Lenox Health Greenwich Village to Ramp Up Local Vaccinations

By Bob Cooley

"Tomorrow, I will lay out our vaccination plan to correct course and meet our goal of 100 million shots at the end of my first 100 days as president," stated President-Elect Joe Biden in his January 14 address. Lenox Health Greenwich Village is racing to finish a new vaccination unit that will significantly aid in that national effort within our neighborhood.

The new 10,000 sq-ft. space will accommodate 20 nurses’ stations for simultaneously administering the vaccine and a 70-seat waiting/observation area for patients; it boasts an efficient check-in system, social distancing, multiple air exchanges, and HEPA filters. The unit’s construction is now complete, and will be open to the public very soon.

Alex Hellinger, Executive Director of Lenox Health Greenwich Village, is heading up the program and is optimistic about the progress being made on the new unit, planning to see it open to Village residents in the very near future.

"What’s important to us at Lenox Health Greenwich Village, is that we take care of this community with anything and everything healthcare-related. Certainly, in a pandemic such as this, we are here to take care of our community. At this point, we’ve tested over 15,000 people for COVID. We are testing in our patient service center, we’re testing in the emergency department and we are working on being able to administer monoclonal..."
Foreshadowing Q-Anon
I read with interest Diane Sare’s spirit-ed defense of Lyndon LaRouche. I don’t profess to know his history very well but my interest was piqued. I do well remember the ubiquitous presence of his acolytes in airports during the ‘80s (pre-TSA). They hung banners with slogans like Feed Jane Fonda to the Whales and Nuke the Gray Whales. They hung their patter on whatever current event was controversial, in an attempt to draw in the curious. They struck me as kooks who were part of a cult.

A quick perusal of Wikipedia shows Mr. LaRouche’s history has a bit more to it than Ms. Sare describes. I will leave it to your readers to see for themselves. It is amusing as ancient history. What is less amusing is the clear foreshadowing of the alt-right Q-Anon conspiracy theories that vex us so today. There will always be charlatans who prey on those who want to see a big (necessarily secret) reason for everything that happens and who want to be part of that select group that sees the “truths” (e.g. the letter in the same issue on 9/11).

In light of today’s events, the LaRouche movement seems almost quaint.

—Art Steinmetz

Mysterious Illness
Hi George,
My wife and I live on the corner of Christopher and Bedford. We moved in on March 1st last year and after lockdown commenced my wife worked from home, from our bedroom, for two weeks until she suddenly got very sick on April 2nd with COVID. She was bed-bound until the end of August and then made some progress in her recovery and went back to work (again, from our bedroom) on November 2nd. Ten days later she relapsed and has been back in bed ever since.

About two weeks ago a friend suggested we look into EMF as a possible cause for the length of the illness and we sourced an expert to come and investigate.

Before he came though, I noticed a cell antenna on top of the lamppost about 10 feet outside our bedroom window. We moved my wife into another bedroom and she immediately began to feel better.

When the guy came to take readings in our bedroom, they were literally off the charts. 5,000 microwatts is considered extremely dangerous but the reading in the bedroom, in the corner closest to the cell antenna, was over 20,000 microwatts.

These cell antenna seem to be on a huge number of lampposts around the village and they must be making (or in our case, keeping) people sick...Wondering if you’ve heard any other stories like this, or would be interested in writing this one?

—Tope

Bottcher Works to Keep Neighborhood Clean
Letter to the Editor
After every disaster the first order of business is cleaning up before rebuilding. Erik Bottcher, candidate for city council District 3, is at the forefront of this effort responding to small businesses who cannot attract customers when piles of trash cover the sidewalk and residents who take pride in keeping their surroundings clean.

Erik started months ago to help residents clean up corners and planting in tree pits. Now, he has released a comprehensive plan to keep our streets clean and welcoming. From simple interventions like bigger trash cans and trash corrals that remove trash from the sidewalks, to ambitious long-term plans like pneumatic trash tubes, the plan is comprehensive and actionable. Erik was endorsed by the Sanitation Workers Union.

These efforts are critical in a context where many stores are closed and will remain so for years to come. No one is mind- ing the sidewalks and the city will need to step up to keep neighborhoods clean, walkable and welcoming.

CHEKPS, the pedestrian advocacy group I co-founded, has focused on improving the safety but also the quality of life for pedestrians. Walking next to mountains of trash during peak commuting hours is not acceptable and it is dangerous. On many streets the sheer size of trash accumulation forces pedestrians to walk in the roadway. Foreign visitors are appalled by this state of affairs.

This is why we are working with the City to pilot TOSS (Trash Off the Side Walk Space) where trash is staged in corrals located in the parking lane. We are delighted that Erik Bottcher is supporting this citywide initiative.

A candidate with deep experience in government who embraces novel ideas, understands the underpinnings of success and can see long term is what we need now.

—C. Berthet, co-founder

Karen’s Style Applauded
The Karen’s Quirky Style spread in WestView News in January was sensational. Karen, you should really be in movies. I was thinking you should collect all your pictures and make them into a website. It would be great to see the whole collection. You have something that appeals to both men and women. You are like that guy who photographed people on the street for the NY7 [Bill Cunningham] but every one of your spreads is different and more interesting than most of the people he could find.

While it’s only one person, your pictures are each so different that they are generally more interesting than his.

—Arthur Lambert

Thanks to WestView
Dear George and crew,
I don’t ask for fame. Couldn’t handle the pressure. But what self-proclaimed poet doesn’t delight in some recognition? WestView has allowed me a creative platform to bounce off. Although it shouldn’t, poetry seems to shout out to a select audience. George keeps his scholarly stash of poetic knowledge under wraps. Suffice it to say, every time I submit a poem I try to forget it must pass muster with the publisher. Sometimes I cringe AFTER I see my accepted poem in the paper. Too wordy, unclear... Yet miraculously some staff members bowed! George is responsible for my stretching my prose wings. With his encouragement, I’ve written a restaurant review and a thrift shop piece. I know WestView News disseminates mainly news! I’m thrilled whenever the powers that be decide one of my “ruminations” fits in. It takes a village to put WestView together. If it didn’t grace the New York Times would pick up on a WestView story and run with it. My personal favorites these days are Bob Heide’s reminiscences about Warhol and famous playwrights—juicy, wild and matter-of-fact, all at the same time, just the way the West Village used to be—then there’s the interviews with fascinating West Villagers and comprehensive reports of local goings on—restaurant, book, theater and indie film reviews—there’s a birdwatcher, an architect and city planner, a scientist, a politician and a thrift shop piece. I know WestView welcomes your correspondence, comments, and corrections: www.westviewnews.org

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Keep the sacred fire alive! Please donate.

—Janet Capron

MIA SAYS: The more accurately you can state a problem the nearer you are to solving it.

Photo by Dusty Berke.
Real Estate Corner

By Scotty Elyanow

It would be an understatement to say that real estate in 2020 has been quite a challenge. While people here and across the country were writing the obituary for NYC, we New Yorkers who have stayed did what we could to prop up our local businesses, be good neighbors, and simply live in our great city. As a real estate broker for 18 years, specifically working in the West Village, I have seen the ups and downs of the market, particularly in 2008-2009 with the Great Recession. During that time we had a period of many months where activity ground to a halt. Banks weren’t lending and the economy was in crisis. Prices did drop precipitously, and the market remained a struggle for sellers until the economy started to turn the corner in 2011.

The current pandemic has been incredibly challenging for the real estate market across the city, including the often insulated West Village. Unlike 12 or 13 years ago, banks are still lending, although in Manhattan many of the requirements from major lenders have tightened with increased down payment requirements from 20-25% (and sometimes 30%) down. This appears to be a short-term situation as the market has started showing some signs of bouncing back. In typical months before the pandemic, back in 2019, the average amount of closed sales in the West Village would average between 35-30 transactions per month. During 2020 from March to November we averaged around 23 transactions per month. Then December 2020 happened. 50 closed sales in December showed that we are in the midst of a comeback of sorts and with January 2021 looking bright with 41 properties put into contract, the feeling of positivity is justified. If we look at the Q4 sales data across Manhattan the sales percentage of the original asking price were on average around 9% down and volume down 17% over Q4 2019. In the over $2m market and especially at the higher end, the slowdown has been very apparent and the prices have gone down considerably (over 10-20%). The biggest discounts are in new developments across the city.

On the rental side, the numbers have been a challenge. 20-30% reductions have been the norm but the influx of new people has been promising since December, and I believe we have turned that corner.

We have been through a challenging time but I am so excited for the city. I have connected with so many neighbors in the West Village, many of whom I would not have if it were not for this pandemic. Small business has been struggling and I am empowered to help and support wherever I can and I have seen many neighbors come out to support as well. There will be more closures but we will also see a resurgence, and come spring our neighborhood will rebound again. I genuinely smell hope in the air. I love it here.

VACCINES continued from page 1

antibody infusion therapy in the emergen-
cy department for infected patients.

With regards to the vaccines, once we’re up and running with our community vaccination center, we will have the ability to not only test, not only treat, but also administer the vaccines for prevention.

In my opinion, we need to do that.

That’s the right thing to do.

We’re fortunate that we are part of Northwell Health and can leverage all of the vast resources of a large healthcare organization such as this with our President and CEO Michael Dowling at the helm, that believes in delivering the highest level and quality of care for our communities at all times.”

The West Village facility is currently vaccinating its staff and will start administering to the public as soon as possible. They will be listed on the NYC healthcare site as soon as they start taking appointments. See our resources section below.

Administering two-dose COVID-19 vaccinations to at least 75% of the US population (about 248,000,000 people) is the key to Herd Immunity and life starting to return to normal for all of us. Lenox Health Greenwich Village is racing to aid in that effort in our community, with a significant upgrade to their facilities.

As of January 14, 2021, 10.8 million doses of the vaccine have been administered across the US, with just above 762,600 people receiving the second dose to complete the vaccination schedule. Federal projections fell short of what was promised, but with a new administration in the White House, improved logistics, and multiple vaccines on the market, the hope is to make up for some time lost at the end of 2020. Across the State of New York, 732,000 total doses have been administered, with 30,000 New Yorkers receiving the second dose.

In extensive testing, the current vaccines on the market (by Pfizer and Moderna) have shown to be 95%+ effective. According to the CDC and FDA, minimal side effects have been experienced by 2%-10% of recipients. Also, per the FDA, though there were less than a dozen instances of allergic reactions, the vaccine has been safely distributed to over 99.9% of patients without incident. If you have any questions about specific conditions or concerns you may have, or when you should get the vaccine, talk with your doctor.

Bob Cooley is a photojournalist and communications strategist who lives in the West Village. He’s spent over 30 years creating photography and stories for publications including LIFE Magazine, Forbes, The Economist, Sports Illustrated, The Associated Press, and many others. You can see more of Bob’s work at www.bobcooleyny.com and new photography daily on Instagram @bobcooley

LOCAL RESOURCES:
Lenox Health Greenwich Village
30 7th Ave. (7th Ave and 12th St.)
northwell.edu/lenox-health-greenwich-village
When can you get the vaccine
(Lenox Health will be listed when available)
vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/
When are you eligible to get the vaccine
INY.gov/vac-init

Keep up with the distribution of the vaccine
Nationally: tinyurl.com/distro-usa
NY State: tinyurl.com/distro-nyc

Cinematography and stories for publications includ-
ing LIFE Magazine, Forbes, The Economist, Sports Illustrated, The Associated Press, and many others. You can see more of Bob’s work at www.bobcooleyny.com and new photog-
raphy daily on Instagram @bobcooley

Michael Salomon Morton

Michael Salomon Morton died on January 7, 2021, at his home in Lyme, NH, after a year of treatment for Glioblastoma.

Mike was born on September 30, 1958, and grew up in Lexington, MA. He attended Dartmouth, disappointing his Harvard man father.

In 1984, Mike began work for Teradyne, followed by Infoicom and Lotus. There was a succession of startups after Lotus which led him to observe that when considering joining a startup, one needs to think about whether the founder has a true vision or is just hallucinating. Unfortunately, he encountered some of each. In 1987, Mike moved to Hawaii, where he lived for seventeen years, working for Apple. In 2004, he moved back to NH. In 2006, Mike joined Google.

He leaves behind his beloved wife, Dani Capis, his godchildren Kate and Nik Ligett and their families, his brother Evan Morton and family of Lexington MA, and his mother Sabra Morton.
COVID Vaccines—Where is the Leadership?

By Arthur Schwartz

On January 14, at 2:30 a.m., I got a needle full of the Moderna vaccine stuck into my arm.

It wasn’t easy to get that done. As soon as I heard that Governor Cuomo had opened the vaccine to people over 65, I got on the Internet trying to make an appointment. For three hours I filled in forms, trying to log onto the different websites for the different agencies. No luck.

I was told that I needed to go to the Health Department at 125 Worth Street, in the neighborhood where I live. I called Nextdoor that the Health Department was taking walk-ins. I shared my experience on the blog, and was advised to try at 6 p.m.; “no walk-ins.” I came back the next day at 6 a.m., I was told “no walk-ins.” I looked as far out as June. Then I started calling locations listed on some NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene sites—pharmacies, urgent care clinics, hospitals. Not one call got me an appointment.

I was beside myself. Mentally I had been prepared to wait until mid to late February or even March for a shot. But when the age was lowered to 65, I leapt at the opportunity. Like everyone reading this, I have lived in dread of COVID for over 10 months. I am 67. I have had a heart attack. Forget about being a City Council candidate—I have had limited time with my adult daughter and my 99-year-old mom. Work revolves around my tiny “home office.” But the chance that I might get vaccinated in January soon became a bad dream.

Then I read on a neighborhood blog that the Health Department, at 125 Worth Street, was taking walk-ins. So on January 14th I went at 8 a.m.; I was told “no walk-ins.” I came back at 6 p.m.; “no walk-ins.” I shared my experience on the blog, and was advised to try again at 2 a.m. I did, and I walked right in! Four nurses were sitting without people to vaccinate. I got it, I got no reaction, and shot 2 is scheduled for February 11—my birthday. But I am angry.

We have no political leadership on this life-and-death issue. We are getting used to death and disease, but COVID is still a killer which can be wiped out.

Cory Johnson, our City Council Member, says he is “depressed.” So he is off attending classes at Columbia and has said nothing about the vaccine. Our City Council Member should have been organizing vaccination points all over the district—in empty stores or at schools that no one is going to. Our City Council Member—and his staff—should have been screaming loudly for you and me. And you know who else Cory forgot? Seniors who are housebound, or maybe not so savvy with roundabout website signups. People with disabilities who may not be 65, but who are immuno-suppressed (like folks with HIV/AIDS), or who have serious diabetes, kidney disease, or heart or lung disease aren’t being addressed. Why isn’t he looking out for these people?

And our Mayor? The Citywide effort should have been gigantic. He could have vaccinated 2000 emergency medical personnel in December and then deployed them everywhere in January. Everywhere means hundreds of sites, with lots of sites open to walk-in, like when you get a flu shot.

Our Governor? He gets a “D” on the rollout. He changes the rules every day. He had months to set up a massive rollout statewide. But he now seems lost. On January 15, 2021 he admitted that his plan to vaccinate New Yorkers was failing. Doses of the vaccine had been sitting in the freezer for weeks, with some tossed out altogether, due to overly restrictive rules about who was eligible to be vaccinated, and harsh punishments for medical providers who vaccinated an ineligible person.

What are the numbers? As of January 21st, the State (according to the City Health Department) had received 1,004,675 doses. But only 539,618 had been administered as first or second doses. Of that, 119,150 have been set aside for the federal program under which CVS and Walgreens are vaccinating residents and staff at long-term care facilities. Another 25,350 are for NYS-run vaccination sites like the one at the Javits Convention Center. That leaves us 320,557. As of the 21st, 232,485 doses were being saved for second doses. That left 88,072 for weeks. With the City expected to administer 30,000 per day, the Mayor had the City cancel thousands of appointments.

THIS IS RIDICULOUS! Even with stepped-up delivery from the Biden Administration, the City and State’s system of distribution shows no sign of being able to keep us safe. And for our readers under 65, that means months of angst—hoping to get vaccinated, not knowing when, hoping to not catch the new “variant.”

If I were your City Council Member, I would be out there every day—yelling, organizing, setting up sites—and fighting to expand availability, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Nothing could be more important!

Arthur Schwartz is the Democratic District Leader for Greenwich Village and a candidate for City Council from District 3—Greenwich Village, Chelsea and Hell’s Kitchen.

Vaccines for 9–11 Heros!

As if the vaccine rollout wasn’t bad enough, the surviving first responders whose health was compromised by the 9–11 attack, aren’t being cared for. The World Trade Center Medical Advisory Committee has looked at the pandemic statistics and has concluded that WTC first responders are at a significantly higher risk for COVID-19 complications. 32,000 of the 80,000 first responders and survivors who have enrolled in the WTC Health Program are under 65, and don’t have access to the COVID-19 vaccine unless they are police, fire, EMS, or transit workers. Over 70 percent of the first-responders in the program suffer from more than one certified WTC cancer or condition. We all need the vaccine. But these heros need it even more. For them to have been left out is wrong. Governor Cuomo must open the vaccine to these heros now!

—Arthur Schwartz

COVID Vaccine Efficiency

State of New York Regional Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>First Doses Administered out of Doses Received</th>
<th>First &amp; Second Doses % Administered out of Doses Received</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Region</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central New York</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finger Lakes</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Island</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Hudson</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mohawk Valley</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Country</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Tier</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western New York</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>91%</td>
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</tbody>
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Crunching the numbers, it appears that New York State as a whole has given out 83% of the supply it received by the government. In specific, North Country is doing better than every other region, having distributed 97% of the first doses it has received. The Albany area is at 93%, as is Long Island. New York City is faring the worst; only 71% of the first doses it has received have already been given out. Couple that stat with Mayor Bill de Blasio’s recent warning that the city would soon completely run out of vaccines, and you’ve got a pretty sad (and scary, and disappointing) situation at hand. Source: New York State COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker.
I’m **Arthur Schwartz** and I am running for City Council in District 3.

- Green New Deal for NYC
- Protect Tenants and rebuild NYCHA housing
- Reimagine NYPD
- Billions for new affordable housing, not the Bus Terminal
- Reduce the cost of Mass Transit
- Stop all hospital closings, expand healthcare

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By the Erik Bottcher for City Council Campaign

My German Uncle Max would sit in the best chair on a Sunday afternoon, with a quart bottle of Schoenheit, and talk and talk. On several occasions he commented on how clean German streets were compared to those in New York and made me, at a very young age, conscious of clean streets. Later, when I traveled to Paris, London, and Athens, I noted that the richer the country, the more careless and profuse the street waste (impoverished Athens, when I last saw it, was mostly free dust).

I had been noticing a steady increase in outrageous cluttering here in New York and wondered occasionally, “what must the tourists think?” But we become insensitive to the clutter we live with (take my desk for example) and move on to real problems, like the high cost of a subway ride (it use to be a nickel).

To my great surprise, however, young Erik Bottcher is not only aware of our increasing display of street waste, he even knows how it happened (a huge cut in the budget of the NYC Department of Sanitation); and now he is offering that if we vote to make him our city councilman he will solve the problem. The more accurately we can state a problem, the closer we are to solving it.

– George Capvis

Erik Bottcher, candidate for City Council District 3 (the West Village, Chelsea, Hell’s Kitchen) announced a comprehensive plan to address the unsatisfactory sanitation conditions in our neighborhoods and enhance environmental sustainability. Informed by his years of experience in city and state government, and best practices around the world, Bottcher’s “Clean District 3” platform contains measures ranging from an increase in basic services to innovative ideas that could reshape the future of sanitation in New York City.

Investment in sanitation is necessary if the city is to attract businesses, residents and tourists again after the COVID-19 crisis. “Picking up the trash and keeping our neighborhoods clean is one of the fundamental responsibilities of city government,” said Erik Bottcher. “If New York City is going to recover economically from this crisis, we need to put our best foot forward to the world, and that includes having clean streets. Overflowing corner waste baskets represent a failure of government services. It’s time to rethink our approach to sanitation and provide the desired resources. I’m excited to make this vision a reality as a future member of the New York City Council.”

Bottcher’s plan was also hailed as sensible and likely to succeed by Judith Enck, former Environmental Protection Agency regional administrator and president of Beyond Plastics, and by John Madd, president of the Midtown South Community Council.

Erik’s “Clean District 3” platform calls for a significant reinvestment in sanitation services, including corner basket service, street sweeping, and the creation of borough-wide DSNY “strike teams” that will respond to 311 calls in real time. The platform outlines a return to more frequent alternate side parking to allow for increased street cleaning, recommends smaller street sweepers to clean bike lanes more efficiently, and embraces new models of curbside trash collection that get trash piles off of sidewalks and into well-designed trash corrals. Erik will sponsor legislation to better regulate corner newspaper boxes, which are often poorly maintained eyesores, and supports the installation of a pneumatic tube underneath the High Line that could transfer garbage to a centralized collection location, thus reducing truck traffic on our streets. Erik will also push for the creation of a Chelsea Business Improvement District (BID) and a northward expansion of the HY/HK BID (Hudson Yards/Hell’s Kitchen Business Improvement District).

Bottcher announced these plans along with the endorsement by the Uniformed Sanitationmen’s Association, IBT Local 381, which represents all of New York City’s sanitation workers. This adds to the current list of organizations and elected officials that have endorsed Bottcher including City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, US Rep. Ritchie Torres, former City Councilmember Ronnie Ehlidige, the United Federation of Teachers, TenantsPAC, LBGTQ, Victory Fund, the Freelancers Union, the Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club, Village Independent Democrats, and Downtown Independent Democrats.

To read the whole sanitation plan please visit Erik’s website at ErikBottcher.com and go to the issues page, or directly visit ErikBottcher.com/sanitationplan.

Erik Bottcher is not only aware of our increasing display of street waste, he even knows how it happened (a huge cut in the budget of the NYC Department of Sanitation); and now he is offering that if we vote to make him our city councilman he will solve the problem. The more accurately we can state a problem, the closer we are to solving it.

– George Capvis

A Voice for the People

By Aleta LaFargue

This is a story I know to be true.

Recently, I received a distressed phone call from a neighbor: “I need help, please, let me know if there’s anything you can do. I can’t let him live like this.” Her voice was consumed with emotion.

That phone call was from the parent of an adult child suffering from addiction, mental illness and homelessness. Each of these a challenge in their own right; together, they are nearly insurmountable, especially when you don’t have access to resources or allies to fight for you.

A mere three decades into his life, my neighbor’s son takes residence at a shelter, a place occupied by others deep in the grips of addiction. How did he get here? A classic tale of one drink turning to two and two drinks turning into too many, a habit that would repeat itself and then become a lifestyle, coupled with other substances.

This habit has triggered a cascading effect of chronic health issues, making life even more painful for Ethan.

The very night before my neighbor’s phone call, Ethan was bunkered down at a shelter trying to survive the pandemic when something unexpected occurred: a roommate high on methamphetamines attempted to sexually assault him. Having no other option, Ethan quickly fled the shelter, leaving with just the clothes on his back. Moments later he checked himself into Bellevue Hospital for shelter and help. If you’re the mother of a son, like me, this story should serve as a wake-up call and a call to action. I cannot imagine my own child being alone, scared, with no place to turn.

And that’s when I received an email from a New York City council candidate in district three. The email? An invitation to a public forum on transportation. What? That was an “a-ha” moment for me. Bike lanes and beautification are important, of course. They aren’t, however, the most pressing issues facing our community.

Businesses are closing. Unemployment has skyrocketed—Broadway alone lost 87,500 jobs according to the state Department of Labor. Residents can’t pay their rent. Children are struggling through the limitations of remote learning, especially those whose parents are without the necessary resources.

My point? We need leadership that’s going to focus on the issues that impact working families most. Hell’s Kitchen, my community, is the epicenter of working class New York City; we’re diverse, hardworking, and deeply passionate about our city.

Hell’s Kitchen has been hit particularly hard by the pandemic. The city made a policy decision to triage unhoused residents to empty hotels in our community. This massive congregation of unhoused New Yorkers has led to a spike in gang violence, as drug dealers and other criminals lord over the hotels like an unoccupied empire. The result has led to a surge in violent crime, particularly gun violence.

In short, our homeless population has become a sitting duck under the city’s current policy, with little to no police presence on site. Our streets are less safe, our neighborhoods less open, and our community is under siege.

Daily calls, emails, and texts from residents in desperate search for help flood my phone. Seniors citizens are being harassed, mugged, and even beaten. Mothers are routinely being sexually harassed from flashers while lewd comments are hurled at their young children.

Local law enforcement needs to return to community policing. It’s a proven model. Our police, NYPD, need to partner with local community groups, like the Manhattan Plaza Tenants Association of which I serve as president, to improve public safety.

A return to community policing will not occur with leadership from city hall. That’s why I’m running for city council for district three. It’s time to lean in, dig deep, and go hard for our community, especially on the issues that matter most.

I’ve always been taught that if you want to change government, then you need to change who you send to run it.

My name is Aleta LaFargue and I believe as New Yorkers we can do more – now let’s do it together.

Aleta LaFargue is a council candidate in district three, the president of Manhattan Plaza Tenants Association, a mother, and lifelong resident of Hell’s Kitchen.
What’s With This Vaccine Rollout?

By Penny Mintz

On January 12, 2021, Governor Cuomo expanded the categories of people eligible to obtain the COVID vaccine. People over 65 years of age and immunocompromised people were added to the statewide pool of those entitled to get the vaccination shots. Overnight, 2,500,000 people citywide could schedule and receive the vaccine.

Problems immediately ensued.

During a public forum on January 19th, City Council Member Mark Levine, who is chair of the council’s Health Committee, discussed the two main problems. First, although there are 2,500,000 people now eligible, the city is getting only about 100,000 doses per week. Levine’s prediction that, “unless we get an unexpected delivery this week from the federal government, we’re going to have to start canceling appointments” was accurate. The supply was exhausted by Friday, January 22nd. The number of doses was increased to about 116,000 doses per week on January 26th, but that supply is still woefully inadequate.

The supply problem can be laid directly at the feet of the Trump administration. The federal government neglected to organize the production, delivery and administration of the vaccines that are so crucial to end the COVID-19 pandemic. They could have used the Defense Production Act, passed during the Korean War, to force production of the components of the vaccine, but they declined to do that. Levine calls this an “epic failure.” He is hopeful that the Biden administration can “right the ship” and “force production of the key components that are slowing down the supply chain.”

The second problem with the rollout is the broken scheduling system in New York City. “What we need is a system comparable to what you can get on a travel website, which allows for a single, unified front end for scheduling,” says Levine. “Right now you’ve got to create a new account for potentially dozens of providers and go through an eligibility screen for every one of those providers, and then only to have to go down the rabbit hole again for another one.”

This is a problem that we clearly have the technology to solve. Unfortunately, there are currently no efforts in the works to do so.

Problems immediately ensued.

By Penny Mintz

On January 12, 2021, Governor Cuomo expanded the categories of people eligible to obtain the COVID vaccine. People over 65 years of age and immunocompromised people were added to the statewide pool of those entitled to get the vaccination shots. Overnight, 2,500,000 people citywide could schedule and receive the vaccine.

Problems immediately ensued.

During a public forum on January 19th, City Council Member Mark Levine, who is chair of the council’s Health Committee, discussed the two main problems. First, although there are 2,500,000 people now eligible, the city is getting only about 100,000 doses per week. Levine’s prediction that, “unless we get an unexpected delivery this week from the federal government, we’re going to have to start canceling appointments” was accurate. The supply was exhausted by Friday, January 22nd. The number of doses was increased to about 116,000 doses per week on January 26th, but that supply is still woefully inadequate.

The supply problem can be laid directly at the feet of the Trump administration. The federal government neglected to organize the production, delivery and administration of the vaccines that are so crucial to end the COVID-19 pandemic. They could have used the Defense Production Act, passed during the Korean War, to force production of the components of the vaccine, but they declined to do that. Levine calls this an “epic failure.” He is hopeful that the Biden administration can “right the ship” and “force production of the key components that are slowing down the supply chain.”

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The pandemic will be behind us when about 75% of the population have received the vaccine and are therefore immune. As of this writing, about 150,000 people have received the first dose, and 52,000 have received the second dose. So 52,000 of the nearly 9,000,000 people in New York City are now immune. We are a very long way from herd immunity.

Dr. Cherisse Berry, of Bellevue Hospital and the NYU Grossman School of Medicine, explained how the vaccine works. The vaccine delivers genetic material to our bodies that overwrites the genetic codes that are already there. The mRNA in the vaccine enables our bodies to produce antibodies and immune cells that attack the spike proteins on the virus. This genetic material is a variation of vaccines that have been around for 30 years, Dr. Berry says. The particular vaccines that Pfizer and Moderna engineered to be effective against COVID-19 were tested on 70,000 healthy volunteers. “Of those, 10 percent in both studies were Black Americans. Latinx Americans were 13 percent of the Pfizer study and 20 percent of the Moderna study.”

FACT: This type of vaccine has been around for 30 years. According to Dr. Berry, the vaccine is “94- to 95-percent effective against clinical disease and 100% effective against severe disease,” which means that about 95 percent of those inoculated never get sick at all and about five percent experience mild illness. No one who was vaccinated became severely ill. Dr. Berry also said that the vaccine is safe for use by pregnant and breastfeeding women and by people with a history of allergies, although they must be watched for 30 minutes after receiving the vaccine.

Despite its safety and efficacy, nearly 30% in the first group of the eligible people declined to take the vaccine.

Anthony Feliciano, director of the Commission for People’s Health Services, explained that people of color have a rational basis for their hesitancy. Among other historical atrocities, they have been victims in the Tuskegee syphilis study; women and children were victims of radiation experiments from the 1950’s up until the 1970s; and more recently, doctors in detention centers in Texas and Georgia have removed the uteruses of immigrant women. Thus, despite the fact that the highest rates of loss from COVID are found among Black and Indigenous Americans, hesitancy remains a factor.

A concern that was raised throughout the January 19th forum was access for people with disabilities. Unless they fall into the so-far-undefined category of those who are “immunocompromised,” their needs have so far been ignored. Trina Rose, who attended the forum, pointed out that people with disabilities are at risk from exposure by their home health-care providers, who are not yet eligible for the vaccine. Natalie DeVito raised the additional concern of those with disabilities who are eligible but would be unable to either get to a vaccine distribution site or wait on line to receive the inoculations. These are concerns that must be addressed.
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The end of overeating—Tak-

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Almost Everything

" by Mark M Green

Abstracted from

FDA Chief Named to Lead Vaccine Response

An Insight into David Kessler

FDA Chief Named to Lead Vaccine Response

Abstracted from A Scientist's View of Almost Everything” by Mark M Green

I've been a bit heavy from time to time but never had a big problem with food. But if there is Philadelphia Cream Cheese in the refrigerator, I can't resist it. I'll pile it on anything around and even eat it straight off a

I love that stuff and even as I try to stop—I can't without running away from the kitchen and even out of the house. When I was a little kid, my Polish grandmother used to make an Eastern European treat—cream

cheese cookies. Oh man, I can still taste them—soft on the inside and crunchy on

the outside. Had my brain become wired in some way? Had I become addicted to cream cheese? How ridiculous. Or is it?

I don't recommend reading all of David Kessler's book The end of overeating—Tak-

ing Control of the Insatiable American Ap-

petite, published in 2010. The book is a bit "overweight." But it is worth picking up for its central message that overeating

and the obesity overeating leads to belong to the category of addiction. Kessler, who is a distinguished medical doctor, has been

drug that acts on the same parts of the

scientific studies show that animals are

willing to work just about as hard for food

with fat, sugar and salt as for cocaine. The

science shows that the neurons in our brains

activated by palatable foods, fat, sugar and salt, are part of the opioid circuitry, the brain's primary pleasure center—the place

where addiction to morphine and heroin

take their effect. Interestingly, the pharmaceutical industry

has figured out how to reduce our craving

for drugs and for overeating, by inventing

drugs that act on the same parts of the

brain. But there are dangerous side effects

to the developed drugs, which are therefore not available.

To paraphrase Kessler, many of us cannot

control our responses to highly palat-

able foods because our brains have been

changed by these foods. The book is full of

undeniable information showing how fast

food, whether from a restaurant or a grocery

story, is designed for palatability, the food

scientist's word for "you can't get enough of

it," or, putting it another way, for increased

profits derived from us eating more.

Human beings didn't evolve with easy

access to fat, sugar and salt. Kessler tells

us that early human diets contained only

about 10% fat and the sugar came mostly

from fruits. Salt has not always been easily

available. In fact, it has been so hard to come

by in the past that it's been an historical

t form of currency. My dear long-gone grandmother

made no harm but she probably hard wired my

brain for those sweet crusty cream cheese

cookies, which even now I long for. Many

kids and we adults are longing for all that

sugar, fat and salt. Too many of us grab as

much as we can leading to what the Ca-

nadian Parliamentary Information and

Research Service calls an epidemic of obesity, which

agrees with reports from the United

States Center for Disease Control. Obesity

leads to bad health, which is why Dr. Kes-

sler, who played a large role in fighting

the tobacco industry, is applying his consider-

able talents to fighting the food industry

and now will put those talents to work in

fighting the pandemic we face.
NYC “Housing Connect” Offers Affordable Housing

By Brian J Pape, AIA, LEED-AP

Clarkson Square is a gigantic towers, 430 feet high, designed for 1,586 residential units, filling the entire block from Houston to Clarkson Streets and Washington to West Streets.

Critically needed permanently affordable housing, with flexible units for senior citizens, will provide filtered fresh air, biodynamic lighting, and access to public and private garden terraces (and the Hudson River Park across the street, as well). Plans by COOKFOX Architects for Atlas Capital Group and Westbrook Partners to develop the mixed-use complex at the former St. John's Terminal site, ca. 1933, were first approved in 2016. Up to 30 percent of the units—475 apartments—are reportedly to be rented at below-market rates through the city housing lottery.

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC) launched a new website in July, 2020 to make the affordable housing lottery application process more user-friendly at nyc.gov/housingconnect.

In addition to new affordable rentals, the Housing Connect website will also host homeownership opportunities and rentals of affordable homes that were accessible via the lottery previously. It’s called a lottery for a good reason: the chances of “winning” are remote, so you might have to try for years before you get something out of it. But it costs nothing to try.

Affordable housing is based on a household’s percentage of Area Median Income (AMI), which is set by the federal government on a yearly basis. Housing is considered affordable if it costs about one-third or less of household income, and is regulated so the rent can’t go up dramatically over time. In order to be eligible, you must be 18 years old, and your household income needs to be in a specific range for each affordable housing opportunity. Applicants will be required to meet additional guidelines, including asset limits, and selection criteria to qualify. Use the chart below to understand the AMI income categories we use to determine eligibility for affordable housing, which vary by household size, so you can see where you and your family fit in.

A chart of NYC AMI for various family sizes helps applicants understand the qualifications for the housing lottery. Credit: the website, nyc.gov/housingconnect.

This writer entered the website with hypothetical searches, one for each of the five income categories, from 0 percent AMI, up to 165 percent AMI. The search left everything as “Any” for neighborhoods, rent range, and family size, to get the most options. These search results were generally uniform, with three to five buildings in Brooklyn, one or two in the Bronx, and from zero to six in Queens; none were in Manhattan. But after entering my email address at the site, I received notice of two buildings in Inwood that have 18 units available for first time condo/coop buyers only, and a building in Harlem with 12 units.

HPD and HDC want to create affordable housing opportunities for many household income levels and sizes. This website is promoted for the public to view open waiting list lotteries and the current waiting lists for Mitchell-Lama rentals and co-ops.

The city council approved Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) in 2016, which provided formulas for affordable unit percentages as part of new developments. (See NYC Planning website under Initiatives.) It does allow the affordable units to be built “off-site” or in a different borough, but all MIH is permanent.

Housing is considered “affordable” if it costs about one-third or less of what the people living there earn annually, also known as Area Median Income (AMI). The median income for all cities is defined each year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A chart of NYC AMI for various family sizes, and a chart of NYC monthly rents, are displayed at the site. For instance, the 2020 AMI for the New York City region for a three-person family at 100 percent AMI is $102,400.

You need to create a new account at the site in order to apply for affordable housing. If you have little or no income, you may qualify if you have a voucher that can cover your rent. The agencies can help you calculate your income accurately and help you determine up front what you’re eligible for. They also provide some general hints and precautions for preparation.

If you have a disability, are a senior, or are living in a borough or community board district where there’s affordable housing, you may be given a preference for some affordable units.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is responsible for the city’s public housing and has a Section 8 voucher program; that is an entirely separate application process.

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 who writes about architecture.
A View from the Kitchen

By Isa Covo

As I write this, America has entered a new era, one I hope will be successful, especially since the former one was a failure.

The lesson we learned here is that we must always hope for what we want, but we must also act. I applaud all the eighty million who voted for President Biden, and all those who gave us a new Senate, as well as all the volunteers who spent so much of their time working for these changes.

We won. It is now up to us to continue this good work and help to build a better and happier nation, for no one can do it alone, even a good president.

February is the month of love and chocolate candy. I think that we shall always receive comfort from chocolate, as well as giving happiness to others with gifts of chocolate, but I leave the making of candy to professionals. Food can bring us a sense of wellbeing; that is why I chose a simple and comforting recipe for a potato side dish. In some European countries, it is served as a light main course, accompanied by a salad, with some fruit for dessert.

Garlicky Scalloped Potatoes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs. Idaho potatoes
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 4 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig of rosemary
- 1/8 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon Cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- Vegetable oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Peel and slice the potatoes into 1/8-inch rounds. Place them in a deep saucepan.
2. Mix the milk with the cream, the salt, the minced garlic, the bay leaf and the rosemary sprig and pour the mixture over the potatoes. Bring to a boil over high heat, then lower the heat to low and simmer for about 20 minutes, until the potatoes soften, but do not break up. Stir gently occasionally to prevent the potatoes from sticking to the bottom.
3. Heat the oven to 400 degrees.
4. Coat an ovenproof shallow gratin pan with a thin layer of vegetable oil. With a slotted spoon, remove potatoes from their liquid and layer them into the prepared gratin dish. Remove the sprig of rosemary and the bay leaf. Stir in the nutmeg and the Cayenne.
5. Pour the milk mixture over the potatoes and brush the top with the melted butter.
6. Transfer the prepared potatoes to the middle of the heated oven and bake for about 20 to 25 minutes, or until the top shows brown spots.

Yield: 6 servings, more as a side dish

GEORGE GETS A BIRTHDAY GIFT

I received a birthday card with a one hundred dollar check with the following handwritten message: "I'm enclosing a small gift. If everyone who reads a free copy of WestView News sent in just $1.00 wouldn't that help?"

YES, IT WOULD.

We give away thousands of FREE copies each month. And with the pandemic restaurants are closed and do not advertise. We have no millionaire patron.

If you want to continue to find WestView on your doorstep
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Hi George, WestView is a great paper and I would miss it if you stopped printing
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Working to Save West Village Restaurants

By Maggie Berkvist

By late December, we at WestView News felt the recent congressional stimulus package was not going to begin to cover our West Village restaurants’ needs, and that we should try to do something to help by publicizing the problem and, hopefully, come up with some serious alternative support systems closer to home.

We wrote to several neighborhood spots, asking them to provide their input by telling us:

• How they had been managing
• The difficulties/financial burden involved
• Their plans for the future
• What solutions they would suggest to help our neighborhood’s restaurants and bars stay afloat.

In response we received an eloquent piece from Laurence Edelman, chef and co-owner of Left Bank (at Greenwich and Perry Streets), just in time for the January issue, and held the following two responses for this month.

GEORGIA DANALIS OF BUS STOP CAFE
(HUDSON & BETHUNE STREETS):

How you’ve been managing to keep Bus Stop Cafe open so far—the difficulties/financial burden involved:

First and foremost, we are a no-frills restaurant. We stick to who we are and focus on the customers, locals, and the neighborhood that appreciates us and has given us tremendous support and love. We exist because of them! Financially, we got by with the PPP which allowed us to stay afloat for a bit. Another way we were able to last was by cutting down our hours of operation and other expenses.

How much longer you imagine you can keep going:

We take each day as it comes, so we really do not know how much longer we can keep going. The struggle with the continuously changing rules and regulations makes it extremely difficult. The industry itself is always changing, and in a time like this, things become even more unpredictable—the weather, the amount of people dining out, the time/day, new rules.

What solutions you would suggest to help this neighborhood’s restaurants and bars stay afloat! The number-one suggestion is financial support—additional financial aid that will keep us going needs to be sent. Another area of support would be in city promotions or initiatives for people to order from us or come to our outdoor seating. Ultimately, it comes down to the city needing to bring people back here.

LOU RUDY OF HUDSON HOUND:

I’m in Pennsylvania at a lake house, so I haven’t been checking on many things, as we are closed until inside seating is allowed again. Delivery is not an option for us as we would lose more each day as opposed to being closed completely.

Basically, at Hudson Hound, West Village, we are just hanging on. Our landlord has been amazing about working with us but unless there is financial support from the government we will have to make some hard decisions. We cannot survive on 25 percent occupancy and no outside seating. We are going to stay closed for a bit and see what is happening in the spring. Decisions are no longer on a monthly basis; they are weekly. We have been a part of the community since September, 2000, and recently celebrated 20 years of West Village love, but it is becoming more and more difficult each passing day. We have opened Hudson Hound, Jersey City, where limited indoor seating is still allowed and options are much better.

As a community, I’m not sure what we can do to support each other besides sharing advice/knowledge of our own experiences and maybe learning from others how best to navigate the devastating state of the restaurant business.

Thank you so much for the picture you sent. I love it. Simpler times. I really appreciate your concern for us and, most importantly, your concern for the West Village as I love it so much, as you do. Rest assured, we will do everything in our power to stay put and continue to serve our West Village family.
IN and OUT
by Caroline Benveniste

This month we observed a new phenomenon—some restaurants have decided to hibernate for the winter. It makes sense, since with the combination of temperatures plummeting and indoor dining banned, it’s not clear how much business there will be in the near future. There is no guarantee that those that are hibernating will actually re-open, but we remain optimistic that things will be better by spring.

We were also surprised by the number of openings this month (January and February have always been slow months), and we even spotted signs of some exciting things to come!

Top Openings

Stafili Wine Café – 796 Greenwich Street at the corner of West 12th Street
Bar Veloce opened its fourth location at this corner in January, 2018, and now three years later, Chris Lampadaris, who had worked for the Bar Veloce company for three years, has taken over the lease and will be opening a Greek wine bar and café on February 1 (Stafili means grape in Greek). Doors will open for breakfast at 10 AM with coffee and pastries. Later in the day, Greek wines, cheeses and cured meats will be on offer along with crepes and panini. Many of the products, such as the pastries and beer will be locally sourced. For now, there will be four tables set up on 12th Street.

Fireplace – 409 Bleecker Street between West 11th and Bank Streets
This concept store, which opened in the space recently vacated by Zadig & Voltaire, features clothing, artwork, home goods, decorations, and toys from independent brands. It was founded by a stylist, artist and journalist, and they are hoping to help designers, artisans and small businesses who are having a difficult time interacting with their customers during the pandemic. Fireplace offers personal styling on-site, as well as an option to Zoom with a stylist. We expect to see other businesses of this type, who might have been priced out of this area before, return to Bleecker Street now that some landlords are being more flexible with rent and lease length. Read more about Fireplace on page 23.

Also Open

World’s Wurst (130 West Houston Street at Sullivan Street) is a new sausage spot with a strangely long menu spanning the globe. In addition to the more pedestrian options (bratwurst, hot dogs), there are bánh mi sausage sandwiches, a riffs on a croque monsieur, Chicago Red Hots, and even chicken and waffles for brunch. Wine, beer and cocktails are also available (although the beer menu is not as long as you might think). Blecker Trading (96 Christopher Street west of Bleecker Street) describes itself as a “trading card, collectible and memorabilia curator”. It also features indoor and outdoor event spaces, but those will probably not be widely used at the moment. Funny Face Bakery (280 Bleecker Street between 7th Avenue South and Morton Street) has opened a curbside pick-up location where Fish used to be. The bakery, which is best known for making custom personalized cookies (they have a number of cookie artists who work to recreate your photos on cookies) hopes to open to the public once dining restrictions are relaxed. For now, delivery is also available. Finally, there are a number of companies that provide an alternative to self-storage—they pick up your items and store them, then deliver them back when you want them; MakeSpace (494 Sixth Avenue between 12th and 13th Streets) is one of these, and they have just opened a storefront where they will carry packing supplies, as well as providing quotes and advice on storage.

Closed
On Bleecker Street, clothing stores continue to close, with the two latest being Sandro (415 Bleecker Street) and Maje (417 Bleecker Street near Bank Street). Rowgatta (31 West 14th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues) was a rowing-inspired fitness studio, but now is not a great time for gyms with group classes, so not surprisingly it has closed.

Coming Soon
There are signs up that Yucatan Kitchen (33 West 8th Street between 5th Avenue and MacDougal Street) is applying for a liquor license in the space where Ardyn used to be. In their application they state: “We are a fine dining establishment that aims to reintroduce the flavors of the Yucatan with Haute/modern cooking techniques. This combination will be further elevated by a world class Wine Program and exceptional service.” Sogno 85th (17 Perry Street at Waverly Place) is opening where Saturdays NYC, a surf shop + coffee bar used to operate. Sogno will be a combination espresso bar, boutique food market and wine bar. In their beer and wine license application they explain: “Sogno Toscano Inc. is a specialty food distribution company established in 2008 that serves over 4200 restaurants in the USA, supplying over 500 food products tailored for restaurants who want to use domestic and imported high quality ingredients. This first retail store will allow the final consumer to access the same high quality products we provide our customers in a relaxed and cozy Tuscan style environment.” As restaurants close and are less busy, we have previously observed this trend of food wholesalers selling directly to the public (Chef’s Warehouse, Baldor, etc.) Shopboy, a boutique tailor shop specializing in alterations and repairs will open at 102 Christopher Street (between Bleecker and Bedford Streets).

Hibernating
The following restaurants all have signs in their windows indicating that they will be closed for the moment: Wick-ed Jane (closed until things get better), Employees Only (closed for the season, will re-open when the time is right), The Loyal (closed until indoor dining returns), Clay Pot (will re-open in March).

Other
Another pandemic trend is the rise of ghost kitchens which makes sense since with the ban on indoor dining, and the difficulties of outdoor dining in the winter, some restaurants have decided to pivot to delivery only. The Greenwich Social, a now-defunct food court at 74 5th Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets appears to have become one of these ghost kitchens. If you look through delivery options in the neighborhood, a number of disparate ones all have that address. A partial list includes Bao Bae, Tender Bird, Pies and Vibes, Free Bird, Bao-works – NYC, the good egg, Glazed Hen Korean Fried Chicken – NYC, Crumb Cookies – NYC, and IN A JAR.

Please continue to let us know what you see. We love to hear from you! You can email us at wvnewsinout@gmail.com
A Chicken Delivered

By Laurence Edelman

Eighteen months before the city wide shut downs—pre-COVID—we launched Poulet Sans Tête, French for “chicken without a head,” in the kitchen at Left Bank. I and my partner Micheline Gaulin developed the brand of crispy and juicy rotisserie chicken, to make the most of the resources we had at Left Bank, by entering the emerging market of food delivery from online ordering, with something built specifically for it. Also as a food guy, I really wanted a rotisserie.

Poulet Sans Tête is inspired by the tradition of butcher shops in France setting rotisseries right out on the sidewalk. Passersby grab a thermal bag of juicy chicken and potatoes cooked in the drippings, on the way home.

We wanted to enhance New York’s culture of rotisserie chicken by getting our birds from small, family owned farms, and giving them a savory and crispy crust. Equally important to us are the sides we serve, including those famous potatoes, made our way, by smashing them open and sprinkling them with chopped parsley and sea salt. With vadouvan rubbed rotisserie cauliflower, mac and cheese, brussels sprouts, kale, homemade sauces and others, we offer a complete meal however you want it; with the chicken at the center, or vegetarian. To make things easier and in my opinion better, we will fully debone the chicken for you, getting every morsel from the carcass. One whole chicken with sides is good for five meals.

It’s hard to know what the near future holds for the restaurant business in NYC. But we predict a cultural renaissance at the tail end of this COVID-19 era; one that Poulet Sans Tête should be a part of. It has been instrumental in keeping our restaurant going during this pandemic. And it has shown itself as a brand worth expanding.

Laurence Edelman is the chef and co-owner of Left Bank and Poulet Sans Tête in the West Village.

INSPIRED BY THE TRADITION OF BUTCHER SHOPS IN FRANCE: Whole chicken, deboned with sauces. Photo by Laurence Edelman.

The 2021st Amendment: Opening a Restaurant Amidst the Second Repeal of Prohibition

By Reed MacNaughton

A reader told me they wanted to open a new restaurant in the Village. I said, “Don’t.” “Haven’t you heard?” I asked, knowing full well they had. “Sixty percent of new restaurants fail in the first three years. Not to mention the margins—it’s no business to be in if you want to make a living!” Also, there’s still a pandemic raging. We’re in our second lockdown.

The National Restaurant Association did a survey: fifty-four percent of restaurant owners in New York do not believe their businesses will survive another six months without major government assistance. Sixty percent are considering “hibernating” until the pandemic is over, compared to 36 percent of respondents nationwide. This is no time to open a restaurant.

“I have to,” the reader insisted. “I love the art of great food, I love the feeling of great hospitality, and I love this neighborhood. I have to do something.” Their sentiment was not lost on me. I walked up Hudson Street the other day, dipped down side streets here and there, and counted no less than 30 vacant storefronts. The image is bleak.

To our friend’s credit: they were persistent, and knew that this was no endeavor to take on alone. Being a “front of house” person, they recruited a chef. And as they needed expert help to pursue these vacant spaces, their real estate agent was on board. An architect will be bringing this vision to light, while the general contractor will bring it to life.

I’m scared for them. To open their doors is struggle enough. The next construction project to come in under budget will be the first. Will it be another abandoned job site? A schedule that dragged on for so long that all hope was lost? I hope not.

What happens when they open? Can they survive in this competitive environment? New York City by itself is home for the finest offerings available to the discerning consumer, but now they have to compete against “ghost kitchens” that deliver their food without nearly the same overhead costs. Also, the delivery apps shave 30 percent of the revenues off the top of an already thin margin. It’s just impossible.

When CAN they open? If construction and competition aren’t challenging enough, they have to survive the whims of politicians and changing policies. How can you pay your rent when you have 24 hours to comply with the city’s newest ordinance? Or when you’re compelled to pull thousands of dollars from your coffers, having been required only weeks before to do the same for a different, yet equally contrived mandate? How can you fight an all-powerful foe?

No, I have faith. I know this can be done. I see it get done every day. This restaurant will open, because our friend is doing it the right way. They know how to find the space that is right for them. They’re using design to their advantage—to build a welcoming space for the community, but not burning cash that is so hard to come by. They will open with operating capital—and with a runway to pay their staff and rent while they earn your business.

And earn your business they will. They will compete. Because hospitality trumps convenience. Because New York needs neighborhood restaurants. Because the Village needs to be a neighborhood. Because the pandemic will end and the Prohibition of a restaurateur’s right to earn a living will be repealed.

— Reed MacNaughton builds restaurants. He has been a contractor for 15 years, and his efforts to help save the local restaurant community can be found at www.PleaseOrderTakeOut.com.

Food Scrap Collection

By Ede Rothaus

Food scrap collection is up and running again in our neighborhoods after being shut down by COVID-19 prevention measures. Led by the LES Ecology Center and various community groups citywide, this is one important piece of New York City’s collective effort to reduce its climate footprint.

The LES Ecology Center compotes drop-off food scraps at its site in East River Park. The finished compost is distributed and used to rebuild the soil in parks, gardens, schools, and tree beds. They recommend that food scraps be collected in reusable containers, paper or plastic bags. Storing items in the refrigerator or freezer reduces odors and fruit flies. A layer of shredded newspaper at the bottom of the storage container helps to absorb excess moisture.

Food Scrap Collection Sites

LES ECOLOGY CENTER FOOD SCRAP DROP-OFF SITES

CHRISTOPHER PARK
7th Avenue at West 4th St, W side
Christopher Park
Wednesday 9:00am-2:00pm

COMMUTER COMPOST CHELSEA
8th Avenue at West 23rd St, NE corner
Wednesday 9:00am-2:00pm

COMMUTER COMPOST HUDSON SQUARE
6th Avenue & Spring Street, NE side at entrance to God’s Love We Deliver
Wednesday 9:00am-2:00pm

TOMPKINS SQUARE GREENMARKET
East 7th Street between Avenue A and Avenue B
Sunday 8:00am-5:00pm

UNION SQUARE GREENMARKET
East 17th Street near Union Square East/
Park Avenue
Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat 8:00am-5:00p

3 additional West Village collection sites—Look for the BROWN bins adjacent to:

PIER 51 COMMUNITY COMPOST DROP OFF
Jane Street at West Street
Hudson River Park

LEROY STREET DOG PARK
Leroy Street at West Street
Hudson River Park

CAFFE ARONNE
112 Greenwich Avenue
Please Order Takeout
The Best Way For You To Support Your Local Restaurants is to Order Takeout Directly From Their Websites.

Want to Get Daily Takeout Specials from these and other Local Favorites?
Sign Up for the newsletter at PleaseOrderTakeout.com

Have a local favorite that’s not listed?
Have them contact DailySpecials@PleaseOrderTakeout.com
The Architecture of Outdoor Dining: Restaurants Get Design Corps Help

By Brian J. Pape, AIA

It seemed like the city began to change overnight, evoking comparisons to Paris or Rome, with so many sidewalk cafes opening up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

NYC was one of the first cities to severely limit gatherings to restrict virus spreading, harkening back to previous pandemics over a century ago. In response to pleas from the restaurant industry, the city issued guidelines to allow restaurants to self-certify their use of the public right-of-way for outdoor seating with simple barriers, measurements for spacing, and avoiding obstacles and traffic. This replaced the previous regulations and permits that were enforced by local community boards.

As warm weather turned cold, restaurants needed configurations that were more substantial and also customized for their locations, but they didn’t know quite where to begin. Some restaurants opted for prefab tents, cabanas, or “greenhouses” for their customers.

Last March, Michael K. Chin formed a group with other architects, called Design Advocates, and offered pro bono design services to help communities with design issues. Seeing a city-wide need, he also helped NYxCxDESIGN form a similar group of architects, called The Design Corps, facilitated by the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIANY) and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC).

Chen stated on a recent AIANY webinar, “Right now, all the designs are prototypes; our challenge is to make true dining spaces with character.” The webinar moderator, Michael Kimmelman of the NY Times, said, “I grew up in the Village—Sixth Avenue, when it was a two-way, eight-lane street. I worked with Sam Schwartz to promote bike bridges over the rivers. We worked on how to place a value on street activity, not just for parked cars, but defined for civic activity and interaction.”

NYCxDESIGN was first established in 2012 as a city council initiative to convene and promote the design industry in New York. NYxCxDESIGN (https://www.nycx-design.com) is calling upon designers, architects, and the broader design community who are individually licensed or associated with a firm to provide pro bono design services to help restaurants successfully reopen. The services include meeting with business owners and providing recommendations to help improve their spaces and ensure compliance with the requirements of the city.

NYCxDESIGN hopes the collaboration between designers and restaurants leads to creative solutions that could be used to help other businesses in the future. All design and restaurant participants agree to share lessons learned and best practices of their completed projects.

Unfortunately, NYCxDESIGN’s website doesn’t list the restaurants they have collaborated with, so we will give a brief tour of the variety of architectural designs, whether they were helped by NYCxDESIGN or not.

Baker & Co. on Bleeker Street presents a clearly finished black tone and glass structure with an open side right on the sidewalk. It almost looks pre-fabricated. Miniature light strings add sparkle to the street.

On Grove Street, Via Carota adds colorful decorations and greenery to a simple open shed.

Using prefabricated plastic “igloos” on Bleeker Street near Seventh Avenue, Suprema welcomes customers on the sidewalk. All photos by Brian J. Pape.

One of the most interesting structures in the neighborhood is the Fantasy Ship at Tacombi, at the corner of Bleecker and Cornelia Streets. The glazing rounds the ends, highlighted by the bright red bands, and vaults over the ceiling as well.

On West Fourth Street, a row of yurt-type tents provides a unique streetscape at the Fairfax restaurant, protected by a hodgepodge of wood barriers.

On West Fourth Street, at West 10th Street, a row of yurt-type tents provides a unique streetscape at the Fairfax restaurant, protected by a hodgepodge of wood barriers.

On West Fourth Street, near Perry Street, Extra Virgin has a green color scheme with awning sheds and clear plastic windows.

On West Fourth Street, Down the Hatch offers a colorful street exposure with a row of light bulbs.

On Grove Street, Via Carota, a number of restaurants, like Bouchere on Seventh Avenue near Grove Street, are blessed with a wide sidewalk that allows room for a lean-to structure attached to their storefronts, mimicking the character of inside dining, complete with glass operable windows that protect customers from the elements.

The Monster NYC Bar and Restaurant on Grove and West Fourth Streets utilizes a row of pre-fabricated canvas pavilions for its diners.

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Some Goose

By Keith Michael

Millie is still sleeping off the exertion from her star appearance presenting the Bird of the Year Awards 2020, so I’ll have to give her a pass for this month’s article. I must say that she looks content, curled in her corner by the door with corgi-shaped fur-bunnies snuggled around her. If she rouses, I’ll let you know. A special goose dropped in to NYC during the last week of 2020, though not in time for even an Honorable Mention at the Awards Ceremony. It’s called a Greater White-fronted Goose, and is common either in Midwest North America or in Europe. It’s smaller than our familiar resident chin-strapped Canada Goose, but larger than the diminutive wintering Brant. It’s mostly a warm gray corduroy with bright orange feet and bill. The “white-fronted” moniker is more appropriately a white forehead behind its bill, that gives it some sartorial pizzazz. A runway-model looker it might not be, but as a one-in-a-thousand goose, it deserves accolades: “It’s SOME goose!”

An NYC birder first spotted it hanging out with several hundred Canada Geese on the ballfields of Randall’s Island. The word got out and soon dozens of birders had made their way by car, bus, bicycle, or on foot to take a gander at this rare gander. (I don’t know if it’s been definitively determined whether this goose is a gander or a hen.) I tried to track it down twice over the end-of-year holidays. Once it was nowhere to be seen under the shadow of the magnificent Hell’s Gate Bridge approach archways (one of NYC’s architectural marvels), but the second time was the charm when it showed me all its moves. Lately, this rare goose and its Canadian pals have been dropping in to the Central Park reservoir to bathe, and for general Duck, Duck, Goose shenanigans.

When a rare (to us) bird shows up, it only means that it’s not supposed to be here. It’s likely just a common bird back home where it’s from. A rare bird could be from anywhere—north, south, east or west. Snowy Owls that thrill everyone when they appear in the winter are common to northern Canada. The Couch’s Kingbird that held court in the West Village between Thanksgiving and Christmas 2014 should have been spreading its yellow rumphs back to her long winter’s nap. Millie looks up at me. But not seeing any action, she harasses back to her long winter’s nap.

The moment one of these showstoppers hits the ether of Twitter, eBird, Facebook, or good ol’ email, a certain crowd of birders start packing their gear to “chase it.” Simultaneously, speculation is unleashed, “How did it get here?” There’s always the cynical strain of theories conjuring up the unnatural help that it could have received in transit to NYC. Or there’s the optimistic contingent who just like to be impressed that it’s here and indulge in the novelistic wherewithal and happenstance that could have delivered it thousands of miles from home.

Look at a map of the top of the globe (go ahead Google it, you know you want to—it actually looks sort of like Australia.) Then think about being a goose summering near the Arctic Circle (and why wouldn’t you want to think about that scenario?) It might not be such a stretch to imagine getting in with the wrong crowd and ending up there rather than Scotland or Des Moines.

Geese are so chatty while they’re flying, supposedly to maintain their energy-saving V formation. My take on it is that this goose just got absorbed by his own story: “Time to fly south? Cool, dude, mind if I tag along your airstream? Wasn’t it a great summer? I ate grass. Then there was that bay to paddle around in. Some canoeing with the wife. That grass was delicious. The kids grew up okay. Fast. Wife mostly took care of that. I wonder where they are now. Did I tell you about the scrumptious grass we found at the top of that hill? I brought along this Fly Away wings-free selfie stick so that I can catch all my grammable vacation moments surfing the air. You guys’ V is totally awesome. Hey, a little more to your right. Over the shoulder. Perfect against the setting sun. The grass was excellent. Yada, yada, yada. Whoa are we here already? Wait, is this New York City? Nice grass. Hey, I usually spend the winter in St. Louis. Oh well. Did I tell you about my one winter in Amsterdam? Crazy.”

Okay, that was a flight of fantasy, but as well as seeing all our neighborhood birds, I do look forward to mixing it up with that next NYC rarity treat. Hearing the word “treat” Millie looks up at me. But not seeing any action, she harasses back to her long winter’s nap.

Visit keithmichaelny.com or follow @newyorkcitywild on Instagram.
Notes From Away

Tempest to Calm

By Tom Lamia

There is a feeling of rescue, of emerging from a hiding place and finding quiet isolation for the moment. Some of this is the effect of a Maine winter, where snow, freshly fallen, mutes all sound, but it is not this alone—it is also the effect of resolution of awful forces that have dominated my thoughts and these columns and now may be receding.

During the past year I have often written about Maine and its place in electoral politics. Susan Collins and her relative performance vis-à-vis Donald Trump in the November elections is an example of my observations that Maine politics reflect Maine values, the most important of which is local knowledge. A national candidate such as Donald Trump gets no credit for local knowledge because (1) he has none beyond the endorsement of a former governor who claimed to be “Trump before Trump,” and (2) he could not credibly claim knowledge of, or respect for, the life style of Maine people at any point on the social or economic spectrum. His sole effort to link arms with the Maine working class was to support access to expanded fishing grounds for Maine lobstermen, an effort that failed both because it revealed his ignorance of the issue and because the image of Donald Trump hauling traps on the stern of a lobster boat would be ridiculous. Susan Collins was shamed by her opponent for being indecisive on big issues that required a choice between party and principle, but she survived because, in the end, her bona fides as a daughter of Maine could not be seriously questioned.

Now, why do I bring up Trump and Collins? As you read this, the time for Trump in power has slipped away and the issue of the day is whether a new president can succeed. That is why Collins, and her fellow U.S. Senator Angus King, neither a Democrat, are very likely to be key elements in any successes gained by President Joe Biden and his Democratic party. Senator King was the subject of a CBS “Sixty Minutes” episode on January 10, immediately following the terrible events of an attack on the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. on January 6. The mood of the country in the days following that atrocity was both angry and fearful. There was also a new feeling of clarity about the struggle that President Trump was waging to continue in office. More than the lawsuits brought and lost, more than the hydra-headed claims of fraud, more than the week to week state election law skirmishes, and the final, incontrovertible clash between democracy and autocracy, was the demand that the certified result be thrown out by a presiding officer (Vice President Pence) who could not bring himself to do what he knew he was not entitled to do. That demand laid bare the conflict with the Constitution and democracy. It was clear to all that a mob of irregulars was standing by to force the issue further. The mob had gathered to do the work of their leader, the President, in his effort to prevent the House and the Senate from certifying the election of Joe Biden as the new President. On his direction that morning the mob acted and in doing so revealed the scale of our national dilemma and disgrace.

The size and zeal of these militias standing by to serve Donald Trump were generally known, but their capacity for organized action was untested. It was a grab bag of discontent, a seething cauldron of the disrespected seeking to save “their country.” It only took a few words from the President speaking “in code” as Michael Cohen told us, to give them license to attack the Capitol. It was a walkover enabled by poor preparation and misguided notions of what is fair in politics. The explosion of self-righteous anger and violence made plain that we had been living under a Sword of Damocles for four years of a steadily increasing drain on our institutions. The veil was lifted with a final act of unconstitutional authoritarianism.

To put it all back together, the country will need leadership from the middle. Now that the dimensions of the problem are clear, one hopes that the need for a quiet and calm restoration and future maintenance of our values and institutions is equally clear. Susan Collins and Angus King can each contribute to this effort. Maine character and Maine values are not flashy, they are built upon hard experience and the competence to finish a job once started. In the next months and years, Washington will need respected leadership, dedicated to putting the wheels back on the bus. A broad range of views can and should be represented, but not partisan views. Let left and right come together; let the standard be competence. Take advantage of the skilled human resources that exist in the country to get the best of us into the arena: all races, genders, birthplaces, cultures and religions that are capable of working together for the common purpose of rebuilding our system of good government and saving our constitutional republic. Nothing less will do.
Dr. Fauci Moves to Cure AIDS

By Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D.

One year before the coronavirus pandemic, Dr. Fauci attempted to direct the research prowess of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) toward curing what is still a largely incurable and festering global disease, HIV/AIDS, but with the explosion of COVID-19 that momentum was stopped abruptly. While right now the world is racing to inject vaccines to defeat the COVID killer, Dr. Fauci has renewed the $200 million call to find a cure for HIV/AIDS.

“This collaboration is an ambitious step forward, harnessing the most cutting-edge scientific tools and NIH’s sizable global HIV research infrastructure to one day deliver a cure and end the global HIV pandemic,” said Dr. Fauci when the $200 million joint initiative between NIH and the Gates Foundation was first announced in October 2019. “We aim to go big or go home,” added NIH Director Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD. In this country, both HIV/AIDS and sickle cell disease are often technologically irrelevant to curing HIV/AIDS and sickle cell disease. Ex vivo cell therapy includes funding to cure both. “This unprecedented collaboration focuses from the get-go on access, scalability, and affordability of advanced gene-based strategies for sickle cell disease and HIV to make sure everybody, everywhere, has the opportunity to be cured, not just those in high-income countries,” says NIH Director Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD. In this country, both HIV/AIDS and sickle cell disease disproportionately affect African Americans. COVID-19 demonstrated that the time to address our nation’s health inequity is now because #BLACKLIVESMATTER.

An estimated 37 million individuals are currently living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. There exist two individuals who have recently been cured of AIDS. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) binds to, infects, and destroys cells of the human immune system by attaching or “docking” to two proteins, primarily CD4 and CCR5, which are located on the cell surface. Left untreated, HIV depletes the immune system and causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

A small number of individuals (less than 1% of the global population) are naturally resistant to HIV. This resistance arises because 32 units of DNA are deleted in these individuals’ CCR5 gene through a naturally-occurring mutation, resulting in a truncated variant of the gene, referred to as Delta-32 CCR5. The mutated version of CCR5 is not expressed on the cell surface, and is therefore unavailable for docking by the HIV virus. Individuals whose cells comprise Delta-32 CCR5 are thus naturally resistant to HIV.

To cure the first two patients of HIV/AIDS, stem cells from naturally HIV resistant donors were transplanted into the patients. This required a complex, multi-step process. The next steps relate to taking the science underlying these first two instances of a cure and developing a safe and effective method that may be used to cure all those in need, worldwide.

Two main pathways can be pursued to develop a broadly-applicable cure, ex vivo and in vivo pathways. Ex vivo cell therapy relates to taking a patient’s own stem cells out of their body and using molecular tools to perform ‘genetic surgery’ on the cells to render the cells resistant to HIV, followed by infusing the newly HIV resistant cells back into the same patient where they may grow and give rise to a new, HIV resistant immune system. In vivo cell therapy relates to performing the genetic surgery directly within patients, without taking their cells out as a first step, by delivering the molecular tools directly into the body.

There are multiple academic, biopharmaceutical, and research foundations each developing their own promising biotechnologies to cure HIV/AIDS. At this time, funding and support from donors, foundations and the government are all welcome and necessary to accelerate the science and to develop the technology. For full disclosure, I am president and founder of Research Foundation to Cure AIDS, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization with its own biotechnology for in vivo and ex vivo cell therapy and I am applying for the NIH and Gates funding to develop a cure that is available to all those in need, regardless of ability to pay.

I am reminded of how the late AIDS activist Larry Kramer once described Dr. Fauci as “the only true and great hero” among government officials in the AIDS crisis. Dr. Fauci did not join the fight today. He first joined the NIAID as a clinical associate in 1968. In 1981, when he first heard of the new disease, he joined the earliest efforts to develop an HIV vaccine. Since 1984 he has led the nation’s research strategy to address HIV/AIDS in his role as NIAID director. We now have life-saving treatments and drugs. Next up, Cure.
The Day the Village Stood Still:
The Invasions and the Inauguration

By Roger Paradiso

I have gone many decades without experiencing an invasion. To deal with two of them in one year is too much to bear. First the COVID-19 invasion, and then the invasion of the U.S. Capital Building. Thank God we have a new president; the inauguration will lead us to better days and hopefully fewer invasions. These are the thoughts I had this past Sunday as I drove into the invaded-by-COVID-19 West Village. It was a cloudy and windy day with winter’s chill still in the air, but wait—do I see some light?

Contrary to the dismal crowds during the holiday season—I shook my head and rubbed my eyes—was I just transported to the Village of the ’60s? There was a decent-sized crowd of young people moving about the streets. A large crowd was at Jamal’s place, Village Music World, on Bleecker Street. Were they shopping for vinyl from the Beatles, Stones and Moody Blues? I checked my glasses to see if they were tinted yellow or something. I waved at Jamal who didn’t see me because he was surrounded by customers.

He sent me a text later that night. “Hello friend, hope all is good. Yesterday people were out, and we were doing ok business-wise. What we still need is grants and business loans. So far, I got NONE! Will try again though, the city is changing and changing fast. Too many vacancies in the city—that does not give me the impression the city is gonna be fine. We need the strength of the local and federal government help to put the energy in the city…I walked and drove to many neighborhoods in the city; some are functioning, the majority are NOT! It’s shocking to me. I do not want my city to fall. The city and state have to step in and save the unsaved. Well, that’s my own opinion. Hoping for the best to come.”

Last month’s issue had already been printed when the recent COVID relief bill passed in Congress days before the new year and was signed into law. It provided some $900 billion in relief and promised to help those small mom-and-pops like Jamal’s Music World. The bill also had some offerings for our movie theaters and performing arts theaters. Immediately I emailed Nick the Greek of Cinema Village.

Nick says, “this is a huge bill for us small independent movie theaters. It is a gamechanger for all the entertainment anchors in Manhattan and New York. The Broadway theaters, the performance spaces, and the movie theaters all serve as anchors to their communities. People go see a movie or a play or any music club—they spend money. They like to go out and eat or go to a bar. They walk around. They may stop in a small mom-and-pop shop. Right now, with all these places closed, it doesn’t look like New York. People come in to see movies, plays, music, and all the other events. There’s nothing now. It affects me at Cinema Village. It affects the community. It is so vital to the economy. The cities around the country will make this money back many times. This is a lifesaver.”

I moved on down Bleecker Street and saw artfully crafted graffiti which lined the boarded or shuttered storefronts of the dead stores. There was a sense of ethics here. No store still operating was given a treatment of art sometimes called graffiti. I like that. Art in the streets. And for the dead stores. It’s a little like Mardi Gras in the Village.

Most restaurants had built clever sheds for their winter guests. La Lanterna di Vittorio had the winner by far. Intimate metal-lined plastic-covered snowballs that you would see at ski resorts for those who like to eat outdoors in the frigid cold. The little winter sheds had heat and great views, with privacy. No longer would you have to worry about COVID-19 droplets or car exhaust. Did the Village turn into a winter wonderland?

I kept hearing, “Do you have a reservation?” And the word, “Yes.” Things are looking up. I couldn’t talk too much to Vittorio of La Lanterna as he was seating people and taking orders—something that owner/operators have to do in this pandemic. He wrote the following in an email: “Aside from the new round of PPP (which hasn’t been doled out yet) nothing much has changed since we last spoke. We are essentially in an extended holding pattern until the spring. Most everyone is just hanging on in the hopes we will return to some semblance of normal once the vaccine is widely administered and we achieve herd immunity.”

Vittorio feels, as do I, that the Restaurant Act needs to be implemented. I discussed this in the past. It is a Marshall Plan to save restaurants, and other mom-and-pops, by providing a grant to restaurants that gross less than 1.5 million dollars (which are the majority of restaurants and mom-and-pops in the city and country). The grant would be used to maintain a restaurant’s operating expenses until the crisis ends.

Yes, we have a way to go. But I promised myself, in this year of 2021, to have some optimism about the future of the planet, or at least the Village.

In the special run-off election in Georgia two democratic senators pulled off an upset and won senate seats. McConnell is out, and big spender Schumer is majority leader in the senate.

But don’t spend any money yet. George Capis and I aren’t spending much money yet, since we know old man McConnell has still got a grip on the purse strings. The Senate is now 50-50 regarding filibuster rules that say you need 60 votes to pass most legislation. Nothing is easy, but we Villagers never give up and we pray for our new President Biden.

“If I had to sell Cinema Village, it would break my heart. I own this theater since 1968. I put my heart and soul into this theater. To sell it to a developer who may turn it into a commercial space or a condo…that would destroy me” (Nick the Greek).
By Anthony Paradiso

*Born to Do It* is a book for “people who are open to incorporating spirituality into business.” Dr. Rebekah Louisa Smith is the “film festival doctor.” Of course, that term was never used before and that is the point of the book. There is no doctorate program for Film Festivals. Such a title never existed before but that is the point of this very interesting book. The book teaches readers about “film festival strategies” and shows readers how to become leaders of this niche. But really what the author is doing is presenting a way you, the reader, can find a job for yourself in this very confusing digital age. In her book, Dr. Smith teaches the reader many useful tricks and strategies that enhanced the way she did business, in a very interesting way. She reminds us occasionally, that while she branded herself as a “film festival doctor,” there is no reason that you can’t follow her lead and find a “niche” that fits you in your search for a career. Maybe you can even be a Dr. in something that interests you.

In the first few chapters, Dr. Smith introduces the concept of having a “soul purpose.” Dr. Smith tells us that a soul purpose is “the reason you are here on Earth” and that by following the path of what you are born to do, you can find a way of making a living doing what you love. At the end of each chapter, there is a list of questions designed to help the reader absorb the information from the chapter they just read.

One of my favorite parts about Dr. Smith’s narrative style is how she describes what she was like to fail at her first job, to recover from that and then how she really got her business to take off. Dr. Smith met a Feng Shui master named Marie Diamond who changed her “energy” after she started to dress with more vibrant colors. This helped Dr. Smith stand out more at networking events and helped her think more positively about her career.

In this chapter in the book, Dr. Smith describes how wearing new colors made her feel like she was “in alignment with my soul purpose and I was feeling a lot more balanced, both mentally and physically.” This is an engaging book that everyone should read especially those of us who feel we haven’t really done what we wanted to do in life, because the spiritual techniques that the author used to figure out her soul purpose and to stick with it, can be learned easily. The good Dr. Smith prescribes that we investigate our “souls” to find out what we really want to do in life and to go for it, while understanding how you need to network and have the discipline and drive to become an expert in your field.
Two Apartments Available in Sinclair Lewis House

QUICK—Village rents are beginning to rise again!

This morning a local online publication reported that after a 20% pandemic-induced price drop, Village rents have turned around and are going back up!

You still have a choice of two reduced rent townhouse apartments in the former home of Sinclair Lewis at 69 Charles Street, current home of WestView News.

• A sunny one bedroom with working fireplace overlooking tree-lined Charles Street

• Top floor two bedroom with working fireplace available March 1

• Access to backyard garden with a barbecue oven

Call George at **212 924 5718** and come have a look. Pandemic discount for the right person.
Rising from the Ashes of Bleecker Street

By Karilyn Prisco

Fireplace, a consignment store and “functional art hub” has opened at 409 Bleecker Street despite the freezes and closures of neighboring boutiques. To those who reminisce about the Bleecker Street of yore, rejoice! Fireplace is employee-owned by a team of New Yorkers in their twenties—a stylist and an artist are among them.

Emily Bogner, the co-owner who specializes in fashion, reports: “Fireplace is where you come to see cutting-edge art and clothing. We showcase independent creators who will probably be new to your eyes, and we completely change what products we hold each month.”

At 409 Bleecker Street, Fireplace’s 1,000 square-foot storefront is well-positioned, directly across the street from the Bleecker Playground’s adjacent park. But at each corner of the block on Bleecker Street is a closed boutique with a sign reading, “Back in the spring.”

The team behind Fireplace admits that they would not have been able to negotiate a Bleecker Street location if there hadn’t been a pandemic. Their hope is to make shopping as contact-free as possible while providing an extra incentive for customers to enter through the display of art.

Fireplace’s “Contact-Free Opening Event” took place on January 16, 2021. A maximum of three guests were allowed inside at once, and RSVPs were honored first. The prices listed were mostly consistent with what their high-end neighbors are comfortable with, but there were also some more affordable options, as well as higher ticket artworks. I loved the variety of designers I was able to see, many of whom were new to me, such as Mia Vesper, Sequence Studio, One Go fashion collector, and toymaker Green Plastic Tunnels.

Inside the store you circle around a carousel of clothing in the middle, both new and collectible. To the right is a shelf holding various pottery, toys, jewelry, and sculpture, and along the west wall is a small gallery of prints and paintings. Each brand or artist is clearly demarcated with a plaque that displays their name and can be scanned to link to more information on the Fireplace website.

Duncan Figurski, design consultant at Fireplace, has this to say: “It’s a shame so many outlets for culture have grinded to a halt, we want to create a safe new way for local creatives to show and market their stuff.”

It is so refreshing to once again see local artists and creators in a storefront on Bleecker Street. Over the years, so much of the street had been taken over by mini Fifth Avenue, high-end, designer stores used as real estate props in order to claim “cool” downtown NYC addresses. These stores were usually empty with the exception of the expensive merchandise they housed. One would be considered lucky if they spotted more than two people that weren’t employees or security guards. I can only hope that Bleecker Street’s local flavor and charm is on a boomerang path, returning back to its small business roots.

On February 13th Fireplace will be hosting their second event, which will feature a dance workshop for solo choreography. The idea is that dancers who have not been able to receive public feedback will be able to show their work through the storefront window. The event will be live-streamed and can be watched from outside or across the street in the park.

While their message of “redefining retail in 2021” does seem lofty, these kids are taking a chance that, as a local, I’d really like to see succeed. You may visit their website www.fireplace409.com to shop online, or schedule an in-person meeting on their Instagram account at @fireplace409.
Karen’s Quirky Style

By Karen Rempel

My love affair with New York began in Washington Square Park. I parachuted into the Washington Square Hotel on my first trip to New York in 2014, drawn by the fact that the Rolling Stones and both of the Dylans had stayed there. Within minutes of ditching my bags, I was walking past the park on my way to the Blue Note. It was close to midnight, and you all know what goes on at the west side of the park! But I felt completely at home, as though I was in the Bohemian Vancouver neighborhood I lived in. A few days later, the sound of a piano playing enticed me into the park. How could this be? A piano in the park?

I tracked the source and sat down on a bench to listen to a person of indeterminate gender playing an upright piano. I wondered how the piano got there. I wondered about the person playing it. As I sat there, a drummer started off in the distance, playing the proverbial different tune. Soon after, a third busker, began playing saxophone behind me. Each instrument was playing its own melody, creating a discordant harmony. The vocals soon joined in, in the form of the quintessential New York soprano, a sirens. My heart was on fire with fierce joy, and my Another New York Love Affair: Sounds of New York art project was born. I’ve produced 54 videos for that project to date. Five years later, I was honored to have a photo I took that day exhibited at the venerable Salmagundi Club on Fifth Avenue. What a potent moment!

When you first look at what I’m wearing this month, you might think, “That isn’t quirky style!” I wanted to dress in tribute to the park’s 1970s period of creative expression that inspired me so much. If you look a bit closer, you might change your mind about quirkiness or lack thereof. I’m wearing a vintage Etro designer dress that I had a tailor mass time?” He kept talking but I didn’t hear another word. My heart was shooting ping pong balls. London at Christmas! With a Rolling Stone architect! Was this really happening? Endorphins, oxytocin, adrenaline—all the good drugs were flooding my veins. Not to mention the six or eight wines I’d sampled tonight.

“Get a grip!” Prudence told me. “Aw, shut it!” I told her.

“I’ll be fine,” I told myself. “No biggie!”

He told me he lived in New Jersey and showed me pictures on his phone of the lofty getaway he’d designed for himself in Denver. “I’m overseeing a luxurious condo development now,” he said, naming his client—a famous architect. “I’m in the neighborhood all the time.”

“Did you design the building? My father was an engineer! He designed industrial logging mills,” I said. I’ve always had a secret weakness for architects and engineers.

George Costanza was really onto something when he used this as his pick-up line.

“I think of this building as a work of art,” he said (ignoring my lame-ass contribution to the conversation, Prudence pointed out). “Fascinating! Tell me more!” I said, ignoring Prudence. He did. “Instead of being a rectangular block, the Sophia has curved sculptural shapes reflecting light off the river. We’re adding a beautiful landmark to the neighborhood.” Hmm. Lights on curves. Hands on curves. I went moony again.

He looked at me like I was the most desirable woman in New York and the canvass beneath me shot up 800 degrees. “Darling, I have a marvelous idea. It’s a bit dotty. Why don’t you join me in London for a few days at Christmas? My love affair with New York began in Washington Square Park. I parachuted into the Washington Square Hotel on my first trip to New York in 2014, drawn by the fact that the Rolling Stones and both of the Dylans had stayed there. Within minutes of ditching my bags, I was walking past the park on my way to the Blue Note. It was close to midnight, and you all know what goes on at the west side of the park! But I felt completely at home, as though I was in the Bohemian Vancouver neighborhood I lived in. A few days later, the sound of a piano playing enticed me into the park. How could this be? A piano in the park?

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Style on the Street: West Village, Will You Be My Valentine?

Follow us on Instagram @styleonthestreet_WestViewNews
Submit your favorite neighborhood fashion looks for a chance to be featured.

Local Finds. Local Love.
Support some of our favorite West Village shops and designers.
Curated by Karilyn Prisco

New York Chemists
77 Christopher St
Mario Badescu
“Facial Spray With Aloe, Herbs and Rosewater”
newyorkchemists.com

t.d.e.
385 Bleecker St
“Pastel Pink Micro Bag With Long Strap”
Made from 100% saffiano leather. Custom monogram
thedailyedit.com

diptyque
377 Bleecker St
“Eau rose eau de toilette”
Infusion of damascena and centifolia roses
diptyqueparis.com

LoveShackFancy
390 Bleecker St
“Camden Print Mix Scrunchies”
Floral printed hair ties
loveshackfancy.com
Valentine’s Day, also known as the Feast of Saint Valentine, is celebrated every year on February 14th all over the world. The history of this annual holiday of love and romance is disputed and mysterious, and many of the possible origins of Valentine’s Day are actually disturbingly dark. The Feast of Saint Valentine was officially established by the Roman Catholic Church under Pope Gelasius I in 496 A.D. in honor of a certain Saint Valentine. In the third century A.D., it is said that Emperor Claudius II executed two men, both with the name Valentine, on February 14th of different years. Their martyrdoms were honored by the Catholic Church with the celebration of Valentine’s Day. It was not for centuries afterwards that Valentine’s Day came to be associated with the notions of courtly love. Commercial and popular Valentine’s Day symbols often include romantic greeting cards depicting the figure of a winged Cupid, the Ancient Greek god of desire, attraction, and affection. Although Valentine’s Day undoubtedly has its own solid roots in the Catholic tradition, it is interesting (and a quite common theme of my articles) to take a look back at history to discover whether some of the modern constituents of the holiday may actually have first come about in ancient times.

To begin, it is important to note the relevancy of Cupid in the modern celebrations of Valentine’s day and, in turn, his relations to the ancient goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite. Cupid, or “Eros” in Greek myth, is commonly thought by Classicists and those versed in mythology to be the son of Aphrodite. The young god is seldom depicted without his bow and arrow, his claim to fame. It is said that one of Cupid’s powers is that, using his bow and arrow, he could force someone to fall in love (one of the most well-known stories where Cupid does this is the myth of Apollo and Daphne). Cupid is often a character whose main purpose is to set the plot in motion; however, there is one tale where he serves as the main character who is afflicted with the trials and tribulations of love.

This story begins with a human woman called Psyche. Psyche was so utterly beautiful that men from all over the ancient world began to worship her, slowly forgetting and neglecting Aphrodite’s beauty and her altar. Aphrodite was blinded by rage and was in disbelief that a mortal girl could have more of an effect on the minds of men than she could. The goddess called upon her son to curse Psyche, asking that he use his bow and arrow to make her fall in love with the ugliest being he could find. However, when Cupid journeyed down to enact the curse, he ended up falling in love with the mortal girl.

Cupid ultimately decided to go against his mother’s wishes, taking Psyche as his wife, but with one condition: he told her that she would never be able to look at him, for fear that his identity could be revealed not only to the girl, but to Aphrodite. Psyche agreed, even though she was completely unaware of who he was. Cupid hid her in a beautiful palace and gave her everything she could need, but only went to visit her in the dark, when his face would be obscured. Eventually, Psyche’s curiosity got the better of her, and she betrayed Cupid by shining a lamp on him while he slept. When he found out she had discovered his identity, he abandoned her, and Psyche was left to wander the earth in search of him. Unfortunately, she fell prey to Aphrodite who, instead of taking pity and reuniting Psyche with her son, decided to torture her with four impossible tasks. Eventually, Cupid discovered what Aphrodite was doing, and having enlisted the help of Zeus, was able to rescue Psycho from the terrible situation. Unwilling to let any other evils befall her, Cupid decided to bring Psycho back to Mount Olympus where she was bestowed immortality as his wife. Cupid and Psyche serve as one of the very few examples of lovers who were finally able to find a happy ending in Greek mythology. It is a story that has survived throughout the millennia, transcending countless empires and alterations in order to be a part of our modern world of romance.

The next time you see a chubby Cupid with a bow and arrow surrounded by hearts and glitter, remember the story of Cupid and Psyche. No matter how or with whom you may be celebrating Valentine’s Day this year, remember to take a moment to tell the people closest to your heart that you love them.

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**Maggie B’s Quick Clicks**

**ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE?**

*All photos by Maggie Berkvist.*
Love Blooms and Endures in the West Village

By Kieran Loughney

…I don’t really know her, but I think I could love her, Crimson and Clover, over and over.” The two of us held hands on a pier at Hudson River Park. Patti, a woman I barely knew, had touched the phone in her pocket to play the song. The move seemed bold to me and I embraced the moment. Here we were, right where fate, it seemed, had led us. We danced close and slow. On that February night in 2019, our fourth date, I was captivated by this woman’s intellect, wit, and elegance. I would soon know her capacity for love and find myself transformed by it.

Patti had left our hometown nearly 40 years ago. Reading Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women as a child had sparked her desire to write. Drawn to New York City, she arrived as a young, attractive, confident woman with a dream and a turbocharged work ethic. Patti, as so many dreamers have, became a quintessential New Yorker. She rose to the top of her profession, becoming an author and a magazine editor—in chief several times over.

Although we were born months apart and were both from Scranton, Pennsylvania, our paths would not cross until later in life. In 2011 I moved next door to the home where Patti grew up. Her father still lived there, and Patti would occasionally visit. I happened to own a novel she authored, Everyday Doughnuts, inspired by co-workers she met as a teenager serving at her dad’s shop. Poignant, funny, and keenly observed, its pages radiate with Patti’s generous spirit.

One morning, after her father had passed away, I spied Patti on her dad’s front porch. Expressing my condolences, I suddenly thought of her book. Excusing myself, I grabbed the copy from my bookshelf and asked for her autograph.

Patti soon returned home to New York. More than two years later, I read with interest a comment she posted on social media. This was weeks before our dance by the river. In an instant message I wrote, “Hi Patti, you may recall I live next door to your family’s place in Scranton. What have you written lately?” She responded, “I remember you. I've posted some essays. What do you think of them? I offered my impressions, and we began corresponding. “You have talent,” she wrote, to my delight. “If we had worked together, I would have encouraged you to write.” Our first phone call, revealing an easy rapport and undeniable chemistry, lasted two hours.

Soon after, New York friends had a flat available for a weekend. I booked it. Unexpectedly, fate placed it in the West Village near Patti’s apartment. A visit to Grounded, her favorite coffee haunt, revealed a cast of characters and a sip of Village culture. Patti greeted everyone by name, often with an embrace. She regarded baristas, Broadway stars, and even panhandlers as equals. On a cold morning we paused before leaving her flat while Patti stuffed gloves and hats in a bag. I was puzzled. She brought them, she explained, in case we encountered any homeless people who might need them. For Patti, nobody is ever invisible.

Given her sensibility and my ethnicity, Patti steered us to the Irish Hunger Memorial, the ruins of a stone farmhouse built on turf brought from Ireland. Patti boldly insisted we hop a gate to enter the site, where she lay on her back to make a snow angel. I returned to the Village often, exploring the city and our growing bond. On St. Patrick’s Day we tipped pints of Guinness at the White Horse Tavern—ern with her brother Sean. Patti and I found we owned identical vintage St. Patrick pins. Such small coincidences reinforced an idea we began to share—that somehow our place was here, together.

After St. Patrick’s Day, Patti welcomed me into a circle of ecstatic and gracious friends. A spring look at the fusion of flowers in Abingdon Square Park would lead to international dance at the Joyce Theater and walks on the Highline—always hand in hand. Summer brimmed with small adventures—a dance with drag queens outside the Beatrice Inn during Pride Week, a taste of literary history at Chewley’s. From a blanket at Hudson River Park we viewed movies and, again, we danced to an all-female jazz band. By Halloween, the West Village and Patti began to feel like home. On a bright November day at Hudson River Park, now “our park,” I took a knee. Patti accepted my proposal.

This woman opened my eyes to new possibilities. Patti, my muse, inspired poetry. She said my stories of people I encountered in my human services career needed sharing. I soon had work published. Buying my essay in print from a newsstand in the Village was a shared triumph. Through Patti I discovered my previously untapped creative spirit, in a place where dreams become reality, in New York.

By St. Patrick’s Day 2020, it became clear that life itself was threatened. We self-quarantined, walked emptied streets, mourned the dying. During a stroll, a bereted cyclist passed us, La Fic En Rose playing from his radio. Spontaneously, we danced, taking solace in the closeness and the life-affirming motion. We cheered for essential workers each evening and took heart in the marches for BLM and TransJustice.

With dining moved outdoors, even on chilly evenings, brass bands and vocalists on the street below our window now move us to dance in our apartment. Through it all—the loss, the beauty, the closings of Grounded and Chewley’s—we dance on. This St. Valentine’s Day, Patrice Adcroft and I will celebrate the love that sustains us and makes our dreams come true in the best part of New York City—the West Village.

Love Conquers Time

By Brittney Ryan

Love weaves its way between the minutes and hours that bind us, only to emerge in the timeliness of the moment.

Princess Holly was the first child born in the Kingdom of Forever, where she came of age surrounded by the great thinkers and artists who had, over the centuries, crossed from the mortal world to hers. She stood frequently before the gates of the Land of Forever, and read to herself the legend carved upon them—“Love Conquers Time”—and felt herself drawn to the world beyond them.

Perhaps it was destiny that drew her to the Empire City, where soft dirtied the snow and the wind cut through the walls of the tenements at night; but it was the clock that drew her through the doors of Carroll’s Curiosities, for beneath it were the words Time Conquers Curiosities. Inside, the shop floor was hushed. She began to search for the enigmatic toymaker, Mr. Carroll.

Absorbed in her quest, she did not hear the quiet footsteps behind her. She did not feel the dark eyes watching her. It was not until his hand touched hers that she realized he was there. He was not what she expected, but a young man with kind eyes.

“I’m sorry,” she began, breathlessly. “It is like magic to me—the words on the door. Did you make it?” And then she thought of something. “What is your name?” she asked urgently.

“Christopher Winter Carroll. Why?” He smiled at her stunned face.

“Was there anything about Christmas, when you were a boy? Did you write a letter to Father Christmas?”

A curious look came over his face. “Yes. I didn’t want anything. So I asked him what he wished for. He wrote me back, too.”

“He did?”

“Well, I’m sure it was my mother. The letter said that I had given him a gift he would treasure for eternity. And at the bottom of the letter, he wrote, ‘Love Conquers Time.’”

“Do you still have it?”

He looked at her quizzically. “Yes.” He reached into a small compartment beneath his worktable and pulled forth a faded letter.

“I remember it!” she exclaimed in case we encountered any homeless people who might need them. For Patti, nobody is ever invisible. After St. Patrick’s Day, Patti welcomed me into a circle of ecstatic and gracious friends. A spring look at the fusion of flowers in Abingdon Square Park would lead to international dance at the Joyce Theater and walks on the Highline—always hand in hand. Summer brimmed with small adventures—a dance with drag queens outside the Beatrice Inn during Pride Week, a taste of literary history at Chewley’s. From a blanket at Hudson River Park we viewed movies and, again, we danced to an all-female jazz band. By Halloween, the West Village and Patti began to feel like home. On a bright November day at Hudson River Park, now “our park,” I took a knee. Patti accepted my proposal.

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Art — Laurel Long, Editor — Kate Samuels

www.westviewnews.org February 2021 WestView News 27
Lisa and Harry—Such Interesting People Live on Christopher Street

By Robert Heide

The lyric from the song Christopher Street from the Leonard Bernstein, Comden and Greene Broadway musical Wonderful Town goes:

"Here we live
Here we love.
This is the place for self expression.
Life is Keen.
Life is great.
Interesting people are living on Christopher Street."

In this article I decided to write about two people who both lived in apartments at 87 Christopher Street across the street from where I still live. One is the stage and film actress Lisa Jane Persky who grew up on the street and later as an adult moved to Hollywood. The other, who is no longer with us, H. M. Koutoukas, called just Harry to many, was known in the Village as a top absurdist off-off Broadway playwright, as a renowned, radical raconteur, and a genuine and original Village character.

In my early days in the Village I liked to hang out at Lenny's Hideaway, a cellar dive gay bar on Tenth Street that was—unlike in these times—open till four in the morning. This was also true of two other popular gay bars on 8th Street between 6th Avenue and MacDougal Street, one called Mary's and the other being the Old Colony. A middle aged gray-haired man named Lenny ran the tiny place at 183 West 10th Street (now Smalls) which had a full bar, tables and chairs, and an open space for cruising, standing, and co-mingling. The main lighting came from a very bright giant rainbow Wurlitzer jukebox against one wall which also provided fantastic show tunes sung by Ethel Merman, Judy Garland, Rosemary Clooney, Doris Day, Eddie Fisher, Buddy Clark, Bing Crosby and Tony Bennett. Nightly habitual regulars included a young and handsome Edward Albee, always with his longtime lover William Flanagan at his side. Flanagan was a classical music composer and music critic for the New York Herald Tribune. They both drank bottled beer and stared into space, occasionally joking, laughing and giggling. Lenny's was my favorite bar in the Village where I met and got cozy with many living legends like composer Ned Rorem, Jerry Herman of Hello Dolly fame as well as Village characters like Ian Orlando Macbeth, who dressed in period Renaissance costumes, always getting super-drunk on a concoction called 'Clinkers', a potent mixture of Apricot liqueur and Brandy. Ian was related to Cecil Beaton and tried to maintain an upper-crust attitude but sometimes threw a drink in the face of some young man he was attracted to but who had ignored his sentimental, tear-driven advances. I met Harry Koutoukas there, always dressed in black with his black hair worn in an upswept 'D.A.' which he said stood for 'Duck's Ass.' He was a wit and a laugh riot and he and I became fast friends. We often hung out on MacDougal Street at the Gaslight Cafe, wore black outfits and at one point we were both reading and carrying around with us our copies of Sartre's Being and Nothingness.

H. M. Koutoukas told me the H. M. stood for His Majesty and that he was a dramatist, not a playwright. His plays include Awful People Are Coming So We Must Pretend to Be Hard at Work and Hope They Will Go Away—a title provided to Harry by Yoko Ono, who was at one time a resident of the same building at 87 Christopher, Only A Countess May Dance When She's Crazy—a line from which reads "I believe that there's nothing but sweet joy and gentle bliss in the singing of a seashell," With Creatures Make My Way, Tidy Passions, Christopher at Sheridan Squired which starred Harvey Fierstein, Medea In The Laundromat or Kill Kaleidoscope, Kill starring Linda Eke nas, When Clowns Play Hamlet, stage debut of actor and playwright Jeff Weiss and many, many more. Harry and I both put on our plays at the legendary Caffe Cino on Cornelia Street and other places like La Mama and Theater for the New City in the East Village. The style and far-out subject matter of his 'chamber plays' as he called them, as well as their sheer numbers earned him the sobriquet 'the quintessential Cino playwright.' In 1972 he wrote Suicide Notations (A Play for Fire Escapes) starring himself, Jackie Curtis, Taylor Mead, Albert M. Fine, Mary Boylan, Ron Tavel and a young, very attractive girl he introduced to me as "my neighbor" Lisa Jane Persky. This was her theatrical debut and this play was enacted in a very different venue—on fire escapes on Christopher Street. Though I actually missed seeing the play it was videotaped by lighting wizard Rudy—"Let There Be Neon!"—Stern. In 1973 Harry wrote the part of "the world's most perfect teenager" in his play Grandmother Is In the Strawberry Patch for Lisa Jane, which was produced at La Mama. A particular scene has two ladies covering a wooden bureau with contact paper and one exclaims to the other, "It's almost like real formal!"

Lisa Jane came to Christopher Street as a young girl of eleven from Atlanta where she was born in 1955. She attended elementary school at PS 41 and later went to the Art and Design High School. Her parents divorced and were both remarried. Her father's second spouse was novelist Judith Rossner the author of Looking for Mr. Goodbar. Her mother married a classical violinist named Vladimir Weisman. Both with her parents, and without, she lived at 87 Christopher until she was 21 when she went off to Hollywood. Also, while still here she photographed and wrote about the punk rock scene for the New York Rocker. Working with director Ron Link she appeared with Pink Flamingos star Divine in Tom Eyen's oft produced camp parody of women's prison movies, Women Behind Bars. In 1979 she made her film debut as Robert Duvall's daughter in The Great Santini. Other films include When Harry Met Sally, The Cotton Club (with Richard Gere), Peggy Sue Got Married, The Big Easy and cult classic Kiss Meets the Phantom of the Park and she has been featured in recurring roles in countless TV series including Twilight Zone, NYPD Blue, X Files, and Golden Girls. She appeared in the 2013 I Am Divine documentary as well and continues to live in LA with her husband Andy Zax, who is a well known former co-star of the game show Beat the Geeks. When I last talked to Lisa on the phone and we got around to Harry Koutoukas, who died in 2010, we both start singing "I'm just wild about Harry And Harry's wild about me."

A bronze plaque honoring Harry Koutoukas is attached to the guardrail of a tree in front of 87 Christopher Street, where he lived for 50 years. It was sponsored by his friend Rhoda Fairman, who lives on Grove Street. You can read both H. M. Koutoukas — A Remembrance by Lisa Jane Persky and an interview with Harry and myself originally published in the New York Native in 1990 and re-published in a book edited by Michael Smith and Mag Mag Domine titled H.M.K. 1937—2010 Remembered by His Friends—available at Fast Books Press. Another ‘smart’ account on this period is The Downtown Pop Underground by Kemibrow McLeod with whom Lisa Jane worked and which was published in 2018 by Abrams—Lisa Jane and Kemibrow together spoke and did a reading of the book at the Jefferson Market Library.

Fast Book Press also published Robert Heide 25 Plays, which is on Amazon.
February News and Events from Project NYC and the West 13th Street Alliance

By Chandra/Jo Sgambaro

Project NYC and the West 13th Street Alliance continue our work as we come into 2021 and the new opportunities offered by the COVID-19 vaccines and the new administration in Washington. Our Virtual Community Events will continue. But as soon as it is safe, we will all be together again in person, whether at Lenox Health Greenwich Village, Integral Yoga Institute, the Church of the Village or the Center. Let’s all set the intention to come back to “normal” again.

Our founding member organizations are continuing to function and serve virtually as best as possible in these times. You’ll find information and events to participate in by visiting these websites.

Church of the Village: www.churchofthevillage.org
Integral Yoga Institute: www.iyiny.org
The Center: www.gaycenter.org
Lenox Health Greenwich Village: www.northwell.edu

Here are our February Virtual Programming Events:

ASK THE EXPERTS

February 9 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. with Lonny Levy, Associate Chair of the Emergency Department. They will talk about Lenox Health Greenwich Village, and Dr Alex Hellinger, Executive Director of February 9 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. with Lonny Levy, Associate Chair of the Emergency Department. They will talk about Lenox Health Greenwich Village, and Dr Alex Hellinger, Executive Director of Lenox Health Greenwich Village, and Dr Alex Hellinger, Executive Director of Lenox Health Greenwich Village, and Dr Alex Hellinger, Executive Director

YOGA FOR ARTHRITIS AND CHRONIC PAIN WITH KEN STEC

Wednesdays at 10 a.m. on February 3, 10, 17 and 24. Certified in Yoga for Arthritis and as a Yoga Therapist, longtime Integral Yoga teacher Ken StSc will guide you safely in gentle postures geared for chair and standing practice. Rooted in traditional yogic principles encouraging a healthy body and a peaceful mind, postures are presented in light of current scientific research for chronic pain and stress relief. With regular practice, classes are effective in the management of arthritic pain and related symptoms.

COMMUNITY GATHERING

Tuesday, February 23rd 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Over the past year, many different people have tuned in to our community gatherings to simply connect, converse, collaborate on our experiences during these times and even complain if we need to! Come join and have a virtual visit with your neighbors from near and far.

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

JOHN OR EMAIL LIST at w13thstreetalliance@gmail.com

SNOWS OF WINTERS PAST: Before the snow in NYC turns a slushy mess each year, it can be a sight of beauty and wonder while still fresh in Washington Square Park and all around the Village. Photo by Bob Cooley.

Faith & Politics: Church of the Village Launches Series Featuring Progressive Faith Leaders

By Rev. Alexis Lillie

In the rollercoaster that was the two weeks between the Capitol riot and the inauguration, many of us experienced a wide range of emotions. Coincidentally, at Church of the Village we had just launched a virtual preaching series at the beginning of January focused on “Faith and Politics” from a progressive, radically inclusive perspective. The series features voices like Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis of the Poor People’s Campaign, Rev. Dr. Jim Forbes, senior minister emeritus of Riverside Church, and Rev. Dr. Traci West, professor of social ethics at Drew University Theological School, along with Church of the Village pastors.

As we watched the mob storm the Capitol Building—some participants carrying banners and signs linking Trump, God, and the Christian religion—it felt very relevant that the Church of the Village continue our long tradition of prophetic dissent. It seemed important to do the honest and difficult work of naming our place in a religious tradition that has condemned racism and white supremacy while we also denounce these forces and seek to dismantle them.

And it feels crucial to recognize that the intersection of faith and politics can also evoke feelings of fear, disgust, determination, hopefulness, and more. As progressive people of faith we are drawn to engage with and impact “the political community,” rooting ourselves in the gospel message to love our neighbors, do justice, and care for the vulnerable. How can we build bridges across our current divides and work toward the flourishing of all people while centering those on the margins? How can our voices and actions move society toward this vision of love and justice for humanity? How can we be part of a religious tradition that has not done this work well, while also standing apart and forging a new way?

We began this thorny work by hearing from our lead pastor, Rev. Jeff Wells, the Sunday after the riot, as we gathered virtually to lament and reflect on “The Politics of God.” Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis joined us the following Sunday to talk about Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s legacy as “A Moral Revolution of Values,” which calls us to act on the belief that the elimination of poverty is possible. All of our worship video recordings are available at Facebook.com/churchofthevillage/videos, and most sermon manuscripts are available at https://www.churchofthevillage.org/sermons.

In the coming weeks the community will be led by additional voices offering up their perspectives on how faith and politics can justly intersect. Associate Pastor Rev. Alexis Lillie will speak on gender justice, using ancient wisdom in the fight against patriarchy; on Feb 7th we’ll hear from Rev. Dr. Traci West; on Feb. 14th lead pastor Jeff Wells will finish out the series.

Join the Church of the Village on these dates, and any Sundays, at 10:30 a.m. EST via Zoom (https://zoom.us/j/262331126) or at facebook.com/churchofthevillage; more information on this series and all our ministries can be found at our website www.churchofthevillage.org and our Facebook page. Email pastoralexis@churchofthevillage.org with any questions!
Joan’s Shanghai

By Joan Klyhn

Joan’s Shanghai is a memoir of a childhood in Shanghai in the ‘30s and ‘40s of the 20th century. I am primarily writing it for myself, extending it to my friends, and now to the many people who have shown themselves fascinated with this period in the past.

The School Lunch

Food at school was totally different. We filed into the gloomy refectory, and took our seats in front of our shallow white porcelain soup bowls at a long, dark table.

We were about 20 girls of different sizes and shapes, wearing identical navy blue and white uniforms. The lunch was considered part of our education. We were monitored by severe nuns in their black uniforms that had a stuffy smell especially in the humid summer. We were doled out soup from a big tureen being passed around by a nun. It was lukewarm and translucent…basically a vial of holy water with me at all times in the pocket of my serge uniform jacket. After petrol rationing ended my chauffeured trips to school, I’d take the tram or walk, which I preferred. Then, whenever I spotted a small bundle in the gutter that I could identify as a live human…either it gave off a bit of steam in the winter, or seemed to move even slightly, I’d get out the holy water. Kneeling over the bundle and poking around to reveal the baby’s face, I’d baptize it…I’d say a prayer, and then move on. This went on for over a year…about ten or twelve lives spared purgatory or worse, until I was caught out by a family friend.

There were always visible dead people, who had died of exposure or disease, or had been executed and put on public display. There were terribly mutilated people displaying their stumps, their wounds, and piteously begging. Wretched dogs and skeletal cats were also part of the misery I walked by and left behind. Much more real to me were the torture of Christian martyrs and scenes in catacombs recounted to us by our teachers. The sight of real dead and dying impressed me less than the lurid stories of the past.

September was the Cruelest Month

We Lost Isaac from Isaac’s Barber Shop

By John F. Early

“In The Waste Land (1922), T.S. Eliot wrote convincingly that ‘April is the cruellest month,’ but a case can be made for September.” (from a September, 2008 article written by Ronnie Rittenberry about the Occupational Health and Safety Administration.)

September 11th. Even approaching twenty years on, words can still fail us. And then, fast-forward to last September. I got to wondering why my favorite barber shop, at 169 Seventh Avenue South between Waverly Place and Charles Street, was closed.

It was only later that month, or early the next, that I learned that Isaac, of Isaac’s Barber Shop, had died.

Either his son or his brother was on the scene to let us know that this sudden sad event was the result of a brain aneurysm. Isaac Sadikov was fifty years old.

By John F. Early

“Isaac Sadikov was fifty years old. Either his son or his brother was on the scene to let us know that this sudden sad event was the result of a brain aneurysm. Isaac Sadikov was fifty years old.

While words might still fail us about such endings, some words can also be helpful in our collective, as well as in our personal, grief.

Name Drop: For seventeen years, Anderson Cooper was a client. Locals like myself, as well as many out-of-towners, were also clients of Isaac. Isaac was the best. Rest in peace.

Finally, please do continue to have your hair treated very well at Isaac's Barber Shop. Sam, Isaac’s brother, is also a very good barber. Business hours: Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

John wants to thank New York Chemists and Wikipedia. If the reader can do it, please contribute financially to Wikipedia, an always useful organization that needs money.
My Trip to Bellevue

By Jeff Hodges

In 1971, I got my jaw broken in a melee on Second Avenue.

I was outside my apartment when I saw some guys beating up a hippie. I approached one of them and asked him to knock it off. His reply was to spin around and hit me solidly in the jaw. I didn’t even see it coming.

Just then the cops arrived. I said to one of them, “That guy just broke my jaw!” He said, “Well, you probably deserved it.”

It was hard to argue with that. So I walked uptown to Bellevue’s emergency room.

In those days Bellevue was a gothic fortress of indifference and ineptitude. After nursing my jaw for a couple of hours, I finally got to see a doctor. Discussing my medical history, we got into an argument about whether or not my father had suffered from a hernia or an ulcer. We agreed to disagree and I was sent for an X-ray. Sometime after midnight, the doctor told me my jaw was fine and pointed to the exit. “I don’t know,” I mumbled. “I can’t move my jaw.”

But I was glad to get out of there.

As I was leaving, a nurse rushed up and grabbed me. “Where are you going?” she yelled. “You have a fractured skull!” They brought me back in. After a huddled discussion they told me I did have a broken jaw, and my X-ray showed it wrenched into immobility. It was pretty painful.

The next day they took me to get my jaw wired shut. They jammed metal wires between my teeth and pulled and twisted them with pliers until my broken jaw was wrenched into immobility. It was pretty painful.

When it was over, all I wanted was some Demerol. The next morning I woke up in a ward with my jaw wired shut. They jammed metal wires between my teeth and pulled and twisted them with pliers until my broken jaw was wrenched into immobility. It was pretty painful.

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The next morning was bright and beautiful and I was discharged with a six-pack of Ensure and a straw. And amazingly enough—by accident or on purpose—I never got a bill! That was Bellevue.

West Village Knit and Needle

Some call opening a new business brave in a pandemic but we think it was a natural beginning! All the lovingly crafted knit and needlepoint projects that emerged from the hours we spent at home and not in the office were completed and now crafters need more!

West Village Knit and Needle is a yarn and needlepoint shop, recently opened on 10th Street between Bleecker and Hudson Street. We have been open for several weeks and our new clients couldn’t be happier to have a shop like this in the neighborhood. Now more than ever we need slow fashion and hobbies to keep us occupied at home.

A quaint neighborhood spot that carries yarns, notions, needlepoint canvases and threads; everything you need for your fiber crafts. “At WVKN, we want every customer to feel welcome and supported. We offer classes for knitting, crocheting and needlepoint and will help you with your projects.”

Kiana, the owner of the store, is a West Village resident with 15 years’ experience working and teaching classes at two New York City yarn stores. “This has been a dream of mine for 14 years. When you finally see the vision you’ve had for so long and it turns out exactly how you imagined, the feeling is indescribable. We are so happy to be in the heart of the West Village, the neighborhood we love dearly.

If you can’t visit us in person, please visit us online at wvknitandneedle.com. We will ship and offer pick up for orders as well.

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VIEWS BY SUZE

Suzanne McAndrews

50 + years in Greenwich Village

See Views by Suze at Bonsignour Café
Jane Street
and Eighth Avenue

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...a few words from the Publisher...

I got a call from an elderly woman who wanted to subscribe to the paper but she had no computer, not even a checkbook, and wanted to know to whom and where she should mail her six dollar bills. I asked her her favorite column and she said “In and Out—it lets me see how my Village is changing.”

...I wish I had a way of continuing to give out free copies of WestView but I don’t. I want to keep producing the paper because it gives me a purpose for living—especially when I hear the occasional compliment “I love your paper.”

And again I wish a local Village millionaire would pay the printer every month but Tim our delivery chief has yet to find his door so it is up to you to subscribe and, if you can, make a donation.

Thanks George for 17 years of publishing WestView News!

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