Police Chief in the Garden

By George Capsis

“I would like to come and see you, Mr. Capseis” Alan Silverstein excitedly offered on the phone. He came in ten minutes and parked in front of my Charles Street door with license plates that allow him to park at the steps of City Hall. Holding a copy of WestView News—that had the anti-graffiti program on its front cover—he was excited.

I learned later that Alan Silverstein is one of the most active volunteers of Community Partners, a civilian organization working with the police’s Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCO) division—which is, of course, now very much needed.

Here was WestView News, a community newspaper vigorously supporting a city-wide police effort that has the police and civilians side-by-side painting out graffiti, and doing it as the whole country was waiting for the verdict on a police officer who made the wrong decision when asked to get off the neck of the subject of his arrest. Just maybe, Silverstein thought, our paper could become the voice of the police.

Alan, as we have come to call him, continually juggles the names of top cops that are his buddies, so we asked him to arrange for us to interview one. He not only got a top cop to agree, he brought him to our garden at 69 Charles (amazing!).

Chief Sal Comodo and Police Officer (PO) Natasha DeLeon from NYPD headquarters, both with relaxed soft smiles, arrived to discuss the 4/10/21 anti-graffiti event and how we could keep the momentum moving, now that every precinct was no longer on “lockdown.”

PO Natasha DeLeon, with a relaxed tone, told of rolling paint over graffiti with children from a local school, feeling that this was all that was needed. But I stopped.

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Police and Public Wield the Same (Anti-Graffiti) Brush

By Brian J Pape, AIA

It was a perfect day for street activities, cloudy but mild with temperatures in the 60’s. Just like dozens, perhaps hundreds, of others in precincts throughout the city’s five boroughs, we saw the opening round in the next chapter of the on-going fight against urban blight and graffiti.

The Police Commissioner Dermot Shea and City Police Chief of the Department Rodney Harrison organized a “Spring Clean Up: Combating Graffiti” day for all of NYC, with community input for designated cleanup sites. Assisting in the organization and coordination are: Alfred Baker, Director of Media in the Office of the Deputy Commissioner; and community liaison Alan Silverstein, who arranged meetings with the NCOs (Neighborhood Coordination Officers) for each precinct, and also coordinated the activities of a group of young high-school student volunteers who belong to a group called the Explorers. The Explorers are a diverse ethnic and racial group, male and female, from throughout the city.

WVN participated in two of the Manhattan precincts, the 13th and 6th. Paul Vlachos and Alan Silverstein joined me as we started at 11:00 a.m. in the 13th Precinct at 19 East 19th Street. Nine Explorers joined with police officers for the 13th Precinct, Sgt. Nikishin, NCO PO Kevin Zorn, and PO Eddie Sollano. All police officers at all the sites volunteered their time, off-duty, and all were painting, some in police jackets, some in street clothes. (The 13th Precinct had four sites scheduled for the day.) We scraped loose paint from the roll-down metal shutter and all the surrounding walls and frames, while pedestrians from the neighborhood streamed past the loft building. The donated paint of dark gunmetal gray was a good match to the surrounding paint, leaving a cleaned-up appearance as we finished this project.

Within an hour, we had moved on to 6 East 17th Street, which was a parking lot surrounded by building walls covered in multiple illegal tags. Once again, we scraped some loose chips of peeling paint and proceeded to cover the multi-hued graphics with reddish paint mixes, similar to adjacent colors (after the attendant had moved cars away from the wall).

Then on to the third location at 7 West 17th Street, another private parking lot with walls on all sides covered with illegal street art. Once we got the paint supplies unloaded,

continued on page 4
Don’t Give Up?

Hi George/Liz,

I am writing to tell you about my husband Richie. He still goes to the window every night at 7PM and drums on a pan cover. He ends his concert with “Don’t Give Up/ Don’t Ever Give Up.” Once in a blue moon someone else on the block will join in with him, but most evenings he is on his own. Occasionally someone walking on the street or passing in a car will cheer him on.

I am not sure if this is crazy or touching. He believes that the first responders — medical staff & essential workers — still deserve to be vocally appreciated. I would like to know what your readers think.

—Carol Quigley, Bank Street

Embrace the Absurd

It’s statistically true: there are more firearms in the hands of American civilians than there are people living in America? That’s a question I’d been asking myself for some time. It is universally agreed that it is hard to hit a moving target. And so it is with counting the number of people living in the U.S. or how many guns are in the hands of its civilian population.

After some research I found two sources which could provide me with the information I was looking for. According to the numbers compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau and a survey called the Small Arms Survey (SAS) which tabulates firearms held by civilian populations around the world, there are more guns than people in the U.S. (The survey, published in June 2018, is a project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland.) Here are the absurd facts:

The estimated population of the U.S. as of April 18th, 2021 is 330,212,480. The number was compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov/popclock).

Gun ownership in civilian hands in the United States (as of the June 2018 SAS report) is estimated to be 393,347,000. The Small Arms Survey’s mission is to be “a global centre of excellence” which “generates evidence-based, impartial, and policy-relevant knowledge and analysis on small arms and armed violence issues for governments, policy-makers, and civil society.” Their report found that U.S. citizens alone account for 393 million (about 46 percent) of the worldwide total of civilian-held firearms. This amounts to “120.5 firearms for every 100 residents.” See: smallarmsurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-BP-Civilian-Firearms-Numbers.pdf

Small arms ownership in the hands of civilians around the world, policy-makers, and civil society. “Their report found that U.S. citizens alone account for 393 million (about 46 percent) of the worldwide total of civilian-held firearms. This amounts to “120.5 firearms for every 100 residents.” We are committed to building better relations with the community, and making a positive impact on citizens’ lives.” He also wished that graffiti artists would turn their talents to the commission’s work around the city that actually pays to improve the streetscape.

When I was a kid, you had to be six feet to join the force because you walked a beat all alone—now pairs of officers tour the precinct in patrol cars.

Now, just maybe, joining with our local precinct to wipe out graffiti, we civilians will learn their names again and they will learn ours.

—Siggy Raible

Police Chief continued from page 1

her, to suggest that the verdict to sentence a police officer for murder was a critical na-
dir in police/civilian relations.

I recalled, when I was a kid in the nineteen-thirties, the tall cop on the beat on Hamilton Place, how we knew his name, and how he knew us. And now, I have to ask for permission to interview the new captain of my local precinct (he declined to be interviewed). But now we had on the front page of WestView News, two police officers rolling out graffiti at the request of a civilian complaint.

Chief Sal Comodo has been with the force since graduating from the police academy, and is now a 38-year veteran of the department. As a Sprink shower of hail started and we rose to move inside, I grabbed his arm for balance and discovered a youthful muscle; he confessed he still “worked out.” Chief Comodo emphasized, “We are committed to build-

ing better relations with the community, and making a positive impact on citizens’ lives.” He also wished that graffiti artists

NYPD Community Graffiti Cleanup

Save the Date

Spring Planting
Saturday, May 15th
from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Dear CSA Members and Neighbors,

Our annual Charles Street Association Spring Planting is back! We will be at our usual distribution location on Charles St and Bleeker St. (Southwest corner). Masks will be provided. Bringing the community back together, one day at a time!

Marjorie Dienstag
Charles St. Association President

Is it Time to Renew Your Subscription?

If we have your email address WestView News will send you a reminder when your subscription expires. Some subscribers have not responded to this means of communication. Therefore, we respectfully suggest that you check your spam folder for such notifications.

Brian Pape contributed to this reporting.

WEST 12TH STREET NEIGHBOR THEO joins Morton Street resident Sloan along with local volunteers painting and removing graffiti from private and public property on the first day of the 2021 NYPD anti-graffiti campaign. Photo by Ede Rothaus.
June 22nd Primary: Lots of Choice…and Confusion

By Frank Quinn

A recent article in the NY Post said even at this late date 25% of NYC Democrats are still undecided about who they want to be the next mayor. When the Publisher of WestView News admonished us that our readers didn’t know enough about the candidates, it was challenging even though this writer tries to stay informed about local elections. There are five major offices up for election in our neighborhood with numerous candidates seeking those offices.

First let’s address the elephant in the city—this election is effectively a one-party contest and the Democratic primary will decide who takes these offices. No citizen who values democracy is well served by this situation. One party rule breeds contempt, like we saw last November when longtime Democratic Assemblymember Deborah Glick snubbed her constituents by refusing to offer to arrange a debate with her moderate well-qualified Republican challenger. What a shame!

There’s a delicate balance reporting only what you know, being fair to all the competitors, and offering advice without venturing into unsolicited opinion. To develop trust with our readers we try to provide information relevant to them as voters. What follows should give some direction on the major party candidates.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

This office provides citizens the most direct access to their local government, and WestView News has done a lot to help its readers with this decision. The candidate you choose will be your local representative in the municipal legislature, which is separate from the Mayor’s administration but an equal partner in how our City is run. There are six candidates running in District 3, and WestView News interviewed all of them in short-form videos designed to make it easy for voters to review. Please visit our YouTube channel or search “District 3” at westviewnews.org to see the interviews.

MAYOR

As of this writing there are eight Democratic and two Republican candidates in this race. Most polls indicate Andrew Yang is the frontrunner, but his lead is considered fragile due to the large number of undecided voters. It’s also possible another candidate could surge ahead if others drop out. There are logical choices for almost every type of voter, including career politicians with political experience (Scott Stringer, Eric Adams), those with strong progressive ideology (Maya Wiley, Dianne Morales), those who’ve run large government organizations (Kathryn Garcia, Shaun Donovan) and those from the private sector (Ray McGuire and Yang). The two Republican candidates (Curtis Sliwa and Fernando Mateo) are not expected to present meaningful competition in the general election but could provide an interesting debate this fall.

MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

This office isn’t well understood by most voters. Originally created in 1898 as part of the consolidation of New York City, today this office is primarily advisory. It’s often seen as a stepping-stone for career minded public officials; indeed, two of the leading mayoral candidates served as borough presidents. There are seven declared Democratic candidates—three are well known term-limited pols, while the remaining four are lesser-known individuals. For more information you can review the Wikipedia article “2021 New York City Borough President Elections” but gathering information on these candidates requires some effort.

COMPTROLLER

This office is the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Auditor for the City. The office has a staff of 800 and a budget of over $100 Million. There are seven Democratic candidates who are considered the “major candidates” because they previously held a public office, showed up in a poll or received some kind of media coverage. This race also requires effort to gather information for your choice, but you can start with the Wikipedia article “2021 New York City Comptroller election.”

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

This race has proven the most difficult to study. There are eight candidates running, but unlike the other municipal races this office is not term-limited and rank choice voting will not be used. Most of the debate between the candidates has focused on criminal justice reform with some candidates offering more progressive agendas than others. Another big issue for this office is how it will take over the Trump investigation currently underway by the incumbent Cyrus Vance who is not seeking re-election. Perhaps the best way to inform yourself is to search the internet and take time to watch one of the forums where these candidates have appeared.

Frank Quinn is a media executive, parent and musician. Linkedin.com/in/frankquinn

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Enjoy the great legends, stories, sights and history of the renowned New York neighborhood which has helped shape our American culture.

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2 hours

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Above, left to right: Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, Dustin Hoffman (Photos by Fred W. McDarrah)
How It Works

In response to my repeated calls to the Police press department to discover who was in charge of their very new anti-graffiti program they sent me a video clip of the new youngish Police Commissioner, Dermot Shea, announcing the program in March while surrounded by a gaggle of nodding police officers and even a few youthful PAL members.

Commissioner Shea was fresh and passionate on the subject—this is a war on graffiti that depends on us—the public—emailing in a photo of the graffiti and then us joining with the police to remove it—wow this is new, joining with the police to erase a crime (a very nice elderly lady called me to stay she reported a patch of offensive graffiti to the sixth precinct and she reported a patch of offensive graffiti to the sixth precinct and she reported a patch of offensive graffiti to the sixth precinct and she reported a patch of offensive graffiti to the sixth precinct and she reported a patch of offensive graffiti to the sixth precinct). They were all friends and were anxious to cooperate.

I asked if they had a son of age would they want him to become a policeman and both quickly said yes.

Now in the press release announcing the program they offer that this new NYPD strategy “Builds upon the deeper human links officers have created with residents they serve through our neighborhood Policing Philosophy.”

The press release also recognizes that with the iphone and computer, citizens can email the offending graffiti right to a police officer that is charged with doing something about it (and please send a cc to WestView).

The Graffiti coordinator who gets all the images we send to him on our computers or phones then distributes them to local police stations and civilian community partners who go out together and remove the graffiti—sounds like fun.

Ready, here is the address to report graffiti... graffiti@nypd.org

At the suggestion of our local Community Partner Alan Silverstein (they support the local NCO officers and act as a liaison with the local community), he invited the local neighborhood coordination officer from the 6th Precinct Sergeant Daniel Houlahan (now there is an old-fashioned police name) and officer James Miller to visit WestView headquarters at 69 Charles and talk very cautiously of the then very recent guilty verdict for a police officer. How, I speculated inwardly, were our local police taking it? (they had nothing to say and I felt they had not taken sides) They were all friends and were anxious to cooperate.

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Graffiti Brush continued from page 1

we left the police officers and Explorers to finish up.

The WVN crew then moved on to the 6th Precinct site at Hudson and West 11th Street, at the former Philip Marie Restaurant. The 6th precinct has five sites scheduled, and this was one of the most prominent and sensitive locations. One of the most active Community Partners, Alan Silverstein had made arrangements to meet the officers in charge of graffit in the 6th, including Community Affairs Officer Evrim Can, NCO Supervisor Sergeant Daniel Houlahan, NCO Jeff Maddrey, Officer Pete Plessa, and Officer Pat Defonzo.

For Hudson and West 11th Street, the side wall paint had to be matched with the cover-up paint, and Police Officer Pete Plessa said they used a paint matching scanning application on their phones to come up with an exact match at the paint store. Indeed, when we left the site, you couldn’t tell where the old paint stopped, and the new paint started; perfection!

As we’ve reported previously, this clean-up day was only the latest effort and an opening round in the next chapter of the on-going fight by the police department to work with the community to get the graffiti cleaned up. The 6th precinct reported about 33 cleanups this past year of various graffiti locations. When new graffiti appears in the neighborhood, one of their officers checks it out and contacts property owners.

Just as we reported the arrest of the painter of the “Magic Trick” tag, the painter of the large “Texas” painted on the wall above the shuttered Riviera Café at West 4th Street was tracked by the police, who were able to arrest that person doing similar painting elsewhere, according to NCO Sgt. Houlahan.

There is a way for all of us to help: call 311 if you see something, and anyone can coordinate your donation. Barrow-Bedford-Pleasant Street Community Partners and the 13th Precinct Police Officer Pete Plessa, who will coordinate your donation.

So, until our communities can convince the city to reactivate this essential equipment for the on-going fight to get the graffiti cleaned up, we are working with ‘one hand tied behind our backs’ as the saying goes. We need local donations of supplies, and lending of ladders too, to reach higher walls.

PO Natasha DeLeon from Patrol Borough Manhattan South mentioned that she can assist and arrange another such cleanup event, working with the police commands that fall under their jurisdiction. Stay tuned for that announcement soon.

Brian J. Pape is a LEED-AP “Green” architect consulting in private practice, serves on the Manhattan District 2 Community Board Landmarks Committee and Quality of Life Committee, is Co-chair of the American Institute of Architects NY Design for Aging Committee, is a member of ALANY Historic Buildings Committee, and is a journalist, especially on architecture subjects.
We have Ballfields All Over Pier 40 - It’s Arthur’s Fault!

The New York Times
Riverfront Wrangling Yields Playing Fields for Hudson Pier

We’re getting Six New Elevators on 14th Street - It’s Arthur’s Fault!

amNY
Schumer pushes FTA to give disabled New Yorkers a lift

The Federal Courts Ordered A Presidential Primary Last Year - It’s Arthur’s Fault!

PBS News Hour
Judge restores New York Democratic presidential primary on June 23

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ARThUR SCHWARTZ
Pursuing Justice 2021
Candidate for City Council District 3

By Kyle Nash

While the Halloween Parade waits for Mayor de Blasio to approve its permit for a 2021 Parade (they had a virtual parade last year) parade organizers have made two announcements.

First: the Grand Marshall for the Parade will be Randy Rainbow, one of the funniest comics in the US, whose “Seasons of Trump” video has garnered over 2 million views. Go to youtube.com/watch?v=UzXBvkWASl4.


Arthur Schwartz you ask, why him? Is he a performer on the side?

Turns out that in 2019, the last year the parade was held, the Village Halloween Parade, Inc. was sued by someone who called himself “SuperFrank” (seriously, that was how he described himself in court papers) who claimed to be a member of the Parade Board and alleged that the organizers had squandered lots of money. Unfortunately, the baseless lawsuit was reported in the NY Post on Page Six and all of the parade sponsors put their donation pens on hold. The Parade Executive Committee asked around for a lawyer who could get them out of hot water fast; if donations didn’t begin to flow by May, the parade would be cooked. They were sent to Arthur Schwartz, who agreed to take on the case pro bono. He gathered the people who get a salary to prevent him seeing your email always win. He gathered what he needed, drafted papers, and filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit and countersued. It took a while, but in early April Judge Franc Perry held a hearing, and the next day issued a decision dismissing the case. In order to resolve everything, the countersuit was dropped and an appeal was waived. May arrived and the donors started writing checks!

Can you imagine the Village without a Halloween Parade? Unfortunately, due to the Pandemic, that did happen last year, and the Parade went virtual. But this year Hope Springs Eternal. The Parade is pushing, Arthur is pushing, and hopefully Mayor de Blasio will end his last Halloween as Mayor with a Parade.

The theme this year? LET’S PLAY!!! Honoring the Children of NYC and the Child in all of us who yearns to take to the streets and play again!

Get your vaccine, so we can do Halloween! (And so Randy and Arthur can lead us)!

“Impagination is the only weapon in the war against reality.”
**Ranked Voting Will Change the Game**

**A SAMPLE RANKED CHOICE VOTING BALLOT** shows how to rank candidates in order of preference, which is the new method being introduced in the June 22, 2021 Primary election. Photo credit: NYC Campaign Finance Board.

By Leslie Boghosian Murphy, Candidate for City Council District 3

Have you ever been forced to vote with your head, when you really wanted to vote with your heart? Perhaps you went to the polls and selected one candidate when you really wanted to choose another, but because you believed your preferred person did not have a strong shot at winning you selected the “popular” contender?

This year for the first time in New York City history we have a new process to help make our election outcomes more representative of what voters truly want. Ranked Choice Voting (or “RCV” for short) received an overwhelming 74% of NYC voter support when proposed in a 2019 ballot measure, and 2021 is the first year that a citywide election will introduce the new method.

Having been implemented in 17 other cities across the United States, including San Francisco, the results of an RCV-style election allow for better representation of the community’s preference in candidates, and less polarization of the final outcome.

The new process is simple—instead of choosing just ONE candidate, you have the opportunity to rank up to five candidates, in order of preference. This way if your first pick does not win, you still have a say in the final outcome. No vote is “wasted.”

Here’s how the results break down:

- Candidates who receive more than 50% of the first-choice votes automatically win.
- If no candidate receives over 50%, then counting continues in rounds.
- In each round, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. (If your top choice candidate is eliminated, your vote then goes to your next highest ranked candidate on the ballot).
- The process continues until there are only two candidates left, and the person with the most votes WINS.

**WHY IS RANKED CHOICE VOTING BETTER?**

For starters, by ranking multiple candidates your vote can still impact who gets elected even if your top choice doesn’t win.

Ranked Choice Voting provides a more civilized election. Because candidates will be seeking broad support (even from voters who may not rank them first), their campaigns are more likely to focus on appealing to voters rather than attacking other candidates. (And after the last two national elections, I believe we have experienced more than our fair share of “attack politics”).

RCV has proven to be more equitable in electing women and people of color, which is critically important to a city as diverse as New York.

This is of particular significance to me. There are 53 Council seats in New York City and currently only 13 of those seats are held by women. That number does not reflect balance, equality, or our city’s demographics. With all of the open seats in September that count could dwindle to a mere five women in City Council! I do not want to imagine our city’s future with only 10% female representation. As a mother and proponent of diverse leadership, I want to set a strong example for my daughter and all of the young ladies out there who are watching us.

As with any change, there may be some confusion at the ballot box. However, the beauty of this new process is that YOU the voter now have more say in the final outcome for our next Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough President and City Council member. Learn more about Ranked Choice Voting [here](http://www.LeslieForNYC.com) and vote with your head AND your heart! New York City’s future hangs in the balance, and we need elected officials who are up for the challenge of revitalizing the greatest city in the world.

Leslie Boghosian Murphy has lived in the District for over 17 years. As a third generation New Yorker, her career as an investigative journalist helped shaped her forward-thinking “get it done” mindset with which our district needs as we anticipate the Post-Pandemic era. Boghosian Murphy is a mother and Executive Member of Community Board 4 who is running for City Council in District 3, which includes West Village, Chelsea and Hell’s Kitchen.

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Michael Russo, PROPRIETOR

Serving the West Village for 11 Years
A Tale of Three Small Businesses

By Penny Mintz

We locals feel at home in our neighborhoods when we sit on a stoop and see a familiar face; when we connect through our children’s school; when we take the sun in a local park. The most significant contributor to our sense of community, though, is probably our connection to, and reliance on, the local restaurants and mom-and-pop businesses. These businesses have always been the heartbeat of our city. They made up 99% of all businesses and 50% of all jobs. They provided opportunities for hard-working people to enter the middle class and beyond.

It is no secret that mom-and-pop businesses are in trouble. We all see the empty storefronts, held off the market by landlords waiting for the highest possible price. In the summer of 2019, I counted nine empty shops on Bleecker Street between Perry and Charles and eight more between Charles and West Tenth. Tiny shops were renting for thirty, forty, and fifty thousand a month. Gone were bicycle shops, produce vendors, bakeries, hardware stores, and old-fashioned variety stores.

Times grew ever harder for small businesses once COV-ID hit. Under the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic, one would think that the City government would make a concerted effort to smooth the way for independent entrepreneurs. The City has, indeed, helped restaurants with the open-streets policy, which allows restaurants to expand rent-free onto sidewalks and streets. But other businesses have not seen such help.

I spoke with the owners of three struggling independent businesses: a fruit vendor, a discount store owner, and the landlord of a single commercial space.

BUREAUCRATIC SNAGS

Harry Alentar, the fruit vendor on Seventh Avenue between Eleventh and Twelfth streets, has been selling fruit on that spot since 2007, but even before COVID it wasn’t exactly smooth sailing. In 2018, despite being properly licensed, he got $2,000 in tickets and had his cart and merchandise seized. Arthur Schwartz came to Harry’s aid and got those tickets dismissed. In 2019, the police again towed his cart due to a bureaucratic mixup over which department was authorized to issue his permit. Once again, Schwartz resolved the issue.

Now, after completely shutting down for several months during the pandemic, he’s back in business. But “times are tough,” Harry says. During the hour that I sat with him, one customer purchased fruit, and Harry gave a banana and a mango to a homeless man. In addition, his truck continues to be ticketed and he is harassed by ever-changing rules about the placement of his cart. Harry drives a car part-time to make ends meet because his profit goes to pay his assistant. He’s hanging in, he says, while he waits for better times.

NO HELP ACCESSING CAPITAL

Mamadou Diaman is the owner of Diaman Discounts U.S.A (also known as 99 Cents Creations), a discount variety store located at 149 West 24th Street between Seventh and Sixth avenues. He got into the business by managing a similar store on West 23rd Street and then on West 24th Street for 20 years. During those years he became part of the community, going to Community Board meetings to find out what was going on, and talking to people to find out what they wanted him to carry.

“I know everybody,” says Mamadou. “I want to light up this neighborhood.”

On January 31, 2021, the owner of the discount store picked up and left Mamadou with an empty shop. Arthur Schwartz became his “angel,” negotiating his lease and helping him set up the new business, which opened in March. Mamadou’s only regret about Arthur is that Arthur did not mention that he was running for city council, because Mamadou, who loves to talk to people, would have enthusiastically talked up the Schwartz candidacy with his many customers. He is now doing his best to make up for lost time.

Mamadou’s biggest problem is a lack of access to capital, and the City “does nothing to help,” he says. Since he is a new business and lacks a relationship with any bank, he cannot apply for PPP funds. Those loans are processed through banks, and banks only provide that service for established customers. But despite his cash flow problems, Mamadou believes that he can hang in.

REAL ESTATE TAXES ARE TOO DAMN HIGH

Finally, there is Chuck Chu, who is being crushed by real estate taxes. Chuck used to own Mama Buddha, a popular restaurant on the corner of Eleventh and Hudson. When he retired twelve years ago, the taxes were high but manageable. For ten years, he rented the space to HSPC, which paid rent plus the real-estate tax. Over that time, the taxes rose 600%.

For the last two years, Chuck has been unable to rent and unable to sell. “With those taxes, nobody wants the space,” Chuck says. He got a 25% tax rollback using an attorney who specializes in real-estate tax challenges, but the taxes are still too damn high. Unlike the big landlords, Chuck cannot write the taxes off as a loss against other rents because he has no other rent.

Like Harry and Mamadou, Chuck, too, is hanging in, waiting for better times. He thinks that things will improve over the next few months. If it takes much longer than that, he will be wiped out.

These three small-business owners are New York heroes. They are all hanging by a thread while they watch their neighboring businesses topple like dominos. Rather than helping them survive, the City continues to set roadblocks in their way.
Ramsey Clark (1927-2021): America’s Gandhi

By Bruce Poli

Ramsey Clark, U.S. Attorney General for LBJ’s Great Society (1967-69), author and supervisor of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, and one of the largest and most prominent figures in the development of civil rights legislation in America, died at age 93 on Friday, April 9th at his West Village home.

I have published three interviews with Ramsey Clark in WestView News before… so much has been shared.

It is so difficult to state and measure his extraordinary effect and vast accomplishments that I refer you to his obituaries, bios and Wikipedia page. I hope you will read and enjoy them!

Recruited into power by the Kennedy brothers, who sent him to the South in the early ’60s to help develop their civil rights agenda, Ramsey was chosen for his intelligence, wit, legal acumen, sense of justice, and, not least of all, because he was from the South…Texas…and would blend into southern racist culture easily whereby he could witness racial injustice and then help develop future solutions to it by the federal government. He toured prisons across the South and found the incarceration programs and systems horrendous and degrading. This set him on a path to principled civil rights reform, from which the Kennedy administration flourished despite great opposition.

Ramsey Clark’s father Thomas Clark was a Supreme Court justice who resigned his post June, 1967, citing conflict of interest when his son was appointed attorney general. LBJ anticipated replacing him with Thurgood Marshall, the country’s first African American justice on the Court.

Ramsey was one of Johnson’s popular and successful cabinet appointments, being described as “able, independent…and soft-spoken,” and representative of the New Frontier liberals. As a devout anti-Vietnam War member of the Johnson cabinet while the war escalated, however, he was a thorn in the president’s side, so much so that he was accused by the hawkish LBJ of helping Richard Nixon beat Hubert Humphrey in 1968. The two didn’t speak to each other for the entire last year of the Great Society and Clark was excluded from all cabinet meetings.

An increasingly radicalized liberal, Ramsey Clark is one of the most quoted public officials in government history: “A right is not what someone gives you; it’s what no one can take from you.”

“U.S. foreign policy is the greatest crime since World War II…American aggression has already created incalculable levels of misery for the world.”

“The world is the most dangerous place it’s ever been now because of what our country has done, and is doing, and we have to take it back.”

“Our overriding purpose, from the beginning right through to the present day, has been world domination—that is, to build and maintain the capacity to coerce everybody else on the planet: nonviolently, if possible; and violently, if necessary.”

Ramsey also vigorously opposed the death penalty and the War on Terror.

I could go on with dramatic episodes during Ramsey Clark’s life, with which he helped shape the America that is now undergoing a serious self-reflection of its civil rights practices.

According to his assistant, he was “catatonic for a month” when Donald Trump was elected. When I met him on the street, shortly after Trump’s victory, I went up to him and said “We need your voice.” “No one’s listening” was his reply.

Not only was he right then, but his views are still true today. His death was not mentioned on many television news reports even though the John Lewis Voting Rights Act of our future was his creation, and John Lewis was his great friend whom he accompanied for years in the South, including on Bloody Sunday and the crossing of the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma.

Despite his radical legal support for extremist figures like Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, and Mohammad Ghadhafi, I cannot fall short of praising Ramsey Clark for his unparalleled courage, dignity, and standing up for what is right for America and humankind. He loved peace and he loved people and justice. We will never see another figure like him.

This brings me to one of my favorite Bob Dylan quotes and a statement about the state of civil rights in America today: “He not busy being born is busy dying.”

Thank you Ramsey Clark for keeping it real. Your life was a testament to America’s forward-moving destiny, and you are an example for all of us.

And, as Ramsey so often said to me, “We Shall Overcome.”

I recommend “Defending the Public’s Enemy: The Life and Legacy of Ramsey Clark” by Prof. Lonnie Brown, published by Yale University.

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WE’RE NOT FREE UNTIL EVERYBODY’S FREE.
**Gansevoort Peninsula Progress**

By Brian J Pape, AIA

THE DAVID HAMMONS SCULPTURE “DAY’S END” has finally been assembled after a long year of preparation. The concrete pilings had to be precisely set in the water to receive the tubular stainless steel framing that exactly duplicates the outer shape of the original pier house at this Pier 52. The Whitney Museum of American Art commissioned the sculpture from Mr. Hammons and has donated it to the Hudson River Park, which will be responsible for its upkeep.

At the same time, the parkland that is planned for the peninsula also progresses. Barges are being shuttled in, off-loaded of their engineered-fill cargo, while front-loaders transfer the fill and compact it at strategic locations. Passing by on the pedestrian and bike paths west of West Street, one can see the grade being built up, inch by inch, several feet above the surrounding street level, between Horatio Street to Little West 12th Street. This won’t completely protect it from strong storm surges, but it will make it readily recoverable once the storm passes. Photos credit: Brian J Pape, AIA.

JUST A FEW FEET NORTH OF THE PENINSULA IS THE NEW LITTLE ISLAND, where Pier 54 and 55 used to be, opposite West 13th Street. Finishing touches are being applied in preparation for a grand opening yet this Spring. The undulating landscape has many trees growing around the spacious lawns and winding pathways and amphitheaters. It is reportedly going to be free and open to the public except for special events, yet to be announced. Photo credit: Bob Cooley.
The Perils of Indifference

By Arthur Z. Schwartz

I was born in the 1950s, part of a family tree which had escaped Czarist Russia even before World War I. But we had family members who were not so lucky. I was a child when the full details of the Holocaust were coming into focus, as the book “Night” by the late Elie Wiesel saw the light of day, and slowly the world learned about the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps, and the efforts to extinguish all European Jews in the most brutal, heartless and cruel ways imaginable. It is easy now for the world to move on, 76 years after World War Two ended, but the Holocaust must always be remembered, in part because of how it demonstrates the extent to which human beings in our society can commit atrocities, and in part because while the death camps killed 6 million, much of the world was indifferent.

When I was in college one of the most profound books that I read drew a parallel between American slavery and the Holocaust. American slavery was, like the Holocaust, one of most profoundly horrific chapters in the history of the world. I bring this up, because one of the reasons why racism, and the effects of slavery, remain so profound, is widespread indifference, the same indifference which allowed the Nazi’s to do what they did.

Holocaust Remembrance Day occurred this year in the midst of the trial of the police officer who inhumanely killed George Floyd. As I watched the video, and saw the inhumane expression on the officer’s face as he choked the life out of George, I flashed to images of the Nazi’s killing Jews. And on January 6, as the Trump hordes invaded the Capitol, one of the leaders was a man wearing a shirt with the words “Camp Auschwitz.”

I decided to run for City Council as a result of George Floyd’s death. While few would ever call my 50 years of activism “indifferent” I felt a need to step up even more. We have so far to go. Maybe I can get us a few inches closer.

Derek Chauvin has been convicted, and we all breathed a sigh of relief. But after the jury went to deliberate, another young Black man was shot 10 miles away, when an officer, doing a routine traffic stop, pulled out what she “thought” was a Taser and shot him dead. In the 24 hours after the Chauvin verdict other Black men were victims—one was Isaiah Brown, 32, who was making a 911 call to police when he was shot—10 times—because the North Carolina cop who had responded thought the phone was a gun. And these shootings are not a coincidence. And they reflect an attitude and climate which exists in the NYPD as well. It must stop.

But the answer is not to “defund” the police. We need public safety. I had someone present a phony check, with my signature, at my bank last week, and I called the police who met me there as the guy ran out the door. Ironically the cop remembered that I had sued another officer in his precinct eight years ago for injuring George Capsis’ eye socket. But he also knew that I represent people in law enforcement, and go to precinct community council meetings.

The police need to be reformed—I like the words “reimagine the NYPD.” Yes, it will take a lot of creativity, and a lot of hard work. But we have to try. We need to make sure that there are no more senseless killings of Black men in NYC.

Arthur Schwartz is the Democratic District Leader in Greenwich Village and is a candidate for City Council in the district which includes the Village, Chelsea and Hell’s Kitchen. He has been endorsed by Black Lives Matter of Greater NY, the Black Leadership Action Caucus, the NYC Court Officers Association, and the Bridge and Tunnel Officers Association.

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Epigenetics: Inheritance of Acquired Characteristics

Abstracted from "A Scientists View of Almost Everything" by Mark M Green

Lamarck’s theory saw evolutionary changes arising from use and disuse (a giraffe’s neck, a farmer’s muscles, the eyes of an animal living in pitch black cave) leading to changes in the individual that were than passed on to their offspring and so on to their descendants, an idea expressed in the title of Kemmerer’s book. Kemmerer was what is called, a Lamarckian. But the scientific establishment has long cast Lamarck’s ideas aside.

But in fact many scientists today see a correspondence between Lamarckian and Darwinian ideas. After all, both theories call for response of the species to their environment as critical to the evolutionary changes even if Darwin’s theory, up to recently, was better supported by modern biology: random changes in the genome, that is, mutations, sometimes lead to improvement in the ability to survive and prosper, which gives advantage to the changed individuals. But times are changing for Lamarck and even Kemmerer. Kemmerer may have discovered what is now called epigenetics.

What is epigenetics? It is long known that genes are turned on and off by mechanisms that are internal to the species. How else could every cell in the body contain the same DNA and yet take the different forms? Muscles, brain, skin, hair etc. How could the fertilized egg become the fetus without different chromosomes taking their turn at control? Epigenetics describes the chemical changes to DNA and the way that DNA is stored as controlling the evolution of the fetus into the fully formed baby. But now scientists are finding that the external environment and the behavior of many forms of life, including humans, are also capable of causing chemical changes to DNA without changing the basic sequence of the DNA, which is identical in every cell and unchanged since conception.

All of this is surprising enough but science has now taken the next step in research that demonstrated that several of these epigenetic changes in DNA can be passed on, that is, inherited. There is every reason to believe that many more epigenetic changes will be discovered that will be passed on to progeny DNA. Biologists increasingly realize that evolutionary processes are controlled not only by changes in the sequence of bases in DNA (Darwinian) but also by chemical changes within that sequence by the changes arising from experience during one’s life (Lamarckian).

Welcome back Monsieur Lamarck and watch out you young folks still bear- ing children—what you do and where you tread may affect the genetic inheritance of your descendants.
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Loyalists and Patriots

By Tom Lamia

In a review of 1774: The Long Year of Revolution by historian and former Cornell professor Mary Beth Norton (New York Review of Books, March 11, 2021) the statement that harsh measures against American colonists came because British officials “suspected that the Americans had absorbed a spirit of democracy,” caught my eye. What similarities might there be between that sentiment and Republican efforts to restrict voting rights at the state and local level? Do Republicans suspect now that voters have absorbed a spirit of democracy and harsh measures are needed to restore order?

A Republican fear of democracy in an expanding electorate does seem to be at the core of our voting rights issues. It was also at the core of differences between Loyalists and Patriots in 1774; the failure to bridge that difference was the essential cause of our revolution.

Before the Tea Party, Paul Revere’s ride, and the Intolerable Acts there were a multitude of irritations flowing from the ordinary American’s lack of a voice in his government. This discontent was known to the British administration and small but inadequate steps were taken from time to time to address it. The failure to include the concerns of ordinary Americans in the British effort to deal with its American problem was a critical failure.

Loyalists (Americans of wealth and standing), while acknowledging the more egregious improprieties of British colonial rule, drew a line between modest, accommodating reform and revolution. Patriots (farmers, merchants, tradesmen and the landless laboring class) had no say in the debate over the pre-revolutionary governance of their country and they were not happy about that. Loyalists, on the other hand, were accepting of subordination to British rule. Favorable appointments to positions in colonial government and eligibility for colonial titles, together with the social and commercial benefits of calm and good order, were sufficient for their continuing loyalty to the Crown. Patriots could not accept governance that left them out of deliberations over their future, regardless of putative benevolent intentions and their unlikely inclusion in royal grace.

Ordinary Americans in all thirteen colonies wanted a voice in any deliberations to address their grievances. A surprisingly simple solution proved to be elected committees in towns, cities and counties. These committees adopted guides for boycotts of British goods and published news of infractions reported to them, making the boycotts effective. Loyalists did not welcome this sort of voluntary pan-colonial action. Joint action among colonies of disparate interests was a risk and a threat to the British. Communication through these local committees had the effect of unifying colonial action and making it transparent.

In remote Gorham, a small town in backwater Maine, then part of Massachusetts, the townspeople resolved that they had “such a high relish for Liberty, that we all, with one heart, stand ready, sword in hand...to defend and maintain our rights against all attempts to enslave us, and join our brethren, opposing force to force, if drove to the last extremity, which God forbid.”

Contrast these sentiments of Patriot farmers with those of high ranking Loyalist clergyman: a New Jersey Episcopal minister [Chandler] asked, rhetorically, whether it was not the proper duty of “every American, to fear the Lord and the King and to meddle not with them that are GIVEN TO CHANGE?” Or, paraphrased, “stay out of things that are above your pay grade!”

A second Episcopal clergyman, this one in South Carolina [Bullman] expressed his adamant view that ordinary men were not capable of judging their betters, asking, rhetorically, whether a person “who cannot perhaps govern his own household, or pay the Debts of his own contracting, [should] dictate how the State should be governed?” Rev. Chandler, then asked whether any “ignorant men bred to the lowest occupations,” were “qualified for the direction of political affairs, or ought to be trusted with it.” The expected answer was “no,” of course, but the fight for independence, carried forth by all levels of colonial Americans, proved otherwise as democratic participation did not lead to chaos or failed government.

Loyalists did not give up their views easily. Some stayed in America, some decamped for British Canada, some joined their preferred society in London or in British colonies elsewhere in the empire. There was no sudden or even gradual recognition among Loyalists that a republican form of government based on democratic principles, was a welcome result of the American Revolution. It seems now that Republicans have adopted the Loyalist fear of democracy.

Republicans are comfortable in a society in which a limited group is running the show. To some extent our Constitutional framework allows a rural and small state advantage. We do not have a pure democracy. Republicans have the right to that advantage and I do not contest it.

However, attempts to expand this advantage by seeking to limit voting by non-European immigrants, Native Americans, felons, African Americans and a malleable range of low status persons goes too far. It is irrelevant whether Republican efforts at voter suppression come from fear of being “replaced,” as the fringe among them have been saying, or simply reflects an elitist (and unconstitutional) view of who is entitled to have a voice in our governance. That train left the station in the 19th Century on the enactment of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution. Attempts to derail it through voter suppression measures are contrary to those amendments. Legislation is needed to identify and prevent those measures. The Supreme Court, in its 2013 decision in Shelby County v. Holder, ruled unconstitutional the requirement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that certain election districts continue to submit proposed election law changes for federal review. The basis for the decision was that conditions in those districts had changed and federal review was no longer justified. Now they are. A new Voting Rights Act is needed.

Loyalists did not trust ordinary Americans to govern themselves in 1774. Republicans have adopted a similar position today. Democracy can survive if all are included. It was so in 1774 and it remains so today.
A Church Named Graffiti—What’s That?

THE EAST 7TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH was given a strange name, Graffiti Church, when their original location got tagged repeatedly. This current brick front location at 250 E 7th Street sports their proud name, but no graffiti. Contact them at https://graffitichurch.org. Credit: Brian J Pape, AIA.

By Brian J Pape, AIA

Friends of mine living near Tompkins Square Park gave me a tour of prominent graffiti in their area, pointing out better-known artists’ signatures or tags, as opposed to recent, unidentifiable works. Many of the wall murals were sanctioned and related to the businesses there. A set of murals on a former school on East 3rd Street, that were originally sanctioned, have recently been re-tagged with new images; fair game, I guess.

In the midst of this atmosphere is the East 7th Street Baptist Church, given a strange name, Graffiti Church. When it was first started in 1974, the small storefront church was constantly used for personal expression in the form of graffiti. In the beginning, they would paint over it, which only served to create a fresh canvas for the next person to leave their tag of graffiti. Deciding to not fight it, they accepted being surrounded by a form of art that represented the people and struggles of that community, and they chose what they think may be one of the best names for a church they could think of.

Graffiti Church began with serving children in the drug-controlled culture of Alphabet City, and they continue to serve as a safe haven for children, youth, and adults who want something more. In the last 15 years they have started five Graffiti sites in the metropolitan area and two affiliates in other cities.
Life in an apartment building is tough; it's treacherous, death-defying. Apartment residents are literally at the mercy of all the other people who live, sublet, and visit in their building. If one person leaves a burning cigarette or a candle alight, you could become a crispy critter. If one person leaves the front door ajar, everybody is at risk. Stoves, ovens, toasters, and blenders are all potential weapons of mass destruction.

In other words, we co-op, condo and rental apartment tenants are all dependent on the good sense, care, and responsibility of everyone else in the building. The backstop for those people, when they drop the ball and put us at risk, is the Superinten- dent. The Super is the town cop, the referee, and the shortstop picking off runners at 2nd and 3rd.

Fortunately for many of us, there are those apartment occupants at the far end of the OCD spectrum, the obsessors, who see things and say things. Their eyeballs, ears, and noses save lives. Here are some recent samples:

“Hey, the cellar window is open…that could allow our water pipes to freeze.” “I’m getting hot water coming out of my cold water tap in the kitchen.”

“My chimney flue is not drafting properly…that can’t be good.”

“I smell gas!” These are not problems that the occupants, generally, are expected to handle personally. These issues get passed on to the Super, who either is skilled enough to make some of these repairs or knows people who are.

Knowing people who are skilled in residential building repair is a skill in itself. It is not enough to know someone who knows something. As a co-op Super, I have discovered that you must cultivate people with skills. You must nurture them; make them feel special and appreciated. The good repair and maintenance people are always busy and are not often looking for work. Work comes to them. You want them to want you. You want them to feel good coming to your building. The ones who feel appreciated will show up much, much sooner. They will send over their best and most efficient people.

But the Super’s job does not end with his or her bringing in a chimney sweep, an electrician, or the fire department to the building. The Super must aggressively follow through, and oversee what is done and left undone by these repairmen. The Su- per must ask questions and get complete, checkable answers. Supers must know the right questions to ask and understand the answers and if they don’t understand, they need to work on that until they do.

What I am describing is the application of a process used for decades in commerce and industry: the notion of applying “quality control” or “QC” to the running of a multi-unit residential building. It is one of the reasons why the Super’s job will not soon be taken over by a robot. It is easier to teach a robot to answer a question than to figure out the right question to ask, and then know when you are getting a snow job. That is human intelligence.

Quality control, that wondrous process that catches and minimizes errors, inefficiencies, and embarrassments, needs to be employed in the property management and caretaker field to ensure positive results from the efforts of the Super. Licensed plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and boiler makers are expert at what they do, but they are not infallible.

A few examples of failures to QC a proj- ect, and the waste and disappointment that ensues:

—On a $100,000 chimney maintenance project, two of ten chimney flue liners were not installed as contracted for and most of the liners that were installed did not penetrate as deeply as they were supposed to and resulted in fireplace smoke problems.

—Some of these are relatively trivial, but all of them required further efforts to complete the repairs effectively. All these examples could have been caught prior to the departure of the appropriate tradesman and dealt with. Instead, completion of these projects was delayed for weeks or months and in some cases required finding a second tradesperson to complete the job. This is not necessarily slumlordism. It is sloppy or unsupervised work. Quality control at a relevant time can save a great deal of aggravation for residents and the Superintendant.

If you live on the fourth floor of a 100 unit building at Christopher and Gay Streets, or the third floor of a MacDougal Street walk-up, your life can depend on whether your Super is able to apply quality control to his or her work or not. Otherwise, you are liv- ing under a regime of squallid-y control and are very much at risk. Take care, tenement dwellers and I wish you well until my next installment of Superhero arrives on your quaint little West Village doorstep.
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.

Falling Over in the Middle of the Night

Thirty days before the Christmas holidays, a crèche was set up at one end of the entrance hallway at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, where I was an elementary school student. In winter, the hallway was dark, the stone floor cold, the mustard colored walls beaded with humidity. Above, low wattage bulbs were set in the ceiling at prudent intervals. They lit one’s way without cheer. What little color passed through this hall turned sepia in the process.

The crèche was not large and was faded from many years of use. But what was important was the cast and the props. Beyond the family in the shed, I sought and recognized each shepherd, kneeling or standing, his arms outstretched in wonder; the wise men, the star, each palm tree, the turfy carpet surrounding the whole. Each worshipper was placed at a proper distance from the sacred center, where the parents bent over the hallowed child and the star beamed down gilded wooden rays.

I would crouch, as close as allowed by the boundary, gazing at, trying to penetrate the mysterious perfection of this scene. My heart brimmed with love and good intentions. Each year I prayed “Jesus, Mary and Joseph, let me be close to you. Please let me come close to you.”

Stretching away from the crèche, a long strip of carpet reached some distance along the hallway. At the end was a group of wooden sheep. Each one had a name tag on it for a child in the school. There would be about seventy five little sheep standing together on that first day, standing way out in dim, lonely space.

There I was, Joan K. There was another Joan, Joan deM. The sheep had once been identical. Now it was easy to tell them apart, sometimes sprinting, but no one had the right to decide to knock me over in the middle of the night.

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The First Time

By Keith Michael

Spoiler alert: This is not a cheerful tale.

On Friday, March 26th, while I looked for migrating spring birds in the Willow Oaks across Perry Street, Millie, my irascible corgi muse through more than nine years of monthly articles here in WestView, took her morning walk with me for the last time.

You may recall that my April article, already written and submitted by that Friday, while shielding her from the excessive cuteness of a pair of Screech Owls in northern Manhattan, celebrated her twelfth birthday.

That morning, with Millie backtracking at the end of her leash, I was already contemplating whether to cast the screaming pair of Blue Jays above us dive-bombing a Common Crow out of their airspace as the subject for my May article. Millie trotted inside from the street and sidestepped up the two front stairs as always, ever impatient that I wasn’t opening the doors fast enough. Unbeknownst as I left for work, I wouldn’t meet her accusatory, worried, “Where are you going?” gaze again.

In the early afternoon, my phone buzzed with a text from Millie’s dog walker friend Kirk: “Something is not right. She is lying down in the bathroom and her breathing seems heavy. She is awake but wouldn’t even respond to a treat.”

I got home. Fast. David returned shortly afterward. Getting Millie to a vet had always been a battle. A regime of tranquilizers preceded every appointment while a muzzle smeared with cream cheese was prepared for when she got there. For most of her life, we hadn’t been able to pick her up or get her into a cab. She always walked. Grumpily.

That Friday was different.

Donning raptor-friendly protective gloves dug from a drawer, there was no response as I fearfully eased on her muzzle. There was no complaint as I wrapped a towel, then my arms, around her. Feeling Millie’s wet breath on my neck for the first time, there was no struggle as David and I rode silently with her to the vet. And now what?

By the time we arrived, Millie was no longer “in there.” Apparently, her spleen had ruptured and there was massive internal bleeding. Her eyes were not seeing us. There was no conflict in our decision to “help her along.”

Exhale. That airless euphemism offers no softening for what comes next—the unexpected, unwanted, relentless litany of first times:

- Walking out of the vet and onto the sidewalk carrying only her collar and leash
- Walking home and passing everyone with DOGS at the end of their leashes
- Turning the key in the lock and she was not pattering by the door
- Not filling her water bowl (emptying it, washing it, putting it on the shelf)
- Not measuring her kibble into a dish, not placing it on the floor, and not saying an upbeat, “Okay!” before she would eat it
- Not leaving an extra bit on my dinner plate and putting it down by my chair for her to lick clean
- Not taking her out for an evening walk to stand silently in the street while the night rumbled around us
- Waking up at 2am from the stillness of her not being pressed against the bed—not breathing, not snoring, not sleep-running from bad dreams
- Not taking her out the next morning to inspect every cobblestone for who passed by during the night (or for an errant French fry or chicken bone) and realizing that time on the street with her was MY time to watch and listen for birds
- Starting to rush, then not needing to rush home to take her out for her dinner walk
- Sitting through a rainy Sunday that she would have balked all day at getting wet
- Picking up a tuft of fur from the carpet knowing, wryly, that we won’t be able to complain about that anymore
- The sudden “oh.” How will I write about West Village birds without her?
- Not seeing her napping in the middle of the floor, and involuntarily checking her spot by the door
- Vacuuming and her NOT barking—The doorbell ringing and her NOT barking
- The neighbor’s dog passing by the door and her NOT barking
- Anyone passing by the door and her NOT barking—Coming home and her NOT barking—the clanging silence
- Reading (okay, napping) on the couch and her not walking over for a chin scratch (to take her out)
- Finishing up my monthly article and her not asking for a chest rub while I typed only with my left hand (probably she was just wanting to go out)
- I can still go out. I can still go out to look for birds. But if Millie’s not there to ignore them, do the birds still sing?

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IN and OUT

by Caroline Benveniste

Spring has always been a time when new places start to open, but this month we have heard of an unusually large number of anticipated openings. Some restaurants that had closed have reached an agreement with their landlords, allowing them to re-open. Others have taken advantage of lower rents to quickly take over business that had recently shuttered.

Openings

**Lucky Louie’s – 535 Hudson Street at Charles Street**
Two readers alerted us to the fact that a fried chicken restaurant called Lucky Louie’s opened where Sweet Sunshine Bakery used to be. The menu features fried chicken sandwiches, fried chicken tenders, chicken wings, mac and cheese and salads. Early reviews are uniformly positive.

**NY 99¢ Fresh Pizza - 167 7th Avenue South between Perry Street and Waverly Place**
A 99¢ pizza joint has opened in the space recently vacated by Fiaschetteria Pistoia (the Christopher Street and East Village locations are still in business). Robert Sietsema of *Eater* recently wrote a piece entitled “Two New West Village Pizzerias and an Old Favorite Vie for Cheese Slice Supremacy” where he compared neighborhood mainstay Rivali Pizza to its two recent pizza neighbors. Surprisingly, he concluded that NY 99¢ had the best slice, but to be fair, at Zazzy’s he had a plant-based pizza with fake cheese which just can’t be good. (Zazzy’s also carries regular pizzas with real cheese.)

**Planted – 361 6th Avenue at Washington Place**
Planted, (361 6th Avenue) which served many vegetarian dishes, but also some fish offerings has closed. The location of Xi’an Famous Foods at 313 6th Avenue (between West 4th and Carmine Streets) is no more, although their webpage floats the idea that they may re-open. While Xi’an Famous Foods is a popular mini-chainlet, best known for their hand-pulled lamb noodles, that outpost always seemed undersubscribed. Unfortunately, the Sullivan Street Bakery Pop-up (249 Bleecker Street between Cornelia and Carmine Streets) is closing at the end of April. The staff told me that not enough people seemed to know about it. The company has opened pop-ups in the East Village and on Sullivan Street, and they may try a West Village location again in the future. The Rite Aid location at 501 6th Avenue (13th Street) closed at the end of April. For a while we would only see pharmacy openings, but in the last few years some locations have closed. Still, there are plenty of pharmacies remaining in the neighborhood so that you’re never more than a few blocks from one.

**Otto’s – 1 Fifth Avenue at West 8th Street**
Otto’s (1 Fifth Avenue at West 8th Street) closed in November, and now the space is being taken over by well-known restaurateur Marc Forgione who will be opening a full service Italian restaurant there. Venetian cicchetti (Italian tapas-like appetizers) will be on offer, along with pizzas, and entrees priced between $24 and $42. The owners anticipate a fall opening. Nat’s on Bank will be opening at 51 Bank Street (at West 4th Street) where the short-live champagne bar The Riddler used to be. Nat is Natalie Freihon, who was a co-owner of the Fat Radish, a British vegetable-forward restaurant on the Lower East Side which closed in August due to the pandemic. In a Facebook post, Freihon says of the new restaurant: “Think Art Deco raw bar but also low key. You know, your neighborhood joint. So pumped!”

**Rivali Pizza – 24 Greenwich Avenue between West 10th and Charles Streets**
Rivali Pizza to its two recent pizza neighbors.

**Manatus – 281 West 12th Street at West 4th Street**
re-opened in early April, after shutting down in December. It is currently the only open lesbian bar in New York City. For more on this story, see Karen Rempel’s article in next month’s Pride issue of WestView News.

Closed/Closing

**Amos on Bleecker – 340 Bleecker Street between West 4th Streets**
is still planning to open in the old Manatus space since over a year had gone by with no word on when it might debut. But the project is still very much alive, and in fact that owners presented their case to CB2 to add French doors to the façade. The rationale was that with COVID, restaurants would be better off if they were able to open windows. Neighbors, worried about excessive noise, were predictably opposed to the plan. When the restaurant does open, it will also occupy the adjacent storefront. **Upright Brew House** (547 Hudson Street between Charles and Perry Streets) has transformed into Leitao, a Portuguese restaurant with wine, beer and craft cocktails, modeled on the cervejarias of Porto.
**A View From the Kitchen**

By Isa Covo

Here comes the Merry Month of May! We look forward to warmer temperatures, long walks or hikes, and hope that the last long months are (almost) behind us.

May is a month where we celebrate mothers, but actually, I believe that parents should be celebrated every day, not only on the days set aside for them. Call them often when you do not live at home.

Traditionally flowers and chocolates are the offerings of the day. This year absolutely offer store-bought flowers, unless you can bring some from your garden. As for chocolates, do something different and make them yourself. The recipe for these truffles has always been a great success. If you prefer them without alcohol, you may replace it with any flavoring of your choice (e.g. vanilla extract, almond extract, etc.). In this case use sparingly, not more than one-half teaspoon.

So enjoy the company, and have a great day.

**Whisky Flavored Chocolate Truffles**

In this recipe, using high quality ingredients is essential. I prefer using Belgian or Swiss chocolate and the Scotch should be premium. You may also flavor the truffles with Grand Marnier, fine brandy, or Kirschwasser. Kirschwasser-flavored truffles are traditionally coated with confectioner's sugar.

6 oz bittersweet chocolate
3 oz semi-sweet chocolate
6 tablespoons heavy cream
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 tablespoons Scotch whisky
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder, preferably Dutch process

In a small heavy bottomed saucepan, over very low heat, heat the butter and cream until the butter has melted completely, and the cream begins to bubble on the sides of the saucepan.

Add the chocolates, chopped coarsely, and stir until the chocolate has melted and is well combined with the cream-butter mixture. This operation should take no more than 2 to 4 minutes.

Remove from heat and add the whisky or the flavoring of your choice, beating briskly with a fork until the whisky is well combined with the chocolate mixture.

Cover the pan and place in the refrigerator and beat it with the fork every twenty minutes for a minute or so. When the mixture is cool and to thicken, stir it briskly, until it turns a lighter color. This operation should take about 3 to 5 minutes, but watch carefully and do not overbeat as the ganache could turn grainy.

Return to the refrigerator until the ganache is thick enough to hold its shape but has not hardened.

Line a cookie sheet with wax paper, parchment paper, or foil. With a tablespoon sized scoop (one used to scoop sherbet), scoop balls of ganache and deposit them on the lined cookie sheet. When finished, place the truffles in the refrigerator for about 10 minutes to harden a little, and then roll them lightly between your palms to smooth them. Cover with an additional sheet of paper and return to the refrigerator for several hours, or overnight.

Pour the cocoa powder in a large plastic food bag and drop in the truffles. Close and shake the bag gently from side to side in order to coat them evenly with cocoa.

The truffles will keep up to a month refrigerated in a sealed container. It is better to remove them from the refrigerator about 15 to 30 minutes before serving, but they are also good eaten straight from the refrigerator.

**Yield: 24 candies**
The Farm Supply

By Jeff Hodges

In 1990, when my daughter was four, we started frequenting the Carmel Farm Supply on our weekends away from Greenwich Village. The proprietor, Red, was a tall, striking figure with red hair, red beard, cowboy hat, and a necklace made from raccoon penis bones. We soon discovered that he had an avuncular nature and a heart of gold.

There was a lot more to the Farm Supply than fertilizer. You could buy fishing gear, bait, guns, ammo, and live chickens, ducks, and rabbits. In season, Red would butcher and package your deer or wild turkey. And in the back, there was an extraordinary menagerie of stuffed mammals ranging from a Kodiak bear to a chipmunk.

Red was a taxidermist of great skill and widespread renown. If you asked why he had so many stuffed dogs in his collection, he’d explain it this way: “When your dog dies, the kiddies want him stuffed, so you bring him here. Then by the time the job is done, you’ve gotten a new dog. The kiddies don’t care about the dead dog anymore, so he stays here.”

One morning my daughter and I found a dead osprey floating in our pond. I said to her, “We’re not going to make the same mistake with this osprey that we made with that screech owl. We’re gonna get this one stuffed.”

So we headed to the Farm Supply. The minute we walked in, everybody rushed out. Red steered us out the door and explained that anyone caught with a dead osprey was liable for a $10,000 fine. We stood outside: father, daughter and bird, outcasts on the margins of society.

The Outdoor Sports columnist in the local newspaper came to our rescue. He called the Department of Environmental Conservation and was told to put the osprey in his freezer and that they would come get it. Five years later it was still in his freezer, and his wife threw it out.

Red often lent us chicks or ducklings to take home for the weekend. Sometimes we’d be late returning them and the Farm Supply would be closed and we’d have to bring them back to New York. There’s nothing like having a brood of noisy ducklings in your apartment for a week, escaping into the hallway and annoying the neighbors.

At one point, my daughter and her best friend fell in love with a couple of rabbits and started pestering us to buy them. I approached Red, who said, “You don’t want these rabbits—these are meat rabbits.” When I relayed this to the girls they became adamant—there was no way Bonnie and Bella were going into a stewpot.

Red shrugged and sold them to us as meat rabbits. We kept them in a hutch and Bella were going into a stewpot.

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Red shrugged and sold them to us as meat rabbits. We kept them in a hutch and were soon surprised to find that we had a newborn litter of six kits, blind and hairless. The next day we were even more surprised to find that Clyde—formerly Bella—had eaten all six of them, proving my maxim that if you want children to become familiar with death at an early age, buy them small animals and fish.

When my daughter got a little older, she and her friend were put in charge of the worms in the live bait department. They had to extract night crawlers from a barrel, count and package them, and keep track of the inventory. They received a small commission and considered themselves specialists in a vital part of the Farm Supply operation.

I’ll always credit Red—along with the chickens, ducks, rabbits, worms, and the Kodiak bear at the Farm Supply—for putting some “country” into my street-wise New York City girl.

Missing My West Village

By Gordon Hughes

Well, it’s been just over a year since I left my co-op in the West Village and since writing my column for WestView News.

Boy, do I miss New York, especially the Theatre District where I worked. I miss the Village where I played. I miss George Capsis, who brought me into the WestView News family, and so many other people.

It has been an emotional and complex time for me.

I miss sitting with George and Dusty, in his back yard, discussing all things Village.

Friends have run hither and yon to escape COVID—it’s been difficult to keep up with so many of them. My pal Frank has moved into my co-op, so it is being well-taken care of. But there is nothing to replace Panino Mucho Gusto and that wacky morning crowd that I loved so much.

All the fiery political discussions. The conversations about the arts. What new show was coming to the Whitney, our local museum. The new super hip restaurant with some new trendy menu that included Brussels sprouts combined with candy sprinkles or something outrageous like that.

All this said, along with so many others I have developed a new lifestyle. No more coat and tie, but rather an array of sweat suits are now what’s in vogue at my home.

That is, with the exception of Saturday Night. We have started a new tradition at our farm. Date night, yes date night every Saturday. Barb and I get dressed up. I don’t need a coat and tie, we have a cocktail in front of the great room fireplace followed by a yummy dinner in front of a second roaring fire in our dining room. I really recommend this as something to look forward to, to break up our week, and remind us of what Saturday Nights used to be in the Village.
Keep Your Local Favorites Alive by Ordering Takeout
Enter your email at PleaseOrderTakeout.com and receive a daily notice for a special item from one of these Village restaurants

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The best way that you can help support our neighbors is to order takeout directly from their websites

Have a favorite Village Restaurant that’s not listed? Have them contact DailySpecials@PleaseOrderTakeout.com
What Makes HIV+ Gay Men Open or Private About Their Status?

By Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D.

Each person's medical history is personal and private. At the same time, it’s always patients who charge the leading edge of medical innovation. What factors are at play when a person decides how public or private they will be about the medical challenges they face? My goal is to try to understand some of this when it comes to HIV/AIDS.

I’ve created a personal and probing survey for HIV+ gay men. As a gay man myself, I feel comfortable knowing I’m asking some relevant questions here. I’m also interested in investigating experiences of straight Black women, another group hard-hit by HIV/AIDS. In this case, I’m working with a colleague whose church is comprised predominantly of people from many parts of the African diaspora and has an active HIV/AIDS ministry that supports and educates people living with the disease. Together, we intend to gear a survey dedicated to experiences of Black women living with HIV/AIDS.

The link to the survey for HIV+ gay men is here; please help me share it among your friends via email and social media: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RFToCureAIDS.

By answering the questionnaire, you consent to our use of the responses you provide, but you do not consent to any use of your name or any other personal-identifying information. Your individual responses will not be disclosed, but the information gathered from your responses will be used to inform our insights and conclusions, which will be published.

Rockefeller University alumnus and biotech inventor Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D., is the founder and president of Research Foundation to Cure AIDS. Contact Kambiz at kambiz.shekdar@rfica.org.

Will We Ever See the End of Hunger in America?

By Kieran Loughney

The smell of my mom's apple pie baking in the oven. Many of us have that one childhood encounter with food that lodges itself in our consciousness, and when recalled, snaps us back to home and family. Some unfortunate children among us never have that pleasurable experience. For such kids, there exists only a constant awareness of their rumbling bellies.

The hot, dimly lit motel hallway with paint peeling and matted, greasy carpeting reeked of cigarette smoke. Children's laughter and a baby's cry burst from inside room 214. I set down the overstuffed grocery bags and knocked. Jenny, a mother in her mid-20s, greeted me, her toddler twins Tara and Sara (not their real names), peeking from between her legs, an infant cradled in her arms. Sara, spotting the groceries, squealed, “Mommy, the man got us food!” Jenny, a single mom, sought help from my employer, the county child welfare agency. The young mother, homeless after being abandoned by her husband, qualified for temporary shelter in a rundown motel. In a room equipped with only a mini-fridge and microwave, a family meal would be limited to canned Beeparoni, ramen noodles or sandwiches. I was tasked with delivering processed food, diapers and baby wipes to the room, as I had for other families, countless times during my years working in child welfare.

Throughout the pandemic we’ve seen images of an exhausted father sitting in a line of cars to receive a box of groceries, a newly unemployed tearful mother, suddenly unable to feed her kids, people once living well now5 shocked to find themselves dependent upon donated food. These heartbreaking scenes on nightly broadcasts give a sense of the magnitude of this seemingly new crisis. Yet, a positive effect of the pandemic is that a spotlight is finally trained on a problem I witnessed daily in my work in child welfare.

For single moms with few job prospects, the elderly, the disabled and those living in the many “food deserts” in the United States, the struggle for nutritious, adequate food has long persisted. Children suffer most since when undernourished, according to the World Health Organization; their growth falters, brain development delays and their immune systems are suppressed.

The recently-enacted COVID relief bill promises a positive step toward food security in the United States. Ironically, it took a plague for the clients I served to receive more substantive help, possibly finally lessening the cycle of poverty. The bill extends a 15% increase in food stamp benefits first provided in the December 2020 relief package and earmarks $880 million for Special Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants and Children, known as WIC. A child tax credit expansion, slated to begin in July, ensures a $300 monthly payment for eligible families which will, according to a Columbia University study, reduce the rate of children living in poverty by half. Democratic leaders will promote efforts to make the benefit permanent. Additionally, the United Nations has set a goal signed onto by 179 countries to end hunger globally by 2030. This ambitious agenda will require unprecedented cooperation among governments, business and individuals worldwide.

For children living in hunger, a meal provided by a food bank or a government program can ensure that basic nutrition is met. But Jenny and her kids merely subsisted in their motel room. Many parents I encountered in my work, even those with functional kitchens, lacked basic knowledge of nutrition and cooking skills and fed their children processed or fast foods—quick fixes instead of fresh fruits and vegetables. In 2009 First Lady Michele Obama, motivated by concern for her own children’s nutrition, planted the White House vegetable garden, knowing it would be an easier way to get fruits and vegetables into her daughter’s diets. The garden became a tool for informing America’s kids about healthy food choices. Mrs. Obama stated at the time (as reported in The New York Times on June 1, 2009) that by teaching the children of this generation, “they will begin to educate their families and that will, in turn, begin to educate our communities.” Jenny’s kids and all kids should participate in the process of cooking food from fresh ingredients chosen from a market with a parent or caregiver. The ceremonial carving of the holiday turkey, bowls of steaming stuffing and vegetables shared around a dining table help create a strong family bond. Such family traditions preserve a culture, passing it on through grandma’s recipe for sauce and meatballs simmering on the stove (or my mom’s apple pie). Treasured memories of those early experiences can feed children on a deeper level throughout their lives.

If you need food assistance or know someone who does, help is available through these charitable organizations.

• Feed America (feedamerica.org)
• Salvation Army 132 West 14th St.
  (212) 337-7467
• The Church of the Village
  churchofthevillage.org/hunger-relief
• The Church of the Village
  churchofthevillage.org/hunger-relief
• Salvation Army 132 West 14th St.
  (212) 337-7467
• God’s Love We Deliver (glwd.org)
  (212)294-8102
• The Church of the Village
  churchofthevillage.org/hunger-relief

These organizations depend on community support. If you are able, please consider donating or volunteering to be a part of their vital work.
A Modern Dive into Antiquity

By Anastasia Kaliabakos

The Titanic. The RMS Lusitania. The USS Arizona. All of these are famous ships tragically destroyed, their debris and broken parts submerged at the bottom of the ocean. Shipwrecks, although devastating, serve as a sort of time capsule through which we, benefitted by modern technology and equipment, are able to gain insight into the past. What secrets lie in the depths of the ocean, so vast and expansive, just waiting to be discovered?

In the National Marine Park of Alonissos and the Northern Sporades, located in the Aegean Sea, lies an ancient shipwreck. The so-called “Peristera” wreck dates back to about 425 B.C. Back in 1985, a Greek fisherman named Dimitris Mavrakis discovered the shipwreck off the coast of Peristera. Nearly a decade afterwards, archaeologist Elipida Hatzidakis led an experienced team to excavate the detritus and uncover the mysteries of the shipwreck. As it turns out, the ship lying in the depths was one of the largest merchant vessels from the classical period of ancient Greece. Its cargo was also fitfully huge: it consisted of thousands of amphorae, which are big two-handled jars designed to carry and hold wine, from the cities Mende and Peparheus; various bowls, cups, and plates meant for banquets or symposia; and fish and sponges that have found a home in the wreckage ever since the 5th century B.C.

It is postulated that the ship sank due to the Peloponnesian War. The Peloponnesian War (431 - 405 B.C.) was a long, bloody battle between the two prominent superpowers of ancient Greece, Athens and Sparta. Athens was previously the dominant city-state in the region, but after the war, Sparta came to wield more power, leading to the end of the Golden Age of Greece. The Peristera ship is thought to be of Athenian origin, and its wreckage parallels the outcome of the war: just as Athenian values of democracy and philosophy have endured over the past several millennia despite defeat, the Peristera shipwreck has been incredibly well preserved at the bottom of the Aegean.

As for the Peristera itself, archaeologists have managed to recover only singed sections of the hull, which is a ship's main body. However, the piles and piles of amphorae were of great value to historians and archaeologists alike. It has shown us how the cargo was placed in the vessel—layered on top of one another carefully in the hold. The layering also tells us how the ships would have been structured. It was previously thought that such humongous vessels meant for transport of amphorae and similar objects came much later in history, probably during the age of the Romans, around the 1st century B.C. However, the Peristera disproves this theory, as the ship was built before that time.

One of the most captivating parts of all of this is that the Peristera shipwreck will be opening to the public and recreational divers as an underwater museum. Alonissos is already a popular tourist destination and is known for its beautiful landscapes and friendly people. It is fitting that its offerings will be expanded to its waters as well. Even before its opening, officially set for June 2021, there has been much interest in the museum from across the globe. Divers who have already gone down to see the shipwreck have described it as awe-inspiring and a real-life example of time travel. And there are various options for people who do not want to partake in the actual diving as well; underwater cameras stream real-time video of the ship to tourists, and non-divers can even use specially-designed 3D glasses to take a virtual tour of the shipwreck.

An underwater museum of a shipwreck seems very fitting to the atmosphere and culture Greece possesses. In Greek mythology, there are many stories of heroes traveling to unknown and unfamiliar lands via ship on grand, tumultuous, and wild adventures. Popular myths include the decade-long traversing of the seas by the famous Greek warrior, Odysseus; another is that of Jason, who sailed to find the Golden Fleece with his band of Argonauts; the god Dionysus, aboard a ship on his way to Asia, turned a hoard of pirates trying to sell him into slavery into dolphins. Sea travel and ships have been woven into the fabric of Greek history, and the Peristera wreck is a lasting testament to this legacy.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, tourism has significantly dropped globally. This has been particularly unfortunate for countries such as Greece, whose economy relies heavily on money made from vacationers. Alonissos was particularly affected, with its tourism falling about 85% in 2020. Hopefully the Peristera, along with Alonissos' other distinctive attractions, will help bring some of that tourism back in a more sustainable way.

How to Register for Next Spring’s Greenwich Village Little League

By Anthony Paradiso

The Greenwich Village Little League’s Spring season runs every year from April to mid-June. The President of the Greenwich Village Little League is Peter Marino, who told me by e-mail that the league started registration “a little later than usual” in late December instead of December 1 this year because the league wanted assurance that the COVID infection rate had decreased in New York City and to secure field permits.

Here is what the League President described what it was like to set up the 2021 Spring season. “It has certainly been challenging getting everything organized and set up with new covid protocols,” Marino said. “We had gotten a lot of the processes down already as we had reopened with small seasons last Summer and Fall. We were able to launch the Spring season on time, at perhaps around two-thirds of the number of registrants as we would have in a normal year.”

Parents can register if they live in these four neighborhoods: Greenwich Village, Chelsea, Midtown West or Soho. GVLL uses fields at different locations in New York City including Pier 40 and James Walker field in the Village and even Central Park. According to the league’s website, “800 boys and girls, ages 4 to 16, played on over 60 teams” in 2020 and that “girls are allowed to play either baseball or softball.”

Parents are asked to review the “Divisions and Play Opportunities” section on the GVLL website before signing up their child, by clicking on “Registration Info.” Registration for the Spring baseball or softball season begins in late November and ends on March 1. President Marino added that registration for Summer ball should start in June.

To learn more about the Greenwich Village Little League, please visit www.greenwichvillagell.com.
Karen's Quirky Style

By Karen Rempel

This month's look veers into very quirky territory, bringing a confluence of three distinct elements into a unique look that combines disparate sources into a true Rempel original. But before I tell you about the fashion, let me set the scene. We shot this month's column in the storied Minetta Lane, in a Spanish-influenced doorway. The Algonquin people called the brook that runs under this street Manette, meaning Spirit Water or Demon Water, and there was a time in history when Minetta Lane and the perpendicular, curving Minetta Street were known for speakeasies, brothels, and "black and tan" bars. Referring to this period, author Stephen Crane called Minetta Street and Minetta Lane, "Two of the most enthusiastically murderous thoroughfares in New York." No doubt due to the influence of said Demon Water driving people crazy with drink at the locals.

Prior to this riotous period in its history, Minetta was home to a large African American population, after slavery was abolished in New York in 1827. By the mid 19th century, the area was known as "Little Africa." It was a peaceful haven at this time, and today's Minettas have regained this peace.

If you've been following my Catch and Release story, you might remember that I planned to take a side trip to Barcelona after my pre-Christmas rendezvous with Keith in London. I did indeed go to Barcelona, where I saw a Flamenco performance at the stunning Palau de la Música, a magical music box of sculpture, mosaics, and stained glass that is now a designated UNESCO world heritage site. I was so stirred by the passionate dancing and music that when I returned to New York I immediately signed up for Flamenco dance lessons at Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana, just off Fifth Avenue on West 43rd Street. I shivered with excitement each time I entered this Renaissance Revival building and climbed the increasingly narrower marble staircase to the eighth floor, where I met with an odd assortment of beginners to learn to strike my feet in golpe, planta, and tacón. We had a live Flamenco guitarist for accompaniment for part of the class. A hidden world in New York! I felt like an insider in this world at Menkes, the highly regarded Manhattan source for all things Flamenco, where I purchased nail-studded Flamenco shoes and this flouncy Flamenco skirt.

The quirky top I'm wearing is made of ghost beads, which I learned about when I was on a vision fast in the Eastern Sierras. Ghost beads are actually dried juniper berries. Ants find the berries on the ground and nibble one end to eat the inside of the berry. The berry is then hollow and dry. Artisans make a hole in the other end to shape the berry into a bead. This top is a Donna Karan original sample and there might not be another like it in the world. I found it while foraging on Greenwhich Street. No nibbling required.

The roots of this look are the boots, of course. I spotted these at Bergdorf's while shoe shopping with my designer friend Andrea on my birthday last October. I first fell in love with Dries Van Noten shoes while writing an article about Eden Manor on Blecker Street (sadly now closed), and love the whimsy of this designer. These boots are so seventies, and give me the commanding height I love that raises me above the crowd. They fit perfectly when I tried them on, but on my birthday I decided to be practical and get my first pair of Manolos instead. Five months later, Andrea saw that the boots had been marked down 60% on the Bergdorf website and she sent me a note. Within days, they had arrived on my doorstep. Magic! Soon I was striding all over the city in them, garnering looks of astonishment and admiration.

These are the origins of a quirky look—world travels, soul-searching in the desert, and shopping with my bestie in the big city.

STYLE NOTES

DONNA KARAN TANK TOP of pale yellow polished ghost beads. Once-in-a-lifetime Donna Karan storage sale, next to Urban Zen, 701 Greenwich Street.
BLACK FLAMENCO SKIRT WITH LILAC UNDERSKIRT. Menkes Flamenco. 250 W. 54th Street. (Temporarily closed.)
DRIES VAN NOTEN SNAKESKIN-EMBOSSED LEATHER PLATFORM BOOTS. Bergdorf Goodman. 754 Fifth Avenue.
GOLD HOOP EARRINGS WITH ORANGE AND GOLD BEADS. Gift from a friend.

Catch and Release: Chapter 5 | The Christmas Date Part 2

By Karen Rempel

This Catch and Release thing is really picking up momentum. Not only is George giving me advice on my love life, but now readers are writing to give me advice to give to me! Last month, George suggested I marry someone rich and then bump him off. This month, George's advice to me is to enjoy your company, and if you make me laugh, that's the best feeling on Earth (almost).

Good looking—tallish (at least 5'11" since I am usually 6' or taller in heels); Rolling Stone hair is a bonus (as you know from reading this story!); interesting face wrinkles not a problem; a wide range of body shapes okay as I like a huggable bear, as well as a tall cool drink of water. This bullet point might make me seem very superficial. If so, I own it. This is the bottom line.

Funny—if we're spending time, I want to enjoy your company, and if you make me laugh, that's the best feeling on Earth (almost).

Smart—yup. Kind of goes with the pre-Christmas advice, since George is so wise.

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Style on the Street: *April Plaid Brings May FAB!!*

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

**MILA BRAZIL**
“Woman Tee”
Full-print dye sublimation
Street Market on Bleecker & Carmine / Fri, Sat, Sun 10am-6pm
IG @milanybrazil

**HENRIETTA HUDSON**
“Hen’s Trucker Hat”
Six-panel trucker cap w/mesh back in Navy
henriettahudson.com

**PURE SOL.**
“Perk Up Gold Eye Mask”
Nano gold, under eye hydro-gel mask
puresolbeauty.com
IG @puresolbeauty

**TRANSIENCE**
“Hammock Bag”
Adjustable shoulder to crossbody strap in Deep Rose
thetransience.com
IG @thetransience

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

*Images of fashion looks featuring: SYDNEY, ELIAS, KATELYN, LAUREN, BRIDGET, ALLIE.*

Photos by Dusty Berke and Karilyn Prisco.
Maggie B’s Quick Clicks

SPRING SPRANG!

All photos by Maggie Berkvist.

LIFETALK WITH ROBERTA RUSSELL

Healing Through Alliance

By Roberta Russell

I devoted much of the ‘80s to writing, and simultaneously living, a book about how to have a mutually therapeutic alliance—RD Laing & Me: Lessons in Love—with the late famed Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing, MD. Partly in the service of that goal we took MDMA, also known as Ecstasy. It was a legal drug then, used by some professional therapists to eliminate fear and enhance the alliance between patient and doctor. The prevailing claim by enthusiasts was that it was often the equivalent of 100 therapy sessions. Indeed, that sentiment reflected my experience of it, both with Ronnie Laing and with other close friends.

My interest piqued, I contracted to write a book reporting on the effects of MDMA. Accordingly, in 1985 I interviewed professional psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychotherapists who reported on the then-legal treatment they offered patients—unadulterated MDMA—as opposed to dangerously impure street Ecstasy. My (admittedly, biased) sample demonstrated mostly extraordinarily successful results.

A sensitive therapist friend, Barry Flint, the founding director of the Institute for the Advancement of Health, initiated in 1983 by Eileen Rockefeller Growald to further scientific understanding of mind/body interactions in health and disease, told me of substantial breakthroughs with his patients while they experienced MDMA at sessions. He reported that they had a more direct sense of the issues they were struggling with. Both members of a couple, depressed because they had been fighting constantly, digging themselves into a deeper hole, were able to say why they were upset in each other’s presences. “It was lovely to watch,” Barry said. “They were clearly in love... They could hear each other. It was a marvel. They did it for six hours.”

Professionals agreed that MDMA added an element of depth, lowered anxiety, and decreased defensiveness. Nevertheless, in 1986 MDMA became a Schedule 1 drug, a felony. Research stopped.

Just in time, I lived through what felt was like a divine state, sharing Ecstasy with the late psychiatrist, my co-author (not my doctor) Ronnie Laing, a man who was known for his searing insights and compassion. Eventually, under the influence of psychedelic medicines, our boundaries disappeared. As a woman alone, I found myself ensconced and intertwined with him in my penthouse in New York City, my fantasies lived out. Never this close to another, my passion. Eventually, under the influence of my doctor) Ronnie Laing, a man who was known for his searing insights and compassion. Eventually, under the influence of psychedelic medicines, our boundaries disappeared. As a woman alone, I found myself ensconced and intertwined with him in my penthouse in New York City, my fantasies lived out. Never this close to another, my passion. Eventually, under the influence of my doctor) Ronnie Laing, a man who was known for his searing insights and compassion. Eventually, under the influence of psychedelic medicines, our boundaries disappeared. As a woman alone, I found myself ensconced and intertwined with him in my penthouse in New York City, my fantasies lived out. Never this close to another, my passion.

My purpose, formalized by my novel verité partnership with Laing, RD Laing & Me: Lessons in Love, has evolved. Now, even in this time of our own COVID-induced vale of tears, I am still prepared to encourage and engender the powerful force of a goal-directed therapeutic alliance with a friend. Maybe you or someone you know or will meet will find this prospect engaging. The constructive bond that I am proposing enhances the probability of forming a therapeutic alliance by fostering a mutual commitment to be trustworthy, to band together, to create a time, a plan, and an intention to do what it takes to achieve goals. Money will not change hands in this endeavor, but mutual motivation and intention may touch your heart.

robertarussell108@gmail.com
mutualalliancetherapy.org
rdlaing.org
effectivepsychotherapy.org

Roberta Russell is the author of RD Laing & Me: Lessons in Love with R.D. Laing, (Hillgarth Press, 1992), Report on Effective Psychotherapy: Legislative Testimony (Hillgarth Press, 1981, 1994), and Report on Permanent Weight Loss (Columbia Academic Commons, 2017). She has also been a contributor to various international magazines and journals including: Psychologie Heute (Germany), Japan Times (Japan), The Psychologist (U.K.), Human Potential Magazine (U.K.), Changes (U.K.), Clinical Psychology Forum (U.K.), Psychoanalytic Studies (U.K.), and Bottom Line (U.S.). Occasionally, Roberta hosts a New York City cable television show, called Lifetalk, which has featured interviews with movers and shakers in controversial areas of psychology, weight loss, nutrition, medicine, the environment, and population growth.
Your Guide to the Ballet Barre Practice

By Dana Jean Costantino

Ballet Barre has quickly become one of the most sought after and popular forms of working out, both body and mind. As a former Ballerina and as someone currently practicing Yoga, I wanted to dive deeper into learning more about what this particular workout has to offer and bring that information to the WestView News reader, so as many people in our community have begun to take Ballet Barre classes or have expressed interest in them. In fact, several members of the WestView team are devotees to the practice. If you have also wondered about Ballet Barre, I hope you find this Q and A with Ashley McQueen as informative as I did.

Q - Is it necessary to have a background in Ballet to get the most out of a Barre class?  
A - Absolutely not! What’s so great about Barre fitness is that it’s accessible to anyone at any level. Simple modifications keep it low-impact and safe, and it’s less of a dance class and more of a strengthening class.

Q - What brought you to teaching Barre?  
A - I actually got into Barre when I was rehabbing a bad foot injury. I was 24 and fresh out of college with a degree in Dance, and faced with the possibility of never dancing again. I was attempting to rehab and cross-train at a gym, but it felt overwhelming and nearly impossible. A friend of mine was opening Pure Barre St. Louis, and invited me to take a class. I was hooked! The low-impact movements allowed me to strengthen without aggravating my injury, and the mental focus helped me get over my fears about returning to high-impact dancing. I was a client for a year before being cleared to dance again and moving to New York. I’ve been a Pure Barre instructor ever since! Pure Barre brought me confidence, strength, and a sense of community. I love teaching because I’ve seen how much it’s changed my personal life, self-esteem, and strength as a performer; I am grateful for the chance to share that with others. Also I’ve met some of my best friends at the studio!

Q - How have you adapted your personal practice and your teaching during these times of COVID?  
A - It’s definitely been a challenge, because for me the best part about working out and moving is doing it with others! Over the last year, I’ve taught a lot of Zoom classes and had virtual rehearsals. I found ways to reinvent my (small NYC apartment) space, and tried to keep a consistent routine. My good friends and I would work out via Zoom every day, which gave us both a sense of community and structure. My company Smashworks Dance has always done performances in unconventional spaces (hallways, windows, on lawnmowers), so for us our creative process wasn’t impacted as much while rehearsing from home. The biggest challenge was giving myself time and space to actually rest, and recognizing the importance of that balance in my life.

Q - Do you currently dance as well? In a company?  
A - I direct, perform, and choreograph for Smashworks Dance, a nonprofit dance company dedicated to women’s empowerment and human rights advocacy through performance, education, and community outreach. We are currently creating two dance films - one set in a giant indoor shower (DRENCHED) and another for the London Climate Change Festival. We’ve also been teaching virtual dance classes for Troop 6000, a Girl Scouts program for girls experiencing homelessness in the New York area. I also dance with Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre. We can’t wait to get back on a stage very soon!

Q - Are you accepting new private clients and are you currently teaching group classes?  
A - I am currently managing and teaching for Pure Barre Jersey City, and teaching for Pure Barre Union Square. While private Pure Barre classes are booked through the studios, I am accepting my own private clients who are looking for at-home or in-person conditioning, strength-training, and dance experience.

Q - How many times a week do you recommend taking Barre for the best results?  
A - I usually recommend 3-5 times a week to see the quickest results.

Q - How long is an average Barre class and what does the flow look like?  
A - Each Barre technique class is different, but overall they are about 45-50 minutes. Most classes include sections that focus on particular muscle groups (arms, abs, thighs, seat). Pure Barre in particular is great because it’s fast-paced and musical, and works out every part of the body!

Please reach out with any of your health and wellness inquiries and thoughts, dana-jeanyoga@gmail.com or Instagram @citydancersays
Ray Johnson, Pop-Culture Collagist, Master of ‘The Happening’ and the Mysterious World of Zen Emptiness

By Robert Heide

A new fantastic exhibition of Ray Johnson artworks, collages and memorabilia at David Zwirner Gallery, 525 West 19th Street will be on view until May 22. The exhibit curated by Jarrett Earnest is called ‘Ray Johnson: What A Dump.’ The presentation offers many never-before-exhibited collages and drawings from the 1950s through the 1990s and focuses on Johnson’s obsessions—from Arthur Rimbaud, Yoko Ono, James Dean and, as the curator says, ‘his queerness’ and how he shared with friends and collaborators like David Wojnarowicz, John Giorno, Peter Hujar, Andy Warhol, Sari Dienes as well as the untold numbers who were part of the New York Correspondence School which he founded. The exhibit has inspired me to tell about some personal experiences I had with Ray whom I regarded as a good friend, and who was a brilliant pop-culture collage artist who lived as if it was itself an art ‘Happening.’ The word for me regarding Ray is unforgettable. Who can forget meeting and hanging out with a real ‘Funny Bunny’?

I first met the wild brilliant Ray Johnson in the early 1960s with his then steady girlfriend, the petite and strangely attractive Dorothy Podber, in the lobby of the Living Theatre, which was run by director Julian Beck and his wife Judith Malina. The two were at a table and were putting stickers on a stack of pamphlets. Working with great intensity and gleeful malice they pasted ‘Boy’s Town’ over the word ‘Living’ to read ‘Boy’s Town Theatre.’ At one point Judith ran over and screamed at them telling them to stop what they were doing or to get out. The mischievous pair simply stood there giggling like two bad children. Dorothy ‘Over the Rainbow’ Podber, as she was called by many, offered me a glass of wine in a plastic cup; and so began a friendship with the fun twosome that lasted for years.

My upstairs neighbor on Christopher Street Dick Higgins—one of the founders of the Fluxus Art Movement—was a character to be reckoned with. Dick, who came from a wealthy New England family, introduced me to the work of John Cage who sometimes visited him upstairs. A coloful young street tramp, a hustler named Igor, stayed with Dick at different times. Dressed all in what he called ‘Bohemian black,’ Igor wore a kind of raincoat cape and claimed he could use it to fly out the window which he never did; but once Dick who had a hot temper threw a screaming Igor down a flight of stairs. An old time Village guru named Baldwin Stegman was often at the Higgins apartment and also visited me downstairs. A master of the Tarot Deck, Baldwin could predict the future and what was to come. He said we were all here by ‘chance’ and that nothing mattered. I discussed reading Jean Paul Sartre’s Being and Nothingness with him and we were both in agreement with the great Existentialist philosopher and author of the ‘nothingness bible’ that existence was a senseless flux. Higgins, of course, was primarily obsessed with his own Fluxus Happenings.

At one point Baldwin disappeared and I later heard he was living and preaching in the South Seas on Easter Island. A few people referred to Ray as ‘Gay Ray’ due to his tendency to hang out at a gay bar in Queens called ‘What a Dump,’ a place he discovered in a gay bar guide. He thought it was a boot and stopped there frequently on the drive from Manhattan to his pink house in Locust Valley. The bar was so named after Bette Davis’s line in a histrionic film from 1949 entitled Beyond the Forest and in later years had become a campy phrase uttered by many a drag queen. The line was used by Edward Albee and was the first phrase uttered by Elizabeth Taylor as Martha in the filmed version of his play Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Ray took to wearing black leather motorcycle outfits and nightly prowled the streets of the Village on his own looking, as many did, for fun and games at late night sexual hangouts like the notorious Anvil on West 14th Street which stayed open well past 4 AM into the morning sunrise. Once, back in those halcyon days and nights, Ray showed up at Dick Higgins apartment carrying a big cardboard box. He opened the box letting loose one-hundred white mice before he ran down the stairs laughing while Dick screamed after him all the way down. Later, the Daily News led a campaign to rid New York of the scourge of rats, offering five dollars a catch. Ray and Dorothy happily joined in this catch-a-rat movement, which also for them turned into collecting dead animals like pet dogs that died and once they even found an oversized dead turtle.

One day Ray called me to invite me to a birthday party for Dorothy that was taking place at the outdoor patio of O’Henry’s Restaurant/Bar on Sixth Avenue. When I arrived, Ray and Dorothy were sipping their bone-dry martinis. Ray ordered one for me and one for another guest, a strange Village character who called himself Albert M. Fine. At one point Ray pulled out a big brightly wrapped box topped by a super-sized blue bow. He handed the box over to Dorothy with what she called a ‘funny bunny’ look on his face. Carefully opening this ‘birthday’ package she was amazed as she pulled out a dead Siamese cat; and Ray said, “We went to a great deal of trouble to find this.” Dorothy smiled knowingly. This was one more event that had to do with the ‘dead animal’ happening phase they were then into. Once at Christmastime Ray and girlfriend Dorothy presented me with a fancifully wrapped gift box. I opened it cautiously and found it contained a ‘Big Ben’ alarm clock. As I stared at it, Ray said mysteriously, “Open the face of the clock Bob!” which I did hesitantly. Inside was a dead rat sprayed gold. The terrifying joke, of course, was on me.

At another point down the road, Ray invited me to his art studio/apartment on the Lower East Side on Ludlow Street. When I arrived in the late afternoon Ray was there with an art dealer who had come to view his latest 8 x 10 collage works. Ray was serving straight gin this time, from a cocktail tumbler on a lone table. I found it odd that all of the other furniture had been removed from the small space. The dealer asked “Where’s the art work?” Ray replied, “Oh! I’ll open the closet doors and show you.” As he did, we saw that the shelves had been removed and no collage works were to be seen. All that was there, tightly scrunched in a corner, was Dorothy grinning from ear to ear. It was another unforgettable Ray ‘Happening’ of which there would be many more. A master collagist, Ray was also the master of the Happening and the world of Zen emptiness.

Of course Ray’s greatest, and final, happening occurred January 13, 1995, just a short time before a major retrospective of his work was due to open at the Upper East Side Feigen gallery. After putting his house in order, all of his in-progress and completed collages carefully wrapped in cellophane, his work supplies, books, files and letters all boxed, inventoried and numbered, Ray checked into a motel in Sag Harbor. The number of his room was 247, which adds up to 13. His age was 67, which adds up to 13. He was seen that day, January 13, by two teenage girls who testified that he had jumped from the Sagaponack Bridge and backstroking like Esther Williams, all the while smiling and laughing, disappeared out to sea. His body was found washed up nearby the next day. The Feigen Gallery show, following the newspaper headlines, was packed to the gills and was a huge success. Ray, who was born in Detroit and who graduated from Black Mountain College in North Carolina has had major museum exhibits at the Whitney Museum of American Art and many other institutions, and his works are owned by major collectors and museums around the world. A documentary about Ray’s life and work How to Draw a Bunny was released in 2002 and there are many Ray Johnson art books available. Zwirner Gallery spokesperson Erin Pinover told me the price range of Ray’s collages is from $15,000 to $60,000. If you miss the show, go—The Art Institute of Chicago will present Ray Johnson c/o, a view from November 26, 2021 to March 21, 2022.

Playwright Robert Heide’s latest book Robert Heide 25 Plays which also includes essays and over 50 photos is available on Amazon.
Raising Up Women’s Artistry, Uniting the West Village with Global Collaborators

By Hannah Reimann

One of the most striking silver linings of our pandemic time is the power of women taking on everything from essential city work, childcare, fatal and near-fatal illness, nurturing those suffering from racial injustice, providing domestic balance and the ability to create new artistic expression when it appeared all had been lost or, at very least, put on hold in 2020 and 2021. A vivid and memorable example of this power, Spring Forward, the March 2021 exhibit in Revelation Gallery at St. John’s in the Village, burst forth just as winter began to thaw, providing hope and promise. Featuring 50 international women artists who create in all media—painting, drawing, pastel, photography, sculpture, video installation, hand made Japanese manga masks and pottery—the exhibit has something for everyone to appreciate.

The brain—and lovechild—of curators, Heidi E. Russell and Arantxa X. Rodriguez (AXR), Spring Forward drew in-person crowds of 20 people every hour at its opening and closing nights, doors wide open for air circulation, everyone in masks as per COVID-19 protocols. On the walls hung images of BLM, a team of nurses walking triumphantly towards an eager camera, surreal and nude women in masks, the tender face of Breonna Taylor, abstract works reflecting strength, vulnerability, the release of pain, the re-emergence of camaraderie and connection. A large tongue perched on a pedestal. Some works are deeply personal, some hauntingly symbolic, some playful and provocative. The quality and presentation are excellent.

Russell founded International Women Artists Salon (IWAS) in 2008 to provide opportunities for women to do things they haven’t done before, to “change the system within the system,” promote events and service that create equal opportunity, equal pay, diversity and global connection via local, grass-roots collaboration. A fine art photographer living in the Village, she invited AXR to invite half of the artists, some of whom live or come from abroad. She also invited local Village artists, creating a broad demographic of women and widely varied work. AXR had similar dreams of elevating other artists while pushing her career forward by moving to New York in 2017. She brought on a designer from her native Mexico City, Mar Nieves, to create high-quality graphics for the show. This is a collaboration for which everyone worked quickly, industriously and to dazzling effect. WestView News’ own Dusty Berke put Russell in touch with St. John’s and the Spring Forward team organized its forces.

The virtual exhibit of these fifty pieces accompanied by a paragraph about each of the artists remains online for your viewing pleasure and can be found at the link below.

There is also a beautiful video portrait of all 50 artists speaking about their work. In addition to the remarkable outpouring of love and enthusiasm for this exhibit, sales were made throughout the month, benefiting both St. John’s and the artists.

VIDEO: youtube.com/watch?v=Kgr4z4ynAfC&feature=youtu.be

ONLINE EXHIBIT: innd.adobe.com/view/74d9ec6-e4e7-40a1-826d-49c8-8d51148f
internationalwomenartists-salon.com

The artists represented in this exhibit are:

Amada Cartoon, Amanda Smith, Andrea Young, Annie Yan, Arcelci de la Parra, Aita Rath, Barbara Clark, Caitlin Lynch, Carla Malizia, Caroline Villard, Collette Topkins, Darla Zhest, Denise Williams, Dorothy Krakauer, Dulce Lamara, Elaina Delbon, Eliza Salas, Eliza Beyer, Emily Toder, Eva Mueller, Evelyn Sternitz, Francesca Dalla Benetta, Heidi Russell, Janet Restino, Jennie Yip, Jennifer Weber, La Tonia Shantee Allen, Laura Sala, Linda Morales, Lisa McCleary, Maria Elena Valdes, Maria Dussap, Maria Fernanda Huheaut, Maria Taveras, Marianne Pergallo, Michelle Girardello, Myko Koy, Orly Ronen, Oxana Kovatchuk, Paula Estrella, Raksha Kacharia, Sadia Fakih, Tina Kordemann, Vanessa Alvarez Diaz, Vera Tio, and Yamin Ruibal.

From the West Village Across the Global Stage, a Virtual World Premier

International Stretto Piano Festival

Narrow Keys…Broad Minds…No Boundaries

By Heidi E. Russell

Long time West Village resident Hannah Reimann joins forces with fellow pianists Carol Leone of Texas and Rhonda Boyle of Australia, bringing together a talented roster of pianists from around the globe to celebrate and perform concerts on pianos with keys that are narrower than conventional ones.

Stretto is Italian for “narrow” and these exceptional pianos allow pianists with smaller hands to cover a wider range of keys to master complex compositions, equalizing opportunity. During earlier eras, musicians such as Mozart and Chopin played and composed on pianos that encompassed different sizes based on local units of measurement. This provided a vast range of options that included narrower keys than today’s conventional size. Modern-era pianos have evolved into the streamlined supply of the standard larger-sized pianos with wider keys that make it harder for smaller-sized hands to circumvent the wider octave+ stretches many compositions demand. In the 1920s, upon pianist, composer and inventor Joseph Hoffman’s request, Steinway & Sons built several pianos for him all of which had narrower keys to accommodate his diminutive stature. “Hoffman is my most important inspiration and guiding light,” beams Reimann, “He was a virtuoso, friends with Rachmaninoff, who was a huge man.”

Reimann advocated for 30 years to have “stretto” pianos available to the public and has worked closely with Steinway & Sons to inform the company about their usefulness. She says this festival project is one of the most important of her long career of performing, writing and teaching to help educate the public and promote this much needed instrumental option in the world of music performing, educating, and composing. Her circa 1900 antique Steinway 74” piano has narrower keys and will be used for the festival.

“This festival is all about playing the piano with freedom, changing attitudes, treating people fairly and honestly, ultimately promoting music’s beauty and expression to the world”, notes Reimann.

The festival aims to raise awareness and promote the idea of alternate piano key sizes, promote and elevate the careers of the performers on these keyboards, and assist in energizing a community of those who are proponents of this technology.

Experience this exquisite festival May 15-23, 2021 from stages, universities, homes, and a West Village gallery over three continents on their online viewing platform partner, Musae.me.

Steinway & Sons is now offering these custom built pianos—Hannah is the liaison. To acquire a Steinway grand piano with narrower keys or have your Steinway grand rebuilt to have narrower keys, reach her at: reimann.musicandfilm@gmail.com

Bravissima, Hannah, the global village is proud of you!

Play on, Stretto Piano musicians, play on!
WEB: info.musae.me/stretto
Performer Roster Includes:
Anna Arazi (Boston, USA)
Amos Kurniadi (Australia)
Erica Booker Studio (Australia)
Kathy Caruana (Australia)
Peter Fancovic (NYC, USA)
Jessica Johnson (Wisconsin, USA)
Carol Leone (Texas, USA)
Barbara Lister-Sink (USA)
Artina McCain (USA)
Hannah Reimann & Rick-Hip Flores (NYC, USA)
Germund Sivertsen (Norway)
Ulrike Wohlwendner Studio (Germany)
Sophia Wiedeman, Annette Seiler, Silvia Carvalho Molan
Eliana Yi (Texas, USA)
The Reviews Are In—He’s a Hit!

“Frank - as both a real estate broker and a resident - has maintained the principles of our co-op with charm, a professional demeanor and a determined presence. He has set the tone for our living standards. I’m very happy he chose our co-op to call home.”

TOM PENN Executive Director - The Irving Penn Foundation, irvingpenn.org

“Frank is a class act with a sincere passion for pairing people with the right property. His work ethic and genuine interest in putting buyer satisfaction ahead of the transaction transcends the definition of ‘Broker’. Frank has been an extraordinary resource for our co-op - always attracting a high caliber of both buyers and renters.”

DOUGLAS SLOAN Co-op Board President, Founder - Icontent Films, icontent.tv

“I bought my West Village pied-à-terre through Frank. His knowledge, help and warmth are with me still. Frank has an eagle eye and a great heart. He’s an incredible real estate resource!”

JOAN DUPONT Writer - Film Quarterly, Producer - Foreign Film Festivals at The Quad, Lincoln Center, 92nd Street Y

“Frank’s real estate expertise has been extremely beneficial to our co-op. We now own a store on Bleecker Street that was formerly an apartment because he advised us to buy it and convert to retail.”

CLAUDINE TOBOL Co-op Board Member, Co-Owner - Le Fanion, lefanion.com

“Frank was the seller’s agent on our pied-à-terre purchase. His knowledge of the West Village is unparalleled. Frank has since become a very dear friend with an open invitation to visit our farm in Unionville PA any time he needs some fresh air.”

GORDON HUGHES Broadway Producer - An American In Paris, Come From Away, Diana

“What you want is trust in a Real Estate Broker - someone looking out for the people involved and not just the deal, it’s a home after all. Frank is someone you can trust.”

STEVEN HAFT, ESQ. Member - Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Trustee Emeritus - Robert Redford’s Sundance Institute, Producer - Hocus Pocus, Dead Poets Society, Jakob the Liar

As a long time West Village resident and a Real Estate Broker with over 20 years of experience working with buyers and sellers, I’m proud to let my reviews speak for themselves!

Frank Veilson
Licensed as Francis H Veilson | Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker
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