State Moves To Save Community Newspapers

By George Capsis

Since 2004 more than 20% of all American papers have gone out of business, including 40% of weekly papers in New York. The principal reason for this decline is attributed to the decline in advertising.

While the disappearance of local and neighborhood newspapers is an issue even here in New York City, it is very important in small towns that depend on their local papers to fulfill the traditional role to tell local citizens what is going on in their town (they have no place else to look).

So it is not surprising that Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner of Saratoga came up with a new law to help keep newspapers alive—The Local Journalism Sustainability Act—and I am very pleased that our State Senator, Brad Hoylman, has endorsed it.

How does it work?

On the next page you will find a subscription form for WestView at $24 a year—fill it out and under this proposed law you get 80% back in a tax credit!

You have time before the holidays to give all of your friends and relatives a subscription!

Hell on Wheels

AN ERRANT CYCLIST RIDES ON A WEST VILLAGE SIDEWALK in violation of the city’s bike safety law. Photo credit: Kieran Loughney.

By Kieran Loughney

The threat is stealthy, silent, spine-tingling, and all too real. Our strolls through the West Village had delighted us before the danger emerged. But things changed.

Moving along sidewalks warily, we gently chided the culprits as they whizzed by. “Careful there, please,” we’d say. As the risk intensified, and our patience wore thin, we then scolded them for their recklessness.

“Hey, get off the sidewalk, you’re a hazard,” we complained. Our outrage continued to grow as encounters with these gormless miscreants increased in frequency. We shouted, made rude gestures, cursed. My fiancée Patti uncharacteristically screamed a slang term for a female reproductive organ at one fast-moving woman cycling within inches of us as we used a crosswalk. Patti’s fury shocked me as much as it appealed to my sense of justice. I took to bellowing at them, “It’s illegal!” My voice would echo off surrounding brownstones, startling our fellow pedestrians who often then exclaimed, “You’re right!”

The offenders, on bicycles, e-bikes, scooters, and skateboards, either responded vehemently with “F*** you,” or, unable to hear us through earbuds, continued unperturbed on their hazardous trajectories. We keenly understood that a sudden turn, or God forbid a stumble, could place us in the path of a speeding conveyance and result in a sprain, broken bone, head trauma, or worse.

According to New York City’s Department of Transportation, there are 1,375 bikes regularly. About $30,000 bike trips are made each day in the city. Across the boroughs, the use of bicycles increased by an average of 26 percent from 2014 to 2020. Midtown Manhattan ridership rose 61 percent during that period. Further increase in bike ridership is assured.

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Sarah Jessica Parker on WestView

In early November, as we were getting ready to leave Lenox Hill Hospital after a week long stay where I received a heart stent, Dusty handed me an email from our WestView editor, Kim, which was a copy of an article in Travel and Leisure in which Sarah Jessica Parker is asked “What makes the Village so special?” She, Sarah Jessica, responded: “The whole city wraps around you—and for me it is the relationship we have made with shopkeepers and proprietors of small businesses and restaurant owners and neighbors...” and then Sarah Jessica said something which gave me hope that I would get over many pains and get back to work and somehow get out another edition...“We have this extraordinary local newspaper called WestView which is amazing. The Editor is a neighbor and he is an elderly gentleman who’s really looked out for the senior community.”

It gets harder and harder to find the revenue to print a paper like WestView every month and now with an exhausted body with strange stabbing heart pains I entertained the thought to give it up—give up trying to find the money to get it out each month—but Sarah Jessica’s words have made me decide to go back to my desk once more and get out the December issue...Will you help me get out the 2022 New Year January issue for the start of our eighteenth year—see page 2 for more info...
VID Statement on Vaccination Requirements

Several neighborhood businesses have window signs which thwart public health measures to contain the pandemic. They contend that the regulations infringe upon civil liberties and equate mask and vaccination requirements with biases. No one in a free society has the right to endanger others.

These businesses are contributing to the health crisis and risk spreading new variants. They are indirectly legitimizing the belligerent behavior of some patrons towards establishments following the rules. This has ramifications beyond public health. Workers at responsible businesses are being put in harm’s way and owners have difficulty staffing with economic consequences. Rules work only if everyone works together.

We do not take our stance lightly. Our club takes pride in supporting small businesses. However, it is better to help the community by giving free masks or a thank you for vaccination, rather than getting publicity for a harmful policy. If we stand silent and/or frequent these businesses knowing that we as individuals are vaccinated, then we prolong this crisis, and they may not understand that their actions have negative consequences. Therefore, our progressive democratic club is endorsing a policy to support only establishments dedicated to protecting all individuals by working to end this health crisis.

Village Independent Democrats
Susan RS Gottesman, PhD, MD.

This is a shortened version of the original letter.

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ROCCO’S STOREFRONT SIGN, one example of a business thwarting public health measures to contain the pandemic. Photo by Alec Pruchnicki.

MIA SAYS: A mind is a tool you have to learn to use. Photo by Dusty Berke.

Give the Gift of Local News
Farewell 2021, What Else Can Go Wrong?

By Frank Quinn

WARNING: The following may contain misinformation. Reader discretion is advised.

Most of us in NYC interact with the police only when there's an emergency, but a few go to public meetings, like the one I was at this past summer to review the situation at Washington Square Park.

It was captivating to see the serious disrespect for those who run toward trouble when everyone else runs away, and I appreciate the volunteers from Community Board 2 who hosted the meeting. They endured taunts and borderline violence from disaffected WSP users who the meeting was organized to speak with; but fortunately, the violence didn't escalate because the police were on-hand as well. It was a wonderful event!

There is a large underserved community in NYC demanding structural reform with growing urgency. Trying to stay informed takes lots of time and effort searching the media for intelligent analysis while stepping around the word “vomit.”

It’s alarming when you consider what’s happening in America these days. In 2022 we might learn that Hillary Clinton played a colossal dirty trick during her 2016 presidential campaign that resulted in a corrupt investigation of her opponent by the FBI. The Manhattan DA thinks Trump cheated on his taxes even though folks at The NY Post say it’s a political prosecution. The NY Post has also done a lot of reporting, based on some digital artifacts they got from a former NYC mayor, and concluded that we all should contemplate whether the current president and his family have their hands in the cookie jar. But here in our democracy, the worst form of government except for all the others, we keep an open mind and give everyone the benefit of the doubt!

So, it’s important to educate yourself with information from the best sources available. For example, the venerable Washington Post recently broke news that the Manhattan DA convened a new grand jury to investigate Trump. WAPO says their sources “spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private legal proceedings.” That’s good, because it sounded like they might be anonymous because they did something wrong, like leaking a secret grand jury proceeding.

Interestingly, the current DA Cyrus Vance is leaving office along with Mayor de Blasio, and a new DA is taking over the Trump thing. His name is Alvin Bragg and he’s well-qualified with lots of marquee endorsements. He beat out a number of contenders in a hotly contested Democratic primary last summer. Then there was another election in November and Bragg had a Republican challenger, but nobody knew who he was and it didn’t really matter anyway.

With Mr. Bragg and a new mayor appearing in prime time this January, I’m looking forward to the new season and there’s a lot of ways to watch. Twitter is good for learning stuff easily, and you can tell the person is really saying it because they have this little blue checkmark next to their name. Unfortunately, there aren’t any basic cable type packages where you know what information you’re getting at a reasonable price, so you have to shop around.

And beware, the actual cost includes your time separating fact from opinion and the hard work it takes to function with competing thoughts in your mind.

Frank Quinn is a media executive, parent, and musician. Linkedin.com/in/frankquinn. Thanks to Winston Churchill and F. Scott Fitzgerald for their help.

Happy Holiday Season!

Wishing all of our West Village Neighbors a very safe and healthy holiday season. Please visit the updated website westvillagebroker.com for your real estate search across the city, real estate info, local restaurant and coffee shop suggestions and further resources.

Don’t forget to shop local and support our wonderful local small business owners across downtown Manhattan.

Scotty is a long time West Village resident, broker, and neighborhood advocate and enthusiast. Go to westvillagebroker.com for detailed info on buying/selling/renting, and to support local.

Let’s keep our mom and pop businesses alive!

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Progressives Organize to Impact Elections

By Penny Mintz

While bemoaning the results of last month’s elections with one of my relatives, a woman I love dearly, she put the blame squarely on progressive Democrats. “Progressives are too much,” she said. “We need moderation.”

Being one of those progressives, I cannot disagree more. I managed to maturely hold my tongue. But clear, convincing rebuttals to my relative’s position were provided by the speakers at the November 18th launch of the Manhattan-wide Progressive Action Network (MPAN), a chapter of the statewide New York Progressive Action Network (NYPAN).

NYPAN was formed in 2016 by delegates for Bernie Sanders to the Democratic Party convention. That was a time when Sanders’ platform positions—like Medicare for all, a $15/hour minimum wage, tuition-free public college, college-loan forgiveness, and paid family leave—were considered radical… socialistic… dangerous. Now, these ideas are practically mainstream. They have even been adopted by Joe Biden, the standard bearer of political moderation.

My relative echoed the argument of the Democratic Party, which has, indeed, blamed progressives for the poor outcome last month. But the reason for the poor result, said New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams at the MPAN launch, is that the Democrats did not do what the voters had asked them to do. People want “housing, healthcare, safety for everyone. Who could be against that?” says Williams, who was one of those 2016 Sanders delegates that formed NYPAN. Williams says that the MPAN launch could not have come at a better time. “We need to get politically courageous people into office. When we run a Republican-lite against a Republican, we’re going to lose.”

Jumaane Williams was one of several elected officials and candidates who spoke to the nearly 100 people who showed up at the MPAN launch. Another was Manhattan Borough President-elect Mark Levine. He said that, rather than rein in its progressive wing, the Democrat Party has to do the opposite. “The eyes of the world are on Manhattan,” says Levine. “We have to be the global leader on universal health care and the green new deal.” He urged the audience members to become advocates on the ground pushing the elected officials and pushing the state Democratic Committee to “go big.”

State Assembly Member Harvey Epstein, an original member of Progressive Action of Lower Manhattan, the downtown chapter of NYPAN, says that progressive politics is about electing people to advance progressive ideals. Epstein sees his role in Albany as an organizer. He creates coalitions among legislators in order to pass progressive legislation. When he was first elected in 2018, it was only Governor Cuomo’s agenda that got done, said Epstein. In 2020, when more progressive members were elected, “We got bail reform. We halted solitary confinement. We repealed walking while trans.” Epstein predicted that MPAN was going to be a collective that was going to impact Albany and make a critical difference in millions of lives. “There’s so much we can do if we engage.”

Zephyr Teachout, who is running for State Attorney General, also spoke at the MPAN launch. She asserted that we are in a “rising progressive moment” here in New York. She, too, suggested that, by coming together in MPAN, the people in the room would have the power to effect positive change.

Teachout described the office that she is seeking, that of the State Attorney General, as the “largest public interest firm in the nation.” She promises to use that office to take on corruption, defend New Yorkers from corporate abuse, pursue climate justice, and fight for civil rights, particularly voting rights.

MPAN’s immediate goals are to get members elected to the Democratic Party State Committee, which sets the statewide agenda for the party, to get members elected as Democratic Party District Leaders, and to get the New York Health Act passed in Albany. Opportunities were provided to take actions on those fronts.

Inflection Point

By Joel Lobenthal

Once again, the West Village must mobilize. NYC is being bulldozed out from under us, brutally upzoned by Mayors Bloomberg and de Blasio. Lame duck de Blasio’s latest valedictory proposal to upzone the landmarked districts of Soho, Noho, as well as part of Chinatown, may prove the most damaging to date. As Brian Pape wrote in these pages recently, it is “an unprecedented attempt to destroy a world-famous historic area of NYC.” The City Planning Commission—composed of development power brokers—has announced that it will continue its upzoning juggernaut under the new mayor. Thus, what happens further downtown could also be a harbinger of the West Village becoming home to 100-story condos, big-box stores, and, yes, more New York University expansion.

Ostensible justification for the Soho/Noho/Chinatown upzoning resides with the mayor’s favorite fig leaf: affordable housing, or should I say, “affordable” housing. As someone asked at the New York City Council’s public hearing on November 9th, “What kind of affordable housing demands a minimum income of $65,000 per year?” The allegedly affordable housing built by de Blasio is certainly out of reach for New Yorkers hit hardest by our housing crisis. Riddled with loopholes and exemptions, the mayor’s new proposal is actually going to disincentivize construction of any “affordable,” let alone truly affordable, housing.

But actual affordable housing, i.e., rent-regulated apartments in these districts, is certain to be eradicated, doomed by the profit incentive extended by vastly inflated height allowances for new construction. As the rent reform laws passed in 2019 failed to prohibit demolition of rent-regulated apartments, the new game plan of landlords is to dispense with rent-regulated apartment holdings, a strategy that can be applied to many low-rise buildings in the areas targeted.

Underpinning an alarming development picture is de Blasio’s recent lawless condemnation of nine 1840s designated landmark houses on Ninth Avenue. By law, designated landmarks cannot be demolished without formal review by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. But the mayor simply proclaimed that because these buildings were so structurally unsound, they had to be demolished immediately—so that yet another tower could rise. The mayor could not produce documentation to support his claim; but he really didn’t need to. The municipal agencies that, theoretically, could stop this kind of abuse—the LPC, the Buildings Department, the CPC—have each been captured by City Hall.

The Soho/Noho/Chinatown upzoning has been decried by U.S. Congress members...
Cohen Mansion

Located in the Greenwich Village Historic District at the NE corner of Washington and Perry Streets, this development includes the single-family 20,000 SF mansion at 145 Perry Street, home of hedge-funder Steven A. Cohen, and a six-story, five-unit, 10,000 SF familial condominium apartment building to the north (left in photo) at 711 Washington Street for his adult children. Major exterior enclosures are nearing completion, hence the removal of scaffolding around most facades. The yellow brick is meant to lighten the large masonry expanses.

**DEVELOPER/OWNER:** Steven A. Cohen/Greenwich Heights Corporation  
**ARCHITECT:** Leroy Street Studio and Higgins Quasebarth + Partners Architects  
Photo by Brian J Pape, AIA

Jane St Mansion

The proposed 12,000 SF 85–93 Jane Street mansion for Jon Stryker is under construction. Near Washington Street, Steven Harris Architects got a redesigned three-story, single-family mansion approved by the LPC in October 2016, with a restored and enlarged Roman brick facade that kept some openings, setbacks, and a cornice–line from the original designs. Major foundational and steel structural framing is in process at the central areas, while complete renovation of existing facades are on-going on the right side. Both parts of the façade will feature tan brick and dark framed openings to unify the street wall. Roof gardens and a courtyard provide outdoor cool respites.

**DEVELOPER/OWNER:** Jon Stryker  
**ARCHITECT:** Steven Harris Architects  
Photo by Brian J Pape, AIA

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!

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**- STEVEN HAFT, ESQ**

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**LOCAL STREETSCAPES**

THIS PERRY STREET VIEW shows the penthouse structure for their roof terrace and bulkheads. Both structures being built are nearly 100’-tall to their bulkheads. On Perry Street, the main entrance and garage door are at sidewalk level, with low ceilings to denote the private home aspect, neighboring historic townhouses of lesser size. Photo by Brian J Pape, AIA

THIS PERRY STREET VIEW shows the penthouse structure for their roof terrace and bulkheads. Both structures being built are nearly 100’-tall to their bulkheads. On Perry Street, the main entrance and garage door are at sidewalk level, with low ceilings to denote the private home aspect, neighboring historic townhouses of lesser size. Photo by Brian J Pape, AIA

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Member - Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Trustee Emeritus - Robert Redford’s Sundance Institute, Producer - Hocus Pocus, Dead Poets Society, Jakob the Liar.
Five years ago, on the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor I told the story in WestView News of my fathers' experiences as the first newspaper man at the scene of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor in 1941. He had received a call from a reporter at the Honolulu Advertiser where he was the City Editor shortly after 8 AM, the two men meeting in downtown Honolulu and driving the nine miles around the Pearl Harbor lagoon to the naval base on Ford Island. What they saw on the way to Pearl that Sunday morning, now 80 years ago, was published in a front page article in the December 8 issue of the Advertiser, the same day that President Roosevelt declared war on Japan. 'The story of the century' which the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor has been called, was not fully told in their article because military censorship policy prevented the details of the carnage behind the gates of the base to be published. The last sentence in the last paragraph of their story which described their trip has them entering the base, and then departing and driving back to town. In the intervening years, of course, the attack has been described in complete detail, most recently by minute, in a large format photo magazine History—Pearl Harbor—Minute by Minute—80 Years Later published by Meredith Corporation, 2021, which is on the stands now. The statistics have not changed: almost 3,000 military personnel and civilians were killed, 1,150 wounded, over 30 ships were damaged, destroyed or sunk, 159 aircraft damaged and 169 destroyed.

'Remember Pearl Harbor' became the American rallying cry until it was supplanted by Remember 9/11 in 2001 which coincidentally was also a surprise early morning air attack, this time by two hijacked passenger jets which deliberately crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan, causing them to collapse and remarkably killing almost the same number of victims. In the 20 years since 9/11 which plunged America into a war in the Middle East, now just ended, and the 80 years since the attack in Hawaii which was the beginning of World War II —only ending five years later with the drop of two atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—there have been island-hopping campaigns with the Pacific Fleet and Army units for NBC and Reuters Agency. Among others his byline appeared in Paradise of the Pacific Magazine—one of these articles complained that the light from his auto cigarette lighter was enough to get him arrested in Honolulu’s total blackout vigilance. And the rigors of those war years caused a rift in my parents’ marriage. They divorced, strangely remarried, and divorced again. The family departure from Hawaii had to wait until civilian travel was approved and after the war was over we sailed to San Francisco where we moved into an apartment on Telegraph Hill. The ship we sailed on carried Japanese prisoners on deck, cordoned off with barbed wire. Once on the voyage my brother Pete got too close and a Jap—as my mother angrily called him—tried to poke his eye out. Her anger was understandable; the reason we were all in Hawaii was because the Japanese, ignoring international agreements, had bombed the neutral territory of Shanghai and now they had seemingly followed us across the Pacific.

LaSelle and Helene met in the mid 1930s at a notorious café in San Francisco’s North Beach called The Black Cat and after a whirlwind courtship (in what my stepmother Veda later told me) were married in an alcoholic haze. Gil, who graduated from a prestigious journalism school at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, had an assignment—of a lifetime from his news agency INS, the International News Service, called by many of its members—I’m Never Sober—’or I Never Sleep’—to be their Far East correspondent and he had also been appointed news editor of the Shanghai Evening News and the Peiping—later Beijing—Daily News, both English language papers. The couple’s first stop, by train, was Portland, Oregon, to meet my mother’s parents. After that they hurried to Seattle to catch a slow boat to China—which is actually the title of a popular song of the time. In Shanghai they lived in Art Deco splendor in the International Settlement and hobnobbed with China’s elite, including those living in the different Settlement quadrants which included European, English, American, and Japanese. In his spare time my father wrote the first of his seven novels, all set in China, entitled Shanghai Deadline. Other titles included The Red Gate, The Dragon’s Mouth and The Golden Horde. He also began his career of short story writing for The Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, Argosy and other popular American magazines.

One day in Shanghai, at a party at the French legation, a Japanese bomb came through the stained glass ceiling and Gil decided that the time had come to leave. They engaged seats on the China Clipper for Honolulu and departed just in time to escape the hordes of Chinese refugees escaping what was later called ‘the rape of Nanking’. Shanghai fell and the violent and tragic story is told in Steven Spielberg’s award winning movie Empire of the Sun, which I watched recently on television. With the proceeds from the sale of Shanghai Deadline to the movies—it was ultimately called International Settlement—which starred one of the most beautiful women in the world, Doloris Del Rio opposite George Sanders and Charlie Chan’s (the Honolulu detective) number one Sonny Luke—they bought their house on Kalakaua Avenue, later torn down and replaced with a warehouse type building called The Fabric Mart which sells Hawaiian print fabrics including bark cloth, cotton and upholstery. In the years gone by, I have collected quite a number of terrific Hawaiian shirts, one vintage label having the name of Duke Kahanamoku, and am now wondering if the cloths used in the manufacture of some of them might actually have come from my old digs on Kalakaua Avenue.

John Gilman’s book, co-authored by Robert Heide, Home Front America—Popular Culture of the World War II Era—was published in 1995 by Chronicle Books on the 50th anniversary of the end of the War, August 6, 1945, which of course was the dawning of the Atomic Age. For stateside homefront World War II reminiscence, read Robert Heide’s “Little Bobby” in this (December 2021) edition of WestView News.
Notes From Away: An Embarrassment of Riches

By Tom Lamia

In order to keep up with events here in Maine I read one of the major statewide newspapers, The Portland Press Herald, where I find a full range of news affecting residents of the state. I also read my local weekly, The Lincoln County News, in which the character and exploits of my neighbors in Damariscotta, Boothbay, Waldoboro, Bristol and Wiscasset are given full coverage. This is where the good and bad news that I might reliably judge from personal knowledge is found. The Portland paper presents a different challenge. Its daily publication and statewide coverage give it more heft and perceived impact on the important stuff, such as politics, but the events and persons involved are seldom known to me. I am informed at a distance. Although I am familiar with the names and places, like all regular readers, I am not close enough to the individuals and events reported on to read between the lines and assess the personal dimension of the news.

In my weekly local paper the stories are about my neighbors, their children, their businesses, their dogs, geese, chickens and goats, so these stories generally raise my spirits, if there is good news, and cause an immediate “oh, no!” moment if the news is bad. When a South Bristol student makes the dean’s list at any college or institute, it is in the paper. When a horrible accident takes the life of a young person it is front-page news. The comic dimensions of stupid mistakes that result in embarrassing situations are fully reported, with photos. This is news of a community of individuals and businesses that I know to be careful about their reputations for honesty and fair dealing. A single mistake can do a lifetime of irreparable damage to a reputation. A recent example: a local lawyer of otherwise good reputation “borrowed” a small amount of client funds intending to repay. When his breach of trust was discovered it was raised and spent be rationalized? Collins’ vote to confirm Brett Kavanaugh for a Supreme Court seat was unpopular in Maine and that could account for the contributions to Gideon that poured in from hopeful Democrats. It may be simply that Collins was a four-term incumbent, a Maine native and a champion of Maine industry, while Gideon was from away.

A most perplexing question is why I only came across these election funding issues a few weeks ago when articles in political journals, Roll Call, The Intercept, Open Secrets, and others brought them to my attention. If there were a community newspaper in Sara Gideon’s town of residence, Freeport, I suspect that all this would have been far more fully reported. A similar situation in Portland or Bangor would be thought too minor for major press coverage and only the state bar association would be concerned. These are examples of the law of inverse concern. The smaller the context the greater is the risk of damaging reputational consequences.

The burr under my saddle that prompts these thoughts is a recent news report that Sara Gideon, defeated Democratic candidate in the November 2020 Maine U.S. Senate election, is sitting on unspent campaign funds of more than $10 million. This remnant was even greater, $14 million, on Election Day, but charitable contributions and possibly tag end campaign expenses have brought it down.

For context, consider that Portland raised about $74.5 million for her campaign and spent about $63 million, while her opponent, Republican Senator Susan Collins raised about $30 million and spent about $29.6 million. Together, these two candidates raised more than $104 million, seven and one half times the total amount raised by any two candidates running for a U.S. Senate seat from Maine in the state’s history. Collins spent what she raised, Gideon did not. Angus King, Maine’s junior senator spent $3 million in 2012 and $5 million in 2018 to win both races.

This dramatic increase in fundraising was, no doubt, the result of a battle for control of the Senate in a presidential election year. But that does not account for the major disparity in expenses between the two campaigns, nor does it explain Gideon’s nearly $15 million in leftover funds. Gideon lost the race by 51% to 42%, while her fellow Democrats running for Maine’s two Congressional seats both won and the Republican presidential candidate, Trump, lost to the Democrat, Biden, by 10 points. How can Gideon’s performance in either votes or money raised and spent be rationalized? Collins’ vote to confirm Brett Kavanaugh for a Supreme Court seat was unpopular in Maine and that could account for the contributions to Gideon that poured in from hopeful Democrats. It may be simply that Collins was a four-term incumbent, a Maine native and a champion of Maine industry, while Gideon was from away.

Gideon has the legal right to direct the surplus funds to people and causes of her choosing or to hold onto them without time limit. Whatever else one may wish to call it, this trove is a slush fund.

A further irritating fact is that Federal Election Commission reports show that the Gideon campaign put out an emergency call for funds just weeks from election day and took in $6.5 million additional dollars, $2.5 million of which came from small donors giving $200 or less per contribution. This unseemly haul came while the campaign was sitting on cash already greater than what she would spend in those last weeks. If she needed these additional funds for ads that would run in the last days of the campaign (as her campaign suggested) why did she not use them? Certainly she did need to do something more, as she lost the election by a large margin.

Now she sits on this pile of leftover cash for which she has nearly unlimited spending discretion. Of course, she could return it to her donors.
Jersey Boy Bobby in WW II

By Robert Heide

Growing up in the middle-class town of Irvington, New Jersey, a suburb of the big city of Newark during the time of the Second World War, I was often referred to as 'Little Bobby', a name tag I resisted as soon as I heard it. Yet, an older cousin of mine began to be called 'Big Bobby.' His father, my Uncle Fred, ran an attractive old-style enameled metal Deco diner with a neon tube sign reading Fred's Diner in big letters. My father had come to America from Freiberg near the Black Forest and would often take me to Fred's, which was located behind an Esso gas station. My sister Evelyn, who was fifteen years older took on a part-time waitress job there while still attending Irvington High School. The upper reaches of Irvington were primarily settled by German immigrants like my father Ludwig and mother Olga. She was of German-Russian descent and had come to America with her sister, my Aunt Emma. My grandma Amelia Straefel lived in Newark and was a woman of property and in the real estate business. She also sold fowl that she raised in her own backyard—ducks, geese and chickens—to the local butchers. One day she told me to watch her prepare the birds for slaughter—first strangling and then dumping them into a big pot filled with boiling hot water. With her knee-high boots and rubber gloves she would break the birds' necks, throw them into the pot and at the same time strip them of their pinfeathers. As a little tot I sometimes woke up in the middle of the night calling out "Help!"

When the war began after the sneak Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Little Bobby was becoming taller but my brother Walter, 12 years my senior, signed up with the Army Air Forces as a tail gunner and returned several years later with undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder. We moved from a big house at 34 Franklin Terrace, around the corner to a bigger house at 214 Elmwood Avenue, experiencing air-raid drills and blackout curtains on the windows in both places. There was a two-car garage at Elmwood Avenue that was next to a stream separating Irvington from the more upscale Maplewood. My father, whom the neighbors called 'Louie', planted and tended a large Victory Garden while my dog Jiggs looked on. I was devoted to the smart little Fox Terrier but devoted to the smart little Fox Terrier but while my dog Jiggs looked on. I was devoted to the smart little Fox Terrier but sometimes he would disappear, running around with a pack of wild dogs sometimes for days. I would be devastated by this, but once I saw Jiggs with his dog pals racing down the block, and he sadly ignored me. I always looked forward to supper that often consisted of a German dish they called Kugel, made up of mashed potatoes in a pot with pork chunks and thick sliced bacon which became my favorite particularly when homemade apple sauce came with it. My mother was a super cook, and made pies, Bundt cakes, chocolate chip cookies and her homemade jam was always available, stored in cold basement cabinets.

My father manufactured needles for the Singer Sewing Machine Company and often spent time at their factory in Elizabeth. One day he brought Evelyn home a brand new wood and metal floor model sewing machine on which she made her own design clothes such as padded shoulder suits and dresses to save money. After graduating from high school she began working at the Prudential Insurance Company in downtown Newark and around that time our father brought home an upright piano and both Evelyn and I started piano lessons. We would sing songs together like yes, Remember Pearl Harbor History in every century Records an act that lives forevermore The thing that happened on Hawaii's shore Let's remember Pearl Harbor As we did the Alamo We will always remember how they died for liberty Let's Remember Pearl Harbor And go on to Victory

Included in my list of favorite songs were the Andrews Sisters' Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else but Me and When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again which was originally composed during the Civil War. Evelyn collected 78 rpm records which we would play over and over again and dozens of colorful song sheets stacked up which she stored in a compartment in the piano bench. Of course we went to the movie houses to see Since You Went Away and The Best Years of Our Lives and second features and cartoons and newscasts every weekend. I remember one particular Popeye cartoon, now banned, that caught my eye entitled Don't Be A Sap Mr. Jap.

Two blocks from our house was a great old amusement playground built in 1840 Olympic Park. For me and the other kids in the gang on the block—two brother and sister teams, Norma and Richie Edgar, Mathew and Matilda Fontana, Peggy Millner, Lois Hausman, Billie Burlew, Norman Rhinehartson, and Dolores Borowski the Park was where we all went every chance we got. My parents and relatives flocked to the German beer garden there with beer served in big mugs and they would all get drunk. A bandstand featuring Joe Basile and his oom-pah-pah brass band could be heard at the great arch at the entrance way which proclaimed Olympic Park in bright white light bulbs. Once inside you would see a colored light water fountain, a huge roller coaster and an incredibly elegant merry-go-round (it was sold to Disneyland after the park closed in 1965). There were Dodg’em Car rides, a Caterpillar, a ride—a donkey attraction and what was called a weekly entertainment section with bleachers wherein you could watch circus acts like Hildy’s Midget-Troupe which was composed of the famed Munchkins from The Wizard of Oz. Bubbles Ricardo, an attractive blond became a singer with Basile’s Band crooning war songs like When The Lights Go On Again All Over the World... after a terrible fall from the high wire trapeze act which left her with a wooden arm which she covered with a long satin glove.

My father who kept rabbits and pigeons in cages outside the garage, for eating he said, and also liked to fish and go crabbing, and pickling eels, bought three bungalows in the shore town of Seaside Heights with its expansive mile-long boardwalk packed with games of chance and pizza and the fun time pier with the latest rides jutting out into the ocean and the great thing was that there was always a place to stay for extended family members who were invited for a week or two to hang out at the Jersey (some called it noisy-Joisey!) shore.

Robert Heide is the co-author, with John Gilmor, of a book entitled Home Front America—Popular Culture of the World War II Era which chronicles further adventures of the gang at Olympic Park, as well as John’s stories of Hawaii, where he was born two months before the war started. See his Pearl Harbor Story in this (December, 2021) issue of Westview News. Heide’s latest book is Robert Heide 25 Plays which is available on Amazon.

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An Interview with Michael D. Minichiello, Author of West Village Originals

By William Repicci

It was a little over 12 years ago when my better half, Michael D. Minichiello, came home saying he had met the quintessential Village character who published WestView News. His name was George Capsis, and he sounded like the crusty but benevolent pub-

ner, Michael D. Minichiello, above, has added up the “sum of the parts” to create a complete collection of interviews with longtime West Villagers. Photo credit: David Plakke.

Now you have a book being published this month that represents all those years of writing your column for WestView News. What do you want us to tell us about that book?

The book, like the column, is titled West Village Originals: An Oral History of New York City’s Most Unique Neighborhood. It features 90 interviews that I conducted over the years with a broad variety of long-
time West Villagers, all of them our friends and neighbors. It includes writers, journal-
ists, musicians, activists, business owners, and artists of all media who make up the fabric of this unique community. Whereas each had a story to tell of what brought them to the West Village and how they thrived here, each would then muse about the special nature of this community that had nurtured them over the years. Yes, they mourned some of the changes here but, ultimately, they had to admit that the West Village had given them a quality of life they felt certain they never would have found anywhere else.

What made you decide this was the time to publish all the interviews to date?

There’s a point where one senses that the sum of the parts has added up to a whole. The book focuses on a time when the West Village was going through enormous change. Certainly, the AIDS epidemic and the influx of tremen-
dous wealth were two of the factors that drove these changes. However, as much as things might have changed, one thing miraculously remained the same for all those interviewed: the sense that the West Village is still an Oz-like community like no other and that there is no place like home.

When did you begin writing for WestView News?

In 2008. I’m a graphic designer by pro-

fession and I called George as writer and it seemed George was always looking for new talent to realize his vision for a local paper.

You qualify as a West Village Original yourself now, don’t you?

I celebrated my 47th anniversary of mov-
ing to the West Village this past October 26th. I remember that day very clearly. Still a teenager, I had packed my belongings in the back of my mother’s Volkswagen station wagon, left the family home in Nyack, and took the 40-minute drive to my new apartment on Perry Street. I unpacked, drove the car back home, had lunch with my parents, and then my father drove me to the bus stop where I waited for the bus back into town. After we said goodbye and my father drove away, I cried my eyes out as one does when they are ending one chapter of their life and beginning a new one—even one as exciting as this was. I’ve never regretted the move. However, the Perry Street apartment would be short-
lived as I soon realized the drawbacks of an apartment on the ground floor front. A few months later, I moved to a third-floor apartment on Grove Street. And, of course, since 1990 we’ve lived on Horatio Street in an apartment on the eighth floor. So, I’ve been moving up!

You talked about monthly meetings at George’s house that sounded like gath-

ers of the Algonquin Round Table. Is that a fair analogy?

I can’t say that anyone will be writing books about our witty bon mots from those meet-
ings, but as far as being a group of literary-
minded people who gathered regularly to share story ideas, there is some fair com-
parison to be made. Like the fabled Round Table, there would be the regulars one could count on seeing every month. And then there were those who flitted in and out. We were all very different people, but there was one thing that tied us together: a love of the written word and of the special nature of the West Village.

Known as “Little Bohemia” since 1916, New York City’s West Village has long been a haven for intellectuals, writers, artists, and activists. Michael D. Minichiello’s entertaining book—a collection of his columns that appeared in WestView News—captures both the modern day changes and the essence of this unique neighborhood through ninety insightful interviews with your friends and neighbors. West Village Originals paints an enlivening portrait of this Oz-like neighborhood where the prevailing sentiment of its denizens is that there is no place like the West Village.

“A delightful group portrait of the West Village as it has been and can be!”
–Kirkus Reviews

Available at
Three Lives & Company
238 West 10th Street, NYC

A favorite WestView column is now a book!
Super Hero XV: A Grand Way to Pay a Bill

By Robert Kroll

No one in his right mind would pay this bill. It was six years overdue, a penalty for a crime committed by a now defunct plumber. It was not clear that the “crime”—failure to file the annual steam boiler report with the Department of Buildings Boiler Division—was even committed. Many reports are sent to the DOB and never seen again. But it was the principle of the thing.

Our cooperative building had a mark on its record, a rap sheet as a scofflaw. Yet we take pride in following the rules of the game. The game here is that if you use a steam boiler to heat your building, you must have that boiler examined by an inspector who looks at the many knobs, pipes, gauges, and connections and determines whether they are all as required by the boiler code.

In the Teddy Roosevelt times of the last century, it was a rare week when one of these steam boilers did not blow up and send residents scattering for cover. But during the past 120 years, like so many consumer items that generated lawsuits and paid for the college educations of lawyer’s kids, the steam boiler was redesigned and made innocuous. These squalling beasts now work better with less, rather than more, steam pressure. Our boiler barely reaches two pounds of steam pressure on a good night. The worst that can happen is that they run out of water and leave everyone shivering in their down comforters.

It was the principle of the thing. The requirement of an inspection report still exists, and it must be complied with. And when buildings’ owners flout the rule, they are hit with $1,000 fines. If a fine isn’t paid, it remains on the record of the building until the building is sold or refinanced, at which point the piper, that is, the City of New York, gets its due. Our building was refinanced in 2020. Before the new loan could close, the bank insisted that either the 2014 boiler report violation be paid or vacated, or that the owners of the building post the $1,000 in the bank’s escrow account, where the deposit would be held there until the matter was dealt with.

So, as superintendent and managing agent of my building, I took it upon myself to pay the fine and recover the $1,000 from the bank’s escrow account. There is where our tale begins.

I proceeded, pre-pandemic, to pay the bill. I searched the Department of Buildings online website. Because of the lockdown, the office of the boiler division was fully closed. Fines could not be paid there. I checked to see if there was a phone number or two I could call, to make a credit card payment to a city functionary and deal with the violation. Sorry. The phone numbers I called were either not answered or were answered by city employees who not only couldn’t, but wouldn’t, take my $1,000 fine payment. Furthermore, they did not know of a phone number, among the thousands of numbers, where someone with the authority to accept my company credit card would answer said phone.

More research in the past eight months revealed that there was a city website that handled fines and violations. I’ve made thousands of payments over the internet in my day and, surely, there was my answer.

I went to the designated website filled with a feeling of immense satisfaction that I hadn’t “let the bastards get me down!” But alas, the site was one of those infuriating ones that never seem to work as designed. It took you round and round from the “pay bills here” button to the FAQ page that explained that you could pay bills online and to press this button here and you would be enabled to do so. Actually, no. You couldn’t pay the bill at the “here” button.

Months went by, and summer turned to fall. Humans were returning to their places of work, vaccinated and ready to go. I returned to my search for an actual human, not a robot, who could answer a phone, to be given the chance to clear our record and pay our fine. By the middle of November I was able to locate a phone number for the Boiler Division Penalties Office (or a name to that effect). I dialed the number, and a human answered. I explained what I wanted to do and that I was not able to do it as I was told I could. The human, who we’ll call Mark, was most sympathetic and eager to solve my “problem.”

He walked me through the so-called DOBNOW website. He urged me to sign on. I attempted to do so but was thwarted because the DOBNOW website did not recognize the access code I had created. Mark showed me how to request a new password. After a number of tries, I was able to get an email from the DOBNOWers with a genuinely unmemorizable password. I eagerly copied and pasted it into the DOBNOW site to be among the anointed who were registered to be permitted to pay six-year-old fines to NYC’s government.

From there it was a mere hop, skip and jump, times ten. The most fiendishly complex and anti-intuitive payment website turned up. But Mark was there all the way, explaining every incomprehensible instruction. After 45 minutes I received that message I had been seeking for 18 months, that my boiler fine was paid. I took a photograph of the receipt to my bank asking that the $1,000 they held in escrow be refunded to our co-op bank account. I received a message in reply: “We have received your documentation from the Department of Buildings and will be looking into it. We will get back to you when we are able to confirm the legitimacy of your contention.”

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The Kallikantzaroi Who Stole Christmas

By Anastasia Kaliabakos

Although winter brings wind and cold weather, it also offers immense joy and holiday cheer to the entire world. Christmas is my favorite holiday, and I love to celebrate with a big family gathering each year. As our family is Greek, my mom and I prepare traditional Greek dishes, like lamb and spinach pie, for everyone to enjoy. The warmth that emanates from these get-togethers obliterates any of the chills one might get from the frigid weather of the season.

Something I also love about winter is the variety of traditions and stories that make the season so unique. Of course, everyone is familiar with the tale of St. Nicholas, which has evolved into the more modern story of Santa Claus. Because Santa is such a benevolent Christmas figure, it is hard to imagine anything that would contradict the gaiety he brings to the table. However, this year I want to explore the Greek story of the Kallikantzarois, whose story is the antithesis of those of holly jolly characters like Santa Claus and Frosty the Snowman.

In short, the Kallikantzarois (plural of Kallikantzaroi) are Christmas goblins. Every year, for twelve days between Christmas and the Epiphany (which is on January 6th on the Greek Orthodox calendar), these goblins terrorize the mortal world with their antics and malevolence.

This is interesting because, according to ancient Greek, the term Kallikantzaroi comes from the words “kali,” meaning “good,” and “kantharos,” meaning “beetle.” How the goblins are meant to fit that description is a mystery for sure, but the beginning of the Kallikantzarois myth can probably be traced back to the ancient Saturnalia celebration, one of the most famous festivities of antiquity that we know about today.

The Kallikantzarois are said to live under the ground for the year, their sole purpose being to saw down and destroy the world tree, which is acknowledged by many different religions and cultures and is thought to connect the heavens, earth, and the underworld with its roots. The Kallikantzarois seek to get rid of this tree because they want the earth to collapse in on itself, thereby exterminating the human race. After the Epiphany, when Orthodox priests with holy water make their rounds to all homes, the Kallikantzarois flee back under the earth, as they are afraid of all things holy. When the Kallikantzarois arrive back at their home deep within the ground, they find that the world tree has fully grown back during their absence, and thus will begin their annual task of cutting it down all over again.

Some of the antics in which the Kallikantzarois partake are relatively mild, such as breaking furniture, spoiling people’s holiday meals, and even relieving themselves in yards. Similar to St. Nicho-

las, they can sneak into homes through chimneys. But there are several ways to keep the goblins at bay. For example, one might hang a pig jaw under the chimney, burn an old shoe, or make the mark of the cross on the door to prevent the Kallikantzarois from becoming unwelcome visitors. Alternatively, leaving the fireplace burning and throwing some salt on it can create a crackling noise that can frighten them. However, the most unusual method of protection is to place a colander on the doorstep of your house. Allegedly, the Kallikantzarois cannot count above two, since three is a holy number and pronouncing it would kill them, so they will be stuck recounting the holes from one to two, and back to one, until the sun rises or until they get bored enough to leave the residents alone.

Because the creatures are mythical and appear across traditions beyond the Greeks, the physical characteristics of the Kallikantzarois change from region to region. They are generally depicted as a mixture of different animals (like the mythical chimera). Depending on whom you ask, a Kallikantzarois (the os versus the ending suggests a singular gremlin) could be part horse, monkey, or goat, but they are always very hairy. Sometimes they are enormous, taller than humans. Other times they are smaller than people, with large heads, red eyes, and a distinctive and horrible odor.

Although the Kallikantzarois are ancient mythological creatures, they still live on today in contemporary media. For example, the popular TV show “Grimm” featured the Kallikantzarois in an episode of season four called “The Grimm Who Stole Christmas.” Additionally, the Gringotts goblins from the “Harry Potter” franchise are referred to as Kallikantzarois in Greek translations of the books, hearkening back to this old but significant tradition.

Whatever you may choose to celebrate this winter, remember the mischief of the Kallikantzarois—surely, they aren’t going to be on anybody’s “nice” list!

Anastasia (Stacey) Kaliabakos, a graduate of the Brearley School, has contributed to WestView News since 2018. Currently, she is a Dana Scholar majoring in classics and philosophy at the College of the Holy Cross, an opinions editor for Holy Cross’ newspaper The Spire, editor-in-chief of the Parnassus Classical Journal, and an avid matcha latte consumer.
Dog Days

By Jeff Hodges

Riley is one of those dogs you keep on a tight leash. She attacks skateboarders and sanitation workers, stops deliverymen dead in their tracks, runs deer, and once treed a fisher cat, a cousin of the wolverine. It’s a good thing she only weighs six and half pounds.

My hometown had no leash laws and no neutered males. Dogfights were ubiquitous and bloody, and the streets had undertones of gang violence, with each alpha dog holding their turf against all comers. The exception was an amiable basset hound we called the Bum. The Bum lived on the outskirts of town and spent his days roaming from house to house, accepting handouts with quiet gravitas. I remember my mother once saying, when the autumn light was fading, “Throw the Bum in the car and we’ll give him a ride home. He shouldn’t be walking down the highway in the dark.”

I was a devotee of Albert Payson Terhune, the author of Lad A Dog, Lad of Sunnybank, The Heart of a Dog, Wolf, and countless other books extolling his idealized life at Sunnybank Kennels in northern New Jersey. I was naive enough for Terhune’s racist vilifications of the Jackson Whites to elude me, and I named my collie Wolfie in tribute to his world.

I was determined to breed Wolfie with another purebred collie so I could raise a litter of Terhune clones with valiant hearts and enviable confirmations. When Wolfie came into heat we would ferry her to suitable mates, but to no avail; she would fight and bite and send every suitor into sulky retreat. It turned out she had her heart set on King, a German Shepherd down the street who sired her litter of nine puppies.

When Wolfie came into heat, every male dog in town showed up. Camped out on the lawn, lurking by the back door, brawling in the driveway, they made life a living hell for the two weeks she was in estrus. The worst of it was the avidity with which they would mount every family member who carried her scent. My mother and sister carried spray bottles filled with water and ammonia; I fought them off with fists and feet. I was banned from sandlot football because my amorous retinue would enter the game to tackle or defend me on every play.

When I was thirteen I went to work for a woman who raised show dogs. Her kennel consisted of a dozen German Shepherds with bloodlines as long as European royalty. I discovered that Terhune had omitted some earthy details from his books—like cleaning dog runs, breaking up fights, and restraining a female while being inseminated with a plastic syringe.

German Shepherds are prone to a disease called hip dysplasia, which in those days was pretty much of a death sentence. When we had to put a dog down, the vet would arrive with a needle loaded with pentobarbital and my boss would tearfully enfold the unfortunate recipient in her arms until it expired.

We’d haul the corpse to the unmarked graveyard and then undertake the ghoulish task of finding a spot that didn’t already contain skeletal remains. After we decided on a promising location, I’d start digging. It takes a deep hole to bury a Shepherd and it was infuriating when I’d unearth a previously interred inhabitant a couple of feet down. While I fumed, my boss would offer a forensic speculation like, “I think that’s Mimsel. She jumped off the roof at Gracie Mansion!”

Riley’s great-aunt Billie died in a fight with a Dalmatian over a potato chip. Riley wears a studded leather harness similar to those worn on Christopher Street 40 years ago, and it’s more than a fashion accessory; it’s a lifeline for yanking her from the jaws of death. It isn’t much use in the countryside, though, where she runs unleashed—always on the lookout for bears, bobcats, and coyotes to add to her list of vanquished foes.
Hush, a Thrush

By Keith Michael

Charles Lane, 11:28 am. Weather cloudy. 59 degrees.

Quite frankly, I’m on my way to Hudson River Park, hoping to take a good photograph of a neighborhood bird for my December (this) WestView article. The inspiration for my monthly recounting of an instant of West Village or greater NYC avian life always comes, literally, on the wing. Each time I hit send on my latest article, the search begins to meander through my mind for, “What’s next?” That’s one of the things about bird watching—sometimes you have to wait.

In New York City, we are lucky. Never are we far away from a remarkable bird, and since every bird can be deemed remarkable, we’re even closer. But. You might have to wait for it. I would say that most people are surprised by how rich the bird life is where we live. According to eBird, a citizen science bird reporting application, in the last century of record keeping, 342 species of birds have been seen at least once within the five boroughs. My current West Village list stands at 108 species, and I know that others have seen around a dozen more. But it’s not like the bird house at a zoo where you walk along the raised path of the aviary with helpful identification plaques on the railing. “Oh, up there’s the red one,” Check. And, “Over there’s the green one.” Check. “Have you found the brown one yet?”

Finding a bird might be as seemingly insignificant as noticing a leaf twitch in a bush or hearing an unusual tsk from high in a tree. One could be jolted by the alarm call from the neighborhood Blue Jay police or only catch a fleeting glance of a soaring bird above an intersection. Seeing or hearing “the bird” might increase your heart rate or light a fire under your feet to hurry to the other side of the street to extend that fleeting glance. Or it might freeze you like a statue in a game of Red Light, Green Light. This is, perhaps, my favorite. “Shhh. It’s RIGHT there. So close. Be like a tree. Part of the street scene. Hope the bird doesn’t notice and fly away.” That’s the moment you wait for. You have to enter into their world. A bird is usually busy. So busy. Finding enough food to fuel the industry it takes to find food is a never-ending cycle. Also, their eyes are always active to anticipate a threat. Maybe a hawk is lurking above? Maybe they discovered a damaged feather which might mean they’re a split second slower to avoid a car, a bicycle, a dog, or a cat? Is the weather too hot or too cold, or might a sudden storm destroy their nest? Or maybe they’ve heard rumors from friends that a collision with a window reflecting blue sky might, out of nowhere, end their life?

A bird just hopped up from the 1820s Newgate Prison cobblestones of Charles Lane to the 21st century Richard Meier wall abutting the lane. Maybe this is my Bird of the Month! Slowly I walk. Step by step. Easing my camera up to my eye. The bird is watching me but not flinching. I click off a few distant shots—that might be as good as it gets. But I keep taking one step after another, focusing on that curious eye. It gives me a fetching three-quarters over the shoulder fashion magazine pose, then spins about for a full-frontal glare. It IS a good bird—a svelte, aurora-tailed, spotted-breasted Thrush. This might be the last one I’ll see this season as they’re on their way south for the winter. It keeps glancing at me with one eye then the other, intermittently gazing up, tail perkily cocked. Perhaps it’s a lucky survivor catching its breath after a recent close call from a hawk’s chase or it’s stunned by a glass curtain wall strike. Rather than fleeing, it lets me pass by. I seem to be the least of its worries.

It’s rare that I decide to leave the bird before the bird leaves me! This one has been so cooperative that I hope it’s okay. Thank you Hermit Thrush for your time. Goodbye and good speed to you on your journey.

Visit keithmichaelnyc.com or follow @newyorkcitywild on Instagram.

If Anyone Can Put an AIDS Cure Together, it Will Be You!!

By Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D.

That is what my doctoral thesis advisor, Nobel-laureate Gunter Blobel, MD, PhD told me, and now I say the same to you: If anyone can put an AIDS cure together, it will be you! Impressive and rapid breakthroughs in science are possible only when committed people band together to propel science forward. We have just witnessed this with multiple COVID vaccines developed and deployed in the span of 20 months. Yet in 40 years of AIDS, no vaccine, no cure. Not even people living with HIV are pushing for a cure.

Certain rare individuals are naturally resistant to HIV infection. This natural biological resistance has been used to cure AIDS in just two people so far. Multiple groups working on developing safer and broadly-applicable cures based on the same science have run into roadblocks. A biotechnology I invented at The Rockefeller University can increase the efficiency of these approaches. (I know I may be losing you with jargon, but please stay with me!)

Known as Chromovert, the technology uses “molecular beacons” to detect and purify even exceedingly rare, optimally engineered curative cells. The same tech has already been validated in other applications. For example, a biotech company I co-founded used it to create cells that mimic human pain perception to discover a non-addictive clinical stage pain blocker fast-tracked by the FDA. In addition, it has been used in flavors research in collaborations with Coke, Kraft and Nestle. The technology I invented at The Rockefeller University alumnus and biotech inventor Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D., is the president of Research Foundation to Cure AIDS (RFTCA) as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. In exchange for $1, RFTCA obtained a royalty-free worldwide license to the technology I invented. RFTCA has collaborations with Columbia University Medical Center, New York Stem Cell Foundation and New York Blood Center to develop a global cure on a not-for-profit basis.

I need donations from $1 to $1 million to cure and end AIDS for good. If you care about this cause, I would be happy to meet with you at any place and any time to discuss how we can team up to end AIDS for good. I can be reached at kambiz.shedkar@rfcta.org.

December 1 is World AIDS Day. With your help, perhaps one day we can use it to mark the birth and rolling out of a global cure as well as a remembrance of those lost.
Gansevoort Street

By Brian J. Pape, AIA

Gansevoort Street (formerly Great Kill Road, renamed 1837) along with riverside Fort Gansevoort (1812), were named for Revolutionary War Gen. Peter Gansevoort (who died in 1812). The fort had to make way in 1851 for infill and freight yards for the shipping piers, according to the designation report for the Historic District. The residential and industrial area transformed over the years to a marketplace, then as a meatpacking district, and now as a shopping and dining magnet.

Home design company Restoration Hardware is developing a hotel, RH Guesthouse, at 55 Gansevoort Street in originally a 5-story store-and-loft building, aka 53-61 Gansevoort Street (built 1887 by Joseph M. Dunn), originally owned by the prominent Robert Goelet family, at the time of the widening of Gansevoort Street.

Their rooftop addition had been the biggest sticking point for the LPC, but it now appears masked behind a restoration-style parapet. Note the unusual curved glass and sash corner windows, matching other historic style windows.

DEVELOPER/OWNER: Restoration Hardware ARCHITECT: Caroline Otto of TriBeCa-based Anderson Architects, and preservation consultant Jacqueline Peu-Duvallon.

Photo by Brian J. Pape, AIA

On the same block as RH Guesthouse is 63-65 Gansevoort, the one-story garage turned bar, on the right, and 69 Gansevoort, (ca. 1949) the one-story restaurant at the left, and each have orange mock-ups of their proposed additions on their roofs. Between is 67 Gansevoort (ca. 1887), neo-Grec French flats once owned by the John Jacob Astor family, a landowner of large parts of Manhattan. These rowhouses still dominate many of the short streets in the district.

in February 2021, but the heavy fenestra tions and nearly vertical ‘skylights’ were too much out of character to pass muster, putting the project on hold.

DEVELOPER: William Gottlieb Real Estate ARCHITECT: BSKK Architects

Photo by Brian J. Pape, AIA

69 Gansevoort is the current replacement for a four-story rowhouse and four-story rear tenement reduced to two stories and connected to the restaurant. Instead of taking an approach of restoring the street-front of rowhouses, the architect presented a setback addition design of striding contemporary style grid to the LPC in August, while keeping the restaurant front. It is still in redesign.

ARCHITECT: Bromley Caldari with Higgins Quasbarth & Partners Preservation Consultants

Hell on Wheels continued from page 1

in the wrong direction, ignoring traffic lights, buzzing crosswalks, violating city laws? Thanks for your small carbon footprint, cyclists. You’re advancing a cause that we share through our support of several environmental groups. But must bike tires treading on pedestrians’ comfort and safety, and in some cases literally on pedestrians’ bodies, be the price for a greener city? Are the riders simply lazy, avoiding traffic, trying to save time? Do they relish frightening pedestrians? When an upset pedestrian complains, why do they respond defensively? Do they make a leap of logic that goes something like: “I’m saving the planet by using a bike, so everyone should yield to me...”?

While heedless cyclists pose a risk to others, they compromise their own safety too. A recent scene captured a trifecta of recklessness. A man with a young child perched on his handlebars rode south on a crowded sidewalk on Eighth Avenue. Swerving among pedestrians, cellphone in his right hand, he carried on a loud conversation. Neither he nor the precariously positioned child wore helmets.

Information about bicycle/pedestrian crash statistics, and enforcement of bike safety laws, can be hard to come by. After speaking with staff at the mayor’s office, the NYC Department of Transportation, and the Sixth Precinct of the NYPD, I was directed to submit questions by email, and in response was sent links to web pages containing some statistical data—much of it outdated, difficult to access, or of little relevance.

The laws regarding the use of bicycles in the city, however, are straightforward. Cyclists over the age of 12 may not ride on sidewalks, must stop at red lights and stop signs, and are subject to all rules governing motorized vehicles. Bicycles must be equipped with lights and bells. Riders are required to report any accident involving injury or property damage to police, and share contact and any insurance information with the victim. Hundreds of injuries have resulted from pedestrian/bike crashes, one uptown incident resulting in the death of an actress. Filing a report of a bike accident involves completing a form downloadable from the NYC DOT. Cycling violations are reportable on the city’s 311 website. Both resources require the use of a computer or smartphone, devices which many senior citizens and others lack.

Nevertheless, glimmers of hope have emerged amid the chaos. A man rode his bike on the sidewalk near Hudson River Park some weeks ago. Patti was using a cane that day and we walked arm in arm as he approached us. We complained and he immediately dismounted the bike, apologized, and seemed to choke back tears as he told us, “I’ve been frustrated by bikers on sidewalks myself. I realize now I’m part of the problem.” Just today we encountered a cyclist on the same sidewalk. When we pointed out his mistake, he also became contrite and began walking his bike, apologizing profusely. Earlier this week, before we stepped from a curb on Eighth Avenue, a cyclist passed us southbound in a northbound bike lane. I shouted, “It’s one way, jackass!” A small woman following close behind him was also cycling the wrong way. She wore a black coat and equestrian style helmet. As she approached, I heard her say, “You are absolutely correct.” She quickly turned off onto a nearby street. This validation of our rights came as a welcome comfort.

Jane Jacobs’ childhood home was two doors away from where I lived in Scranton, Pennsylvania before I moved to New York. Just blocks from our present home in the West Village, an historical plaque on 555 Hudson Street marks the building where Jacobs, author of The Life and Death of the American City, also lived. What would the visionary urban planner make of the risks pedestrians face today on the sidewalks of her beloved West Village?
**Is B Corp Losing its Credibility?**

By Max Goldberg

Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose.

Given that many prominent organic brands are B Corps, what happens with this certification has real relevance to the organic industry.

At issue is what recently took place with Danone North America (Danone), when it cut the contracts of 89 small organic dairy farmers in New York and New England, serving a devastating blow to these farmers and their communities.

While businesses are completely free to make decisions that are in their best interest, this move was complicated by the fact that Danone is also the largest B Corp in the world.

Because of the intricacies and nuances of the organic dairy industry in the Northeast, it was widely known that if Danone cut the contracts of these 89 organic dairy farmers, they would have few options for survival and very possibly face financial ruin.

When Danone made this decision to cut the contracts, it cited “growing transportation and operational challenges” as the reason. For the first six months of 2021, the net income for Danone's parent company was 1.068 billion euros ($1.238 billion dollars).

**OUTRAGE FROM POLITICIANS**

Senator Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-NY) is fighting for answers from Danone and is calling for aid from the company.

In Maine, Governor Janet Mills said, “I’m upset. Danone is a B Corporation. They’re supposed to be involved with social justice.”

In a letter sent to Danone (the parent company) from U.S. Representatives Peter Welch (D-VT), Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Jared Golden (D-ME) and Annie Kuster (D-NH), the lawmakers wrote, “Your actions against these Northeast farmers are in direct conflict with the B Corp commitment of ‘balancing profit with purpose’ and ‘using business as a force for good.’”

**B CORP MAKES A DECISION, COMPLAINTS FILED**

In late October, Alexa Harrison, senior public relations manager at B Lab U.S. & Canada (the entity that oversees the B Corp certification), sent an email out saying that B Lab had reviewed this situation internally and that Danone North America’s B Corp status would not be affected.

This decision has not been sitting well with organic advocacy groups.

On November 8th, eleven organic consumer and farming organizations submitted a complaint to B Lab asking it to re-evaluate this decision, complete a full investigation and “send the message that B Corporation’s status is credible.”

Just a few days ago, 7,739 organic consumers and farmers submitted a complaint to B Lab against Danone North America, which outlines violations the company has made against the B Corp Declaration of Interdependence.

At a time when consumers want to spend their dollars on companies having a positive impact on society, third-party certifications have become more important than ever. Yet, that also means, for these third-party certifications, making some hard decisions about the companies that they certify—precisely the ones that are paying to keep these third-party certifications afloat.

According to Kate Mendelhall, executive director of the Organic Farmers Association, one of the eleven organizations that signed the November 8th complaint, “If there is no enforcement of the rules, consumers will start to lose trust in the values that B Corp represents.”

Max Goldberg is the founder of Organic Insider, one of the most influential newsletters in the organic industry. Max has been called “an organic sensation” by The New York Times, and he has been covering the organic industry for more than a decade.

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**4,000 Giant-Sized 5G Antennas Proposed for NYC: Opposition Grows**

By Camilla Rees

Recently, health advocates have learned that 4,000 enormous new ‘Jumbo’ 5G antennas in New York City are still rapidly going up all around us.

The new Jumbo 5G antenna structures planned for City streets, each containing multiple antennas, on multiple tiers, are starting to raise big questions.

Odette Wilkens, Esq., of Wired Broadband, Inc., says, “City officials mistakenly believe that wireless is the fastest option and the better choice. It is not.”

Former FCC Chairman, Tom Wheeler, and CEO for twelve years of the wireless industry association (CTIA), says “Fiber To The Premises” (FTTP) is “futureproof” technology. Indeed, in testimony to Congress Wheeler said, “Wireless may be a last resort option in the most isolated areas, but it should not be a first resort for most of America.”

He said the consequence of the finite nature of radio spectrum is that “it is not a fully-fledged substitute for wired broadband”, and that we need a network that is future-proofed from becoming inadequate in a few years.

Why aren’t New York City officials listening?

Even on aesthetics grounds alone, it’s hard to understand how City officials could be considering polluting our neighborhoods with these unattractive structures, at the same time destroying peoples’ hard-earned home equity with these eyesores.

Not only is Tom Wheeler, who comes from the heart of the telecommunications industry, now championing FTTP over wireless, but also the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) safety guidelines for Radiofrequency Radiation (RFR) have also been called into serious question recently by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals in an historic legal case.

One of the key concerns revealed in the case is that the FCC relies on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in setting its RFR safety guidelines, but the FDA, it turns out, does not evaluate RFR from cell phones, wireless devices or infrastructure, like it does pharmaceutical drugs, RFR-emitting medical devices and microwave ovens.

This means that proper assessment of the biological and health effects of RFR has not been conducted by a federal agency to justify the exposure guidelines.

Wilkens says, “We support wired broadband on many grounds, well beyond the health issues. Fiber will always provide faster transmission speeds than any generation of wireless. The industry tends to compare the speed of one generation of wireless to another, and tech folks and government officials get excited about improvement, rather than comparing how wireless is performed by fiber.”

According to Les Jamieson, member of NewYorkersForWiredTech.com, “If fiber is a superior technology that can offer quality service to close the ‘digital divide’, protect health, improve privacy, reduce energy usage, and not be prone to obsolescence or further costs for the City, then why are New York City officials permitting small cell antennas on utility poles, and now Jumbo 5G antennas? Given the facts, City officials should not be permitting any antennas at all.”

Camilla Rees is a member of Manhattan Neighborhoods for Safer Telecommunications.
Change Your Patterns That Don’t Work

By Roberta Russell

Of late, I have been a steady patron of social media sites. The results of this widely diversified search for would-be mates, after being widowed, pales by comparison with the amazing run of extraordinary people I knew during my 12 single years between marriages, and especially during my 27-year intense and loving marriage to Harold Krieger.

Despite the fact that most romantic relationships start online today, my results seem like a bad joke. My past success in attracting remarkable men did not prepare me for the current depressing reality: age dramatically alters the demographics.

We all live by attachment, not by reason. There is no value without caring. Fear shadows my attempts to replace lost love by re-creating attachments. Like a pendulum swinging between the pull of open-hearted trust and the dread of betrayal, we enter the heart sweepstakes with trepidation.

To make matters worse, we are in the midst of a plague of loneliness, fostered by COVID and abetted by our increasingly precarious human condition. In America the birth rate has been decreasing for six years. The climate is in crisis. Our planet is in danger. There is no value without caring. Fear shadows my attempts to replace lost love by re-creating attachments. Like a pendulum swinging between the pull of open-hearted trust and the dread of betrayal, we enter the heart sweepstakes with trepidation.

For the lonely, be they single or with another, the remedy may lie in a change of heart and the consequent actions that are dictated by that change. If this is beyond the scope of mere will, could trust be generated by exercising the appropriate behavior first? A new tact may be what I need.

First, I intend to use the systems that have worked during the 18 years that I had a New York City search firm specializing in the placement of computer professionals. I only advertised once, and my entire business was generated by referrals! So why not do the same thing now? I should go where the action is and where I have the most to give.

In my quest for meaning, I authored RD Laing & Me: Lessons in Love, with the late Scottish psychiatrist, RD Laing. “This book is about power and love,” he wrote. “It is intended to give you the power to get what you love…when you are in love with love and not with power.”

I was guided by my intention to become more effective at achieving my goals, which were, then, losing 35 pounds and finding mutual love, both of which I accomplished. The plan included recommendations to stalk your own behavior, to move away from people who habitually bring you down, and to move with intention towards those who validate you.

I invite you, the reader of this column, to join me in focusing on some behavior you may want to alter to enhance your life. You are welcome to a free copy of my book by downloading it from www.schol-ooglegoogle.com or www.rdlaiung.org. Additionally, if you are so inclined, email me about the results of your journey and I will get you a copy of the published version.

Write down your story. It’s easy to forget how you got where you are without concerted effort and reflection.

If you are stuck with maladaptive behavior, do not be governed by wishful thinking. Clarify ambiguous behavior and thwarted expectations. Then, move passionately in the appropriate direction. Keep in mind that everyone has their own pre-existing priorities. After all, you can only change yourself.

Move with intention. Use every occasion to increase the chances of rewarding relationships.

Enjoy the pleasures available to you. Don’t sulk. Do something good for others, especially on the holidays.

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, 1983, 1994), and Report on Permanent Weight Loss (Columbia Academic Common, 2017). She has also been a contributor to various international magazines and journals including: Psychologie Heute (Germany), Japan Times (Japan), The Psychologist (U.K.), Human Potential Magazine (U.K.), Changes (U.K.), Clinical Psychology Forum (U.K.), Psychoanalytic Studies (U.K.), and Bottom Line (USA). Occasionally, Russell 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.

Our Publisher, George Capsis, was born December 20th, 1927.

Yesterday Barry sent him $1000 so WestView News will also have another birthday! Will you join him?

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The Digital Age or The End of the World as We Know It

By Roger Paradiso

The robots are coming! The robots are coming! I am concluding my top ten nightmares of the digital world serial. As you can see by the chart to the right, there is an expected increase in robotics for what they call professional services. That's almost acceptable. It's been with us for many years, and we have survived. What I am worried about in my countdown to the 5th slot of digital nightmares is the use of military/police/terrorist robotics.

5. THE MILITARY HAS BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH ROBOTS FOR A LONG TIME. I predict that in the next ten years they will have perfected robotic soldiers that can shoot lethal weapons. Military humans would direct the robots in battle (and the rest will be history). We do have drone technology, which provides very popular aviation killing machines. Like drones, robots are lethal. If the military has them, then the police will. If the police have them, then the bad guys will. Bad guys meaning people like terrorists and drug czars. Go watch a robot movie now and you will see what I mean. Is this the digital age's fault? Yes, with assistance from the computer age. Remember, the effect of global change on society always has good and dark sides to it. Robotic development is a dark force.

4. I WENT TO A VERIZON CELL PHONE STORE BECAUSE I WAS HAVING A MINOR PROBLEM WITH MY PHONE. Several hours after I left the store my phone refused to operate. It was on, but it didn't do anything. I called the store. "Oh," said an employee, "operate. It was on, but it didn't do anything."

5. THE MILITARY HAS BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH ROBOTS FOR A LONG TIME. I predict that in the next ten years they will have perfected robotic soldiers that can shoot lethal weapons. Military humans would direct the robots in battle (and the rest will be history). We do have drone technology, which provides very popular aviation killing machines. Like drones, robots are lethal. If the military has them, then the police will. If the police have them, then the bad guys will. Bad guys meaning people like terrorists and drug czars. Go watch a robot movie now and you will see what I mean. Is this the digital age's fault? Yes, with assistance from the computer age. Remember, the effect of global change on society always has good and dark sides to it. Robotic development is a dark force.

I was amused by the medical diagnosis. My phone was having a mini stroke. "What?" "Yeah, well with all the cell towers and 5G waves going around, the phones get confused. They act a little strange," he said. "Ok what do we do," I asked? "You have to reset." "Oh, and how do you do that?" The person was multi-tasking while directing me to where the reset button was, but after a few minutes the phone worked.

My concern is about driverless cars, trucks, and airplanes. What happens if they have strokes? Are reset buttons infallible? Can we survive power grids or nuclear weapons having strokes? Or being subject to malfunctioning equipment because of hackers and terrorists? I guess the powers that be feel we can, for the greater good of progress.

3. THE DIGITAL CLOUD. Cloud technology is a new way of looking at something that doesn't exist, materially, in the physical world. If a digital cloud is something we can't see, why call it a cloud? It strikes me as odd, but marketers are so clever. (Don't we love brand names?) It is the new thing we have been accustomed to. But perhaps not any more than we have been accustomed to.

We are doomed.

2. DIGITAL BONDAGE. The cry now is to cut the cable cord in our lives and replace it with the newest and greatest invention: streaming with 5G technology, they call it. In China, right now, they are creating enormous-sized television monitors that house computers. One of these will replace your small TV with a large screen (over fifty inches) TV computer.

This monitor/computer/TV will contain a large number of channels, apps, and games already programmed in, so you won't have to worry about going to the smart TV button and finding your app screen. It's all already there. The monitor devices will come with 5.1 surround sound and Wi-Fi/Bluetooth internet-ready capability. They really are computers, but marketing folk will call them home theaters.

And guess what? In China they can make this monitor/TV at half the price of current "smart" TVs.

You will be able to operate the unit with your cell phone and add on a visual keyboard, or a Bluetooth large keyboard to use the monitor as a computer or to use it as a TV. The home theater becomes even more enticing compared to movie theaters.

But by cutting the cable cord, will we let the digital companies take over our brains?

1. FACEBOOK AKA FACEBOOK, GOOGLE, APPLE, AMAZON. These are huge digital age companies that want to control our lives, on their terms. They want us to have an operating system that is their brain. They want us to communicate through one system which is Facebook. And they want us to buy things through Amazon. Apple wants us to think of their phone as the only communication hardware/software we need.

Scott Galloway, a critic of current big tech, spoke at a Ted conference. He called Google the brain for our now lazy brains. Facebook is the heart for our weak of heart moments. Is Facebook a media company? Yes, it is. Facebook says it isn't. Facebook is a media company.

Scott flooded me when he said, "We have our religion; it's Apple. Our Jesus Christ is Steve Jobs, and we've decided this is holier than our person, our house, or our computer. We have become totally out of control with the gross idolatry of innovation and of youth. We no longer worship at the altar of character, of kindness, but of innovation and people who create shareholder value."

The digital age will create havoc for our civilization. But perhaps not any more than the industrial revolution did. Time will tell.

In the meantime, check your messages on your phone, or text, or watch a video. Gifts from the digital age.
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.
West Village residents were sad when Aria (117 Perry Street between West Houston and 6th Avenue) has re-opened as Jack & Charlie’s No. 118. The owners have gone for a clubby vibe in both the food and décor. They inherited a wood-burning oven from the previous occupant of the space, Neapolitan pizzeria Rossopomodo, but are using it for dishes like roast chicken and bone-in duck meatloaf. Two Hands Seoul Fresh Corn Dogs has opened at 95 MacDougal Street (between Bleecker Street and Mhattan Lane). This is the chain’s third NYC location, and their 40th or so US location. It’s also the second corn dog shop to open in the West Village (the first was Oh K-Dog at 70 7th Avenue South). In addition to the standard Korean corn dog (which actually has a rice coating), there is an American Classic Dog which is described as an “Old-fashioned state fair corn dog” and more. The corn dogs are sold individually, as well as in a box of 3 (Two Hands Signature Set) or 5 (Mega-Star Set).

Re-Opened
Idlewild, the travel bookstore which also offered language classes closed early during the pandemic. They were located at 170 Seventh Avenue South (at the corner of Perry Street), and that storefront has remained empty. But a reader alerts us to their re-opening at 617 Hudson Street (between 12th and Jane Streets) in what had been a 4U Fitness personal training studio.

Coming Soon
Maestro Pasta will open at 102 MacDougal Street (near Bleecker Street). This restaurant has a roots in Parma, in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy. The founder, Alessandro Morani, has worked with a team to build a patented pasta machine, producing traditional pasta in a non-traditional way. Maestro Pasta Lab, their first US location, opened in FiDi in 2018. They are also affiliated with a number of restaurants in Italy, including Osteria dei Servi in the center of Parma. In July 2019 we wrote about Pastificio G. Di Martino, a pasta bar that was poised to open in Chelsea Market. Over two years later, it looks like it will finally open as La Devozione. Pastificio Di Martino is a family-owned business that was established in Gragnano, Italy in 1912. The Chelsea Market location is the first in the US, and in addition to the pasta bar, there will be a shop selling over 100 shapes of pasta. A tiny new Indian eatery is opening at 176 Bleecker Street (between MacDougal and Sullivan Streets). Honest Indian Street Food traces their origin back to 1975, when they ran a street cart in Ahmedabad in western India. From there they expanded to Thailand, and are now coming to the US. There is signage up in the old Dirty Bird location (204 West 14th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues) for the Silver Spoon Café.

Other
With the end of the year approaching, Eater has been publishing some “best of” lists. In the sandwiches category, Tea and Sympathy (108 Greenwich Avenue, at Jane Street) scores with their cucumber and cream cheese sandwich (which comes with their excellent afternoon tea) and Faico’s Italian Specialties (260 Bleecker Street, between Morton and Leroy Streets), a shop we profiled here in 2015, is cited for their Faico’s Italian Special Hero (although personally I am a fan of their Chicken Parm hero). In the Vietnamese food category, Hello Saigon (180 Bleecker Street between MacDougal and Sullivan Streets) made the cut, although as far as I’m concerned, their wok-seared flank steak banh mi should have made the best sandwich list. A WestView News contributor alerted me to a post on Eytan Sugarman’s (current owner of the White Horse Tavern) Facebook page, where he offered a free pizza for Thanksgiving to those who were unable to afford a traditional Thanksgiving meal. At the beginning of the pandemic he gave out free pizza to front line workers and medical staff. When he took over the White Horse there were protests by Villagers who were convinced he would renovate the interior of the restaurant, but those fears turned out to be unfounded.

Please keep writing to us! It’s so much fun to hear from you, and with your help we can cover the openings and closings in our neighborhood more thoroughly. Drop us a line at wvnewsinout@gmail.com
A View From the Kitchen

By Isa Covo

No question, winter is upon us here in New York. The little huts which are the extension of restaurants, even when equipped with heaters, do not seem that appealing for a night out with friends.

It is best to stay home and watch a movie, read a book, and brush up on history.

I have been reading about Thomas Jefferson and the Founding Fathers. It took a lot of courage and imagination to invent an independent new nation that would be different from any other, “created by the people for the people.” No king, no authoritarian ruler. Unfortunately, slavery was not abolished in the Southern States where the Plantation owners refused to change the status quo. I assume they could not imagine not having all these people at their beck and call, and at very little expense.

Thomas Jefferson, despite his mixed feelings on the subject, had owned somewhere around 600 slaves during his lifetime, many of them skilled workmen, beyond agriculture. They also worked long hours, and several were housed in sub-par lodgings.

It would be wrong, however, to only concentrate on this part of his life, which alas, was also shared by all the plantation owners.

Thomas Jefferson was a man of many talents, interests, and an exceptional intellect. Beyond writing the “Declaration of Independence”, as President, he stabilized the country’s economy, and with the Louisiana Purchase, he increased considerably the country’s economy, and with the Louisiana Purchase, he increased considerably the size of the territory. He also founded the University of Virginia, a public university whose aim was to “advance human knowledge.”

He died on the 4th of July 1826.

He also designed his tomb, and here is what he wrote:

Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom & Father of the University of Virginia.

Isn’t something missing?

Pink Bean Chili with Chorizo and Beef

Yield: 10 servings or more

DIRECTIONS

• Pick over the beans, if necessary, rinse them and soak them in cold water overnight, or at least six hours.
• Cut the chorizo into ½-inch slices. Seed and cut away the white membranes from the peppers and cut them into thin strips, about ¾ inch.
• Cut the beef with a knife into tiny cubes, no bigger than ¾ inch in size. Do not grind the beef.
• Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large and deep ovenproof saucepan or Dutch oven, over medium heat and add the chorizo slices and sauté for about ten minutes, or until browned, stirring the pieces once in a while to cook them evenly. With a slotted spoon transfer the chorizo to a plate and discard the fat left in the saucepan.
• Pat the beef pieces dry, add the rest of the oil and heat over medium heat. Sauté the meat in the hot oil without crowding it, a few pieces at a time, until browned on all sides, and transfer it to the plate with the chorizo. Do not discard the fat.
• Reduce the heat under the saucepan to medium low and add the onions, stirring about 5 minutes until the onions become translucent and slightly brown. Add the peppers, jalapeños, garlic and the spices and cook stirring for 1 or 2 minutes until fragrant.
• Return the chorizo and the meat to the saucepan and stir to mix all the ingredients. Add the beans, drained, to the meat mixture and add the stock or water. Stir the mixture again. Cover the saucepan and cook over medium low heat for half an hour.
• Heat the oven to 325 degrees F.
• Uncover the chili and add the chopped tomatoes with their juice and the corn meal. Make sure that the bean mixture is completely covered with liquid. Add more water or stock if necessary. Cover the saucepan tightly with its lid and place in the middle of the oven for 2 to 2 ½ hours, until the beans and the meats are very soft. The chili should be thick but not dry. Check periodically while it bakes to see if more liquid is necessary. When the chili is ready, taste and add more salt if necessary. Stir in the chopped coriander leaves.

Serve with plain boiled rice and cornbread.

Pink Beans:
1 lb small pink beans or pinto beans
1 lb chorizo, preferably Spanish
2 lbs lean boneless beef stew, cubed
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 cups chopped sweet onions
2 sweet red peppers
2 tsps minced jalapeños, or more to taste
3 cloves of garlic
1 bay leaf
1 tablespoon Spanish paprika
3 tsps chili powder
1 tsps ground cumin
1 tsps dried oregano
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 small dried hot chili
2 cups stock or water
4 cups peeled, seeded, chopped tomatoes
2 tsps corn meal
1 tsp coarse sea salt
½ cup chopped cilantro

Chorizo:
2 cups chopped sweet onions
2 sweet red peppers
2 tsps minced jalapeños, or more to taste
3 cloves of garlic
1 bay leaf
1 tablespoon Spanish paprika
3 tsps chili powder
1 tsps ground cumin
1 tsps dried oregano
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 small dried hot chili
2 cups stock or water
4 cups peeled, seeded, chopped tomatoes
2 tsps corn meal
1 tsp coarse sea salt
½ cup chopped cilantro

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Behind the Mask: Living Alone in the Epicenter
Reflections on a New Book by Kate Walter

By Catherine Revland

Nearly two years have passed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, but Westbeth writer/resident Kate Walter’s account of this time of traumatic stress, grief and loss couldn’t be more relevant, especially for people like herself who went through the ordeal alone. This article is not a review, because the subject matter is too close to home for objectivity. Instead, it is a selection of touchstones from her book that evoked “me too” moments of familiarity for this writer. It’s human nature to avoid looking back on painful experiences, but Walter has revisited them for us: “I’m happy to move on and enjoy daily life again, but I never want to forget.”

Her story begins with the shutdown of New York City, transformed into a war zone where defenseless residents did battle with a mysterious, deadly, and invisible enemy. This state of combined helplessness and fear soon had a name, Coronaphobia—which people who fled the city for safety can never comprehend. Walter’s description of her panic attack after touching the “enter” button on a cash machine without wearing her latex gloves will resonate with the many who stayed. For them the most scary thing about COVID was that it was unprecedented, unlike any other catastrophe they had endured. “I witnessed 9/11 with the Towers burning and falling,” the author writes. “I lived through Super Storm Sandy, when the Hudson River rushed up my block. . . . But they brought us together as we helped our neighbors. The virus forced us apart.”

Despite the anguish of an enforced isolation that was seemingly without end, Walter also recalls moments of jubilation—hanging out her window at seven o’clock each night to cheer the health workers, waving at a family of noisemakers across the street, kids drumming, parents clapping. The results of the November 2020 elections were another moment of joy—“People were dancing in the street. Biden won! Our national nightmare is over!”—only to find out the following January that it had just begun. “Like COVID, it wouldn’t go away.”

“Have a Good One”

Then, after eleven months of pandemic fatigue, everything changed with the announcement of a new kind of vaccine that would soon be available without cost to anyone who qualified. But nothing COVID-related came easy. Walter describes the excruciating ordeal of getting an appointment online—crashing web sites, hours spent nailing down time slots that vanished into thin air—but she got lucky when she secured a February appointment at the Javits Center, where men and women from the National Guard were directing thousands of people through the largest vaccination center in the country—“Turn left at that soldier over here, turn right at that soldier over there.”

After receiving her vaccination the author says, “I was so relieved I almost cried.” As she headed for the exit a soldier told her to “Have a good one.”

“You too,” she replied. “Thank you,” feeling so grateful that she kept thanking staff members during the rest of her visit.

And then came the day she pulled down her mask and felt the sun on her face for the first time this year. Change was in the air. The city was slowly coming back. Although it was sad that so many mom-and-pop stores like the beloved Golden Rabbit were gone for good, a number of restaurants were reopening, having managed to survive through the winter. While the author was having an outdoor lunch at La Bonbonniere her waitress, an older woman, called out to a couple passing by. “I got the Pfizer!” she told them. “It made me feel like a tiger!” The couple started laughing. “You were always a tiger.” “But now I’m a young tiger!” she replied.

It was good to hear people laughing again.

You Can Plan on Me

Thanks to the spectacular success of the vaccine, the lifting of travel restrictions, and Dr. Fauci’s recent blessing, this holiday season has already become a long-delayed season of joy that couldn’t be more different from the aching loneliness of just a year ago. It adds a new meaning to Bing Crosby’s old familiar “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” of World War II—an other awful time. “You can plan on me,” he croons, with a promise of snow, mistletoe—the works.

Have a good one.

Behind the Mask: Living Alone in the Epicenter by Kate Walter is published by Heliotrope Books LLC, heliotrope-books@gmail.com.

Maggie B’s Quick Click

HEIGH-HO, HEIGH-HO, IT’S OFF TO PLAY WE GO—at the Bank Street playground.

Photo by Maggie Berkvist.
Oh, Bring Us a Figgy Martin
Wallsé Next Door

By Hannah Reimann

These days, an oasis in the city to me is more than a watering hole. It’s a sanctuary where I can eat well, experience comfort, culture and be treated well, a temporary escape from the speed and pressures of the day-to-day in a calm and attractive setting. With or without the COVID-19 pandemic, these are qualities we rely on in the West Village. We remain lucky even if we need to search for an oasis at times.

The night before the “shutdown” in 2020, my last visit to a restaurant was to the extraordinary Wallsé on West 11th Street, home to the finest gourmet Austrian cuisine in the city. I folded my coat and put it on the barstool next to me so that the barstool would remain empty, creating a barrier to the bar patron closest to me. I took off my mask and had a glass of Grüner Veltliner. I was as at once happy to be there as I was sad and concerned, not knowing when we’d be reunited. Wallsé has always been an oasis for me for special occasions when we’d be reunited. Wallsé Next Door, had stayed open to serve the emptiness and dreariness of the city.

On a cold November night under velvety blankets, my colleague, Caroline and I started with the Warm Pretzel with Liptauer (a soft Hungarian cheese with paprika and other seasonings) and two warming cocktails, a Figgy Martin—cognac infused with fig named by a charming waiter, Ellison—and Alpine Lodge, a gengry bourbon literally topped with smoke in an upside-down glass stacked above the cocktail, removed upon serving and imparting a subtle autumnal taste. We warmed our hands around steaming cups of flavorful Lobster Bisque drizzled with pumpkin oil. The burrata plate came with tender butternut squash, fresh figs and sprouts. We shared a cheeseboard with Murray’s unusual Alp blossom, an aged Swiss cow cheese which has a rind coated with cher-vil, cornflower, lavender, lovage, marigold, marjoram and rose petals and Murray’s Cave Aged Original 80-10-10 (percentages of cow-goat-sheep milk, respectively, in one cheese). This all paired perfectly with the full-bodied 2017 Iby Hochräcker Blaufränkisch red.

I love figs, however, if you’re not as into them as I am, I assure you that there are plenty of fig-less selections including the Kranerwurst, a rich, gourmet version of Keilhäs with sweet, tangy mustard and the best rye bread I’ve ever had. There are also oysters, charcuterie, Tapenade Toast and Smoked Salmon Toast; all you need for a nourishing end-of-the-day respite.

We found the Bründlmayer “L&T” Gruner Veltliner to be delightful with our apple strudel mit schlag and fluffy vanilla pudding topped with sliced fresh ripe figs.

The lights are back on! During the pandemic lockdowns, it seemed like no work was done on the partly completed development at the NE corner of Greenwich and Leroy Streets, an apartment block with five townhouses adjacent to it, built on a former parking lot. The property has had previous setbacks. The city rezoned the block from manufacturing to residential in 2006, but the recession derailed earlier plans, and all the properties were sold at a foreclosure auction in 2012.

Property Markets Group purchased 111 Leroy and 621 Greenwich for $38,176,272 in 2014, and purchased air rights from a townhouse on Morton Street and a commercial building at 627 Greenwich Street. Located just southwest of the Greenwich Village Historic District line, it seemed their initial proposed designs before the Community Board 2 would have to be allowed. But they drew fierce opposition for the over-sized composition; a scaled-down version was brought back and approved for the 10-story, 12-unit apartment block with townhouses in 2015.

The five single-family homes are 115, 117, 119, and 121 Leroy Street, each four stories and 50 feet tall, as well as 621 Greenwich Street at three stories tall.

Now, after months of darkened silence, lights are on and activity has resumed. Hopefully, the street barricades will be cleared soon.
Singular Sensation; More Than a Song

By Gordon Hughes

Singular Sensation is a song from A Chorus Line and also the title of a new book written by Michael Riedel. For those of you who are not familiar with Mr. Riedel, he is the theatre critic for the New York Post, an author and has a morning show on WOR radio with Len Berman. That radio show, incidentally, is a great way for New Yorkers to start their day. I had the distinct pleasure of introducing Michael to an audience at the Union League Club on November 23rd. Michael has been making the rounds talking to folks about his latest book. It was a treat to be Michael’s opening act that evening. I had actually first met him at The Players, a theatrical club, in 2015 when he was introducing his book Razzle Dazzle.

Razzle Dazzle was the precursor to his current work Singular Sensation. Michael is what I would call a chronicler of the Great White Way. In Razzle Dazzle he covered Broadway from the early 60’s to the late 80’s and early 90’s. Two of the high points of this wonderful book were, first back in the 60’s when producers would raise money for a show and then would sometimes buy a boat instead—think of Max Bialystock in Mel Brooks’ The Producers. Those days are a thing of the past with new protective laws that have been initiated, so that that behavior no longer exists. The second take away was Michael’s insight on the transformation of Broadway shows. At the end of the 80’s Andrew Lloyd Weber’s music spectacles were all the rage; shows like Cats, Miss Saigon and Sunset Boulevard. Singular Sensation picks up where Razzle Dazzle left off. This was the beginning of a major shift in Broadway shows. Starting in the early 90’s he tells us about productions such as: Rent, Chicago, Lion King and Angels In America, that came on the scene and ushered in a new era on Broadway. Michael always includes stories of the staging, the producers raising money, huge egos as well as the passionate people who make this industry what it is. All and all it was a delight to spend an evening with Michael, listening to his facts, anecdotes and his riper wit. It was indeed quite an evening as his passion for Broadway held the guests at the ULC in rapture.

Messiah in Manhattan

By Fr. Graeme Napier, Rector at St John’s in the Village

In 2004, when I worked at Westminster Abbey, I was responsible for planning the UK’s national memorial service for Alistair Cooke (1908-2004). Cooke was best known in the UK for his radio show Letter from America, but here, of course, for his television show Masterpiece Theater. I worked closely with his daughter, Susan, an ordained minister in the USA, on choosing music for the service. She was keen that we include music by Leonard Bernstein. She explained: “My father was a friend of Leonard Bernstein and introduced him to baroque music: in fact he introduced him to the Messiah.” An interesting spiritual introduction! What she meant, of course, was that Cooke had introduced Bernstein to the music of George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) and to his oratorio entitled Messiah (not The Messiah). Messiah is certainly Handel’s best-loved and most-performed work.

It premiered in Dublin in 1742 and received other performances in England shortly after. Its introduction to us in Manhattan, however, was in rather odd circumstances. It was first performed, in part, here in Manhattan in January 1770, in a tavern by Bowling Green at the south end of Broadway by a bankrupt musician, William Tuckey, as a fund-raiser for himself! He advertised it as A Sacred Oratorio on the Prophecies concerning Christ; and he did very well out of it. More Manhattan performances followed and by the 19th century performances of the oratorio had become ‘traditional’.

This year there will be a number of traditional performances of the oratorio, including the annual large-scale one by the New York Philharmonic way up in Riverside Church and one in Carnegie Hall. But down here in the West Village there will be, for the first time, a unique Christmas Day presentation of the work at St John’s in the Village (on the corner of West 11th St and Waverly Place): Messiah in liturgical performance within a Christmas Day service. This is possible because so many of the texts of an Episcopal Christmas Day service are set to music in Handel’s work: Gloria (Glory to God) and Agnus Dei (Behold the Lamb of God), and also, of course, the Christmas readings, such as For unto us a child is born and Lift up your heads, o ye gates (both from the Hebrew Bible) and such New Testament texts as If God be for us, who can be against us and There were shepherds abiding in the fields…. Christmas Day Messiah is open to those of all faiths and of none; and all Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion. As far as we know this is the first time anywhere in the world that such a performance has been given.

The Strathmere Ensemble (Jack Kulowitsch (double-bass) with his colleagues on violins, viola, cello, and piano/harp/chord) is well-known in the Village, having performed a number of WestView News free-to-seniors concerts over the years. After an impass during the pandemic, the Strathmeres are keen to make music (free to all, not just to seniors, on this occasion) once more at St John’s with St John’s professional choir, in this unique presentation of Handel’s Messiah on Christmas Day at 11am. Spaces are limited, as St John’s is a co-op church, so to be sure of a seat it is best to register (strathmeremessiah.eventbrite.com) in advance. Bring a mask and proof of full vaccination. This liturgical performance of Messiah is followed by festive drinks in Revelation Gallery (St John’s art gallery).
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**Village Diary: Sometimes the Twain Do Meet**

By Pago Habitans

I was standing on the east side of Seventh Avenue at Sheridan Square, waiting to cross west, when a couple of tourists got my attention. They were consulting cell phones, examining street signs, studying a map, and they looked perplexed—bewildered by the intersection of so many streets at such odd angles.

When I offered my help they were like survivors of the Titanic seeing the Carpathian on the horizon. Giving them directions to Little Island, I saw my friend Brother Ben approaching. He waved a hello, but the couple apparently didn’t see him.

“I hope you sent them up West 4th Street,” said Ben, who’s been around the Village a long time and takes an interest in all sorts of people, both living and dead, fleshy as well as fictional.

“No,” I answered, “I thought it was least confusing to send them down Christopher Street,” to which Ben responded, “But you’ve deprived them of the Mystery of West 4th Street.”

“And what Mystery would that be?” I asked.

Instead of a direct reply, Ben recited a bit of doggerel:

**East is East**

*And West is West,*

*Though sometimes West goes north.*

*If you doubt that’s true*

*I’ll meet up with you*

*At the corner of West 10th and West 4th.*

As we began walking up West 4th Street, Ben observed, “It used to be called Asylum Street.”

“What was?”

Ben continued: “West 4th Street, of course. This section of West 4th used to be named for an orphan’s asylum between Bank Street and what is now West 12th Street. Long after the building was demolished and the street renamed, they still sang a song in Village saloons:

*Wee Charlie cries himself to sleep*

*And prays that God his soul will keep*

*I hope that he will see once more*

*His mother dear walk through the door.*

Ben often sings songs and ditties as they occur to him in our conversations. He has a mellow baritone voice, so it’s a pity most people can’t hear him.

He continued his story: “It remains a mystery exactly why the City chose to change its name to West 4th Street, as that street clearly angles north in the West Village. Of course, in the early days there were no numbered streets west of Greenwich Avenue. Tenth Street was Amos back then; Eleventh Street was Hammond, and Twelfth Street was Troy.”

We stopped to consider where the Asylum had stood.

“Come to think of it,” said Ben, “the idea of an orphanage in the neighborhood is why this part of West 4th Street interests me. It speaks to the historic values of the Village. When it was Asylum Street it sheltered orphaned children. Since then the Village has been a shelter for all sorts of older orphans who leave home to find their place in the world.”

“West 4th Street defies the rigid order of New York’s numbered streets. And a questing, creative life is like that. Sometimes we must go against the grain, break patterns, question customs, and look at life from a different angle—as Emily Dickinson appreciated when she wrote, ‘Tell all the truth, but tell it slant’. The Mystery—no, the Manifesto—of West 4th Street is that it slants!”

And off he went to look for souls who might be lost and in need of directions.

*Village Resident otherwise known as T. P. Miller*

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**LOCAL STREETSCAPES**

**540 Hudson**

By Brian J. Pape, AIA

Construction is proceeding rapidly in the Greenwich Village Historic District, for a mixed-use building at 540 Hudson Street, similar to what was brought before the New York City Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) in July 2017 by Morris Adjmi Architects, for the William Gottlieb Real Estate development.

540 Hudson Street is a trapezoidal site of an old gas station, at the NE corner of Charles Street.

The proposed 74-foot-tall development will build 48,535 square feet, including 28,562 square feet for 26 residences and 6,002 square feet of commercial space, with a cellar but no accessory parking.

The BKSK design retains the previous unique feature of wavy red brick walls, and may have garnered LPC approval because there is reference to typical neighborhood ‘punched’ individual windows in sets of three, mimicking a line of rowhouses.

**DEVELOPER/OWNER:** Gottlieb/ Cayre Investments

**ARCHITECT:** David Kubik of BKSK Architects

Photo by Brian J. Pape, AIA.

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**West Village Artist Aliza Sternstein’s Debut Solo Exhibition**

By Naomi Sternstein

Recent paintings by West Village resident (and longtime WestView News reader) Aliza Sternstein will be on view beginning this month at Olympia Gallery on the Lower East Side as part of the artist’s first solo exhibition, entitled *Don’t Move Stones.*

Sternstein’s paintings present a bold and dreamy play with layers and transparency, filled with symbols and gestures in a delicate consideration of both the ephemeral and the preserved. She builds the canvases with layers upon layers of gesso to create surfaces that are so absorptive, they maintain the history of knocks, fingerprints, and wipeouts that permeate across the paintings.

Sentimental symbols such as hearts and flowers are the subjects of many of these paintings, that prompt us to reconsider the joyful and energetic nature of such symbols and wonder why they were ever relegated to the category of “trite” or “childish.” The artist makes her own stencils, which she uses to repeat these shapes and block out areas.

This show’s title, *Don’t Move Stones,* an allusion to Anne Carson’s translation of Sappho’s fragment 145, not only encourages us to embrace what we find already laid before us, but also welcomes us to imagine the pauses dancing on the edge of the shapes and symbols.

*The exhibit will run from December 11th through January 15th. WestView readers are invited to the opening reception on Saturday, December 11th at 6:00 p.m.*

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Westbeth Winter Exhibit Defies Winter

By J. Taylor Basker

Flanking the large sign that announces the Westbeth Winter Show are two huge yellow and orange laser-cut acrylic flowers sculpted by Rachel Urkowitz. These introduce the viewer to the artwork in an exhibit that will raise acrylic flowers hung on a wall. The side rooms have smaller art pieces that address large topics. Penny Jones, a puppet maker, assembled a mixed media installation, "Two",” that dramatically conveys the chaos and danger for our nation with a large rat in a red cap emerging from under a severed Capital dome with suggestions of blood and violence. An international theme appears in the Kabuki figure of “Osome,” a man in a patterned woman's dress for Japanese theatre, depicted in an elegant monoprint on rice paper, and Jacqueline Taylor Basker’s icon of “The Immaculate Heart of Mary of Gaza” surrounded by NY Times pictures of dead Palestinian and Israeli children, collaged on gold leaf. Here also is “The Covid Series” by Emil Marc: 12 small panels of mixed media in vibrant color and nightmare imagery, depicting our surreal experience these past two years. These grim realities are relieved by the playful multicolored patterned painting by Margie Rubin, “Wind,” perhaps blowing the flowing hairs of Claire Rosenfeld’s large noble collies in “Dog Day Afternoon.”

The photography room displays the talents of Westbeth photographers. Included are Shelley Seccombe’s powerful sunset image “Motel Pool-Closed,” another document of closures, and Mary Ridge’s photo print, “The A Train,” of masked, separated people. Three engaging videos by Theodore Timreck, Ethan Mass, and Mourrice Papi are looped with images from the High Line to street mobs. Eric Sheehy’s painting “Music of the Spheres,” with its colorful figure eight in bright yellow against strong abstract colorful shapes and slashes, provides a message for us: “Breathe.”

In the large back room we are awed by the detailed snowy tracery of Olive Ayhens’ large forest in “Unaccustomed to Winter.” In contrast, this is surrounded by the powerful and colorful flowers of Simon Carr and Sandra Caplan, and an enormous bouquet by Avri Ohana, luring us to the lush Italian landscapes by Francia and Ray Ciarrocchi. For Westbeth artists, winter is only a passing annoyance; warm summer colors, and an enormous bouquet by Avri Ohana, luring us to the lush Italian landscapes by Francia and Ray Ciarrocchi. For Westbeth artists, winter is only a passing annoyance; warm summer colors, and masks, that watch the exciting explosion of color and dancing abstract foliage, faces, and flowers on Karina Cavat’s large canvas “Fallin’ as we head out into the cold reality of winter.

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