’t a slaughter house worker.

Then the scientists said it would last all year, but I did nothing because the President said it would be over by summer.

Then the doctors said to wear a mask, but I did nothing because the President never wore a mask.

Now I’m alone in the ER about to be intubated. My family isn’t here yet so I can’t say goodbye to them before they put me under. I’m a white Republican.

How could this happen to me?

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In 1946 German clergyman Martin Niemoller wrote the original version of this as a way of confessing his lack of action in face of the rise of the Nazis. This updated version is not to equate the death from WWII with this pandemic, at least not yet. It is to equate people’s ability to deny reality even when it stares them in the face. The voice of the writer is an imaginary person, not me, but it should still make the point. But reality has a way of returning and producing a lot of suffering, as we are now relearning.

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**Shekdar continued from page 1**

chief executive officer and Kambiz its chief scientific officer.

However, it took a good two years before we obtained the necessary rights to the technology and set up a small incubator laboratory upon Kambiz’s graduation with his Ph.D. in 2003. Fast-forward to 2020, we brought the technology to work epidemic. Christian presented this program at The White House as part of Chris Christie’s commission on the opioid epidemic. After establishing a robust R&D organization, Kambiz left his day-to-day role at the biotech to establish Research Foundation to Cure AIDS, a public charity we created and to which we donated a license to all our

and used it to make pioneering discoveries in treacherously difficult scientific and business landscapes. Here is a taste of what we used our science to accomplish.

We developed cells that mimic human salt taste biology and used these, like miniature taste buds, for turbo taste testing of natural extracts to discover new natural ingredient combinations that make table salt taste more salty. The world’s largest food companies as well as the most innovative startups are now starting to use our natural flavors to substantially cut sodium in food.

We also created cells that mimic human pain perception and discovered non-addictive pain blockers that the FDA fast-tracked for clinical trials to help address the opioid epidemic in order to develop a cure for AIDS that is available to all those in need, regardless of ability to pay.

Finding all-natural salt taste enhancers and non-addictive pain blockers validates our science, but Chromocell is not a cash-rich company. Given the immediate ability to commercialize some of the technology, we decided to bootstrap the company with funding from friends and family. This allowed us to focus on projects that further public health, both in the nutritional and the therapeutics space.

We worked around the clock seven days a week. The idea of a break or vacation was a distant memory. We never cashed out, and more than once, including now, we have poured all of our personal assets into the company to keep it afloat. In this way, we are no different than a local restaurant or corner deli in the face of the pandemic.

The same way we have made inroads and have much left to offer to help improve our nation’s diet, to help address the opioid epidemic, and to help accelerate a cure for HIV/AIDS, our platform technology holds promise to help in the development of treatments and vaccines for COVID-19.

However, as the pandemic has slowed down the economy dramatically, we are facing an uncertain future.

What our company hopes to find are industry and financial partners that support our venture to bring novel sodium- and sugar-saving technologies to market, as well as proceeding with our therapeutic endeavors that hold strong promise to combat COVID-19-related illness and to find vaccines.

We are grateful for this opportunity to share our story in our local community newspaper, WestView News, where we are very much a part of our community, dedicated to doing our part to contribute to all our lives and livelihoods. We only hope that we will survive to do so. It will be critical for our organization that the financing vehicles that the CARES act set up will be made available to organizations like ours. We have successfully built a viable business for almost 20 years. Having access to, for example, the Main Street Loan Facilities or other financing options will be decisive whether we can continue our work to further public health.

Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D. obtained his doctoral degree at The Rockefeller University where he invented Chromovert® Technology. Kambiz co-founded Chromocell Corporation based upon the technology and served as its Chief Scientific Officer until leaving to establish and head Research Foundation to Cure AIDS (RFTCA). Christian Kepli co-founded Chromocell Corporation in 2002, serving initially as General Counsel before becoming Chief Executive Officer in 2005. Prior to joining Chromocell, he was an associate at Davis Polk & Wardwell. He received a doctoral degree in law from the University of Zurich and earned his LL.M, from Columbia Law School in New York City. Christian is a Board Member of BioNJ and admitted to the Bar in New York and Switzerland. To support our work, please contact kambiz.shekdar@rftca.org

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The West Village is where Pride was born. WestView News is proud to nurture it along.

For the first time in 50 years, the NYC Gay Pride parade is canceled and the LGBTQ community is celebrating Pride-in-Quarantine. Now, when no one can gather in our neighborhood, bars or streets, we have used our pages to share our collective experiences during this strange time. We would like to do more. See the facing page for eight curated organizations working to achieve the future LGBTQ milestone successes of the next 50 years. WestView News is proud to serve as the community newspaper of the West Village. From our home in the capital of the world, we aim to share news and raise awareness that ripples across the globe.
The One I’m With

By Keith Michael

I’m still wearing a mask and Millie doesn’t seem to care. Contrary to true corgi watchfulness, as attentive as Millie is to every movement and nuance of routine, the addition of a mask hasn’t made any impression on her whatsoever. Her ears and eyebrows still perk up when hearing the same words even though she can’t see my mouth moving, and if the hand dangling below the mask throws her a treat she’s in heaven.

When I sent in my May article, Corona Birds, my West Village bird list had 41 species on it, and I said that I hoped to add “several dozen more” by this month. Well, I’m up to 76, and at least ten more species have been seen by friends! All in our little ol’ West Village. Cheers to us!

Paired with the sidewalk question, “When did you start watching birds?” another frequent inquiry that comes my way is, “What is your favorite bird?” In the moment, I want to say, “The one I’m looking at!” (And if you can’t tell, I’m smiling behind my mask.) Actually, that’s mostly true. Sorry, Millie hates my having ANY conversation on the street—so I have to answer fast.

Maybe I could eliminate the “common” birds from my favorites list: pigeons, sparrows, starlings, and Mallard ducks. But then again, I truly admire their resilience, frequent entertainment value, and reliability. Can I really look at the nine fresh ducklings dashing about the pool in Battery Park and say they’re NOT my favorites? Among my 35 new corona birds, how do I choose between my Abingdon Square Park sightings of a Wood Thrush perched briefly on a bench rail with its jauntily spotted breast or of a Veery’s buttery caramel color? What about knowing that Barn Swallows have, again, built their exquisite mud nests under Pier 40, and that there are already chicks in those nests demanding to grow up? Should I cross off the quandary from my list, “Is it a Swainson’s Thrush with the eye ring or a Gray-cheeked Thrush (which is browner and plainer) that I saw moments ago in Hudson River Park?” Both of them survived flying here from as far south as Argentina. Shouldn’t I cheer them on no matter what? THEY know when they see one another whether they’re a Swainson’s or a Gray-cheeked Thrush. Goodspeed.

I have so many questions. Should I enjoy the Chimney Swifts, those “cigars with wings” chattering above Bleecker Street in the early evening, more or less than locating a Northern Parula warbler (foraging in a Perry Street tree) by its unmistakable 2z-2z-2zz-2zzee-2-wup call, then marveling at its gradation of blue, yellow, and orange coloring? Should I draw straws as to whether a Blue-headed, Warbling, or Red-eyed Vireo is my favorite? Maybe I should just send them all a text message, “Sorry, I’m eliminating all three of you as candidates for My Favorite Bird because y’all are just too hard to find—never staying in one place at the tops of trees. My neck hurts from looking for you. Come on down to the lower branches and I might still consider you for my Top Ten List.” Choosing between a Baltimore and an Orchard Oriole is a toss-up. Should I let the summer black-headed Laughing Gull supplant the local Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed Gull contenders just because the Laughing Gull has snazzy white eyeliner, or because I’m bored with the resident gulls, or because I’m feeling glum and the Laughing Gulls’ cackling bonhomie cheers me up?

What kind of a score card should I devise for the migrating warblers? Yellow Warbler? Yes, you’re bright yellow but SO obvious. Black-and-white Warbler? Black and white palette, clever, very New York, but you seem to be imitating a Nuthatch with your crawling DOWN a tree antics—you need more original material. Common Yellowthroat? Sorry, you could use a better stage name: I see you and I think Black-masked Warbler. Ovenbird? How many times am I asked why you are called an Ovenbird? Okay, yes, you have that cool, brick oven-shaped nest on the ground: Honorable Mention for Architecture. But why are you called a warbler anyway? You don’t ACT or LOOK like a warbler, high-stepping it under the bushes as you do. Black-throated Blue Warbler? My only reservation is that jaunty “white pocket handkerchief” adorning your wing. I fear that you are putting on airs.

I’m down to two super-flashy new spring birds as my “favorite” contenders: Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Scarlet Tanager. Both are descriptively named. I saw both munching contentedly on fresh elm tree seeds. I can’t decide. I’m going to write their names on two different treats and see which one Millie prefers. Oh, she ate both nuggets. Sorry, the next time I see either bird, THAT will be my favorite bird.

Visit keithmichaelnyc.com for books, photographs, and the latest schedule of New York City WILD! urban adventures in nature outings throughout the five boroughs (currently on hold). Visit Instagram @newyorkcitywild for photos from around NYC.

By Nathan Manske
Executive Director, I'm From Driftwood

"You are not alone." It's a message that resonates with everyone, and it's the message I'm From Driftwood, through the power of storytelling, has been sending to LGBTQ people for 11 years.

Now, while the feeling of isolation is skyrocketing and revenue from fundraisers is plummeting, I'm From Driftwood is faced with a common challenge confronting small nonprofits worldwide: do we freeze or decrease our programming, which means in our case stop publishing first-person LGBTQ Video Stories every single week, so that our funds can be stretched out longer? Or do we push forward and continue sharing stories at a time when our community needs them the most, but risk our funds drying up?

The challenge reminded me of a conversation I had with our Board Chair after a meeting. I was struggling with a decision—I've since forgotten what it was even about—but I'll always remember the guidance he offered. He said, "Look...we are the very few people who get to determine what kind of organization I'm From Driftwood is going to be. So think hard about what kind of organization you want it to be and make a decision based on that."

He didn't push me in either direction, but he did help me refocus my thoughts to what our singular mission is as a nonprofit: combat isolation in the LGBTQ community. Thinking back to that conversation helped me this past March when I wasn't sure if I should slow down our programming or not, and the decision became easier than ever. While it presented more risk to us as an organization, if we’re not serving our community, what’s the point of our existence anyway?

So push forward is exactly what we did, and hard. In May, we launched a new program called "Story Update" in which we interview previous storytellers via Zoom about updates on their stories and lives.

And we kept pushing. In late June, we're launching another new program, the I'm From Driftwood Podcast, in which two hosts listen to existing stories and lead a conversation about the topics of the stories, from love, immigration, and coming out, to issues surrounding aging, gender identity, and workplace discrimination.

While we currently can't meet people face-to-face to create professionally-produced Video Stories, we are sharing existing stories in new ways and across more media, reaching more people, and leading conversations around important topics facing the LGBTQ community. By doing so, we are combating isolation in the LGBTQ community more than ever. And our message is being heard loud and clear. With nearly 25 million views on YouTube alone, the need for these stories and the need for belonging has been heard from countries all over the world.

To answer my Board Chair's question, I want I'm From Driftwood to be like the LGBTQ community itself: adaptive, resilient, strong, united, and focused. Fighting isolation has been a constant struggle for members of the LGBTQ community, and I hope you'll join me this Pride month by resisting that feeling of being alone. If you do feel alone—everyone does sometimes—please know that you aren’t. And if it helps, dive into our archive of stories until you find a story that helps you know that even though we are physically isolated this Pride Month, you are part of a large, welcoming, loving community.

www.imfromdriftwood.org

Maggie B’s Quick Clicks

TINY STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION WAS A REAL MORALE BOOSTER.

After their disheartening lockdown in early April, discovering these favorite neighborhood casualties back up and running felt like an encouraging step in the right direction.

All photos by Maggie Berkvist.
The Natives Are Restless

By Robert Kroll

What can an apartment building’s super do to boost the experience of Pride Under Quarantine in a West Village co-op?

The Super of a co-op apartment building unquestionably has the responsibility of seeing to it that his or her co-operators survive intact, thrive, before, during and after Pride 50—Under Quarantine. Life after COVID-19 must go on and it takes after Pride 50—Under Quarantine. For the ultimate in white glove treatment, Supers who are positive for COVID-19, an important goal, but also surviving Pride itself. Do not for a moment forget the language of the King James version of the Almighty’s text:

Proverbs, 16:18, “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall...” Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

The Super must resisteth not just the proud. She must resisteth and give grace only to those who aren’t too humble and don’t have too much about which to be humble. In other words, rule 1: the “pains in the ass” types of your building are on their own!

And what about those under quarantine who do not have access to Netflix? A Super can extend Netflix privileges, shareth the access code, to those in need for the duration of the special pandemic period of unknown duration.

A Super has the authority, and the obligation, to prevent hunger within his ranks. Yea, provideth Door Dash, Grub Hub, and Uber Eats delivery services on the co-op’s account. Be sure you only forketh over for LGBTQ-friendly restaurateurs. There really are not that many of the other kind in the Village anyway, are there?

Distribute a calendar to schedule residents’ access to the building’s roof garden. Social distancing must be observed — Prohibited: square dancing or line dancing on the roof, even during Pride, without appropriate PPE. Those powdered blue latex gloves would be a nice touch...

Social distancing also should be maintained on the stoop. If the stoop is omnidirectional, that’s tough. Appoint a monitor to appropriately distance the up-goers from the down-goers. Again, Pride goeth before the fall, and a fall could generate a lawsuit.

Distance-appropriate games should be provided for co-operators in isolation. This would not include Twister and Stretch-out Sam but might include Clue, solitaire and strip poker. Any activities that get residents active, alert and functioning after a several month hiatus from life is wholesome and beneficial.

Schedule a Zoom party to create “Stay well, wash hands, distance yourself” greeting cards for fellow West Village co-op dwellers. You can never be too safe.

At the Zoom meeting of the co-op board of directors, get pre-approval for virtual “tenant talent nights,” discos, and Broadway Elegance, karaoke etc.

For the ultimate in white glove treatment, Supers who are positive for COVID-19 antibodies, hopefully immune, and fully protected can provide in-apartment haircuts and beard trims. Keep the clipping “in the family.”

Pride in Quarantine month in the co-op venue should be LGBTQ-friendly, convenient, and fun. Enjoy!

Robert Kroll is a contributing writer for WestView News, a Co-op apartment super, journalist, retired lawyer and Japanese woodworker.

Please join the Strathmere Ensemble for an All Bach Concert to honor our fallen heroes and victims of the coronavirus.

Friday June 5, 7:30 pm

We will be broadcasting from St. John’s in the Village. You can join us on any device — phone, tablet, computer, tv — or, for $8, we will send you a Virtual Reality headset along with any ticket purchase.

Program

Ouverture [Suite]
Ouverture [Suite] Nr. 3 in D major [original version for strings and continuo]
Ouverture [Suite] Nr. 2 in B minor for Flute, Strings and Continuo
Ouverture
Menuet
Badinerie

Artists

Bart Feller, flute
Mitsuru Tsubota and Karl Kawahara, violins
Louise Schulman, viola
Daire FitzGerald, cello
Jack Kulowitsch, bass
Bob Wolinsky, harpsichord
Bill Zito, archlute

If you’re struggling due to the coronavirus situation, take advantage of our “Pay What You Can” offer. If you’re able to pay more, to help someone else pay less, please do!

TICKET / CONTRIBUTION LEVELS

$5 — I Just Need to Smile Right Now
$10 – Fan of Strathmere Ensemble
$20 – Supporter of Strathmere Ensemble
$50 – Patron of Strathmere Ensemble

Tickets/info: bit.ly/strathmere

IF THIS PAPER MAKES YOU THINK

We will print your thoughts in the next issue

Send your letter to gcapsis@gmail.com
69 Charles Street • New York NY 10014
they operate, also in the Village, I Sodi, Buvette, and Bar Pisellino. While they have not decided yet what they will offer, they may feature groceries and meal kits and some of their signature dishes from all their restaurants.

Closed
Sadly, it is likely that many restaurants will never re-open, and we have already heard that Takash (456 Hudson Street near Barrow Street) is one of these. The restaurant was known for tableside grilling at communal tables, something that does not translate well to take-out or delivery. In addition, since it is a small crowded restaurant, the new capacity restrictions that will be imposed with restaurant re-openings would make it such that the restaurant would not be able to do enough business to survive. We have not heard anything official about Blenheim (283 West 12th Street near West 4th Street), the farm-to-table restaurant that featured products from the owners’ farm in the Catskills, but they have been closed since the beginning of the pandemic, their phone is disconnected, and one of our contributors spotted people in the restaurant carrying chairs out to a waiting U-Haul truck.

Other
Rahi (60 Greenwich Avenue near Perry Street) and sister restaurant Adda in Long Island City are both highly regarded Indian restaurants, but while Adda featured relatively inexpensive traditional Indian food, the offerings at Rahi were more upscale and fusion-y. Now, the take-out menu at Rahi has mostly familiar Indian dishes, and recently, they have added an earthen pot biryani option. I have had this dish at Adda and it was definitely the best biryani I’ve ever tasted. The biryani must be ordered at a separate website, biryanibol.com. According to the website: “The 16 layers of ingredients are carefully laid in the traditional and ageless earthen pot, sealed with a bread so not even the slightest flavor can escape, then cooked in the original “dum” technieque (sic).” The biryanis are available for pick-up at Rahi and Adda, and starting in mid-June, they will be available for delivery. And the pot is yours to keep! Mah-zee-Dahr (28 Greenwich Avenue between Charles and West 10th Streets) has been closed since mid-March, but has re-opened for a few days at a time for pick-up and delivery of their delicious baked goods. You can sign up on their pop-up website https://www.mahzedahrpopup.com/ to get notifications about future dates.

In and Out continued from page 22

Experiencing Emotions During Covid-19

By Dale Atkins

Our lives have been turned upside down by the coronavirus. Emotional responses include fear, sadness, grief, anxiety, anger, loneliness, and worry. Previously unnoticed or ignored feelings that allowed for “normal” life-coping strategies may help us grow and become “comfortable” with what is unfamiliar, uncertain, and scary.

Physical confinement can ignite feelings of restriction or constriction. Without usual routines and distractions we feel more vulnerable and exposed. Worry can make it hard to access hope, gratitude, serenity, or kindness.

The potential for circumstances to become traumatic depends on how we view and process them. Emotional liberation can result if we consider how to adapt, help and connect with others, and learn from situations as we find meaning in them.

Deeply saddened by personal stories of grief, I offer hope and practical techniques, when possible, to address overwhelming fear and concern. I also practice lovingkindness meditation to focus on the well-being of people I both know and do not know.

It can be strengthening to quiet ourselves, breathe in, and recall times we struggled, relied on inner resources, and prevailed. What helped then can help now. If not, we can develop new strategies. We can challenge our views of ourselves and the world, recognize our capabilities, and develop optimism.

We can also consider how role models handled challenges. I am awestruck and inspired by the endurance and wisdom of survivors of horrific circumstances, how their perception of their experiences became part of their lives, and how they have maintained realistic yet optimistic perspectives. They have gained meaning and perspective by finding healthy ways to integrate painful experiences.

I remember my recently deceased mother’s inner strength. Once, when I was 10, she cautiously navigated deserted back country roads in an extremely dark and dense fog. As she hugged the side of the road, we sang the entire score of “The King and I” until we arrived safely home. In 2003, when she was 81, we landed in Hong Kong along with the arrival of SARS. Despite loved ones pleading for our return, we continued our journey, committed to keeping safe. Our first purchases in Vietnam were face masks. We wore them for much of the trip, including in Singapore, where we encountered bird flu. I have countless examples of my mom’s adaptability, positivity, and resilience. Despite being a worrier and ruminator, she was smart, judicious, careful, and jumped in and learned from experience. Every adventure was tightly woven into her “fabric.” Many photos of her convey both pain and joy in the same moment.

The lyrics to “Smile” remind me of the positive effects of smiling during tough times. As a psychologist, I’m conflicted about promoting a song that suggests “hide every trace of sadness.” Yet acknowledging and validating feelings is not rumination and becoming paralyzed by them. Being present in pain allows discovery of opportunities for gratitude, pleasure, and even laughter. Laughter helps to maintain sanity and has a positive influence on healing. Experiencing nature, meditation, connecting with friends, and cherished photos all help refill my emotional reservoir.

I hope society will learn from this crisis. We must work together to create a “new normal” where we care about each other, appreciate what we have in common, and refuse to go back to what was unhealthy. The GOOD STUFF that happened while we were isolated needs to be preserved.

DALE ATKINS. Photo credit: Marcia Ciriello.

Dale Atkins is a licensed psychologist with more than forty years of experience as a relationship expert focusing on families, wellness, managing stress, and living a balanced, meaningful life. Author of seven books and many chapters, articles, and journals for popular and professional audiences, Dale is a featured speaker who lectures and leads seminars worldwide and has appeared regularly on NBC’s TODAY and CNN. She has a private practice in New York City and has been a member and advisor of several non-profit boards, including Jumpstart for Young Children, from which she recently retired. Her websites are www.dradaleatkins.com and www.thekindnessadvantagebook.com.

MY PLAGUE DOCTOR MASK FINALLY CAME. Now I’m really ready to face the pandemic. This is actually a real thing. During European plagues of the Middle Ages, there was a person in town in charge of inspections and caring for victims. The long nose was filled with flowers and sweet herbs. The cause of plague at the time was thought to be miasma, or foul smelling air. So the mask was thought to be protective, blocking the odor. The plague doctor also wore a hood, a hat and a full cloak. They carried canes to test putresce cause by Bubonic Plague. —Anonymous, M.D.
As I am someone who lived through the cruellest years of the AIDS epidemic, younger people often ask me, “Was it like this?” COVID-19? Like the AIDS epidemic, the early years? The short answer is no. Because AIDS was hands-on and COVID-19 is hands off. We took care of our dying friends, in the hospital and at home. We handled their dying and dead bodies. We gathered and wept, and held on to each other and raged against the injustice and inhumanity that was visited upon us.

What is similar between the AIDS epidemic and COVID-19 is twofold—the over-flooded hospitals and the hospital understaffing. Except in the rare times a nurse, aid, or doctor was stuck with an infected needle, the medical staff was not at risk for contracting AIDS as they are with COVID-19. Also, as with AIDS, the doctors working with COVID-19 patients do not know what they are dealing with. The learning curve with COVID, as with AIDS, has been steep.

We educated ourselves alongside the doctors. We also worked alongside the doctors, nurses, and aids taking care of our friends in the hospital, doing what the nurses and aids would not or could not do. On Thursday, March 12, 2020, when lights went out on Broadway as all the theaters shut down their shows, I thought of the first Day Without Art created by the artist and art professionals’ coalition, Visual Aids. On December 1st, 1989, to draw attention to the suffering and loss in the arts community due to the continuing pandemic of AIDS, museums and performance spaces in New York, Los Angeles, London, and Paris, went dark, in solidarity, to bring attention to the fearsome possibility of a world without art or artists as the art community, hard hit by the HIV virus, buckled under the attack of AIDS.

When I see people on the streets without masks, I feel so sad. NYC has always been a city with an innate sense of solidarity. In the more than 50 years that I have lived here, it has always pulled together in crisis. We last saw that in 2001 as the walls of our city were covered in flyers, the faces of people’s loved ones lost in the fires and collapse of the Twin Towers were everywhere. No one who experienced it will ever forget. We openly wept in the streets, at all of it. It made no difference that it wasn’t our husband, wife, sister, brother, mother, father, fiancé, family member, or friend; we all lost everyone who was lost. We felt it—the searching for loved ones, the hopelessness, the grief. We now all know that wearing a mask is a way of protecting others. It also protects ourselves, to a degree, but most of all it is a symbol of solidarity, care, empathy and community.

In 1991 the members of Visual AIDS gathered in a ramshackle loft to try to come up with a symbol to show empathy for people with AIDS, but more so for the AIDS caregivers, many of whom were exhausted, bereft and grieving. We felt that if there was a symbol, not a brand but an iconic visual gesture that said “You are seen; we know what you are going through; we are on your side,” it could bring peace of mind and solace to many. This created the Red Ribbon.

There is a physical and metaphysical meaning to wearing a mask. We do not know who we pass in the street. We do not know their immunity, who they have lost, who they are grieving.

My neighborhood the LES/EV is filled with 20, 30, and 40-somethings without masks or practicing social distancing. These are the ones who haven’t fled home to the American suburbs, to their parents’ houses. They crowd the sidewalks in front of walk-up bars—yakking it up—their simple mating rituals largely unchanged in the face of the pandemic. For many of them it is a form of extended spring break. For others, it’s an escape from the routine of quarantine and lodging in place. I get it; the novel coronavirus is no longer novel. Many of these younger people have bought into the belief that they and not at risk, that only “old people get it” even though that is old news, disinformation—as everyone, from neo-natal to children to teens and people under 50, is affected, not only affected but can also die.

Joggers, maskless on the sidewalk, panting with spit spraying from their mouths, run two feet from me. Yesterday, enraged by what I kept seeing—the lack of empathy and ethical consciousness, the inherent racism—I tried to stay even-keeled. But when a 30-something maskless female jogger in Lulu Lemon (all Gwyneth Paltrowed), tall, slender and blonde, passed me, ignoring social distance on the wide sidewalk, and chose to slide by less than eight inches from me I hissed, “You would look great on a ventilator.” Yes, I am her wake-up call. I was taught by the meanest queens in NYC.

Her shock is that of the shallow, rooted suburbanites who call NYC home now, but who do not muck in. They do not feel part of our city. They did not come here to be part of it all. They do not recognize community in anonymity, they only care for the people they know. They are confused and stunned by “tell it like it is” street realness. They have never interacted with a battle-scarred New Yorker like me.

They think I am rude. I think they are machines. They don’t understand that I don’t give a good goddamn about what they think of my manners, because I am concerned about their manner of behavior, not the manners that deliver it. This is not about shaming or cooler-than-thou ethical superiority. My life might very well depend on the 30-something jogger, and vice versa. As Lou Reed sang in There Is No Time: “This is no time to count your blessings, this is no time for private gain. This is the time to put up or shut up because this time won’t come again.”

Now is the time for all of us, despite, or in spite of, the politicizing of COVID-19, to go beyond self-interest, to pull together, to, in the famous words of poet Allen Ginsburg, “Put our queer shoulder to the wheel.” To be honest, I did not think I would live to see another plague.

Climate change notwithstanding, approaching age 70, I thought whatever was coming would happen after I died. My former patroness, who had been studying Mandarin and had developed friendships online in China, called me in mid-January. She was homeschooling her son and warned me the coronavirus was headed our way.

Then Italy became the epicenter and the news from my family in Milan was dire. They were surrounded by death and dying, the hospitals were overwhelmed, and they were in lockdown. Hundreds of miles south of Milan, where most of my family lives in the rural village of Picerno in the remote mountainous region of Basilicata, with only seven cases of the coronavirus in the entire state, they too were in lockdown and not allowed to leave their houses.

Read Part 2 of Penny’s article at our website (westviewnews.org).

Silence Continues to Equal Death

By Drew Minard

Can we, as a country, find any value in comparing the similarities between the Coronavirus and the health crises that our country has faced in the past, or has it been proven to be counterproductive? While we have all the time in the world to spiral into the uncertainty from the comfort of our own homes, it’s normal to get anxious and look to the past to learn from people who have come before.

For me, when the word “pandemic” began to be tossed around, my mind immediately turned to the AIDS epidemic that was thrust upon thousands of queer people forty years ago. There was an abundance of strength, persistence, loss, and grief during that time, and though I enjoy thinking about the strength that was so bravely conveyed then, it’s also necessary to think about the misinformation and conflict that was equally present as well. Today, we’re bombarded with so many different headlines and varying information that it’s sometimes too difficult to keep track.

It’s also useful to think about the reasons why we, as a country, were so unprepared for this crisis in particular. Was the last epidemic swept so far under the rug, that we had none of the knowledge that was necessary to face this one? Silence continues to equal death. Are the Trump administration’s words, “Chinese Virus” so unlike Reagan’s “Gay Plague?” The continued categorizing and racializing of the virus today has demonstrated the alarmingly present xenophobia and racism that has afflicted the country for centuries. Is the process of reengaging a number of states across the country accentuating the lack of respect we have for elderly and low-income people? Where do we go from here? As queer people, we have a responsibility to stand up for the people facing prejudices similar to what our gay ancestors went through decades ago.

When our president shrugs his shoulders and says that the rich having an easier time getting tested has practically been the “story of life,” it’s time to avoid caving in to the unmotivating nature of our living rooms. We as queer people have always fought for the well-being of people who need it most, so why should 2020 be any different?

Journalist Mark Schoofs brought upon readers a set of lessons we have learned and can continue to learn in the age of an epidemic: act as if you are infected; the governments of dollars weren’t spent and there was no economic collapse. This is the time to put up or shut down. This is the time to count your blessings, this is the time for private gain. This is the time to put up or shut up because this time won’t come again.

People didn’t care about people dying of AIDS. There was no Netflix documentary to explain the virus to those who were frightened. Billions of dollars weren’t spent and there was no economic collapse. But still we unleashed our power. Sketching out Ronald and Donald’s pure and blatant racism, we sketch out our need to act. People feel a weight behind their eyes as they recall the memories of passing friends.

TODAY

By Drew Minard

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Today, injustice prevails for all but some. Yesterday, injustice prevailed for all but some. Has that been the “story of life”? Will the world be looked at a different way after lockdown? Will the flowers that bloomed while we were away look brighter? What will prevail after this crisis is finished is how each community continued to rise and connect through isolation and grief. When injustice proved to be impossible to avoid, where did each person look?

Forward? Backward?
A HERO’S WORK IS NEVER DONE

Help carry the torch to create a world that is Free From AIDS
Take your pledge at FreeFromAIDS.org

CURE AIDS