A Very Concerned Citizen Speaks

By Steve Romano, MD

It is the character of youth to rebel, but what has been happening at night in Washington Square is not just the natural excess of youth but the abandoned behavior sometimes induced by substance abuse—public urination, defecation and partial nudity, and over the top resistance to police orders. What follows is a letter sent to me by a doctor which I read to the overflow crowd at a recent Police meeting addressing the situation (see page 3).

—George Capsis

I and many of my friends and fellow residents of the West Village are at the end of our rope. I serve on the coop board of 136 Waverly Place West and have been a resident of the building for nearly 31 years. I’ve lived through some rough spots such as the crack days of the 90s, but I’ve never seen things as bad and as ominous as they are now. I’m a physician and pharmaceutical executive, and have enjoyed living in one of the more vibrant areas of NYC. But the criminal element (please don’t call them “homeless”—the majority have no interest in services) on my corner and the northwest corner of Washington Square Park is driving many of my neighbors out of the area and the city. We are losing longstanding members of the community and giving in completely to petty theft, vagrancy, drug dealing (on my corner and Gay Street behind a temporary boiler), and people urinating and defecating on our stoops. These are streets often full of pedestrians, residents and children attempting to go about their business. Sadly, the police seem to do little (it certainly isn’t visible to me), and these screaming, fighting, alcohol and heroin addicts get to do whatever they want to do, and at all hours of the night. They scream, fight, and fornicate (yep—not kidding).

It is important to underscore that there is a component of people who are seriously psychologically ill. It’s despicable that this richest of cities does nothing to intervene meaningfully with this needy subset.

Bottom line, this has got to stop. I myself am close to moving and will gladly pay taxes somewhere where quality of life and criminal activities are taken seriously. What can we do?
Central Park Traffic Threats

Last year, Transportation Alternatives teamed up with Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver to save the majestic horse-drawn carriages from the last motor vehicle on the Central Park Carriage Drive and open up the drive to its original purpose, an exclusive road for horse-drawn carriages, later joined by thousands of pedestrians and bicyclists. Now, from out of the dark and distant past (NY Times June 8, 2021) comes along the real estate mogul, Steve Nislick, with his cronies from NYCCLASS, to bring back the cars and once again try to eliminate the horses and carriages which have trodden there since the mid-nineteenth century. The livelihoods of the carriage drivers would be lost. The horses would become dog meat and their stables would be replaced by Nislick’s high rises. Thousands of residents and visitors would lose the pleasure of slowly ambling through the verdant groves.

This is the same Steve Nislick who cowied, fortunately unsuccessfully, with former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to destroy the High Line so that his firm, Edison Parking, could build high rises over the track beds which he owned. He would have insured the loss of one of the greatest Manhattan parks since Central and Riverside Parks were built. The election of Mayor Michael Bloomberg put the kibosh on Mr. Nislick’s greedy ambitions, when the mayor designated the High Line as parkland. New Yorkers will have to remain continuously vigilant to protect our parks from the selfish real estate barons.

—Barry Benepe

Christine McLaughlin

Hello George,

My name is Jo Grossman and I recently grew concerned about a dear friend in NYC, Christine McLaughlin, after trying to reach her and learning that both her phone numbers were disconnected. Immediately knowing something was wrong and not having any mutual friends, I Googled her name and found your April 2021 issue in which there was a photo and details of her passing. I feared the worst but when I saw that I was devastated. Although I didn’t see Christine very often, having left NYC in 1978, any time I visited the city over the years, meeting up with her was a high point of my trips. We first met in Greenwich Village in 1966 when she was just 16 years old and I was 19.

I am hoping one of your readers might be able to provide me with contact information for her family members or friends. Her closest family are her late husband’s (Harvey McLaughlin) sisters, whose names I have Googled, but as they are all quite common, it’s difficult to connect to the right ones. I very much would like to reach out to the family to share my condolences. I appreciate your help and hope to hear from you.

—Jo Grossman

Bedbugs of Bethune, printed in the June issue of WestView News, asked people to respond by email if they wished to share stories. We regret that the email address was not printed. Please send any comments to westbether@gmail.com

Spectacular Brownstone Apartment For Rent

ELEGANT APARTMENT on the top floor of the Sinclair Lewis house with two marble fireplaces and two bedrooms, parquet floors, skylight and magnificent kitchen

Call George at 212-924-5718

Charles Street Association News

Dear neighbors,

Thank you for coming out and helping restore Charles Street to its natural beauty! Already, these flowers are putting a smile to all the faces when strolling down the street.

To maintain our flowers throughout the summer, these tree-beds will need plenty of water. Please kindly remind your super or building manager to water them. We wouldn’t want to disappoint our newest Pee-wee planters, three year olds Oscar and Popi S, and five year olds Miwa and Popi B, who assisted with planting this year!

Congratulations to Daniel Circotti, and Buster Pratt H.S class 2021, and Leah Rosner, Zoe P, and Zoe A. from their respective colleges!

Welcome Back West Village is gearing up to bring some fun events that will be sure to get you out of your home office and enjoying the neighborhood! We have food, fun, and interactive events for the whole family and our neighbors.

MARK your calendar: Tuesday August 3rd on Charles St. Between Hudson St. and Bleecker St. starting at 6pm. Please join for National night out against crime. Food and drinks will be provided! Bring the kids and neighbors for some fun!

Follow us on Instagram @CharlesStreetAssociation
“Build the Block” Meeting Addresses Washington Square Park Situation

By Frank Quinn

On Wednesday, June 16th, the 6th Precinct held a “Sector A Build the Block” meeting at Our Lady of Pompeii Church to discuss conditions at Washington Square Park. Many local media reports described it as an “emergency meeting.”

As a regular attendee at 6th Precinct meetings, what this reporter found unusual was the size of the crowd and the significant media coverage. Otherwise, it was a typical community police meeting where the cops asked for support, local residents griped, and a few speakers offered substantive remarks.

Later that night, a large group of visitors congregated in the center of the park well after midnight. There was loud music, skateboarders, motorbike riders, and a very festive dance party. It was a semi-organized event, promoted through social media, where many participants explain their motives and intentions. As one person stated, “the youth of New York have been cooped up for a year and want to stay out late in our park.” Enforcing a park curfew would undoubtedly be resisted by large numbers of these park revelers, and police knew this.

The meeting was closed once the church hall reached capacity, and many would be attende es were turned away. A raucous protest then ensued at the corner of Bleecker and Carmine Streets. Confrontations occurred between residents and park users demonstrating for social justice and unimpeded park activities and intentions. As one person stated, "the youth of New York have been cooped up for a year and want to stay out late in our park." Enforcing a park curfew would undoubtedly be resisted by large numbers of these park revelers, and police knew this.

The meeting was closed once the church hall reached capacity, and many would be attendees were turned away. A raucous protest then ensued at the corner of Bleecker and Carmine Streets. Confrontations occurred between residents and park users demonstrating for social justice and unimpeded park access. Inside the meeting, many who described themselves as “long-time residents” expressed their own agreement on how or when to enforce the curfew and address the “quality of life” problems. Notably, they described a June 8th call with representatives from 26 city agencies that concluded without agreement on how or when to enforce a curfew, and expressed their desire to use the meeting to obtain that consensus.

Some attendees considered it significant to note who was absent from the meeting. Mayor de Blasio, who many have thought is the ultimate decision-maker on this subject, was not in attendance. Nor were City Councilman Corey Johnson, State Senator Brad Hoylman, or Assembly Member Deborah Glick, all of whom serve as elected officials for the neighborhood.

In attendance were Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Community Board 2 Chair Jeaninne Kiely, and Andrew Kunkes from the Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit. City Council Member Margaret Chin, whose district includes Washington Square Park, sent a staff member.

Competing interests vying to use the park as they see fit will require leadership from elected officials to solve the differences.

The Rewards of Giving

By Alan Silverstein

On Sunday June 27, the hundreds of imaginatively dressed gay pride marchers found their way to Washington Square Park. As the senior civilian community partner of the New York Police Department, I discovered myself on the north side of the park when I heard the aggressive screams of a woman shouting at one of the attendants of the food cart facing the Washington Square Arch. She kept screaming “you owe us an apology” and was soon joined by a growing chorus of Pride marchers voicing the same demand. Suddenly, the crowd exploded into a mob of 40 to 50 marchers who were delighted to support the protest with a hail of cans and bottles. A marcher broke off an American flag attached to the stand and attempted to replace it with a parade banner. As the aging attendant reached to retrieve the flag, he was struck from behind and staggered into a mob of swinging marchers who punched him as he fell back unconscious onto the street. I rushed forward and discovered him bleeding profusely from his mouth, nose and head.

As I discovered and treated his many bleeding cuts, I became anxious for his life and was relieved when we were able to carry him to the ambulance.

I received a call from his son to meet them at the very same spot where the incident occurred two nights prior. Upon seeing me he spoke rapidly in Arabic “Habibi, you saved my life, how could I ever thank you. You are now part of our family forever.”
A Tribute to Detective Stanley Dash

By Lisa Smith

Dear Detective Dash, or may I call you Stanley?

You’re gone now, having died from CO-VID on May 29th, so you won’t be reading this, but I want the world to know: you were one of the good guys that helped put me back together. You knew my entire story, as you were assigned to my case and heard it again and again.

I was strangled and suffocated, nearly to death, in my Manhattan apartment by a man I’d dated for three months. At the time, as I gasped for breath, I thought, “When is he going to stop? Am I being murdered? This can’t be happening to me.” Looking up at my ceiling, lying nearly lifeless on my back, I realized, “This is really happening to me!”

Finally, he stopped, as perhaps he didn’t want to get put away for murder. Evidence was all over my body. My neck was badly bruised, I could barely speak, and I was paralyzed by fear and paranoia. I didn’t know where to turn to or what to do. Still, to this day, I haven’t told most of the complete story to my parents, family, or friends.

Over a week after the incident, desperate, I did finally file a police report.

The first time that we met, you were dressed in casual clothes and had a huge smile on your face. You were so calm, friendly and approachable. I immediately felt at ease. You reassured me that I would be OK. You told me, “Don’t worry Lisa, we will get him.” And I knew that you would. You were a man of honor, of your word.

During the month between filing the police report and my attacker’s arrest, you watched out for me on the streets—traveling to and from work, my family, and my friends. So many people helped me in the battle to regain my self-esteem and normalcy: the district attorney’s office, the domestic violence counselors at Sanctuary for Families, and the NYPD. I am forever grateful.

Thankfully, I had you and the 6th Precinct by my side. I doubted that I’d get through it, but you always reassured me that I would be OK. You helped me through the most horrific and difficult period in my life. Without you, I would not have survived that nightmare.

Every day, each one of you devotes your time to serving our community for the better good. You sacrifice time away from your families, and risk your lives, to bring safety to our streets. Your roles and hard work go unrecognized and unappreciated.

I am especially grateful for you, Detective Dash. You devoted 30 years of service, as a veteran and to the NYPD’s anti-crime unit and detective squad. You faced crime and violence, daily, to help complete strangers. You had such a wonderful sense of humor, considering.

For me, New York City feels a little less safe without you here, yet I know that you will always watch over me. You are a true hero.

Rest in peace, Detective.

Lisa Smith, author of “Unschooled,” is launching Relationship Truth—a high school and college workshop that educates and empowers young adults about healthy and unhealthy relationships—to build an unapologetic, uncut, unbreakable movement to end relationship abuse.

Importance of Summer Camp for Kids This Year

By Oma Amores

Summer is traditionally a time for kids to have fun after a busy school year. This has been a school year like no other, with many students spending some—or all—of their time learning remotely. A year with limited opportunities to socialize with peers and engage in fun activities like sports and arts could have lasting impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of children.

This year parents are looking to find enriching summer activities that support their children academically, and help them rebuild their social skills and form bonds with other kids, while giving them space to have fun.

Fortunately, many community organizations throughout the City offer the perfect solution to help children experience some summer fun while developing resilience, self-esteem, creativity, independence and critical thinking skills: summer day camp.

The right camp can help address summer—and school year—learning loss.

On average, kids lose one month of learning over the summer break. By providing fun, academically-oriented activities, camp programs can engage your child’s brain and halt the “summer slide.” Increasingly, camps are providing more science, engineering, technology, arts and music programming.

It is impossible to know how much learning loss students have suffered the past year due to remote learning. Academically enriching activities such as trips to museums and creative writing are more important than ever this summer. Additionally, it’s been shown that the physical activities traditionally associated with summer camp have long-term benefits for academic performance.

KIDS NEED IN-PERSON SOCIAL CONNECTION AFTER A YEAR OF ISOLATION

Last summer, Greenwich House was one of the only summer camp programs open in the City. Campers had finished the school year remotely, and most of them hadn’t socialized with kids their own age in four months. During that period, we noticed their socialization skills had dropped dramatically. But as the summer progressed, things improved. Kids began to gain confidence and became more comfortable socializing with each other.

Studies have shown that the disruptions to daily life brought on by the pandemic, including social isolation, have had a tremendous impact on children and adolescents, and could have long-term effects on their physical and mental well being. It’s crucial that kids spend time this summer socializing with their peers.

RESPONSIBLE CAMPS ARE TAKING MEASURES TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE

When we opened our camp last July, there was a lot of understandable fear and hesitation from parents. But we, like others, launched our program with three basic principles always in mind: take time and care to protect our campers, our staff, and our broader community; and as parents saw those principles in action they became more comfortable with sending their children to camp.

Last summer we kept groups small and followed guidelines and best practices, this year, as circumstances and protocols continue to evolve, we plan to adapt with them, keeping campers in groups being mindful of social distancing.

KIDS NEED SOME FUN AFTER A YEAR OF SO MUCH LOSS

It’s been a difficult and stressful year for everyone, and our kids have felt that stress too. They need an opportunity to decompress in a fun and enriching environment, while discovering new talents and interests and forming lifelong friendships and memories.

Camp runs July 6th – August 27th

Omar Amores is the Director of the Greenwich House Youth Community Center.

Greenwich House’s Summer STEAM Camp runs from July 6 through August 27. This summer, the Greenwich House Music School is offering P.L.A.Y.B.I.L.D., a theater-making intensive for children ages 8 through 11, from July 19 through July 30. For more information, visit GreenwichHouse.org.
Stop the Soho/NoHo Rezoning Debacle

By Brian J Pape, AIA, LEED-AP

In an unprecedented attempt to destroy a world-famous historic area of NYC, a major income-generating tourist magnet, the city has proposed and certified a massive misguided upzoning of SoHo and NoHo neighborhoods.

Only four percent of all NYC buildings are within historic districts, yet the city wants to target those areas for rezoning. The city calls historic districts “high opportunity areas” because they consider them capable of absorbing higher density development; in other words, historic areas are not as dense with skyscrapers as midtown areas are. The proposed rezoning will allow developments of up to ten million square feet, as tall and as dense as in midtown, FiDi, or on “billionaire’s row” at Central Park, according to Village Preservation studies.

Destroy the neighborhood to make it more dense, feed the greed of development—these seem to comprise the city’s mantra. The SoHo and NoHo neighborhoods—south of Houston Street to Canal Street on both sides of Broadway, and north of Houston on the east side of Broadway to East 8th Street—have a limited infrastructure to absorb massive development, as anyone walking the crowded shopping sidewalks most afternoons or evenings can attest to. The sidewalks are typically narrow, the sewer, water, and waste services are strained to the limit, and open space is almost non-existent or threatened. This is not a neighborhood that can “absorb higher density.”

The city precedent for historic districts in NYC is to actually rezone the areas to be more compatible with the historic character of the districts, which reinforces the efforts to preserve the special qualities that exist. Now the city wants to reverse that, throughout the city, including in Greenwich Village and the Meatpacking District.

When more than 250 people attended a public meeting in February, 2019, and wrote 211 comments about how the neighbors wanted to preserve the special character of the architecture and the artists’ lofts, the city promised continuing community involvement and transparency preceding any future implementation of recommendations for rezoning. But now the community demands have been dismissed by the city and developers’ demands have taken their place.

Initially, the city put forward the six premises listed below to rationalize the rezoning efforts; public hearings have since recorded responses from the community, also summarized below.

CITY PREMISE NO. 1: the current neighborhood is not socio-economically diverse.

Community response: this is false; these neighborhoods have made a place for a diverse population of makers, services, and income levels, as shown in examples below.

CITY PREMISE NO. 2: the current neighborhood contains little or no affordable housing, and the new housing being introduced would be more affordable than current housing.

Community response: this is false; there is a good chance that the rezoning will result in a net reduction in the amount of affordable housing in the neighborhood, and in the number of low-to-moderate income residents. It will allow grossly out-of-scale development and a flood of super-luxury condos at prices averaging over $6 million, as well as large new office buildings and big-box chain stores.

CITY PREMISE NO. 3: the city’s upzoning plan will create a significant amount of new affordable housing.

Community response: This is very doubtful, as the upzoning will likely destroy a considerable amount of affordable housing. Numerous examples show that new affordable housing is actually disincentivized in the plan, which calls for big-box stores and restaurants far exceeding current limits, and prioritizes commercial use, not housing.

CITY PREMISE NO. 4: there is no danger of the proposed upzoning pushing out people of lower incomes or leading to the elimination of existing affordable housing.

Community response: this is false; the proposed upzoning will create tremendous economic incentives to demolish many four to six-story buildings that house residents with more modest incomes, which contain a significant amount of remaining affordable housing, and will probably create about 80 percent less affordable housing than projected (see the historical examples below).

CITY PREMISE NO. 5: the rezoning plan will make for a more racially diverse and equitable neighborhood.

Community response: this is very doubtful, since the city’s SoHo/NoHo upzoning plan will more likely make these neighborhoods richer and whiter as housing prices overall become much more expensive than they are now, based on the evidence of numerous previous upzonings. And there are no provisions to preserve the artistic and creative diversity.

CITY PREMISE NO. 6: the proposed upzoning won’t negatively impact adjacent areas like Chinatown and the Lower East Side.

Community response: this is false. The city is ignoring the clear evidence of the negative impact which this plan would have on SoHo, NoHo, Chinatown, and the Lower East Side—and, eventually, other neighborhoods such as Greenwich Village and the Meatpacking District—continuing a pattern of wildly inaccurate projections and prognostications about what their rezonings would do.

In a MAS (Municipal Arts Society) 2018 report, A Tale of Two Rezonings: Taking a Harder Look at CEQR (City Environmental Quality Review), a key recommendation is strengthening the city’s flawed prediction process. CEQR looks at land use actions under consideration by the City Planning Commission (CPC) or other city agencies, as identified and evaluated for their significance to the community. Two city-sponsored rezonings, in Long Island City (2001) and downtown Brooklyn (2004), have shown drastically different outcomes from what was projected. MAS has also produced a website 3D map showing the potential impacts of the SoHo/NoHo rezoning.

The Cooperator Square Committee issued a May 2019 report, In Context; Out of Reach, about the 2008 rezoning of the East Village/Lower East Side, again showing vastly contrary results.

The Manhattan Community Board 2 reported many shortcomings to the CPC in December, 2020, pointing out that project- ed historic district sites have distinctions not reflected in the draft scope, and potential development sites have distinctions not reflected in the draft scope. Another CB2 report will be issued in mid-July.

The AIANY (American Institute of Architects New York) held a webinar during which the panelists showed examples of new development in historic city districts around the world. New buildings conformed without exception to the maximum height of the historic buildings, yet these limitations didn’t prevent creative design features that made the cityscape dynamic, interesting, and allowing for existing and historic buildings to adapt new uses or continue prior uses. Height limitation was a key feature that made the newer, denser, mixed-use, and affordable housing buildings such complementary neighbors—no building stood out-of-scale with the others.

Testimonies given by outraged neighbors at recent community board hearings have declared the upzonings of SoHo and NoHo as “all wrong” and “you can’t tweak a terrible plan; we must resist it entirely.” Just say NO!

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 AIANY Historic Buildings Committee, and is a journalist, specializing in architecture subjects.
The Evolution of Democracy:
How America’s Founding Fathers Were Influenced by the Ancient Greeks

By Anastasia Kaliabakos

Freedom. Such a simple word, but one that has millennia worth of meaning—the core principle of our nation, the very fabric that holds society as we know it together. It is what allows us to debate principles, express our ideas, and go through our lives with the ability to think for ourselves. America’s founding was so momentous and inspiring because of freedom. The American Revolution sparked a fire inside so many other nations to fight for their own freedom of expression, and July 4th, Independence Day, serves as a reminder of this every year. However, our Founding Fathers and the framers of the Constitution did not emphasize the ideal of freedom by chance: their underscoring of freedom has its origins in Greek Philosophy and Natural-law theories developed by the Ancient Greeks thousands of years ago.

Long before the concept of America was even brought into existence, famous Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle established their own theories of natural law. By means of this theory, everything was assumed to have an inherent purpose. Going through life, man would be able to imitate those who already were aware of their purposefulness, moving towards their own perfection through the “chain of being.” Using his intellect and reason, man was significantly and uniquely poised to grasp his own nature and perceive his natural good. This originally Greek concept of natural law became integrated into Western Christian thought by St. Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century, although it did undergo development and some change upon contact with the Catholic church. Whether natural law could exist in the same way if a God existed simultaneously was brought into question, but, ultimately, the consensus was that the Greeks had begun a widespread revolution of ideas that had deep implications in the functioning of what was becoming modern society.

The Greeks were the first people to really think about these significant issues regarding knowledge—that is, the relationship between the knower and the known. Their grasp of rationality influences every aspect of Greek thinking and contributed greatly to Greek political thought. Before the Greeks, government had been something almost arbitrarily in place that was primarily held together by beliefs in religion. Governments were despotic, unpredictable, and often short-lived. The Greeks transformed how governments were structured into what we know as ancient democracy—still imperfect, sure, but a huge step on the long road to establishing the mostly-stable democratic world governments we see in place today.

America’s founders were undoubtedly influenced by the Greek perspective on government. Many were well-versed in the classical tradition and it was from there that they gleaned their sense of law and what a government should look like. In fact, the Second Continental Congress had the theories of natural law in the front of their minds when developing the document demanding freedom from their British overlords. They believed that the British had violated natural laws and, therefore, their revolution was justified by the laws of nature.

America is undoubtedly unique in many ways, but the radical ideas found in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were not entirely new—they were preceded by the supreme and great Greek thinkers of Athens who came along thousands of years ago. The ideals and practices that eventually led to the American democratic republic that was established after July 4th, 1776, owe themselves to Ancient Greece. Morality, ethics, independence, the separation of powers, mixed government, the significance of natural law, and freedom—these are what have molded America into what we celebrate today. So, this fourth of July, do not only remember the heroes of the American Revolution and our Founding Fathers, but also remember our ancient Greek fathers who continue to influence the world we live in today.

A Big Thank You to Morrison & Foerster!

By Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D.

An estimated 38 million individuals are currently living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. There exist two individuals who have recently been cured of AIDS. Using biotechnology originating from The Rockefeller University, Research Foundation to Cure AIDS (RFTCA) intends to take the underlying science and develop a broadly-applicable cure for all those in need. But how does one go from an idea to acharitable worldwide cure? More than twenty volunteers from Morrison & Foerster have been hard at work helping us find our path.

The international law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP (MoFo) has been representing RFTCA on a pro bono basis since before inception. MoFo incorporated RFTCA as a legal entity, secured the organization’s IRS tax exempt 501(c)3 status, put in place a license agreement that provides RFTCA with an exclusive license to biotechnology that holds promise to cure AIDS and pursued and secured U.S. and European patents for prospective nanomedicines to cure AIDS.

Four current and former partners of MoFo serve on RFTCA’s board of directors:

Chet Kerr initiated the firm’s relationship with RFTCA where he currently serves as treasurer. Thanks to Chet’s meticulous work ethic, RFTCA’s housekeeping and records are in such order that we can, for instance, account for every dollar ever received and/or spent. As an organization that values and respects each donated dollar, this is of utmost importance to lay the foundation for being able to account to our donors and to ourselves.

Karen Hagberg is RFTCA’s board chair where she has created a collaborative environment that brings the diverse leaders who serve on our board together to focus
It’s Been An Amazing Year

By Arthur Schwartz

The primary for City Council in Greenwich Village, Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen is largely over. Although Erik Bottcher did not get a majority, his margin of victory over me is large enough that it seems mathematically impossible for me to win once the Ranked Choice process begins.

I want to offer Erik my congratulations. He ran a positive, optimistic campaign, and I hope that his prediction of “better days ahead” comes true. I remain the Democratic District Leader in Greenwich Village, I am still in court challenging the constitutionality of the PACT/RAD program at NYCHA, and I remain the Political Director of the NY Progressive Action Network, so we will have lots of opportunities to work together. I consider Erik a personal friend, he has always been kind to my family, and I am happy that his dream has come true. I do hope he takes a stronger stand against luxury development in Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, the Village and Soho than Corey Johnson did; if he does he will be a hero.

I started running late last July, during a hiatus in the Pandemic lockdown. For me the end of the campaign feels like an opportunity, finally, to fully (I pray) move on from that horrible year. I am not going anywhere. I continue to be Special Counsel to TWU. I continue to be an activist lawyer. I continue to be a dad and a husband. Campaigns are periods (for me) of great learning: about the issues of concern to my neighbors, about the fairness of the process, about who my friends are, about the genuineness of people’s expressed political views, and about myself.

I won’t address all of that here. I can say that many WestView readers provided invaluable support, financially and emotionally. And for that I thank you. I want to especially thank my full-time campaign staff, Kyle Nash and Jason Coniglione, my Treasurers Penny Mintz (who worked scores of hours as a volunteer in the field), my Tweeter Jack McClatchy, my field support Dan Marcus, Bruce Poli, Jacob Schwartz (my son) and Nick Glasser, my graphic designer Andrew Jones, my daughter Devin (who organized high school students to work on Primary Day), Lucy Anderson who interned for us, my wife, Kelly, who tolerated all of this, and last but not least, Jacob Chen, a rising star at Beacon High School, who not only interned but became a key cog in our last few weeks of the campaign. He has “future leader” stamped all over him. Also, my other opponents, Leslie Boghosian Murphy, Phelan Dante-Fitzpatrick, Aletta LaFargue, and Marni Hall, all turned out to be wonderful friends, who I will, I hope, work with on issues in the future.

I won some nice battles along the way. Beth Israel Hospital isn’t closing. Full service has been restored to the F and C lines. Elevators are coming to two 14th Street stations. Tenants at 401-419 West 19th Street have had their gas restored. And Ranked Choice Voting, which I defended in court, seems here to stay.

Why the West Fourth Street Basketball Courts are Famous and Still Popular Today

By Anthony Paradiso

The West 4th Street basketball courts, aka “The Cage,” house small basketball courts encircled by a 20-foot-high fence. The courts are right across from the legendary Sixth Avenue IFC movie theater. The West Fourth subway entrance is nearby, on Sixth Avenue and West Third Street. The entrance is marked by the big green sign beside it that reads, “West 4th Street Courts” in thick white lettering.

West Fourth Courts games always attract a crowd that spills out onto the sidewalk because the court itself is too small for big crowds. Street basketball involves players getting together for pick-up games. They form teams and strike pick-up games on the spot, rather than establishing a team before they gather.

According to Nyctgovparks.org, the West Fourth Street Courts are “one of the most famous streetball destinations in the world.” It’s been said that NBA players such as Anthony Mason, who played for the New York Knicks when they reached the 1994 NBA Finals, and former Knick star point guard, Stephon Marbury, both played at the West Fourth Courts.

Four days before WestView News went to print, I visited the West Fourth Street Courts, seeking an interview with a player or basketball organizer. Upon arrival, there were at least 30–40 people on the court.

I approached a young African American man with a t-shirt that read “MSU Red Hawks.” His name was Edward Emedoh and he said that a men’s league tournament called Kenny Graham West Fourth Street had been organized for that day.

After going to the Courts, I came back to visit “Unoppressive Non-imperialist Bargain Books” on Carmine Street. Inside I discussed the West Fourth Street Courts with the storeowners and their son, Tayo Drougas, who told me what he has gathered over the years about the famous courts, one of the most popular streetball locales in the world.

Tayo told me that he had seen 2012-13 NBA scoring champion Carmelo Anthony, who played for the New York Knicks, play at West Fourth Street Courts.

“It’s a classic place to play basketball. So many famous players have played there,” Drougas said. “SNL is there all the time filming, and Jimmy Fallon played there once. When you walk by and they’re filming, it’s like Whoa.

Throughout the summer, Villagers can walk by the West Fourth Street Courts on Sixth Avenue and watch part of a streetball game. Who knows who you might run into playing there?
How to Renovate An Apartment While Recycling

By Brian J Pape, AIA, LEED-AP

When it comes to renovating rental apartments, saving money and time is key. The sooner the work can be done, the sooner a paying tenant can be living there. And given the age of many West Village apartments, the need for renovation can be long overdue.

This was the situation our publisher George Capsis found himself in during the Pandemic shutdown, having lost all his tenants. Apartment 3F needed a quick fix-up to appeal to new prospective tenants.

Dusty used her interior design skills to arrange for a plan to transform the tiny kitchen and worn-out bathroom into something modern and fresh. By using an L-shape kitchen layout, it was possible to add more counterspace and larger appliances, while also creating a buffer space between the living room and the bathroom. The bathroom got new fixtures and marble highlights that matched the existing marble floor.

The kitchen cabinets came from a friend who was renovating their apartment, but new appliances were needed too. Enter Renovation Angel, or rather, enter George and Dusty into Renovation Angel’s Fairfield, NJ showroom. Renovation Angel has the high-quality, name-brand appliances and fixtures they needed, at a price that beat any big-box store brands. Rowan Groth, at the Fairfield store, said, “We sell everything as-is, and a good portion of what we sell comes in unused. The warranties depend on the item, so customers can deal directly with the manufacturer. If an item is busted, we take returns within 2 weeks.”

Renovation Angel is a recycling company that specializes in luxury kitchens and interiors, originating in Greenwich, Connecticut in 2005, and is a donation program of Recovery Unlimited, a section 501(c)3 non-profit organization also established in 2005. Steve Feldman, founder of Renovation Angel, says that 7300 kitchens have been recycled, either from showrooms or private owners, enabling the donors to reap a donation credit. Renovation Angel, in turn, has distributed over $2.3 million to charitable programs.

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Spectacular Brownstone Apartment

ELEGANT APARTMENT on the top floor of the Sinclair Lewis house with two marble fireplaces and two bedrooms, Parquet floors, skylight and magnificent kitchen

Call George at 212-924-5718

THE SMALL, OUTMODED KITCHEN in Apt. 3F was in serious need of an upgrade. AFTER: An expanded footprint allows more generous counter space and larger appliances to be fitted into the apartment. High-end appliances were sourced through Renovation Angel. Photos by Dusty Berke.

Thanks You continued from page 6 on our mission and goals. Under Karen’s leadership, RFTCA established research alliances with Columbia University Medical Center, New York Stem Cell Foundation and Lehigh University in connection with our grant application to NIH in response to their first call seeking proposals to cure HIV infection.

Jim Hough is an RFTCA board member who, most recently, organized a firm-wide fundraiser at MoFo on behalf of RFTCA for LGBT Pride month this June. On June 1, an email went out to partners, associates, team and alumni of MoFo providing information about RFTCA, outlining some of the many ways some 20+ dedicated lawyers and team from throughout MoFo have volunteered their support and soliciting financial support. Donations have been coming in throughout the month. The MoFo Foundation also pledged $15,000 in matching grant support.

Dario de Martino is RFTCA’s newest board member from MoFo, joining in April 2021. Dario had already been supporting RFTCA as a partner at the firm, where he and his team have provided us with input and agreements for our relationships with our partners and where he had an instrumental role in advising us about our crowdfunding platform at https://freefromaids.org/. In addition, Dario is also an active leader in the MoFo’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, through which RFTCA has had the pleasure to get to know many allies.

By taking on RFTCA as a pro bono client of the firm, MoFo laid RFTCA’s legal foundation and made it possible for interested individuals at the firm to join our effort, from partners to paralegals who have reached out to say how important this cause is to them personally. Chet talked about how it all started in a Zoom meeting that was organized as part of MoFo’s firm-wide fundraiser for RFTCA this June. He and I first got to know each other from the board of a local theatre called P.S. 122 where I was a biotech inventor and he was a lawyer. When I heard of how the first patient was cured of AIDS and realized the potential of technology I had invented to help develop a global cure based on this early success, I reached out to Chet to see if he would be open to hearing more and helping establish a charitable effort to develop a cure on a not-for-profit basis. I’m so grateful that Chet took this back to MoFo and fondly remember coming in to make a presentation to Chet and several of his colleagues, which included Karen at that very first meeting too, and for every individual who has considered this cause and decided to take it on since then too.
The Pro Act (Protecting the Right to Organize): Potential Implications of the Most Transformative Labor Bill Since the 1940s

By Samuel Dobre, Esq. & Michael Kratovil

While the Biden administration has quickly ushered in a number of changes to the administrative side of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Congress has been considering an even more consequential labor matter: the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. This bill has already made it through the House of Representatives but faces an uphill battle in the Senate because of its significant implications for labor relations throughout the country.

Specifically, the PRO Act promises a number of changes to the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), a statute that has governed labor relations in the United States since the 1930s. While the NLRA has been relatively unaltered since the 1947 Taft-Hartley Amendment, the PRO Act presents a new effort to shift the balance of power from employers to employees and unions. The following details four key potential changes, among others:

**BOLSTERING REMEDIES**
The NLRA has been criticized by many individuals in the labor field for lacking the “teeth” that many other administrative statutes have. Currently, the NLRA only permits (1) make-whole remedies (i.e., reinstatement, back pay, etc.); (2) informational remedies (i.e., the posting of signs concerning conduct that violates the NLRA); and (3) injunctive relief.

With the PRO Act, employees would be able to receive monetary damages for violations of the NLRA. In addition, the NLRB would be able to assess further penalties for noncompliance with NLRB orders. Adding damages and civil penalties (potentially ranging from $50,000 to $100,000 for unlawful discharge or “other serious economic harm to an employee” if the employer has committed a similar violation within the preceding five years) would significantly raise the stakes of labor relations to a level never before seen in this country’s history.

**ELIMINATING “RIGHT-TO-WORK” LAWS**
In 28 states, employees laboring as a part of a unionized workforce are not obligated to pay union dues. In other words, even if a union has been duly elected to represent a group of workers, any employee in that group would have the right to refuse to pay union dues while still retaining the representation of that union. The PRO Act would eliminate this ability to opt out of paying union dues.

**CHANGING DEFINITIONS**
Currently, independent contractors, supervisors, and other management staff are largely unprotected by the NLRA. The PRO Act would alter the definition of employees, supervisors, and employers to include more individuals under the gamut of the NLRA.

**ALTERING RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS**
There are a number of other changes impacting the rights of employees and employers:

**Employees**
The PRO Act would reverse long-standing case law and permit secondary strikes, meaning that unions could picket a neutral employer for the purpose of coercing it to stop doing business with the primary employer.

**Employers**
The PRO Act would prohibit certain conduct by employers in an effort to increase the power of employees in the following ways:

(I) Employers would be prevented from permanently replacing employees who participated in strikes.

(II) Employers would no longer be able to limit an employee’s right to pursue or join collective or class-action litigation.

(III) Employers would be prohibited from taking adverse action against an employee, including those with management responsibilities, in response to that employee participating in protected activities related to the enforcement of the prohibitions against unfair labor practices. To put it in simpler terms, whistleblower protections would be expanded considerably.

(IV) The dynamics of union elections would be altered by (a) preventing employers from requiring or coercing employees to attend employer meetings designed to discourage union membership and (b) permitting employees to vote in such elections remotely by telephone or the internet.

The future of the PRO Act is undetermined. Nevertheless, employers and employees should remain on notice given the widespread legal implications of these potential changes.

Please contact Bond, Schoeneck & King’s labor and employment attorneys if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the potential scope of exposure, mitigation, and/or other legal developments arising in labor relations.

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Everything Old is New Again in the West Village

By Gordon Hughes

As Peter Allen once sang, “Everything old is new again.” Boy, that sure is the case in the West Village. I was going through some of my past WestView News columns the other day and was delighted to see that so many activities I have written about over the years are returning as COVID is winding down.

For instance, young mothers in yoga pants and nannies in uniform are back with their amazing array of perambulators. Of course they are taking up way too much space, once again, at Cafe Panino Mucho Gusto.

The dog-walkers are back with renewed energy, what fun to watch their gaggle of beasts doing just what they did prior to the pandemic. Village Cigars is hopping again, as is Bus Stop Cafe, two of my favorites.

Some places are gone, like Chumley’s—the redo after the fire was just not the same as the Chumleys I used to go to, which makes the demise of Arthur’s Tavern all the more tragic.

That said, on a positive note, Claude Noelle’s French antique store Le Fanion is open, and what fun it is to browse through her new additions from Provence. All the wonderful bookstores I wrote about, like Three Lives, are back. Now, you may remember that I do most of my writing from Panino Mucho Gusto Cafe; however, all those other coffee joints, like Jacks & Joes et al., are also back, and serving new exotic coffees (my favorite being a skinny latte to help stave off weight gained during the pandemic).

Yes, all this is happening for the returning West Village natives. And speaking of returning, so have the tourists. I have counted any number of backpacks, Village tourist maps, fancy packs and cameras (tons of cameras), and all those goofy sneakers with the wide white soles. Perry Street is practically blocked by young women in front of the “Sex in the City” brownstone and, of course, the long lines have returned at the Magnolia Bakery.

The resilience of the West Village is truly amazing and heartwarming.
A Great Victory—Beth Israel to Stay Open

By Penny Mintz

In a closed Zoom meeting on Tuesday morning, June 15, 2021, representatives from Mount Sinai informed Community Board #3 that Beth Israel Hospital will remain open. I was not invited to attend. Nor were most of the community health activists involved in the struggle to keep Beth Israel open. But I learned that, during that meeting, Jeremy Boal, Mount Sinai Health System's chief medical officer and president of Mt. Sinai Downtown, recognized what community organizers have been saying for years: A reduction in beds from the approximately 800 capacity at Beth Israel Hospital to 72 at the planned new facility on 1st Street makes no sense.

In a note to Beth Israel employees, Boyle wrote that Mount Sinai wanted to have the capacity to respond to the kind of pandemic we have just experienced as well as other disasters. Mount Sinai plans to retrofit the Beth Israel building on East 16th Street and First Avenue to bring it up to modern medical standards, and they will be selling the nearby Bernstein building and shifting all mental-health services to their facility on Rivington Street.

As soon as the news came out, Progressive Action of Lower Manhattan (PALM) and the 504 Democratic Club started organizing a celebration/press conference for Wednesday morning, June 16. Since Council Member Carlina Rivera was also organizing a press conference, PALM and 504 joined with her.

CM Rivera thanked Mount Sinai for its decision and called upon Mount Sinai to reopen Beth Israel’s maternity department, which was first shut down without community review in January of 2017.

Arthur Schwartz, who called this outcome a “great victory,” called for the reopening of cardiac surgery, pediatric intensive care, and neonatal care, the other three units summarily closed in 2017. Schwartz’s 2017 lawsuit against Mount Sinai and the NYS Department of Health played a crucial role in slowing down the closure of Beth Israel until COVID ultimately showed the danger of Mount Sinai’s original closure plan.

State Assembly Member Harvey Epstein also spoke. Before being elected to office, Epstein played a pivotal role in demonstrations, petitioning efforts, and the organization of the Community Coalition to Save Beth Israel. After his election, Epstein and State Senator Brad Hoylman, another speaker, urged the legislature to make the hospital-closure review process more transparent and to put consumer advocates on the PHHPC board, which reviews those applications for the NYS Department of Health.

Other speakers were health-rights activists Anthony Feliciano, director of the Commission on the Public’s Health System, Lois Uttley, director of Community Catalyst, a consumer health advocacy organization, and Mark Hannay, director of Metro New York Health. Feliciano, Uttley, and Hannay have been strategizing the effort to save Beth Israel and educating the public on the negative impact that closure would have on the health and economic life of the community.

For once, their effort does not have to be labeled “an ongoing effort.” This is, indeed, a great victory.
Notes from Away: New Life

By Tom Lamia

It is late spring in Maine, a season that for most of the state opens the planting and nurturing process for home gardeners and is preceded by the mud season (early spring). Mud season is not a highly productive time. The spring thaw produces mud that seduces those long imprisoned by cold and COVID to believe, for a moment, that their release is imminent. On farms, like mine, farmland has been productive of crops for two centuries or more, but now that a lot of it, like mine, lies fallow (a farmer’s term for dormant) seasonal work is less often done. The annual tasks of draining, channeling, shoring, and related inspections of the works (like dams and ditches, natural and constructed) must continue if flooding, seeping, and adverse movement of thaw-induced mud into living, working and transportation space is to be prevented.

Long-time local residents tell a story (a tall one no doubt) of what the mud season was like in their youth: black flies as big as butterflies, impassable routes to necessary places (docks, boats, outhouses) and the related imminent arrival of mosquito season, mud season’s harbinger of a summer of discomfort. Today those stories seem exaggerated, but the onslaught of black flies, mosquitoes and mud are a part of life that starts with the snowmelt. Much of that life is today evident in my fields and woods. Much of it is welcome. Some not without misgivings, but the bad does come with the good.

Several broods of turkeys roost in the woods that encircle my farm fields. These birds are permanent residents who very happily find food and safety in their daily comings and goings. New life has come in this spring season to at least two families of these turkeys. A few days ago I came across a hen and three poults (newly hatched young) parading in tight formation at the edge of my field. In my surprised reaction to this sight I must have planted myself between this group and the field where they had been feeding. I had no camera, so could only stay still and watch as the hen headed to a wooded area next to our farm pond. While I watched, those birds somehow were absorbed into a bush from which they seemed not to exit and were gone when I approached. Two days later, I was at my front door preparing to go out when I saw a turkey through a side-light. The poults could not climb or fly over the wall and so were heading toward an opening in the stones that would allow them passage. Fumbling with my phone as I tried to keep all this action in sight, I could not get a shot of this entourage before the poults were through the wall opening. The mother hen had set up her position on the opposite side of the road. I could see disaster coming. Route 129 is a busy road. Traffic from the south comes in groups heading north in series order after gaining access to northerm progress when the swinging bridge in the South Bristol gut closes following the passage of boats between Johns Bay and the Damariscotta River. One such group was now emerging from the south. No break in this traffic seemed likely. Again, I froze. How, if at all, was I to aid this turkey family in finding safety and feeding ground in my neighbor’s field? I tried waving my arms and shouting (all that came to mind) to no effect. By serendipitous good fortune, three of the five baby birds got across safely as a speeding car approached. The car’s wheels passed over the last bird’s path with an inch to spare. A relief; a life preserved; survivor guilt avoided.

Did I not mention, in this softhearted tale, that I see before me every day the results of spring birthing and the competition for resources that will see this new life through to maturity? It is all there every day and in every corner of the landscape. Young things have a fragile existence. Some, like the alewives that spawn in the headwaters of local rivers, are so regular in their travels that predators, including humans, wait patiently for their spring arrival. Others, like turkey poults, are the targets of small animals that themselves are famished come springtime: raccoons, foxes, coyotes, skunks, bald eagles and, I am told, bears.

In this allegory of dangers, discomforts and seasonal challenges on the farm, I see lessons for the defense of our way of life. If the divergent partisan forces that control our government are not brought to civility, I fear that we are making a fateful charge into existential danger, with the same mindless, panicked urgency of that helpless turkey chick. Our good fortune at governing and defending ourselves over nearly 250 years was providential, but not accidental.
Pier 54, 55, and Little Island

By Brian J Pape, AIA, LEED-AP

THEN: The Pier 54 gate header has the faint lettering CUNARD WHITE STAR, dating back to the pier’s heyday when this was part of a row of grand buildings embellished with pink granite facades that totally blocked the waterfront docks from the city. In testament to the prominence of the world’s busiest seaport, both freight and passengers moved through these gates. Pier 54 docked Cunard’s RMS Carpathia, which delivered the survivors of the maiden voyage of the RMS Titanic in April of 1912, greeted by thousands who had been following the news reports of the disastrous loss of over 1,500 passengers and crew. In 1915, Pier 54 was the departure point for the RMS Lusitania’s voyage to Liverpool. 1,198 civilian passenger and crew lives were lost when the ship was sunk by German U-boat torpedoes near Ireland. The unprovoked attack contributed to the U.S. entry into World War I. Pier 54 was also used by U.S. troop ships during World War II. Credit: NYC Municipal Archives, undated (est. 1920s).

NOW: The skeletal structure of the Pier 54 archway on the West Street side of Hudson River Park, near West 13th Street, now marks the entry to what has been reimagined as “Little Island,” Manhattan’s newest attraction.

As Barry Diller remarked, without a hint of rancor, when responding to questions about the delays, lawsuits, and cost over-runs, during a local TV interview on the May 21, 2021 grand opening day, “In New York, anything worth doing is going to get some resistance. It was worth it.” Starting with initial conversations between Diller and HRPT (Hudson River Park Trust) in 2013, an idea to save Pier 54 (since Pier 55 was already demolished) developed into the 2.4-acre square pier that is now supported by 132 pot-shaped concrete structures high enough above the water to avoid flooding.

In October, 2017 the CCNY (City Club of New York) agreed to cease litigation, and in a joint statement with Governor Cuomo and Diller, expressed that its priorities were always the completion of Hudson River Park and the environmental protection of the river. With the resistance quelled, construction was allowed to continue. Community members feared that this billionnaire’s folly (privately-managed “public” space) would turn into a private party space, or that the HRPT couldn’t sustain the long-term maintenance, or that the Hudson River esplanade would be degraded by the tourist crowds. And what was the purpose of the new pier anyway?

Although Little Island is relatively small, it takes several visits on successive days to absorb the many nooks and crannies and features and vistas that this park offers, and one is hard-pressed to find fault now that it is open to all. Little Island is open daily from 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m., with timed free tickets after 12 noon.

A brief description of features can’t do Little Island justice; it is a visual delight, peaceful, diverse and attractive, and affords a unique perspective of the Hudson River and its environment. The broad bridges that connect the esplanade with the island rise gently to reach the main plaza level where the central pavilion is furnished with sunshades, picnic tables, and food vendors, and which may include tavern-type servings in the future.

As we make the climb to one of the observatory peaks we pass the exposed small openings between the pods and can appreciate the detail of the gently curving pod edges, guarded by the unique steel rods that mimic the wood piling remnants of the abandoned piers. The heavy timber wooden benches even get special attention, as the planks are hand-carved and sculpted with softened edges. Beyond a ridge overlooking the wide Hudson River a 687-seat amphitheater is tucked into the slope.

Last but not least, of course, Little Island is a great people-watching spot, with people from around the world and around the city coming to take in this newest attraction or just to relax.

The majority of the 500 events planned for this year will be free ticketed events or low-cost, with performances and educational programming six days a week, offering music, dance, circus, or spoken word. No private parties or rentals for weddings, etc. will be allowed. Currently, there are four artists in residence who are the curators for programming: tap dancer and choreographer Ayodele Casel; playwright and award-winning director Tina Landau; actor, singer, and music director Michael McEroy; acting, storytelling, and musical group, the PigPen Theatre Co.

Displays on the esplanade railings provide historic reminders of Pier 54’s past. I still think the “S4” on the arch would be a nice commemorative finishing touch. Photo credit: Brian J Pape, AIA.

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 AIA/ANY Historic Buildings Committee, and is a journalist specializing in architecture subjects.
The Princeton Problem: Cancel Culture and the Future of Classics

In 2019, I wrote an article for WestView called “Keeping Ancient Greek and Latin Alive.” Back then, I was a starry-eyed senior in high school who was just beginning to appreciate all that the Classics had to offer. I had been studying Latin since middle school, had travelled to Rome through a summer “Latin immersion” program, and had been exposed to Greek culture my entire life as a second-generation Greek American. At the time, I was also deciding the next major step in my life—where to go to college. I chose to attend The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts—not just for its welcoming community and high-level academics, but for its robust and expansive Classics department. I was immediately amazed by the sheer number of professors in the department and the fact that all of them were so supremely knowledgeable about a vast assortment of topics, ranging from Greek tragedy to Classical archaeology to even gender in antiquity. The Classics track were instituted in order to create a more inclusive and “equitable” program of study, according to the members of the department. Although the school claims that this change will incentivize more students to become majors, what are the true implications of their decision? Are the Princeton professors admitting to the fact that Classics as a field is racist, thereby invalidating and tarnishing their entire academic careers spent studying and teaching the subject? This can’t possibly be the case. Or are they saying that some students at Princeton University are in fact incapable of succeeding in these rigorous language courses? It’s impossible to wrap your head around this issue without coming to these conclusions.

I understand that the privilege to study Classics is not afforded to all. Communities of color and students in underrepresented groups in the United States have indeed suffered from a lack of access to the Classics. However, this is beginning to change. There are a multitude of upcoming initiatives in middle schools, high schools, and universities to incorporate more BIPOC (black, indigenous, and other people of color) and underprivileged students into their Classics departments. Personally, I have been involved in these types of programs—in high school, I volunteered through the Paideia Institute’s Aequora program, which is driven by the belief that “Classics [is] an inclusive, diverse, and socially engaged field.” I also currently am on the Classics Inclusion Committee at Holy Cross, which upholds those same values. Classics has long been considered a very niche subject, but this doesn’t have to be the case: with enough effort, Classics can become open to all who wish to study it. Simply giving up and saying that students of color are at a disadvantage at becoming successful Classics is plain wrong and, frankly, offensive. If the Classics department at Princeton University, one of the “best” universities in the entire world, does not truly believe in their students’ intellectual abilities—and their desire to step up to the challenge of fully immersing themselves in these ancient languages—how are the students expected to believe in themselves?

Rash decisions made on the presumption of “inclusivity” (while actually being the very antithesis to real and more expansive inclusion) will undoubtedly lead to the death of Classics in the classroom…and it may well arrive sooner than you think.

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!

- 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.

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Robert Allen Zimmerman aka Bob Dylan

Eternal Legend of the Village
By Bruce Poli

Yes, it’s him again…at 80. And it’s always about him…and us:

He wandered, lived, breathed, spoke, sang and played Greenwich Village. There is no Village without Dylan. To paraphrase Antonio Salieri (played by F. Murray Abraham) at the end of the film Amadeus: “They are nio Salieri (played by F. Murray Abraham) at the end of the film Amadeus: “They are my audience, and I am their patron saint.”

The stories are etched into our memory of the 1960s like “We Shall Overcome” and “I Have a Dream” are etched into our memories of the civil rights movement. And if 1963 isn’t your Village year of greatest resource, I don’t know what is.

In ‘63, Dylan lived with Suze Rotolo at 161 W. 4th, top floor in the back…five footsteps for his boot heels to be wandering to the Music Inn.

I start my Village Tours in Sheridan Square with the civil rights theme and then pivot to music walking down to West 4th Street where the iconic picture of both Dylan AND Greenwich Village appears:

We all repeat stories of Dylan at the Lion’s Head, the Sazerac House, the White Horse Tavern, Gerde’s Folk City, and at … hold your breath…Café Wha?

The stories are etched into our memory of the 1960s like “We Shall Overcome” and “I Have a Dream” are etched into our memories of the civil rights movement. And if 1963 isn’t your Village year of greatest resource, I don’t know what is.

In ‘63, Dylan lived with Suze Rotolo at 161 W. 4th, top floor in the back…five footsteps for his boot heels to be wandering to the Music Inn.

I celebrate him at 80 years old (May 24, 1941) as a tribute, as well as to celebrate my 50th high school reunion this month—the quote in my yearbook was “Yes, to Dance Beneath the Diamond Sky with One Hand Waving’ Free…”

Congratulations West Village…you’ve given us 60 years of the greatest leap of consciousness that music has ever produced. It injected our brains with a force we’ve never let go of.

As Bruce Springsteen said, when he heard Like a Rolling Stone while riding in the car with his mother, “It kicked open the doors of my mind…” and thus ignited another great rocker of our time.

If there were two verses with which we can advise the younger generations, they would be: “There must be some way out of here,” said the joker to the thief

There’s too much confusion, I can’t get no relief

Businessmen, they drink my wine, plowmen dig my earth
None of them along the line know what any of it is worth”

“No reason to get excited, the thief, he kindly spoke
There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke
But you and I, we’ve been through that, and this is not our fate
So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.”

As the inspiration for the Beatles and Rolling Stones through Leonard Cohen, Phil Ochs, Neil Young, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Peter, Paul and Mary, Joni Mitchell, Carole King, Nina Simone, Sam Cooke, and all the greats of folk and rock ‘n’ roll, Dylan was the touchstone of the 60’s revolution—changed us and made us reach to a higher order of awareness—a higher intelligence.

In the recent Martin Scorsese film Rolling Thunder Revue, Robert Allen Zimmerman from Duluth, MN says, “People talk about finding themselves…they don’t understand, you have to CREATE yourself.” Sounds like the theme of Greenwich Village.

Thank you Bob Dylan, you are the legend among legends.

You have left the Village glowing for decades!
Summer is olive-growing season: The International Olive Council estimates that over 139 olive varieties are grown in 23 countries worldwide.

By Mia Berman

There’s Olive Oyl, (Popeye’s girlfriend); Olive Garden; olive tree; olive branch. And then there’s the olive.

Let’s face it—the world is divided. We see mounting violence—from guns on city streets to mayhem in Gaza. We’re weary about what’s woke, inundated with infrastructure, and submerged with cyberhacking. We’re exhausted by cartels, cancel culture, and COVID. We’re arguing about prison reform, defunding the police, catch and release, and reopening schools. We’re barraged with international crises, from border crossings to Middle East missiles. We’re overwhelmed by inflation and immigration, and crave de-escalation. With all this global talk about civility and hostility, methinks we need a completely new approach.

Call it OLIVE-ILITY. Enough politics. Let’s go with something radical yet international—like olives. Yup. You heard me. Olives. And not just for martinis.

Forget bitcoin, SpaceX, and electric cars. Now that the G7 summit and French Open are over, and Harry and Meghan are done venting, we need something to bring us all back together—not in competition, but in camaraderie.

Consider the facts. The International Olive Council estimates that over 139 olive varieties are grown in 23 countries worldwide. The olive branch is an ancient offering of peace. In Genesis, the dove came to Noah after the flood with an olive leaf in its mouth. Olives even enhance global well-being—they are an excellent source of heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, important for the heart and brain. Olives even enhance global well-being—they are an excellent source of heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, important for the heart and brain. Olives are an incredible part of the heritage and culture of the region.”

Regardless of mankind’s countless nationalities, races, and cultures, we are all one: Homo sapiens. Ditto for the olive. Despite the hundreds of varieties, flavors and colors, they all stem from the same olive tree species, Olea Europaea. We are the world—the World of the Olive.

Olives abound in ancient history and modern culture. Goddess Minerva had an olive branch in her hand, and as she was the goddess of wisdom she must have known something. The UN flag waves a crown of olive branches. The winners of the Olympic games were crowned with olive branches. And...the Tutankhamun tomb contained assorted crowns with olive branches.

Artists and poets have been using the olive muse for centuries. Homer and Virgil revered it. Pablo Neruda wrote about it in his Ode to Olive Oil. “Among the good things of the earth I set apart olive oil, your ever-flowing peace, your green essence, your heaped-up treasure which descends in streams from the olive tree.”

Suffering artist Van Gogh painted his beloved olive grove 18 times. Those olive trees were his salvation. And finally, how could we not cherish the olive...and bring the world together. After all, it contains the word love.
Maggie B’s Quick Clicks

WHATEVER THE WEATHER

Whether the weather be fine

Or whether the weather be not

Whether the weather be cold, or whether the weather be hot

We’ll weather the weather whatever the weather

Whether we like it or not!

All photos by Maggie Berkvist.

Mercer Street Books & Records:
An Interview with Owner Wayne Conti

A BOOKSTORE FOR READERS AND WRITERS," is what Wayne Conti says of his Mercer Bookstore, which he opened in 1990. The wonderfully eclectic shop at 206 Mercer Street is filled with everything from signed editions to classics and contemporary books to classic vinyl records. Photo by Bob Cooley.

By Dana Jean Costantino
Mercer Street Books & Records is a long-standing store on Mercer Street, right here in the Village. It is a true New York City classic, a place where you can spend hours combing through the racks and finding treasures in the form of used books. I have spent countless hours inside this fabulously old school space. When I walk in I feel as though I have been transported to a New York City of another time—old New York City. One that so many of us crave daily, no matter what our age.

When I enter the store, somehow I immediately feel as though I am a beat poet, college student, or writer in search of the next big idea. I can most assuredly count on an intriguing conversation with owner Wayne Conti if he happens to be behind the front counter. To keep this bookstore alive and to share it with those of you that already support it or maybe do not know about it but should, it was a great pleasure to conduct an interview with Wayne. I share with you here some of our delightful conversation. Please be sure to take some time out of your day and stop into Mercer Street Books & Records. It is an absolute must for anyone that loves a good book or just loves supporting the very best of New York City in the form of local businesses.

Q: For how many years now have you been running Mercer Street Books?
A: I have been running Mercer Street Books for 31 and a half years.

Q: What do you love about living downtown and being part of the Village community?
A: What I love as a 40+ year resident of the Village are the memories. Don’t I sound like Joe Franklin? The Village was full of irritable refuges from Europe or New Jersey. Everyone argued, everyone listened, then argued some more. No one had any money, including the landlords. Life was great if you were not too hungry. We were thin.

Q: What do you hope for the future of Mercer Street Books?
A: I do not know what to hope for Mercer Street Books, my business of more than 30 years. The second six-year term of Bloomberg was a disaster. De Blasio?

Q: What are the current hours of Mercer Street Books?
A: My current hours are 12 noon to 8:00 p.m. That is enough reality for me right now.

Please find your way to Mercer Street, and then find your way to the front door of Mercer Street Books & Records. Walk down the few steps into the store and begin your journey into the best of this city.

Mercer Street Books & Records is located at 206 Mercer Street, New York, NY 10012. Phone: 212-505-8615.
Throughout the pandemic, our team safely delivered a wide range of emergency, primary and specialty care for all ages. And now, with the COVID-19 vaccine widely available, we’re helping vaccinate as many New Yorkers as possible. We’ll continue raising our neighbors’ health—so we can keep moving forward, together.

Northwell.edu/ForTheVillage
There were lots of openings this month, and many more still to come. One trend we’ve observed is Brooklyn spots coming to Manhattan, perhaps because of attractive rent deals. We continue to see restaurants that we thought were gone for good re-opening, sometimes in the same spot, and sometimes nearby. While there are always neighbors who complain about the “Open Streets” program, the rest of us see it in a sense of optimism and exuberance.

Openings

**Brooklyn Kolache** (185 Bleecker Street near MacDougal Street) has made the move to Manhattan and serves kolaches, a kind of Danish pastry of Czech origin that can be sweet or savory. In addition to its eponymous offerings, Brooklyn Kolache features rotating sweet buns, with a rainbow pride bun available in June. For those who love soft-serve ice cream, there is a delicious new option in the Village: **Urban Outfitters** (79 MacDougal Street) will offer a varied menu of fried items on a tater tots are a signature offering and are enhanced with corporate outdoor structures are in the shape of classic diners. The wine list is more ambitious than at many Mexican restaurants.

**Saint Theo’s** (124 MacDougal Street at Minetta Lane) serves empanadas, with meat and vegetable fillings. **Café Tola** (92 Greenwich Avenue at West 12th Street) moved into the old L’Artusi location occupied by “clean beauty” Pollaris. This Boston-based business carries candles, diffusers, bar soaps and body scrubs. **8 Street Pets** (44 West 8th Street) offers walks, grooming, boarding and “doggie daycare.”

**Mr. K** (152 7th Avenue South between Charles and Perry Streets) is a tiny storefront with a large menu of Japanese street food such as okonomiyaki (savory pancake), katsu sando (fried breaded pork cutlet sandwich), takoyaki (octopus balls), yakitori (skewers), and soba and ramen noodle dishes among others. **Bandits** (44 Bedford Street at Leroy Street) is an old-school, 1950s-style cocktail bar with craft cocktails, “dressed up beers”, bar snacks and other drinking food. The tater tots are a signature offering and are enhanced with Mexican, Indian or Middle Eastern seasonings. Their elaborate outdoor structures are in the shape of classic diners.

**an.me** (249 Bleecker Street between Leroy and Cornelia Streets) is a children’s store that sells clothing, toys and some furniture. The original location is in the East Village.

**Re-Openings**

On the same stretch of MacDougal Street, both The Mermaid Oyster Bar (79 MacDougal Street) and **JG Melon** (89 MagDougal Street at Bleecker Street) closed in the last few months, but now new outdoor structures outside JG Melon are sporting Mermaid Oyster Bar signage. The **Original Sandwich Shop** closed, but its reincarnation is arriving a few doors down at 64 Greenwich Avenue. The new spot will be called The Village Sandbar and will feature sandwiches and libations where the Meatball Shop used to be. The oldest restaurant in the city’s history, The White Horse Tavern, is taking it over, but employees at the White Horse say that Philip Marie is returning.

**Closed/Closing**

**Urban Outfitters** closed its store at 526 Sixth Avenue (14th Street). The retailer had been at that location since 1999.

**Coming Soon**

A number of spots around the city have started offering breaded hot dogs on a stick, a popular Korean street food. Unlike corndogs, these are breaded in rice flour. **Oh K-Dog** (70 7th Avenue South between Barrow and Commerce Street) will offer a varied menu of fried items on a stick: some hotdogs are stuffed with cheese, and others are not hotdogs at all, but just breaded cheese. The location on Ludlow Street often has a long line of eager customers. Previously, Ramen Thai-Ka occupied the space. **Pappas Taverna** (103 MacDougal Street between Bleecker Street and Minetta Lane), a Greek restaurant, is coming to the massive Panchito’s space. It is named after a Greek restaurant opened in 1910 on East 14th Street by the owner’s grandfather and two great uncles. Instead of grilling food, they would be opening at that location. The description of the restaurant read: “Amos on Bleecker is an all-day kitchen and cocktail house embracing the vibrant energy of the West Village. Serving inspired New York comfort food in an upscale environment, our story welcomes guests to reminiscence by Caroline Benveniste.

THE "PRIDE BUN" from Brooklyn Kolache (above), and SURREAL CREAMERY’S "CHOCOLATE BLACKOUT" (below); chocolate ice cream, chocolate crunch, chocolate syrup, Cocoa Puffs, and Oreos. Photos by Caroline Benveniste.
A View From the Kitchen

By Isa Covo

We stayed indoors for months, looking out of the window, wishing for escape, for travel.

Now the doors are cracking open slightly, and I have started to think of destinations. I would like to go to England and have a proper afternoon tea. But in the meantime, I made cream scones, which are usually featured as part of tea. For the most authentic presentation, serve with jam and clotted cream (available at Myers of Keswick), but if you don't have clotted cream, whipped cream works well too.

Rich Cream Scones

INGREDIENTS
2 cups all-purpose, unbleached flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
+ 1 tablespoon for dusting
4 tablespoons of chilled unsalted butter, cubed
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/3 cup heavy cream
(preferably not ultra-pasteurized)
+ 1 tablespoon for brushing on top
Pinch of salt

DIRECTIONS
1. Combine the flour, sugar, and baking powder in a large bowl, and whisk the ingredients to combine thoroughly.
2. Add the butter to the flour mixture and cut it in with a pastry blender or two knives until the mixture looks like coarse meal.
3. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs with the cream, vanilla and salt, and pour into the butter-flour mixture. Mix with a fork until the dough almost holds together. Knead the dough lightly with fingertips until it becomes smooth and even.
4. Leave the dough in the bowl, cover it and let it rest 15 minutes in a cool place.
5. Heat the oven to 400 degrees.
6. Separate the dough into two equal pieces, place them on a cookie sheet and flatten each one into a circle six inches in diameter.
7. Score each of the cakes into four or six equal triangles, but do not separate them.
8. Brush the tops with the remaining cream, being careful not to drip it on the sides. Sprinkle with the additional sugar.
9. Bake until thoroughly cooked and golden on top, about 15 to 20 minutes.
10. Let the scones rest five minutes on a rack and then separate.

Yield: 12 scones

FOR ORANGE OR LEMON SCONES, add 1 teaspoon of grated orange or lemon rind and one tablespoon or two of lemon or orange juice to the cream mixture. Instead of the sugar you may press some slivered almonds into the top of the scone. Bake as above.

FOR WALNUT-RAISIN SCONES, add 1/3 cup of coarsely chopped toasted walnuts and 1/3 cup of dark or golden raisins, or, even better, currants, to the dough. Proceed as above, but add 1 scant teaspoon of powdered cinnamon to the sugar sprinkled on top.

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Fifth Year Commemoration of the Pulse Nightclub Shooting

By James Tigger! Ferguson

Five years ago, an unspeakable massacre occurred at Pulse nightclub. We live in a country that worships guns—the power, the money, the violence and the hatred that guns represent. So it certainly wasn’t the first massacre, nor would it be the last. And though it was the deadliest shooting in this country at the time, even that didn’t last long. Each of these senseless attacks is a devastating tragedy, but this one felt personal. This was one toxic, bigoted bastard’s attempt at queer extermination in our sacred sanctuary, a gay bar. This was an attack on all of us.

When you grow up queer, you tend to grow up with a part of you just waiting for something horribly violent to happen. And all too often it does happen to so many of us. But most of us who’ve been bashed survive it. My stitches healed. But those 49 Human Beings are gone forever. No one who loved them and no one who was at Pulse that night will ever fully heal. And it happened in a gay bar, the one place where many of us first felt safe, where we finally felt at home.

I knew I had to do something more than sign petitions. My husband Scott and I recognized that there had been so much gun violence in this country that most people had become numb to the numbers. All those staggering statistics didn’t feel real anymore. We agreed that people needed to experience what the absence of 49 people looks like. They needed to see one human being standing in for each human being who was murdered. So we decided that we needed to gather 49 of us to all dress in white. (No more black because there were already too many funerals.) We would be silent because it’s not about us, and we would be veiled to mourn our dead. Instead of showing our own faces, each of us would carry a sign with the face, name, and age of each of those 49 victims. We wanted to be silent witnesses at Pride, to honor the 49 Human Beings who were robbed of their chances to ever celebrate Pride again.

Fortunately, we heard about a new activist group that was also moved to action by the Pulse tragedy, and they were about to have their first meeting.

Gays Against Guns was and is the perfect home for our Human Beings. They brought the Rage, so we could focus on the Grief.

The overwhelming impact we felt that day, each of us cocooned behind our veils, is impossible to describe.

And yet...five years later, here we are. Obviously, that effort wasn’t enough. Not yet.

I’m deeply grateful that Gays Against Guns keeps on fighting and that they keep our vision of a living memorial alive, to honor the ever-increasing number of human beings who die from gun violence. But I’m also enraged that the NRA hasn’t died instead of all those people. And I’m enraged that it’s so goddamn easy for racists, misogynists, homophobes, transphobes, religious bigots, and other haters to murder in minutes. Enraged that it’s so much easier to get an assault rifle than decent mental healthcare.

If you share our grief and feel our rage, please make it productive. Honor the dead with action and fight for change. Otherwise, this nightmare will continue to play out for people of every color, gender, sexuality, and age, in every city. We could all be next.

Thank you.

James Tigger! Ferguson is an actor, burlesque artist, and activist who created the Human Beings as a living memorial to victims of gun violence.
The stresses of aging are ongoing and cumulative. Inflammation rises, weakening our resistance to disease. Brain cells diminish, requiring increased effort to remember the names and details that we once took for granted. Muscle strength and balance decline. Loved ones die and depart. Without compensatory efforts, isolation and loss of competence can cause problems. We become increasingly fragile. In time, the grim reaper claims us, one and all.

But take heed. There is a joyous note in at least one redemptive prescription. You can slow down aging by having sex in a way that promotes genuine closeness—particularly, without a condom. You can live longer, have more satisfaction, and, miraculously, get smarter.

Research now reveals that the brain has neuronal regenerative powers. It is not limited to the neurons you are born with, as was previously assumed. It renews itself even into one's nineties. Sex with a loved one has been shown to regenerate brain cells. Professor James Goodwin illuminates this process, and presents practical advice on how to optimize our brain's performance and halt the depressing toll of cognitive decline during aging in his book, Supercharge Your Brain (2021), which offers a unique, multifaceted, evidence-backed perspective on how to foster a healthier and longer life. As an evolutionary biologist and historian of brain science, Dr. Goodwin presents research-based evidence for the eye-opening health benefits of high-minded purposeful behavior, and sex with real intimacy. Surprisingly, sex without a condom confers even more regenerative benefits than sex with one. (No pun intended.) The touch, feel, and flow of a loving partner is a life-enhancing elixir. The brain is an erogenous zone.

Intimacy is one of life's greatest challenges. There is the risk of being emotionally hurt as you expose your vulnerabilities to another person, but without the courage to overcome your probable mutual anxiety, the full health benefits of meaningful sex and the thrill of real intimacy are not achieved.

As a cautionary note, be aware that sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise in nursing homes, where sex without condoms is common and resistance to infection is low. In these times of on-line-dating it is prudent to get to know one's partner's exposure before taking the plunge, no matter what age you are. Studies have shown that feelings of love and belonging matter even more than frequency of sex, as long as it is regular.

There are many behaviors that can slow aging. According to Goodwin, who is also a founding member of the Global Council on Brain Health and chair at both Exeter University Medical School and Loughborough University, exercise is the most important way to change your lifestyle to increase your healthy, creative, active lifespan. Sitting too much is harmful.

Supercharge Your Brain will be published by Pegasus in January, 2022, and online and audio versions will be available as well.

Roberta Russell is the author of R.D. 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: Psychology Today (Germany), Japan Times (Japan), The Psychologist (U.K.), Human Potential Magazine (U.K.), Changes (U.K.), Clinical Psychology Forum (U.K.), Psychanalytic Studies (U.K.), and Bottom Line (USA). 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.

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July 4th Fireworks Are Back!

An American version of Professor Goodwin's Supercharge Your Brain will be published by Pegasus in January, 2022, and online and audio versions will be available as well.

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How Electricity is Generated from Sunlight

Electrons are the stuff of electricity, hence the name. And electrons are also what the world is made of. Every grain of sand is full of electrons. Everything is made of electrons together with other unimaginably small particles, which together constitute all the elements in that periodic table you learned about in school. But it’s that grain of sand that’s the foundation of creating electricity from sunlight.

Sand is made from the elements silicon and oxygen. In fact most of the crust of the earth is made from silicon and oxygen. Silicon, symbol Si, exists in sand in a network of atoms in which each Si is surrounded by four oxygen atoms, so that the general formula for sand is SiO₂.

Each oxygen atom is bonded to a silicon atom in this network so that each half of each of the four oxygen atoms around one silicon atom “belongs” to that atom—hence SiO₂. If we could use some of those electrons in sand to make electricity a great deal of electricity could be generated. But the elements in sand hold their electrons too tightly to be wrenched free by the sun’s energy. However, if the oxygen is removed from sand to obtain pure silicon, which can be accomplished by heating sand to very high temperatures with charcoal, then we have a substance in which the electrons can be made into electricity using sunlight.

This chemical reaction makes sense. The product of heating sand with charcoal is a very stable molecule, carbon dioxide, allowing transfer of the oxygen from its connection to silicon to a connection to carbon in CO₂. And this process only takes place once to produce a material that makes a great deal of electricity, not as in the burning of fossil fuels where CO₂ is continuously produced. And helping this process is the formation of a very disorderly situation, a gas, CO₂, at high temperature, from a very orderly situation, the regular arrangement of the silicon and oxygen atoms in sand. Nature loves an increase in disorder, an increase of entropy, which makes the process easier.

Electrons belong to the world of quantum mechanics, a world sort of like Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. Both the book and the physics were created around the same time, in the late nineteenth century, and in both book and physics, nothing is what it seems. Although electrons (which are estimated to weigh about 10-31 kilograms each) cannot be described in terms that make sense to the world we are familiar with, we know how many of them there are in each kind of chemical element. Each silicon atom, if it be in sand or pure silicon, has fourteen electrons surrounding the nucleus of the atom, four of which are involved in connecting the Si atoms to the four surrounding oxygen atoms in sand or to four surrounding silicon atoms in the network of pure silicon.

But the electrons in pure silicon are still held too tightly to use the sun’s energy to get them to make electricity. To accomplish the objective, a trick is used called doping. Whereas silicon has four electrons available for its connections to other atoms, phosphorus has five electrons. When phosphorus is added in small amounts to the otherwise pure silicon only four of phosphorus’ five electrons are used to fit into the silicon network. One electron is left over. Boron atoms on the contrary only have three electrons available for connections to other atoms so that when boron atoms are added to pure silicon they make holes where electrons are missing. These so-called holes in the boron doped area then allow some of the extra electrons in the phosphorus doped area to move about causing adjacent areas of the silicon network to be positively and negatively charged, like a battery. Movement of electrons stops at this point until light shines on the silicon network, which energizes the electrons to continue to jump from one kind of doped region to another. With the proper conducting wires attached, an electric current is generated creating a solar cell.

Solar cells are serious business for the energy needs of the world. Sun-generated electricity, photovoltaics, is becoming a very important enterprise with large corporations created to advance the field. Huge amounts of money are pouring into this technology causing an inexorable march for solar generated electricity to become as cost-efficient as electricity generated from fossil fuels. These corporations want to collect from us when we plug into their grid or sell us solar cells for our homes to reduce the fare we pay to the grid.

What I’ll have to save for another day is the irony that modern gasoline could not be produced without also using silicon based material in a process called catalytic cracking. But that’s another story about silicon, the second most abundant element in the earth’s crust after oxygen.

School Redefined: Learning and Unlearning

By Amanda Marlowe

“We made it home!” Maylin shouted to the class as we approached Captain’s doorway. “Home?” I wondered. “I thought we were at school!”

“We are at school.”

We felt a sort of comfort in this confusion. Looking at one another for an answer seemed a bit silly. We all knew exactly what Maylin meant. This was home, Captain’s technically. This was school, we had school here every Wednesday from nine to three. Why did this puzzle us? What was it about our definitions that no longer aligned with the way life had shifted?

The pursuit of a pod was both overwhelming and humbling. As we cycled through the school weeks, the designs laid out for each space began transforming into learning environments. Yet as each day passed, I came to realize that each home was already its own school. The students were not asking me about which kitchen cabinet held cups for our science experiments or what library books we had on the shelf. I was asking them.

Traditionally, students are asked to construct their education around the physical space of the classroom set by the teacher. The pod allowed for teachers to mold and scaffold on the life of the student. What seems to arise often in classrooms is the very opposite. The students enter a building and conform to the setting. Here, students are free to explore the plasticity of their space, ultimately exploring the flexibility of their own minds. They exercise what is yet to be seen. This challenged the students to find patterns in their world and adopt a routine. Each time they entered a different home, they had to settle in again into new arrangements. It is here that patience becomes vital to keeping a pod strong.

If you are at all feeling drawn to creating a pod, return to patience. Remind yourself that progress comes with pace. Trust your children and know that your pod is your family. Place yourself in a new point of view, and you are sure to see a new angle.

No matter our age, life demands of us a belief in our own capacity and the know-ledge to know that our being can create beautifully and inventively.

I asked each child, “What is a pod? Who are we?” They responded, “Family.”
The Power (and Pain) of Water

By Dana Jean Costantino

Recently, I was reminded of the fact that I do not drink nearly as much water as I should. The subject was brought up by a good friend as we were taking a long walk, and again on a lovely day with my brother, sister-in-law, and nephew at the Bronx Zoo. My brother said, after being asked if I would like a bottle of water and my declining, “Dana doesn’t drink water.” It made me think, “I really don’t drink enough water.”

Most days go by, and I have had maybe a glass. Lately I’ve been taking a look at a lot of different aspects of my life, inside and out, from a health and wellness perspective. Over the years, water has always been a struggle for me. So many people seem to have such an easy time drinking 8-10 glasses of regular water a day. NOT ME!

We all have those friends that carry around a water bottle no matter where they go. It could be to the gym, on a walk, at a party, at a bar, while traveling on a train or plane. No matter what, they’ve got their water right beside them. Me? I’ve usually got my coffee, and in the evening I do enjoy a glass of red wine. But I understand that we’re getting our water from the food we eat, like carrots, watermelon, and leafy greens. However, for hydration, that’s not enough. Our bodies need more water than what we get from the food we eat.

THE THOUGHT OF DRINKING FROM 12-16 CUPS OF WATER A DAY is daunting for many, but studies show that most of us do not get all the hydration our bodies need on a regular basis. The best approach may be a gradual increase in the amount of water you take in every day to work up to the recommended daily amount. Photo by Bob Cooley.

As I proceeded with my water increase plan I began to realize that eight glasses a day is just too much for me. As I got closer to that amount I noticed that I was running back and forth to the bathroom way more frequently than normal. I thought, “OK, maybe this isn’t about living up to the water standard that’s set as a general rule.” (Similarly, for many of us the food pyramid doesn’t really work. We’re learning that it is slightly outdated.)

Maybe now it was time for me to consider and understand what my body needed, and over the course of a week I realized that four glasses of water daily seemed to be the sweet spot. I could get four glasses down, especially if I added a little cucumber, orange, lemon, or lime. I even tried mint one day and that was great! For a fun summer vibe, slice up some watermelon, muddle it at the bottom of your glass, and then pour the water over it. It is absolutely delicious!

I’d love to hear about your joys and struggles with water. As readers of WestView News, do you really love water and drink it all the time? Do some of you find yourself not having a glass at all in a day? Send me an email and let me know what your tips and tricks are. What are your favorite ways to make water fun?

Cheers to you all for a great summer ahead. Keep Calm and Drink Some Water.

You can reach me at Instagram @citydoorway or danajeanyoga@gmail.com.

EVEN THOUGH THIS YEAR’S “OFFICIAL” PRIDE MARCH was only held virtually, over 3000 people joined in the Queer Liberation March held by the Reclaim Pride Coalition. The march started the afternoon in Bryant Park and ended at the Stonewall Inn, and was a wonderfully diverse crowd of ages, LGBT folk and allies, and no corporate entities. The only large entries were created by artists, like Chris Williams’ Pride Puppets, that marched along with the many who celebrated. Photo by Bob Cooley.
The family joy seemed complete.

He and Perry had fans to adore them.

Baby Charles was surrounded by love from the start.

It was early to bed and early to rise.

And the wilder crowd from the coup flew.

The parties turned into much tamer affairs.

So the glamorous couple, Horatio and Jane,

And so little Perry arrived right on cue,

To give birth to a namesake and heir.

Perhaps it was time, it occurred to them both,

And the cocktails for none but the brave.

For the suppers and soirees they gave,

Now, he was an actor while she used her brain

They were known as a dashing young pair.

Through the fifties and sixties and even beyond

Pai Ling had little dogs for pets. I loved them. A friend

spoke little English and Mother spoke little Thai; but

her husband in lodgings in the back of our house. She

the work was named Pai Ling. As I recall, she lived with

where with no warning, but apparently there was no prob-

assertive and could just tell people we were coming some-

fragments that formed a beautiful mosaic.

with some of their decoration coming from broken china

visited the spectacularly beautiful temples, gilded all over,

the klongs—canals—where we saw many merchants riding

water life went during the dry season I had no idea. We loved riding in boats on the

lem—she went out and got a charming little teak house that

We never did anything to clean or restore them be-

was two stories high. In front, in a corner of the yard, there

was a small stone house-like structure on a post; it contained

water you could see leeches floating, waiting for prey. You

often couldn't really walk up to people's front doors; you had

two seasons—rainy and dry. During the rainy season you

the water of the main river, and it was quite lovely. I was so petite

school that held classes in buildings that were right over the

friends was named Nina Dabney. We attended an American

I can't remember which month, but it was probably July. I

remember celebrating my 12th birthday in August in Bang-

k new friends she had made there and that one of my

friends was named Nina Dabney. We attended an American

school that held classes in buildings that were right over the

water the song Love in a Home from Abner,

she remembered her dashed hopes for the marriage that

whenever she heard the song Fanny

from Fanny

Li’l Abner.

I remember Mother being tearful

taped it to the wall and put paper decorations on it.

it together in the outline of a traditional holiday tree. We

course, but we cut out green construction paper and put

When I set out to write this article, I had no idea I would

get her autograph because I had torn the paper I was going

Marian Anderson who was in the audience; she’d sung in

some other kids as we lined up to get autographs from

recited the lines very stiffly. Before the program I joined

just a few lines about the responsibilities of that office. I

represent the secretariat and had

play because we left before the semester was over.

I certainly wasn’t hurt. I wasn’t sure, but maybe the

based on the way the teacher saw me as a person—funny lines

again, although we corresponded for a while. It was in the

New Mexico, our home, in 1958, and never saw Mildred

over and over again—over the mountains to Beirut.

Eventually, Mildred told us she was taking a vacation and

Eventually, Mildred told us she was taking a vacation and

bevaktopositioninBangkok,Thai.

Mildred worked for the U.S. government as a part of USOM (I never learned what that stood for). She’d been transferred to Bangkok.

Before Mildred left she gave us her convertible, and we marveled at how you could push a button and the whole top would roll back to rest on the rear of the vehicle. She’d nicknamed it Lapsy, for collapsible. Mother, whose full name was Frances Elizabeth Palmer Yost, sent a telegram to Mildred in Bangkok: "CAROL LAPSY I COMING ARIVE FIRST." By that she meant the first of the month; I can’t remember which month, but it was probably July. I remember celebrating my 12th birthday in August in Bangkok with American friends I’d met there and that one of my

friends was named Nina Dabney. We attended an American school that held classes in buildings that were right over the water of the main river, and it was quite lovely. I was so petite that I was given the nickname Molecule.

The climate in Bangkok was tropical, of course, and it had two seasons—rainy and dry. During the rainy season you often couldn’t really walk up to people’s front doors; you had to walk on boards supported on cans, or whatever, and in the water you could see leeches floating, waiting for prey. You also saw fish. There were walking fish, too, that could walk from one puddle to the next. Where the water life went during the dry season I had no idea. We loved riding in boats on the klongs—canals—where we saw many merchants riding up and down with their many wares of fruit or flowers. We visited the spectacularly beautiful temples, gilded all over, with some of their decoration coming from broken china fragments that formed a beautiful mosaic.

When Mildred heard we were coming—Mother was very assertive and could just tell people we were coming somewhere with no warning, but apparently there was no problem—they went out and got a charming little teak house that was two stories high. In front, in a corner of the yard, there was a small stone house-like structure on a post; it contained little stone images of spirits that were supposed to guard the house. We never did anything to clean or restore them because we did not have religious beliefs in support of them; now I wish we had kept them clean and upright, out of respect for the culture of the people we were living among. On our second floor, because orchids were so plentiful, we had our own orchids; to Mother, that was a luxury.

We had live-in servants. The woman who did most of the work was named Pai Ling. As I recall, she lived with her husband in lodgings in the back of our house. She spoke little English and Mother spoke little Thai; but Mother improvised a combination of rudimentary Thai and English to tell Pai Ling what was needed for a meal. Pai Ling had little dogs for pets. I loved them. A friend of mine gave her two more puppies from a litter she had. When a darling little dog named Mee was hit and killed by a car in front of the house, Pai Ling and I grieved terribly. She rubbed the body and said, "Sleep."
Feed Me

By Keith Michael

It all started with a Sunday email from WestView’s own “Maggie B’s Quick Clicks" Berkvist, forwarding an earlier email from Left Bank’s maître d’ Danielle Marie: “Maggie, we’ve got a new friend at Left Bank. He’s been sitting in the [flower] pots all morning. Hoping you can forward this to Keith? The little bird doesn’t seem sick but also hasn’t flown at all. He hops between plants. I think he might be hungry!”

Having a reputation as “The Bird Man,” I do receive frequent avian questions. Already this week, as well as Maggie’s query, there have been ID requests for an odd-looking bird that turned out to be a House Sparrow with an unfortunately deformed bill, and for a fancy pigeon seen hobnobbing on the street in Queens. I don’t know fancy pigeon breeds but Google helped me out.

The photo sent of the Left Bank visitor was clearly, to me at least, a recently fledged baby American Robin, a rust-colored, spotted-breasted dumpling. The rest of the description didn’t worry me. Though young Robins just out of the nest do fly (remarkably, after only about two weeks from hatching,) they don’t fly well, so prefer to hop, and, yes, it was likely hungry! Baby birds are ALWAYS hungry. Their frequent, sometimes metronomically regular, “cheeps” are like a dedicated ring-tone so that Mom and Dad know where to find them for the next meal delivery. Perhaps this one had traveled far afield of its immediate backyard, which is why M & D weren’t finding their wayward chick. By the evening, the news was that it had flitted into a tree further north on Greenwich Street—after briefly alighting on a brunch guest’s head.

The next morning, even before I was out of bed, I heard a Robin chick’s “cheep” somewhere high outside my street window. Yes, I heard it through a closed window, above the whir of the air conditioner, and amidst the clanging of yet another construction shed going up across the street. These kids have lungs! One of the many things that I continue to miss with the loss of my corgi partner-in-birding Millie, is our morning routine of going out early for her, uh, walk. It’s perfectly normal on a West Village street to endure an oblivious someone pacing up and down the block shouting into their phone about a business misunderstanding, but it’s uncanny how many side-eyes and distancing side-steps one gets if you’re standing still on the sidewalk staring up into a tree. Millie’s anxious indecision gave me the protection to stand around “with a purpose,” watching and listening for birds. Of course, I COULD still do this on my own, but I don’t.

After answering a barrage of work emails from home that took until lunch, I did finally get outside, with my camera. That “cheepster” was still at it, accompanied by three of its likely nestmates. Following the voices, I finally tracked down two of them in the White Ash tree, second tree west from the northwest corner of Perry and Greenwich Streets, nearly right across the street from Left Bank. One chick was on a branch to the right of the trunk, a sibling (likely a day or two younger) was still sitting on the nest to the left of the trunk, and two more were high in the Callery Pear tree to the west (heard but not seen.) Suddenly, the “cheeps” accelerated, I focused my camera, and in descended Mom Robin with a ripe White Mulberry, which disappeared in a blink. As did she.

White Mulberry? Hmm. The nearest White Mulberry tree that I know of in the neighborhood is along the Hudson River Park bike path at Gansevoort Street. I really hope that there’s one closer in someone’s backyard. Otherwise, this Mom Robin flew 18 blocks round trip to provide this sweet-treat for Junior, and she was back in a minute with another one! After a rotation with the other three chicks for food deliveries, fifteen minutes later she brought a purple Juneberry to Chick #1—also, the closest Juneberry tree I know is in HRP at Charles Street. Mom’s work is never done. This chick knows how to sing for her supper.

It’s time for me to sing for MY supper (“Feed Me!”): “Hello, Left Bank? Danielle? Hi! I’m a little late, but I’m leaving now to stop by for my pick up order. See you shortly. Thanks.”

Visit www.keithmichaelnyc.com or follow @ newyorkcitywild on Instagram.

She Paints While Dancing

Movement Artist Annika Rhea will perform and create her art in Revelation Gallery at St. John’s in the Village on September 28, 2021. Right, a shot from her premiere exhibit this month at The Box Factory on the Bushwick/Ridgewood border.

The exhibit is open by appointment only on Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 2pm-7pm through July 17th.


Photo credit: Sasha Bianca.
FashionWars

By Jeff Hodges

In the early 1980s, when fashion was starting toloom large on the cultural landscape, I found myself on the riser with a horde of fiercely competitive photographers who deeply resented my presence.

We were pioneering the use of video to record fashion shows—a medium that ended up transforming staid runway shows into highly choreographed spectacles. And though we didn’t threaten the mode of distribution claimed by the photographers, we took up a lot of real estate with our big cameras and unwieldy tripods. And because the designers had hired us, we couldn’t be bullied into altering our locations or configurations.

Photographers were an unruly bunch in those days. Arguments over positions or sightlines sometimes became shouting matches or fistfights. If a model didn’t display her outfit properly, curses and imprecations would erupt from the riser. When the first girl hit the runway, shutters clicked out of sync with the music, and cameras and lenses our videos had nestled into a thicket of cameras and lenses our videos had to look like they were from the only cameras in the room.

“At least she can be funny. I had the time of my life when the photographers started to appear on the riser. We shake our grizzled heads and make wry jokes about ‘phoning it in’ but as the numbers add up, the experience is not always.

“You can sit on something a little lower? Or pull back closer to my tripod? I’m sorry, but I’ve got your camera in my shot.”

Sometimes a photographer, exhausted from his trek to London to Milan to New York, would yell “Impossible! Impossible! I’m here to do my job just like you! Raise your camera!”

“No! No!” the photographers behind would shout. “You’ll block my shot!”

Sometimes the only solution was to say into the headset—“I’m having a problem with a photographer. I need a utility out here.”

Utilities were the guys who set up the cameras, ran the cables, and loaded in and out of the venues. They were large and muscular and not endowed with a surfeit of patience. A utility would growl over a photographer until a solution was reached—most often with a subtle tweaking of a camera position or a few simple adjustments in pitch and yaw. Mishaps on the runway were not uncommon. Slips, falls, wardrobe maladjustments, flash mob invasions by PETA activists, broken heels, hopeless entanglements in ball gowns and bridal trains were often a part of the show. One time a Japanese photographer, trapped backstage, bolted down the runway, weaving through the girls like an errant running back. Long afterward, at the start of many a fashion show, some wag on the riser would yell: “Cue the Japanese photographer!”

Eventually, we got easier on each other. Camaraderie re-

For more fun Philip Maier photos, go to karenquiskykstyle.nyc.

STYLE NOTES

MIDNIGHT BLUE AND BLACK BROCADE JACKET WITH SILK-SATIN LAPELS AND POCKET DETAIL. Engineered by Andrea T. 147 West 35th Street (by appointment only).

VERONICA BEARD 1970S STYLE “BEVERLY” HIGH-WAISTED SKINNY FLARE JEANS. Bergdorf Goodman. 754 Fifth Avenue.

BLACK JERSEY SPLIT CHEMISE WITH DIAMOND AND CHAIN T-STRAP AND COLLAR. Kookie Intl. 1201 Folsom St. San Francisco.

RED SNAKESKIN BOOTS WITH SILVER STUDS ENCIRCLING THE BASE. Charles by Charles David Dodger Chelsea boots at DSW. 40 E. 14th Street.

WEST VILLAGE MODEL KAREN REMPEL pays homage to Keith Richards in Engineered by Andrea T’s sensuous brocade jacket. Photo by Philip Maier.

“Camera 3! Get the Hem on the turn! Stay with her!”

“Camera 1! There’s a lens in your shot! Lens in the shot! Get that guy out of there!”

“Can I see how you plan to be shooting?” we’d ask politely. Most of the time the photographer would oblige, but not always.

“Get that guy out of there!”

As the numbers add up, the experience is not always.

“In the past couple of seasons, smart phone cameras have started to appear on the riser. We shake our grizzled heads and make wry jokes about phonin’ it in” but as the number of big shows starts to dwindle and the maw of social media widens in technical acceptability, we may have to face the fact that fashion shows are changing once again.

If fashion shows become downsized, and pandemics and carbon footprints keep us closer to home, “zooming” into a model may someday take on a much different meaning.
Style on the Street: *These Boots Are Made For Walkin’*

Photos by Dusty Berke and Karilyn Prisco.

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

New Women’s Apparel Brand

In 2020 my friend Adriana Berguer and I co-founded Ines, our women’s fashion brand. We live in a historic apartment in the West Village where we design pieces for our customers, individuals that are looking to add versatile, high-end products that can live in their closets forever as their personal styles evolve. Our pieces are season-less and classic, taking our customers from the beach to soirees with a simple change of accessories.

Our products reflect our values: American-made pieces with the highest quality, sustainable, and deadstock fabrics sourced from the Garment District in Manhattan and hand-produced in Detroit, Michigan, our hometown. We employ highly talented independent artisans to construct our garments. Our business strives to reduce our carbon footprint and, as such, all of our packaging is 100 percent biodegradable and made from plants.

In an effort to further promote sustainability, as well as eliminate unnecessary markups to our customers, we have eliminated the need for a distributor and sell small batch limited-edition collections seasonally, directly through our website and Instagram platforms. Our website is inesattire.com and our Instagram handle is @ines Attire.

— Adrianna Bojrab

**CO-FOUNDERS ADRIANA BERGUER (LEFT) AND ADRIANNA BOJRAB** on their block wearing the Ines Sienna Top and Ines Eclair Dress now available online. Photo courtesy of Adriana Berguer.
Billionaire Slumlord

By Deborah Privitello

Another Fourth of July is upon us, and I write this in remembrance of my late beloved husband Michael Privitello on what would have been our wedding anniversary. My children and I have been rendered homeless since April 2018 from our three-bedroom duplex on E. 50th Street. We have lived here since the 90s. Our billionaire landlord Francis Greenberger/Time Equites, dubbed the “Condo Co-op King” since the 80’s, has constructively evicted us.

We are the last remaining rent-stabilized tenants. Our apartment is the most valuable, worth well over three million dollars (more than he paid for the two buildings together).

His empire, headquartered at 55 Fifth Avenue, owns over 36 million square feet of real estate, and nets over four billion in revenues across 5500 residential apartments. Greenberger’s credo, “it’s the hold in real estate,” fueled his purchase of our building to convert to condos. He made sure to maintain his hold by managing the buildings.

The cruelty toward us for the past 20 years has been so painful and scary. And for the last three years homeless, forced to live in hotels and 16 months of that in the pandemic. We have everything we owned destroyed, including irreplaceable possessions of my beloved husband.

Just four days after September 11, 2001, Greenberger managed to close on the building while the world wept and the country was at a standstill. He even sent us a letter of eviction in 2005 for flying the American flag. This flag flew even prior to his purchase.

Since his ownership, we have been subjected to harassment, and our apartment has been left to rot and fall into disrepair. There have been numerous structural emergencies with collapses of ceilings and caving in of floors—one in April 2018 and another just two months ago in April 2021. The NYC Department of Buildings issued a second emergency vacate order for our apartment, emanating from the leaks coming from the main waste line in the building. Greenberger was again cited for taking away the judgment! After three years still homeless, Greenberger continues to fight us ruthlessly and illegally in court with no repercussions whatsoever.

As the founder of his Center for Social and Criminal Justice, he has never done anything for us resembling justice.

In the context of bad landlords Greenberger gives Steve Croman, a run for his money! Twenty years of suffering, my husband dead, we remain homeless, they continue litigation against us, emotionally, physically and financially broken, our apartment decimated and our lives destroyed.

Joan’s Shanghai

By Joan Klyhn

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

The Slave

Xiao Mei entered my life in 1940 when I was six years old and Shanghai was occupied by the Japanese. World War Two meant less to me than the invasion of my life by this young girl, barely twice my age.

“So, are you planning to write about that slave of yours?” asked Phyllis. I was visiting her in the late ’80s at her home in Guelph, a Canadian town. I distinctly remember sitting down suddenly. “I forgot all about her,” I mumbled. I had buried that time deep in my memory, but at that moment, my mind flashed back to my childhood. “Well she spent at least three or four years with you,” Phyllis continued relentlessly, “how could you forget that poor girl?” Vivid images came back to me as she talked. I see myself, up a tree, demanding my breakfast. I see her expressionless face as she awkwardly climbs up the tree and hands me the tray. That image, which I suppressed for years, cuts across my vision like it just happened; the day, the sun, the tree, being alone, hating my life, hating my parents for forcing on me this ugly, dull, sad, pockmarked girl. All I can think to do is punish her for being alive. Just as I took the puppy I vehemently didn’t want and threw it down the stairs and ran into my room and screamed and screamed and screamed.

“Well, you needed a friend,” my exasperated mother said, “and Xiao Mei’s parents were glad to let us take her.” I wanted a dog, too. I had cut out photos of some big dogs to show my parents, but I was given a handbag size pup, who yapped non stop. “It’s the perfect size dog for you. You won’t have to take it for walks; you can run around the garden with it.” My mother, again, settling the issue for walks; you can run around the garden with it. I had cut out photos of some big dogs to show my parents, but I was given a handbag size pup, who yapped non stop. “It’s the perfect size dog for you. You won’t have to take it for walks; you can run around the garden with it.”

My mother, again, settling the issue for walks; you can run around the garden with it.
The Slave continued from page 28

The film industry takes another hit.

By Roger Paradiso

The news that Amazon is acquiring MGM-UA is not surprising if you believe that the big fish eats the little fish to survive in this Darwinian and Amazonian view of life. The question to come next is: which industry giant or theater chain giant topples in the near future?

At the MGM lot in Culver City, California, in 1986, after we completed Moonstruck, there was talk of another movie being offered to me. What I remember of that day is that MGM was sold to corporate raider Kirk Kerkorian of Las Vegas. Many of the longtime workers at the lot were in mourning. Things would never be the same, they said. And they were right.

Kerkorian and others made a killing filleting MGM into many saleable parts. Ted Turner of CNN fame got a library of films for his Turner Classic Movie Cable channel. The recent Japanese buyers of Columbia Pictures bought the physical lot and got a much better location on the trendy west side of L.A., as opposed to the site in the valley of Burbank (which was formerly a desert). The frugal studio folks moved out there for the cheaper land back in the 1920s. Other assets were sold to the delight of Kirk the corporate raider. MGM-UA was left with a few trinkets, the biggest of which was the James Bond series which kept them profitable to this day. Now it will keep Amazon profitable.

So, don’t cry for me America. There will still be films. Things will just be different.

Digital streaming has taken over movie projection booths. The 50- to 75-inch TV has taken over movie screens. The theatrical experience is now happening in your living room, bedroom, or kitchen, or on your outdoor deck. Not so much anymore in those multiplexes and marquee theaters. As we all know, the family-owned movie palaces of yesteryear are now performance spaces for the arts or have been knocked down for condos or glass-box offices. The business of America is big business, they say.

And this is happening when you, the consumer, want it to happen. No more waiting on lines or rushing to analog clocks telling you the movie starts at 7:00 p.m. sharp. The movie show time happens when you want it to happen. No more lines at overpriced concessions where a popcorn and soda could cost you $6-12 per person. You can buy all the treats you want for your family for that price. Or better yet, eat whatever you want to eat at home.

Will there still be movie theaters? Yes, but not as many. We will go to them like we go to baseball games or the theater or a concert. Once in a while, the studies say. Yes, there is nothing like sitting in a dark theater or an outdoor baseball game with thousands of fellow humans, except on a cold snowy day or during flu season or a pandemic. So, going out to a movie as a steady diet like in the old days is long gone?

It died on our watch.

Nowadays, it is so much easier and more comfortable to stream your favorite movies that you pick from a library of thousands of films. Will you only get museum films made dozens of years ago? No, you will get streaming premieres of many films. And the big blockbusters? They will get to you soon enough. Maybe even the same day. Or in just a few weeks. Meanwhile, watch a film classic, or an opera, or even a baseball game. Amazon has contracted with the Yankees to stream several games.

So, what’s not to like? I haven’t even mentioned that many people watch movies outside of their houses—on laptops and phones.

But there are theaters that will survive. The grand and new movie palaces split up into 8-24 small movie theaters with 100-300 seats each may survive if they serve better food and glitz up the lobby with video games and other teenage wasteland activities. These new palaces of fashion will stream the tent-pole movies, the blockbusters, and the big studio movies. The boxy and square multiplexes will be bulldozed down for another corporate park or even worse, another strip mall.

The biggest winners of this deconstruction of filmgoing will be the little art house theaters which will show modern independent films and some old classics. There will be a select audience for these spaces, which are small and funky. This is where the film intelligentsia will go, along with the high school and college film students. It will be the home to underground films, noncommercial indie films, and larger Studio material that thrill the art house crowd. I can see these theaters renting their downtime, like mornings and afternoons on Monday through Thursday, to community groups that will show a local documentary or a rock video series. I can even see young children having a video game playground.

These art houses will lead the way to the next New Wave of Film.

I’ll talk about that next month. Write us a letter, or should I say email your thoughts, to the publisher.

The Digital Revolution and the End of the Film World as We Knew It

walls and doors, I could hear my screams being absorbed and gradually sounding hoarse, pitiful and finally tiny. Xiao Mei's job was to enter my room and try to deal with my rage. She would come in timidly, and I would stare at her through my tears. She stared back at me silently. I didn't want her more than I didn't want anyone or anything in my life. When I think of her now, I imagine she just made herself blank. How could she ever understand being off loaded by her family at just age. That would be sixteen or so. My mother picked out them in household duties and using their services until they reached a marriageable age. That would be sixteen or so. My mother decided to follow suit with Xiao Mei when she reached sixteen. My mother picked out some serviceable clothing, a pair of gold earrings, an umbrella, and sturdy shoes. A husband was selected, and my mother, Xiao Mei and I set out one afternoon with a can-vas downy bag. Just a few blocks away, we turned into a side street, really a narrow alley, and my mother led us to a decrepit gate, and confidently pushed it open. "This is where we got her originally," my mother explained. Inside was a tamped earth area, a kind of courtyard. Someone was washing clothes in a basin, and something was being poured in a bucket by another person. A few dirty children with requisite snotty noses were crawling around, the backs of their smocks open, exposing their buttocks so they could urinate and defecate at will. Judging from the stink in the area, they did just that. A man smoking a cigarette squatted silently in front of the house in the background. It spread across the lot, a long front punctuated by doorways but no apparent doors. Xiao Mei just walked over to the house and went inside. "Well, that's that," said my mother, "For all my efforts! You never appreciated anything." I looked around at the scene; I saw poor people living their lives, seeming neither happy nor unhappy. Xiao Mei emerged with an older woman and the two of them chatted briefly with my mother, who handed over the bag and a few banknotes. "Where's the husband?" I asked. My mother shrugged. "Hopefully working. He gets the money I brought, not that he earned it. It's Xiao Mei's years of pocket money." We left shortly afterwards, no tea being offered. It felt a bit of an anticlimax, a letdown after years of barely communicat-

ing with a being given to me. "As your slave!" my aunt Phyllis would repeat, "That poor, poor child!" They didn't respect her in the kitchen, either. It was so easy for me to forget my callous behavior toward Xiao Mei; to forget her entirely, to not even remember her face or anything distinct about her. Only years later did my memory dredge her up together with a sadness, a nebulous regret. I never saw her again. I never went down that alley again, nor did she ever wander along my boulevard either.

But there were other meetings. I saw them in the community groups that would show a local documentary or a rock video series. I can even see young children having a video game playground. These art houses will lead the way to the next New Wave of Film.

I’ll talk about that next month. Write us a letter, or should I say email your thoughts, to the publisher.
A Hundred Years From Today

By Robert Heide

There are many parallels today in 2021 to the years following the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918 and 1919, which is estimated to have killed forty million people worldwide. As of this month the number of deaths worldwide from COVID-19 is reported close to 4 million people. It took many years to compile the statistics of La Grippé, as the 1918 flu was sometimes called, and the fatality numbers of the COVID flu of 2020/2021 are, of course, still coming in but we know it’s not over yet. Another parallel, in my mind, is the four miserable years of World War I (1914-1918) and the four horrendous years of the non-presidential Trump presidency—both followed by death dealing viruses worldwide. In New York in June 2021 shootings are up 64% from last year at this time and New Yorkers are not looking forward to what is expected to be a dangerous, violent, and gun-tothin’ summer.

The 1920s roared in after the devastation of the teen years, and America was ready for a big comeback. The 18th amendment, Prohibition, and the 19th, women’s suffrage, were passed in 1920 and both had far reaching results. As far as the ban on drinking, the opposite happened almost instantly. Speakeasies opened up in cities and towns and all hell broke loose when gangsters like Al Capone and like minded businessmen-crooks began supplying illegal hooch to satisfy customers who couldn’t get enough of the hard stuff. It was drink, drunk, drunk and getting plastered all the way became the unofficial theme of the decade. The ‘speake’ functioned behind closed doors where singers and hot jazz bands featuring the likes of Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington were all the rage. J. Edgar Hoover, the infamous director of the FBI, had his hands full trying to keep a lid on it all but to little avail. Out in the country people made their own beer in barrels. My father, Ludwig made his in the cellar of our Village there. Men donned Raccoon coats, drove fancy speedsters and applied so much Vaseline to their heads they looked like domes. The ‘flaming youth’ in this Charleston era brought in many orchestras performing everywhere in fancy clubs; radio began transcontinental live broadcasts and floor and table model radios joined the household along with 78 RPM records and the Victrola. Songs like Hot Lips, The Black Bottom (named after a dance craze), Crazy Words, Crazy Time, Runnin’ Wild, You’re Driving Me Crazy, and Crazy Rhythm were on the airwaves. I’d Rather Charleston sung and recorded by Fred and Adele Astaire with George Gershwin on the piano was a highlight for me. The lyrics from one of my favorite songs (this one written by Victor Young in 1933) popularized in more recent times by Peggy Lee and Frank Sinatra A Hundred Years From Today, includes these lyrics:

Don’t save your kisses
Just pass them around.
Who’s gonna know that you passed them around
A hundred years from today?

Why crave a penthouse fit for a queen? You’re nearer heaven on Mother Earth’s green.
If you had millions what would they all mean A hundred years from today?

So laugh and sing, make love the thing Be happy while you may
There’s always one beneath that sun
Who’s bound to make you feel that way

The moon is shining and that’s a good sign Cling to me closer and say please be mine.
But just remember darling you won’t see it shine 100 years from today.

One hundred years ago or so the Ku Klux Klan’s racist activities drew comparisons to the French Revolution’s Inquisition, and 300 black people in the prosperous Greenwood section of Tulsa were summarily killed and their businesses and homes burned to the ground. At the same time Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theories and insights swept around the world, Wonder Bread, Wise Potato Chips, Betty Crocker’s Gold Medal Flour and Chanel #5 were offered for the first time and among many others Sears Roebuck and White Castle’s opened up chain stores across the country. Fantasy movie palaces in every city and town and every neighborhood opened to accommodate the 35 million Americans going to the movies at least once a week to see their favorite heroes including at the top of the list of the ‘silent era’ the great Swedish ‘sphynx’ Greta Garbo, (her first American film was The Torrent), the vamps Pola Negri, Mae Marsh and Vilma Banky, the number one flapper—Joan Crawford—in Our Dancing Daughters, the ‘sister stars’—Norma and Constance Talmadge and Dorothy and Lillian (Orphans in the Storm) Gish, Myrna Loy, Claudette Colbert, the red-headed ‘It’ girl Clara Bow, socialite Hope Hampton, Gilda Gray (I Wish I Could Shown My Like My Sister Kate), Lupe Velez, Norma Shearer, Mary (America’s sweetheart) Pickford, Janet Gaynor, Dolores del Rio, Loretta Young, Anna May Wong, Fay Wray, Zasu Pitts and zany comedian Pearl White, among many others. The male stars included heartthrobs Rudolph Valentino (The Sheik, Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, etc.) Ramon (Ben Hur) Novarro, John Barrymore, Gary Cooper, Douglas (The Thief of Baghdad) Fairbanks, William ‘Billy’ Haines, Mickey Rooney, Mickey Mouse—talking in the first sound cartoon in 1928 Steamboat Willie. As an aside these notables were also born in 1928 including Andy Warhol, Shirley Temple, and playwright Edward Albee. Charlie The Tramp Chaplin, Al My Mammy Jolson, Roscoe ‘Fatty’ Arbuckle, W. C. Fields, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, cowboy stars Tom Mix and Hoot Gibson, and the great dog stars Rin Tin Tin, and Strongheart.

What will happen in the 2020s as we march into the future? Who can say. But there is no doubt that we must be vigilant, persevere and fight on. I will conclude with a salute to Independence Day on July 4th by quoting the lyrics from a special, fun, patriotic song in a spectacular stage number from the 1954 musical starring Shirley Booth By the Beautiful Sea which takes place in Brooklyn’s Coney Island and which has music by Arthur Schwartz and lyrics by Herbert and Dorothy Fields. Following are the lyrics from one of the songs, Hooray for George the Third.

Hooray for George the Third
If it wasn’t for George the Third
Would there be a 4th of July?

No, there’d never be a 4th of July
Then where would you be tonight—tonight?
Where would you be tonight—tonight?

Without a Paul Revere?

Without a Liberty Bell?

Without a Banker Hill, Without a Washington Crossing the Delaware?

Although it seems absurd
If it weren’t for George the Third
Would there be a 4th of July, Oh no!

George started the whole damn show!!!

Starstruck—The Wonderful World of Movie Memorabilia written by Robert Heide and John Gilman published by Doubleday was consulted for this article. His most recent publication, Robert Heide 25 Plays is available on Amazon.
Boffo Laughs, a Bagel and a Schmear

By Kieran Loughney

“I’m picking up something for Joel Grey,” said the young man next to me as I shopped at a store in the West Village. Excited by Grey’s name, I exclaimed, “How cool!” The clerk ringing up my purchase, asked, “Do you know him?” I told her, “I sure know his work. I have some of his Dad’s stuff on vinyl, too.” Actor, singer, dancer and director, Joel Grey, now 88, is best known for his zany arrangements and topical musical spoofs is remembered as the Frank Zappa of the period. Katz left the group over a pay dispute and formed his own band. He cranked out a series of records, combining comedy and music informed as much by traditional Yiddish culture as by the jazz and popular music of the day. His genius took aim at any pop culture target. Katz released “K’nock Around the Clock”, a kosher take on “Rock Around the Clock” within a year of its debut. His parodies of cowboy songs included “Borscht Riders in the Sky”, “Yiddish Mule Train” and “She’ll Be Comin’ Round the Catskills”. High culture received a similar skewering: the opera Barber of Seville re-imagined as The Barber of Schlemietz. Most listeners welcomed his records like a delicious bowl of matzo ball soup, but his songs also offended more than a few folks, and by today’s standards would be dismissed as politically incorrect.

Novelty records, often derided for their inherent goofiness and widely considered low brow, usually saw limited and brief success. Katz’s records (performed in a hybrid mix of Yiddish and English—Yinglish) occupied a sub genre of the novelty category, making hit record status all but impossible. Mickey never soared in the charts and for most he has long since faded into obscurity. But to hear Katz’s priceless spoof of “How Much is that Doggie in the Window” entitled “How Much is that Pickle in the Window” (his work is easily found on YouTube), is to bite into a warm pastrami on rye in The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel’s world. Discovering those Katz records and listening to them on my turntable for the first time felt like a weekend at a classic Catskills resort minus the gefilte fish.

Katz’s Jewish heritage informed all his work, his records finding their most enthusiastic fans within that community. Klezmer, an Eastern European Jewish traditional dance music, featured prominently in many of his arrangements, usually including solos on his virtuosic clarinet. His comic sensibility, playful creativity (he released “Katz Pajamas, with comic versions of nursery rhymes), his seemingly helium-enhanced voice and his blending of ethnic and popular music styles set him apart as an original. For Katz to have raised a son of such prodigious talent as Joel Grey had to be destiny, or in Yiddish—beshert.

The young man at the adjacent register responded to my mention of Katz and spoke to me. “You’re familiar with Joel’s Dad?” he asked. I nodded, adding, “Yeah, tell Joel he has a fan in the neighborhood and tell him I think his Dad’s records are brilliant.” Joel’s messenger smiled and said, “Joel will be more excited to hear you’re a fan of his Dad.”

originating the master of ceremonies role in the Broadway musical Cats. He’s won an Oscar, a Tony, a Grammy and a Golden Globe. For me though, being a cash register and a couple degrees of separation away from Grey’s father, Mickey Katz, was a thrill.

Mickey Katz occupies a niche in music little remembered or understood today. For years, Katz’s records appealed to my fascination with the intersection of music and comedy. My affection for the genre went beyond nostalgia. I had heard records from the 1950’s and 60’s by artists such as Stan Freberg, whose recordings featured voice actor Daws Butler (Yogi Bear, Snagglepuss, etc.) and Sinatra’s bandleader Billy May and by Alan Sherman (Camp Granada) who also used the richest orchestration to back his silliest tunes. I loved their skewering of everything from commercialism to politics to celebrity. These artists performed social commentary with a melody, standup comedy that rhymed.

My introduction to Katz’s work, nearly as serendipitous as the encounter in the store, began in a dusty basement. A friend was selling the inherited record collection of his Dad. A serious collector, his Dad had stored these vinyl treasures on shelves, dividing them into distinct categories. I found dozens of early rock and roll, big band and jazz records filed there. What sparked my curiosity at the time, however: the section labeled “novelty records.” I climbed out of the basement with Vaughan Meader’s JFK parody album, The First Family, Stan Freberg’s comical History of The United States, Tex Ritter’s record Hillbilly Heaven and two Mickey Katz albums tucked under my arm.

Novelty songs, while a rare bip on the charts today, once enjoyed status as a music industry staple. This type of song takes a popular phenomenon—a social ill (Freberg’s takedown of the commercialization of the holiday in “Green Christmas”), a musical genre (gunfighter ballads were spoofed with Big “Irving—The 142nd Low Brow, too. In 1958, seven of these odd and exploitive it for laughs and with luck, a quick buck, too. In 1958, seven of these odd and funny tunes hit the top five on the charts. Of these, “Witch Doctor” by David Seville, “The Purple People Eater” by Sheb Wooley, “Yakety Yak” by The Coasters and The Chipmunk’s “Christmas, Don’t Be Late”,
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