Open Restaurants or Open Sidewalks

What’s on the Menu?
By Sid E. Walker

We are lucky to be West Villagers, with so many world-class and local hang-out cafes, bars, and restaurants. It’s a veritable walkers’ paradise in the noblest Jane Jacobs tradition… or at least it used to be until a small but significant number of bars, restaurants, and cafes took advantage of the Open Restaurants program to defiantly clog our sidewalks, as the City turned a blind eye while simultaneously working to make the Open Restaurants program permanent. How did we get here, and where are we going? On foot, if possible.

QUALITY EATS, GREENWICH AVENUE AT W. 10TH STREET: One of the worst offenders, and defiant, too. Less than five feet truly clear. The manager says he has approval from FDNY.
Photo by Sid E. Walker.

Bullied by Smart Meters
Technology We Can Do Without
By Les Jamieson

Have you ever wondered how technologies most of us would never dream up get foisted upon the public? You know, things like digital measuring devices called “smart” meters used by Con Edison. After all, those round analog devices usually found somewhere in the basement that are electro-mechanical meters have recorded electricity usage reliably for a hundred years. Then around 2005, electric utilities began telling consumers they’d need to “upgrade” their safe, reliable analog meters by accepting a digitally-run unit communicating through microwave radio frequencies back to the company. Purportedly, these so-called “smart” meters are a great benefit, if we overlook a long list of issues such as:

- how they pulse highly charged microwave radiation every 30-60 seconds
- how they can profile what devices or appliances we use in our homes and when
- how they do not have surge protection
- how they create fluctuations known as “dirty electricity” over cables behind the wall leaking into our living space
- how we wound up being required to have these devices, and much more.

According to Timothy Schoeckle, a PhD engineer who played a role in developing standards for advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), there are no benefits to consumers. He wrote “these meters and their dedicated networks are primarily for the benefit of utilities.”

Utilities will claim smart meters offer fast outage detection, details to reduce electricity use, thereby lowering demand, and monthly readings are recorded without need for a meter reader. However, there’s no compelling evidence that these are significant or necessary to consumers, or why they must operate through microwave frequencies rather than be hard-wired through fiber optic networks, which would be the safer route.

Electric utilities have basically decreed that consumers must convert their electro-mechanical analog meters over to microwave-emitting smart meters. First, you’re supposed to get a notice, which by far the majority of people never bother to thoroughly read. At the very end, the notice gives a number to call if you want to “opt out.” It would be in the interest of customers to put it at the top in bold lettering, but it’s at the end so you’ll miss it. If you didn’t opt out, you probably also weren’t all that enthused about calling the utility’s installation contractor to make an appointment for the installation. You got busy, and the 90-day time window flew by. Then you get a stern notice with a threat that you must provide access for installation or be fined $100 a month. It’s hard to believe. Why are you being threatened to accept something you were never really informed about, never had a chance to give your consent to, nor expressed your desire to have? This can’t be continued on page 4

BACKGROUND
In response to the COVID-19 epidemic, and in an earnest attempt to help bars and restaurants recover, while also providing New Yorkers and visitors COVID-safe environments, the City instituted the Open Restaurants program to allow and encourage outdoor seating, whether on the sidewalk, or in the roadways—all subject to a straightforward one-sheet trifold set of guidelines available online to print, “NYC Open Restaurants Siting Criteria, February 2021,” and which the establishments are allowed to “self-certify” that they are in compliance with. Money quote: “Business must self-certify that they comply with all requirements stated in this application.”

The public reaction city-wide has gen-

continued on page 4
A Complicated Assignment

Editors:
Thanks to F. Quinn for keeping Wash. Sq. Park in the news (A Complicated Assignment, April issue); but it’s really not that complicated. Salary of NYC Parks Dept. Deputy Director is $80K+. Average annual salary for Park Enforcement Patrol person is $40K. Our tax $8 “at work”? Obviously not. There are 22 skateboard parks in NYC; 5 in Manhattan; so there are plenty of them around. Wash. Sq. Park isn’t one of them and never should be. No Smoking Allowed in any City or State park; enforce it. NO WHEELS signs are at entrances; enforce it. Vendors in the Park are required to be licensed; enforce it. NO WHEELS signs are at entrances; enforce it. Vendors in the Park are required to be licensed; enforce it. NYU calls the Park its “campus”: use your connections to get the Park under control. This constituent of Glick and Hoylman has known for a long time that they don’t take a stand on the hard issues. Ditto Community Board 2. Will strict enforcement of historic rules cause the best outcome, or should public officials engage at meetings to facilitate new approaches to evolving demands by park users? It’s complicated!

—L. Saunders, Waverly Place

Agree we need more active enforcement, and Police and Parks officials need support. Will strict enforcement of historic rules cause the best outcome, or should public officials engage at meetings to facilitate new approaches to evolving demands by park users? It’s complicated!

—Frank Quinn

A Trash Solution

Hello George,
My suggested solution to the NYC trash problem is to establish a connection with the Sanitation Department and the Schools public and private. Provide mandatory field trips for all schools to learn about how trash is handled in the city from street collection to the final resting place of our trash. Connect this to a Museum showing how ‘wet wipes’ clog drains, etc.

This might help to teach the population to understand what they are doing.

—Jenny Janzen

Correction

Dear Editor,
I need to correct myself. Printed in my ‘Letter to the Editor’ in your April issue, in which I critiqued George Capsis equating Putin and Trump, I fear I quoted something incorrectly from The Lady Vanishes (1938). Since quotes are sacrosanct, here is the correct version, in context:

Caldicott actually says: “You know, we used to call it Rounders. Children play it with a rubber ball and a stick. Not a word about cricket. Americans got no sense of proportion.”

What we got here is a failure to double-check. Again, I apologize for my earlier misquote, and for inadvertently misleading your readers.

—John F. Early
The Village Has a New Supermarket!

By George Capsis

Despite the turmoil in the wake of the pandemic to retail businesses, an innovative new supermarket has opened just opposite the outdoor Farmer’s Market that assembles at Abingdon Square every Saturday.

The location may look familiar—it’s where Mrs. Green’s operated for a short while before closing down in 2016. The first words new visitors to the market utter after walking 10 feet is “Oh Wow!” It is a paean to fresh taste.

They have a glistening array of sandwiches on fresh exotic breads, fresh Italian pastas and a Japanese chef slicing sushi at the fresh sushi bar.

The manager of the market, seeking gourmet perfection, signaled their modest prices by announcing a freshly brewed Fairway coffee for only two bucks a cup, and legs of exotic beverages.

They were so anxious to answer the needs of the community that they canvassed the interest of Villagers and discovered their great desire for things like Asian staples and a wide range of other hard to find specialty items.

They have gourmet chefs that prepare and season meals to perfection and they provide you with cooking instructions so it’s perfect every time, and their rotisserie chicken bar is a spectacular display of cracking goodness.

To remove any doubt as to whether you should check out the new Gourmet Garage, the owners are offering WestView readers a $5.00 off coupon on your first purchase.

Gourmet Garage Opens

GOURMET GARAGE WEST VILLAGE FINALLY OPENS ITS DOORS: Many fresh food options greet shoppers. Photos by Maggie Berkvist.

By Caroline Benveniste

On April 29th, at 11 a.m., Gourmet Garage West Village finally opened its doors. The weather cooperated, and while a bit chilly, it was a beautiful sunny day. It was hard to tell the size of the crowd, but the line snaked from the entrance near Hudson and Bank Street around the corner and west on Bethune Street. Adding to the festivities, Off the Bar Brass Band was playing some lively jazz while people massed and waited for the doors to open. Young and old members of the Sumas family, the current operators of Gourmet Garage, were on hand for the ribbon cutting. A few short speeches at the beginning gave some history and described the philosophy of the new store.

Gourmet Garage opened in 1992 as a wholesaler of produce to chefs and restaurants. A few years later, it added a retail option. At its peak there were five stores, including one in the West Village on 7th Avenue South, but later that store as well as the Upper East Side location closed, leaving locations in Tribeca, Soho and Lincoln Square. In the summer of 2019, Village Super Market, which also owns the Shoprite chains of supermarkets, acquired Gourmet Garage with plans to restore it to its former popularity. The following year, Village Super Market purchased five Fairway Market stores at the chain’s bankruptcy auction.

The day before the opening, Amanda Fischer, the Marketing, Business Development & Outreach Manager at Village Super Market sat down with George Capsis and Dusty Berke in the garden of George’s West Village home. In addition to offering a $5 coupon to WestView News readers, she gave some additional information on the new store:

*Gourmet Garage is operated by the Sumas family, 2nd and 3rd generation grocers who started their family business in 1937. They have over 85 years of experience running grocery stores*

*This store is a new model for Gourmet Garage, much larger than the other three locations in Manhattan. We have two floors. The ground level floor focuses on what you need now. Fresh convenience including ready to eat fresh fruit, sushi, salads, sandwiches, soup bar. Also a new program that has over 30 varieties of meat and seafood in ready to cook tins making meal time simple.*

*The lower level will feature a focus on a wide variety of what you need for your pantry. We're focusing on providing value to the neighborhood by having low prices on the items that the neighborhood purchases the most. We want to be affordably fabulous and will feature a $2 cup of Fairway freshly roasted ground bean coffee. We'll also have unique gourmet sandwiches under $10 and $0.79/lb Organic Bananas.*

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*We want to welcome our youngest foodies by offering them a FREE Fresh piece of fruit for all kids while they shop with their parents. If the enthusiastic crowd at the opening is any indication, West Villagers are eager to welcome a new grocery option to the neighborhood.*
Restaurants continued from page 1
erally been positive, along the lines of making the City more “European,” etc. That said, Community Board 2 has heard from a good number of local businesses that the program has a number of issues, such as: blocked sidewalks (the focus of this article), but also, unsafely narrowed streets, lack of access to building entrances, obstructed garbage pickup, noise, and even such shockers as blocked fire escape ladder drops and… vermin.

PHYSICAL ISSUES. Basically, with respect to sidewalks, businesses are required to maintain an 8-ft minimum clear path, and, “seating and tables must be up against the wall of the business or as close as possible.” Note that the guidelines do not address—and apparently do not anticipate or ALLOW for—on-sidewalk semi-permanent sheds, platforms, and the like. In short, the sidewalk needs to be clear when the business is not open for business. Explicitly, “nothing allowed on sidewalk adjacent to the curb” in the “Amenity Zone,” the first 5’ (max) measured from the curb for things like tree pits, signage, Express Bus kiosks, advertising kiosks, mailboxes, etc. The Sitting Criteria specifically address all that, all to maintain (repeat after me) an eight foot minimum clear path.

Apparently, dozens of businesses interpret this brochure differently—some defiantly so.

DEFIANCE. A good number of businesses, once reminded of their own self-certification, make no correction. And that’s putting it mildly. Some have responded by taking even MORE of the sidewalk—the public space if you will.

Or telling this author, “It’s up to the city.” In point of fact, that alone is a denial of their own self-certification.

Or asking this author, “Do you have a tape measure on you?”… when the clear path is maaaaybe five feet, not counting their PLANTERS. So call it four. Generously.

WHAT ABOUT…? But what about establishments that have only recently opened, and did not struggle through the early days (months? YEARS?) of COVID? Is it fair that they be given the same free use of the public space as the survivors?

And what about those establishments that are on Village streets and byways with narrow sidewalks in the first place, or which due to the luck of the draw are opposite bus stops or have fire hydrants on their curb?

And what about those roadway sheds that have been up—and unused—for over the allowed 30 days, whether erected before the establishment ever opened for business, or whether it has since gone out of business? How about those permanent—and utterly illegal—sheds ON the sidewalks?

And what of local car-owners, and the loss of dozens if not hundreds of parking spots?

ENFORCEMENT. Again, this program relies on “self-certification.” Apparently and empirically, that’s ALL it relies on. This. Must. Change. Imagine how many car owners would comply with Alternate Side Parking (returning to twice a week in July) if there were no parking enforcement Law Enforcement Officers?

To that point, this author spoke off-the-record with one such “LEO” last week. When asked, “Why can’t you guys ticket restaurants,” the LEO said they were not given that responsibility, and change would have to come from the top. Fair enough. But, I pointed out, both parking regulations AND sidewalks and roadways are under the jurisdiction of the one-and-the-same NYC Department of Transportation, which does not itself have the same enforcement powers, let alone staff walking the streets DAILY, as NYPD.

Bridges need to be built, and tolls levied. (In another twist of irony that any Mayor Orwell would be proud of, Meter Men rigorously ticket trucks for double-parking. … Partly because there are illegal roadway sheds IN THE LOADING ZONES. Case in point (being named by name because THIS stunt is SO egregious): "Fairfax," on West 4th at West 10th. Note further that for a corner location, the roadway setup must be 15’ back from the crosswalk.)

JUST DESSERTS. So, what’s for last? Join me in NOT PATRONIZING the worst offenders. Join me in handing out Open Restaurant brochures. Join me in keeping this topic on CB2’s front-and-center agenda. Join me in flagging this topic to your local City Council member. And then join me for a meal or adult beverage at any of the vast majority who ARE playing by the rules, and doing all they can to stay in business, and keep their staff employed.

Sid E. Walker is the pen name (no, really?) of a long-time local village resident, parent, and professional civil engineer, who has been active in local community issues for the past 15 years, and who would like to see bars and restaurants recover from Covid and succeed, while still keeping sidewalks passable. His family have been Villagers for three generations.

Greenwich Village Little League’s 2022 Opening Day

By Anthony Paradiso

The Major League Baseball (MLB) season is in full swing and so is the Greenwich Village Little League’s spring season! Last year only “mini opening days” were held according to GVLL President Peter Marino but this season has been more like the way it was before the pandemic.

The opening day ceremony was a beautiful day with parents, players, league directors and even Erik Bottcher coming out to throw the first pitch and this is how it happened through the eyes of league President, Peter Marino.

“It was a great feeling to have the whole family back again in one place. To go back to the format where every team gets to put on their uniforms for the first time… It’s an opportunity for the kids to meet each other and an opportunity for us to thank the families and elected officials who’ve helped us along the way.” – GVLL President, Peter Marino

“Greenwich Village” may be in the league’s name, but Marino added that the area that players come from goes from SoHo to Hell’s Kitchen. The Little League has five softball and eight baseball divisions with up to seven levels based on age, from the young T-ball level to the baseball senior’s division and softball

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LOCAL STREETSCAPES

St. Luke’s School

By Brian J Pape, AIA

Are you thinking that you just read about the St. Luke’s school completing their expansion work, and now we’re seeing more construction work? You are right. Credit: Brian J Pape, AIA.

In 2020, St. Luke’s School did complete their classroom expansion, adding a couple of floors above the existing two-floor structure, which in the photo, looking east from Christopher Street to the Greenwich Street façade, shows the new additions above the red brick base. The new scaffolding in the photo protects the sidewalks along the southern portion of the school right up to the roof, at the original gymnasium building on the far right. The school also recently upgraded the playground at the corner lot of Christopher and Hudson Streets with new playground equipment and absorbant surfacing.

What is going on so soon after completing the additions? St. Luke’s presented their plans to LPC and CB2 Landmarks Committee earlier this year. Basically, the school is upgrading their roof play area, with a second stairway exit and protective framing for the play area, like an arch of netting (no more errant balls flying into the street!). The committee found the newly visible structures, being fairly transparent, to be visually acceptable. So, the sidewalk sheds are there until the roof work is complete.

St. Luke’s Church has been a part of this community since it was founded by the Episcopal Church in 1821, when the chapel was established as part of the Trinity Church parish. In 1927 a gymnasium was built for their children (it’s still there), and in 1956 a new school was built where the rowhouse rental units had been. Today, the Pre-K and K-8 school serves 342 students, with 50 teachers. This private school has annual tuitions of $50,140 for pre-school and $52,465 for upper grades, with some generous financial aid offered. The garden at the southeast corner of the block is a neighborhood treasure for everyone to enjoy.

Village Independent Democrats
Political Club Now Covers Healthcare Matters

By Carol F. Yost

Recently, a Healthcare Committee was established for VID. As the Chairperson, I can report that we have started by taking action to oppose the privatization of Medicare. Dr. Alec Pruchnicki, a member of the Committee, wrote a letter to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand opposing the federal effort to privatize Medicare. Meanwhile, on the New York City level, a determined effort, pushed by funding from the federal government, is geared to privatize the Medicare coverage for municipal employees. I wrote both Mayor Adams and Comptroller Brad Lander asking that they not authorize this plan. The letters went out under VID letterhead. Meanwhile, the opposition from different groups to the privatization on the city and federal levels has had a significant effect. The federal program has been slightly revised in an ineffectual attempt to placate the opposition (the plan is now called ACO REACH), but the opposition is as strong as ever. For now, the New York City retiree Medicare privatization program (the Medicare Advantage Plus Plan) has been stopped as the result of a lawsuit brought by a group of retirees. Both sides will be facing off in court, as the City continues to try to ram through its plan. I think the main reason so many of us are against the privatization is that the profit motive is expected to play a role in determining just how much coverage for medical expenses will be provided. We get promises, but there is no guarantee. As a municipal NYC retiree myself, I know what it feels like to have the rug ripped out from under you. We had been guaranteed coverage by traditional Medicare for our retirement.

Other possible issues for the Committee to cover will include mental healthcare, inmate healthcare, abortion rights, Medicare reimbursement and the drive for a new Village hospital to replace St. Vincent’s. We can write letters on VID letterhead, suggest legislation, write resolutions and organize forums.

You’re Invited
SATURDAY, MAY 21 • 10 am-1 pm
21st Annual Charles Street Association Spring Planting

Meet on Charles St. between Bleecker and Hudson Streets
The Green Team will provide you with all the plants, flowers, tools and horticulture advice.
Rain Date Sunday May 22
The Board Meeting at St. Vincent’s

By Roger Paradiso

“This was a well-thought-out plan,” said Tom Shanahan, a lawyer for a group of former St. Vincent doctors and nurses suing St. Vincent’s. “They wanted out and had to justify it to the state. They were running it into the ground.”

DA Cy Vance’s team is looking into whether vendors double-billed for services, gave kickbacks for contracts and hired relatives of hospital employees, sources said.

They met with the Dept. of Health and DOH said “no.” That killed the deal. The Health Commissioner, the late Dr. Richard Daines, believed that there were too many hospital beds in NYC, and favored closing hospitals all over. He intentionally killed the deal. Governor Paterson, who had advanced $10 million or more to keep the St. Vincent afloat did not intervene. In my opinion, this happened because the local political leaders didn’t fight for it. Not Christine Quinn, the City Council Member, not Tom Duane, the State Senator, not Deborah Glick, the Assemblymperson, not Jerry Nadler, the Congressperson. Several days later St. Vincent’s filed for bankruptcy.

It should be noted that many in the community felt blindsided. “How could they shut down St. Vincent’s Hospital?” they shouted in the streets. There were many demonstrations outside of the hospital for days after the news.

Carol Yost who was one of the demonstrators and also a local activist said about the politicians: “They’ve all done some good for New York City, but in regard to St. Vincent’s, nothing. Brad Hoylman, Christine Quinn, Deborah Glick are all names that come to mind. But Charles Barron, as I recall, is the one Council member who spoke out in favor of St. Vincent’s until Speaker Quinn told him to pipe down and sit down.”

Bill Rudin was being courted to pay millions and to make much more off of the carcass of St. Vincent’s Hospital. Yost said, “Bill Rudin was so sure of getting ULURP approval that he started getting rid of the hospital equipment and dismantling things internally months before he got the actual approval.”

“By March of 2012, Quinn was bailing out a grand bargain struck by the City Council, the Bloomberg administration and Rudin development. As part of the deal to clear the way for Rudin’s hundreds of luxury units and town houses, the neighborhood got a new elementary school, a 15,000-square-foot park, an AIDS memorial and commitments for additional historic preservation—but no hospital. At the St. Vincent’s site there would be the free-standing emergency room. The project was also scaled down from its initial design.

The issue would haunt Quinn in her bid for the Democratic mayoral nomination, when her critics went wall to wall with negative ads linking her ultimate support of the St. Vincent’s redevelopment plan to the nearly $30,000 she got from a half-dozen Rudin executives in campaign contributions…”

– Bob Hennelly, CityAndStateNewYork.com

George Capsis, the publisher of WestView News has been on a quest to get a new hospital to replace the lost St. Vincent’s. He went to a community meeting at PS 41 in 2011. He heard a man named Dowling talk about replacing St. Vincent’s with an emergency room. As George wrote “I got up and said I was concerned about people who had to be transferred to hospitals far away. “You’ll never get a hospital,” declared Michael J. Dowling in his Limerick accent, “it will cost a billion dollars” receiving a roar of rage from a packed West Village audience at PS 41. This was after North Shore LIJ and Rudin were successful in the bankruptcy court over the 11 buildings of St. Vincent’s for a mere $230 million in April 2011.”

Two years later George had an encounter with Dr. Stephen Berger who was chair of the Berger Commission, which had said in 2006 that there were too many hospitals and beds and too many hospitals in financial trouble. This encounter caused George to wonder if there was an overall plan to destroy St. Vincent’s. George wrote about this encounter in 2013.

“I ran into Berger at a conference in downtown Manhattan. I said “Mr. Berger, my name is George Capsis, and this is my newspaper, and for three months I have been trying to get you on the phone…” Trying to avoid George, Berger said something like “If you didn’t give Rudin such a hard time, you would have a hospital.”

“And finally, as I emerged from the hotel, I watched Berger get into a limousine as a passenger who was getting in the front seat stood and looked at me with an “I know you” smile. I could have sworn it was one of the North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System suits.” – George Capsis, WestView News 2013

Politics makes strange hospital bedfellows. Northwell Health emerged from the North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System. Northwell is a nonprofit integrated healthcare network. It is one of the largest health care providers and private employers in New York State. Michael Dowling, who told George he would never get a hospital, is the president of Northwell. Northwell operates the Lenox Health Greenwich Village Emergency Center which opened in 2014.

Stephen Berger (The Berger Commission) indirectly closed St. Vincent’s and many other hospitals when his report was released in 2006.

“The Commission will make final recommendations on right-sizing New York State’s hospitals and nursing homes by December 1, 2006. These recommendations will include possible consolidation, closure, conversion, and restructuring of institutions, and reallocation of local and state-wide resources. If the recommendations are approved by the Governor and the Legislature, they become law, and must be implemented by the Commissioner of Health.” – Commissioner Stephen Berger

This was taken from the website of the Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century.

Sister Jane Iannucelli, a Sister of Charity, was on the board. Her office confirmed this quote that appeared in America: The National Catholic Review not long after the closure. “Jane Iannucelli of the Sisters of Charity, a St. Vincent’s board member, faulted the state’s Department of Health for the closure. “I think the easiest way to explain why... St. Vincent’s is closing its doors tomorrow is that the state Department of Health said there is no need for an acute care hospital in Greenwich Village,” Iannucelli told the publication. “And while St. Vincent’s had many problems, they were on their way to being fixed. But with the Department of Health saying there’s no need for an acute care hospital here, the board had no choice but accept a vote to close.

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Washington Square Park
SOS Instagram Keeps Tabs on Police and Predators

By Sophia Astor

For most people who use Instagram, the perfect place to take selfies or post photos of the city's golden youth sporting alternative fashions is in front of the iconic landmarks in Washington Square Park. For the owner of the @washingtonsquareparsos Instagram account, it's a tool for monitoring police activity and to warn artists and vendors of impending crackdowns.

@washingtonsquareparsos, which posts videos of arrests and scuffles with police, has gained over 500 followers and has been shared with hundreds more since its first post in January. It has also earned the account’s owner more than a few enemies. She declined to be identified because of the constant harassment and death threats she says she receives from strangers.

“People are getting surrounded and intimidated by big groups of cops over Bluetooth speakers, over trying to sell clothes,” @washingtonsquareparsos explained. “I post to look out for the park community and to show them that they can have a voice, that they can fight this attack on their livelihood.”

Police presence in Washington Square Park has ramped up since Mayor Eric Adams took office in January. While some residents appreciate the attention, many of the park’s denizens say police enforcement of minor quality of life violations is highly arbitrary, sometimes involving excessive force.

“Some people may say I’m being too political, but I think that’s ridiculous,” said @washingtonsquareparsos. “It’s not about being political. It’s about having morals, being ethical.” She checks in with the park’s vendors and street artists daily to keep up with what’s going down. Eric Cook, who’s been selling his art in the park for years, says her account plays an important role by calling attention to the situation in the park. “Everything the police enforce here is capricious; they can move anybody at any time for any reason,” said Cook. The NYPD did not respond to requests for comment.

Calista Sheehan, a 22-year-old park regular, says she started following the account because it also warns of known sexual harassers and other potentially dangerous people prowling the park. Adam Ellis, who sells paintings and T-shirts, likes @washingtonsquareparsos because police tend to ignore what is actually important. “There are people who steal money from performers, people who do hard drugs here every day, and I don’t see the cops bothering them,” said Ellis. “The account shows who they’re really cracking down on, and it’s the vendors, the bikers, the musicians.”

But Ellis said there are also things that he doesn’t like about @washingtonsquareparsos. “The awareness is amazing, but the account can be a very negative place. There’s a lot of fighting, a lot of yelling, and I think some positivity needs to be spread, too,” he said.

@washingtonsquareparsos accepts that criticism but says she’s happy doing things her own way. In her videos, she can usually be heard yelling aggressively at the police from behind the camera.

“I curse, I’m loud, I know the police hate me, but I’m not here to fulfill the idea of a perfect activist,” she said. “It’s my account, and I do what I please. I want to capture real emotions that the community can relate to.”
Gifts and Bliss to City Councilman Erik Bottcher in Celebration of Earth Day

By P Segal
New York City fine-art photographer and multimedia artist, SuZen, brought gifts and bliss to newly-elected Eric Bottcher's City Council office on Earth Day, April 22. Joined by the Westbeth Bliss Singers, SuZen and Erik hung a photograph from SuZen's FOGSERIES and sang in celebration of Earth Day.

At the Spirit of Spring Festival of the Arts, photographer SuZen presents City Council member Erik Bottcher a gift of her photo, Hudson River Runner. Photo by Arlene Rush.

SuZen’s FOGSERIES images depict ethereal, dream-like scenes of Hudson River Park in deep fog, suggesting the Buddhist concept of emptiness. Using various special techniques, the glowing light of the photographs imbues a mystical, painterly quality reminiscent of J.M.W. Turner.

Bottcher enjoyed the Spirit of Spring event so much that he suggested to the Bliss Singers that they collaborate on a monthly sing-along for the whole city to join in. Currently there’s discussions of possible monthly events at Westbeth that would be open to the public.

SuZen is best known for her 25’x 40’ painted mural of her photograph, Flowing Light, in Times Square. Since 1982, she has been creating public events around New York City. Her artwork is exhibited in galleries and museums internationally. Eve Zanni, born into a California family of musicians, vocalists, and activists, has been performing and writing music and lyrics since childhood.

Publisher with Commitment

Our esteemed publisher, George Capsis, was recently the focus of a feature in the Greek newspaper, The National Herald. Many thanks to the publishers for allowing us to reprint the article. Read on for great insight into George’s heritage.

By Penelope Karageorge
Actress Sarah Jessica Parker has tagged her neighbor, George Capsis, 94, the “king of Greenwich Village,” and the title is apt. Capsis, editor and publisher of WestView News, “the voice of the West Village,” works seven days a week to turn out a literate, colorful, always readable monthly paper. “It’s an occupation of mental survival. It’s amazing that we get it out,” says Capsis, who works in an office in his Charles Street townhouse, a 20-room house once occupied by Nobel Prize-winning author Sinclair Lewis. Lewis lived there during his salad days when money was scarce, leading him to coin the phrase “brunch,” claiming it cost less when dining out to combine breakfast and lunch, says Capsis, who has a touch of the Homeric story-teller about him.

In Capsis’s eventful life, a bad thing often leads to a great thing—something like Odysseus lost at sea and washing up on Circe’s island. While an undergraduate at Columbia, he also took courses in film at City College and got a job as a production manager for a TV commercial production company. “The ad agency head was insulting to the crew, and I insulted him back and was fired on the spot. I went for a job interview in the newly erected United Nations building, and decided to take the UN tour. When I learned the tour cost a dollar I started to leave but was stopped by a tour guide who had been a fellow student at Columbia. She took me on the tour, and at the end said to me ‘Capsis, you’re a Greek. Do you want to meet another Greek?’ And she introduced me to her boss Andromache Geanacopoulos, who was very attractive and very smart. When I invited her out for dinner, she declined and said she had a date. And I concluded that she was too attractive and too accomplished to have anything to do with me. So I left and went down to the Village to Washington Square. I ran into my first love who announced to me that she had just gotten a divorce. I invited her to the White Horse Tavern for a beer. As we entered the White Horse, I looked down to see Andromache and her date. She had just said to him ‘Today I met the man I am going to marry’. And then she looked up and said ‘There he is.’

“Nine months later we were married, a beautiful wedding in the Holy Trinity Cathedral. You could do a film on this incredible story. It’s a true story. I called her Maggie, from the American distortion of “mache” in her name. We were both 27 when we married and were married for 50 years.” According to Capsis, his three children, two daughters and one son, were “really Greek.” Naming their son, Capsis suggested calling him “Doric, as in the column. My wife thought that was silly, and suggested George. Finally we named him Doric George Constantine—after his grandfather—and left it up to him to pick. He opted for Doric.”

Capsis’s father, Costas, was born in Smyrna. When his brother Traseavalous came to the USA to study at MIT, he followed him, coming to New York, initially living in a rooming house in the Bronx “run by a German woman whose daughter Martha married my father. My father became the first Greek restaurant broker in America. He bought and sold restaurants. If you wanted to buy a restaurant, you would go and see Charlie. He had his office in the Times Building and dealt only with Greeks.”

Capsis just missed being born in Greece. “In 1927, my uncle Pantelis was running for mayor of Salonica, and invited my father to help in the campaign. So my father and pregnant mother went to Salonica and Pantelis did not win the election. They had run out of money and my mother wanted to get back to the USA before I was born. She wrote her mother, who only sent one ticket. My dad went into an all-night card game to earn the passage and come back with my mother.”

Before starting WestView News, Capsis worked in the corporate world. “I was in my seventies when I left my last paying job, and founded WestView in 2003.” Capsis uses his paper to fight for the causes he believes in and is now campaigning to bring a hospital to the West Village. He’s modest and understated about his numerous good deeds. When the Greek-American Writers Association lost its Cornelia Street Café home, for instance, Capsis introduced the group to Father Graeme who welcomed the writers to a special new venue, St. John’s in the Village.

Says Capsis on the subject of his Greekness, “If you have to have a country of origin, Greece is the best.”
Opening the New Rooftop Park at Pier 57

By Brian J Pape, AIA

The roof of Pier 57 is New York City’s largest public rooftop park, and is now open to the general public daily from 7am – 10pm all year. Brad Hoylman joined Governor Hochul, Mayor Adams, Congressman Nadler and Council Member Bottcher in mid-April at the ribbon-cutting.

Featuring nearly two acres of open lawn space, the park delivers on one of the original commitments made to the public as part of the pier’s redevelopment, according to the Hudson River Park website pier57nyc.com. The rooftop park at Pier 57 joins the growing number of public piers and landscapes located within Hudson River Park, such as the adjacent Little Island, offering inspiring views, lawns, and seating.

Pier 57 will also contain 350,000 square feet of commercial office space for Google, as an example of a public-private partnership, waterfront access and adaptive reuse. Pier 57 is already home to City Winery’s restaurant and music venue, and will also serve as an outdoor screening location for the yearly Tribeca Festival beginning in 2022.

Opening to the public in Fall 2022, the ground floor of Pier 57 will feature a brand new food hall led by the James Beard Foundation, with flexible community spaces available for booking by local organizations, and a public gathering place with spectacular views of lower Manhattan, the Hudson River, and Little Island. The community spaces provide local groups with free, bookable space to host community gatherings, educational classes, workshops, and cultural programs, adapted for a range of program types and group sizes. For more information, contact Jenna.Nigro@James-townLP.com.

Under a lease with the Hudson River Park Trust, the development team led by RXR Youngwoo and Baupost has invested approximately $410 million to restore the building and adapt it for new uses while retaining its historic features; it is a registered national landmark.

Livable Streets IV: Our Streets, Our Rooms

By Barry Benepe

In previous Livable Streets articles I stressed the comfort and convenience of walking and relaxing in safe, comfortable, and convenient landscaped streets.

In this article I address how we can experience our streets as extensions of our interior rooms.

Just as our apartments and rooms are defined by their ceilings, floors, walls, materials, colors, moldings, and trim around windows, doors, cabinets, wardrobes and furnishings, so are our streets defined by their abutting architecture.

Perhaps there is no more outstanding example than the Piazza Navona in Rome, as illustrated in the 1748 Nolli map prepared by J. H. Aronson in his Plan of Rome and reprinted here with his permission. Note how carefully the entrances to buildings are delineated, as are the interior courtyards and other spaces into which they lead. The surrounding street entrances become great mysteries of exits and entrances leading us to yet to be discovered spaces and outdoor rooms, as it is when we leave our home and enter the public street.

Like our apartments, streets are defined by the architecture of surrounding walls, the color of brick or stone, the stoops, the stone or metal-trimmed building entrances and windows, the roof cornices which state, “Here I stop and frame the sky.”

There is drama in our outdoor urban surroundings, which I hope we will never cease to enjoy. Indoors, we may enjoy whatever daylight the windows invite into our comfortable surroundings. Outdoors, we will be exposed to the comforts and punishments of a forever-changing climate. The sounds will change, as well, when we listen to the city.

Of course, the most fundamental change will be exposure to moving vehicular traffic and its ever-present danger to pedestrians, especially when we walk out from between parked cars. The day may yet come when our streets are designed chiefly for those of us on foot.

PIAZZA NAVONA IN ROME. Photo: Barry Benepe.
A Doctor’s Advice on Staying Injury-Free this Spring

By Peter D. McCann, MD

Springtime is finally here, and it feels a lot different this year. For the first time in three years, the transition out of winter feels joyful and hopeful, as life begins to resemble the normal for which we had been waiting so long.

There are more opportunities to travel, gather with friends and family, and spend time outdoors enjoying our beautiful city. It is because we have been vigilant as New Yorkers that we are finally able to witness the city coming back to what it was before the pandemic, and it's a great reminder to cherish the time we have with our loved ones. We have all learned to never again take simple pleasures in life for granted.

One important way we can be sure to take full advantage of each day we have this spring is to avoid unnecessary injury. Many of us have spent the last two years working from home and maybe more time than we would like to admit on the couch binging on TV shows. The arrival of warm weather and loosened health restrictions means more hours a day to enjoy being active both inside and outside. Maybe you are looking forward to chasing your kids around the park, going for a run with your dog, shooting hoops with friends, or even tackling spring cleaning.

Regardless of your reason, as we all start to move around more, here are some helpful tips to avoid being sidelined by an injury:

PACE YOURSELF: remember that overdoing it—be it trying a new workout routine or moving furniture around your apartment—is a major cause of injury. Don’t rush through any of it and take regular breaks.

Always start slowly, allow your body to warm up, and avoid putting a sudden strain on your muscles and joints.

Keep your posture in mind and try to maintain proper form while avoiding uncomfortable positions and movements.

AVOID REPETITIVE MOTIONS: try to steer clear of doing the same task excessively to reduce the risk of an overuse injury. Giving fatigued muscles a rest will go a long way.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS: did you know that many injuries are caused by accidental falls? If you don’t have the proper training or equipment to perform certain tasks, don’t do them. Safety during any physical activity should be your top priority.

However, life is unpredictable and if you do manage to hurt yourself, it is important to know what to do. For moderate sprains and strains, you can treat the injury at home using the R.I.C.E. method: Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. This technique can reduce pain and swelling for up to 72 hours after the injury and can help speed up recovery.

If you are concerned that your injury may be more serious, you should contact a doctor, ideally one who specializes in orthopedics or sports medicine. At Lenox Health Greenwich Village, part of Northwell Health Orthopaedic Institute, we have a multidisciplinary team of fellowship-trained specialists offering a full range of services for illnesses and injuries affecting the neck and lower back, shoulders, elbows, knees, ankles and feet. Whether you need emergency care, imaging services, a comprehensive recovery plan, or surgery, we are here to help.

It doesn’t take much to cause a sprain, injure a joint, pull a tendon, pinch a nerve or even break a bone, so as you get back to your favorite activities this spring, don’t let preventable and treatable injuries slow you down and keep you from living life to the fullest this season. Take proper precautions, take care of your body and get medical help when necessary.

John Rockefeller Joins Non-Profit to Cure AIDS

By Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D.

JOHN ROCKEFELLER joins the quest for a global cure for AIDS as the latest board member at Research Foundation to Cure AIDS. Photo courtesy of Mr. Rockefeller.

Kambiz Shekdar, Ph.D.

Mr. Rockefeller, JD, MPH, DrPH says: “Throughout my career as an Infectious Disease Epidemiologist, I have focused my attention on prevention, and containment. Never did I dare push my dream toward an attainable cure for AIDS. The mere concept of such a cure seemed impossible. Having now seen the irrefutable proof for an actual unthinkable outcome of curing AIDS.”

Starting in the early 1980’s in San Francisco and continuing into Sub-Saharan Africa with the Clinton Health Access Initiative, the long-term focus of Mr. Rockefeller’s career has been with HIV/AIDS. In addition, Mr. Rockefeller has been targeting the epidemiologic intersection of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), Tuberculosis (TB), Malaria, Ebola and most recently SARS-CoV2. Mr. Rockefeller trained at Johns Hopkins as an Infectious Disease Epidemiologist and Biostatistician. His career has been spent in philanthropic leadership roles across the global healthcare landscape with support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), and Wellcome Trust. He also directed national and global mental health programs, most notably in partnership with William Randolph Hearst III.

As a tool in the genetic engineer’s toolkit that supplements CRISPR and enables the crafting of highly desired cells that had previously remained out-of-reach, the validated Chromovert Technology has numerous applications including drug discovery, personalized medicine, biologics and cell therapy, including CAR-T and viral vector production applications for HIV/AIDS cell and gene therapies. Previously, the technology was used to discover and develop a clinical stage novel non-addictive pain blocker fast-tracked by the FDA and presented at Gov. Chris Christie’s panel on the opioid epidemic at The White House, and in strategic flavors research with The Coca-Cola Company, Kraft Foods and Nestle to cut salt and sugar in the diet.

In 2007, 2019 and 2022, the only three patients ever cured of AIDS were reported. All three cures were achieved using HIV-resistant stem cell therapies. RFTCA’s current goal is to use its technology to translate the science underlying these index cures to research and develop a safe and effective cell therapy for all those in need regardless of ability to pay.

As President of RFTCA, my hope and goal is to realize full potential of our technology. John Rockefeller’s expertise enables us to identify new ways to use our cellular biotechnology to make the greatest impact for science and human health. I and all of RFTCA’s current board members are grateful to welcome John to the team.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RESEARCH FOUNDATION TO CURE AIDS:

RFTCA Board Chair Karen Hagberg, Esq.
RFTCA President Rockefeller University Alumnus & Biotech Inventor Kambiz Shekdar, PhD
Rockefeller University Robert & Harriet Hemmati-Brivanlou, PhD
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biologists (FASEB) President Patricia Morris, PhD
John Rockefeller, JD, MPH, DrPH
Chromocell Corporation CEO Christian Kopfler
HAVAS HEALTH

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Our expert team has you and your family covered with a wide range of primary and specialty care for all ages, from advanced orthopedic and imaging services to 24-hour emergency care. Wherever life takes you, Northwell is along for the ride—with a commitment to raising health, one neighbor at a time.

Northwell.edu/ForTheVillage
A Yogic Guide to Dying:
Virtual Workshops from Integral Yoga on the Ultimate Letting Go

By Chandra/Jo Sgammato

No one likes to think about their own death or the death of a loved one. Yet dying is an inevitable part of life. For more than a half-century Integral Yoga has taught us to live, and now the yogis are offering clear inspiring ways to prepare for the end of life. The Integral Yoga End-of-Life Project Virtual Workshops offer spiritual guidance and practical advice online, monthly, from May through October. Hosting the six programs are long-time Integral Yoga instructor Karuna Kreps and former general manager Chandra/Jo Sgammato. Featuring talks by senior teachers, each class is available free or by donation, $0–$36 suggested. Register at www.iyiny.org to receive a Zoom link. A companion website, yogicendoflife.org, is an offering built by Karuna aka Karen of Net Ingenuity.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION
Swami Karunananda
Thursday, May 26th, 7:00pm–8:30 pm.
The best preparation for one’s final transition is a life well-lived. Spiritually, we can equip ourselves with a proper understanding of the nature of existence, that all things are passing. Through the principles of yoga, we can face that final journey gently and peacefully, with courage and grace.

PHYSICAL RELEASE
Sandra Amrita MacLanahan, MD
Sunday, June 26th, 2 pm to 3 pm.
What happens to the physical body as it moves toward and ultimately achieves release? Explore the process of aging, what happens to our bodies in our final days, and the mysterious yet fascinating topic of after-life experiences.

PRACTICAL PLANNING
David Deva Barrett
Tuesday, July 19th, 7:00pm–8:30 pm.
What legal papers are needed and why. Learn about the advantages of working with an attorney, as well as how to access and navigate state and online resources for free and affordable forms.

MEMORIALS & INTERMENT
Swami Sarvananda
Saturday, August 6th, 2:00 pm–3:30 pm.
How should you dispose of your physical remains? Would you like to have a memorial service that you have planned? More importantly, how can you make sure that your survivors are aware of your wishes and not burdened by having to make decisions you should have made?

COMMUNITY SERVICE
Swami Chidananda and Karuna Kreps
As we age, we need more and more personal assistance. Explore the meaning of service in terms of seeking help for yourself and serving those at the end-of-life, while maintaining your own well-being. Learn about a web-based platform for requesting and providing service to the elderly as a karma yoga service or as part of the gig economy.

LEAVING A LEGACY
Chandra/Jo Sgammato
Thursday, October 27th, 7:00 pm–8:30 pm.
What will remain to tell of you and your impact on the world after your departure? How do you want your life story to be told? Do your loved ones know what you want? What will remain to tell of you and your impact on the world after your departure? How do you want your life story to be told? Do your loved ones know what you want?

Yoga Therapy—What It Is & How to Get Started

By Dana Jean Costantino

Yoga and Therapy are two practices for the mind and body that are ever more important these days. We all seem to be so much more in-tune with the desire to get grounded, stay grounded and be well in mind, body, soul and spirit. As it turns out, there is in fact Yoga Therapy. While I have a Yoga Certification and have gone to Therapy, I had never experienced Yoga Therapy and was eager to not only learn more about it and what it entails and how it can help to heal, but where we can access Yoga Therapy here in NYC as well as what we can expect to gain from going and how to, if interested, become a Yoga Therapist?

In order to get a better understanding, I connected with Lorena Tapiero; She is enrolled in Loyola Marymount University’s Yoga Therapy Rx program (4-year pathway) and is currently working towards her clinical hours to receive her C-IAYT credentials. Below is a question and answer meant to help you get acquainted with Yoga Therapy. I hope that you find this information as purposeful as I did. I wish you all a mindful and meaningful month of May ahead.

What is Yoga Therapy?
The goal with Yoga Therapy is to empower people to progress toward a state of optimal health—emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually through the application of yogic practices & principles. Yoga Therapists are uniquely trained to work as part of an integrative setting and provide specific yogic modalities tailored to the health needs of the individual. As stated by Felicia Tomasko, Practicum Coordinator at the Center for Religion and Spiritualty at LMU & Editor-in-Chief of LA Yoga Magazine, “Some of the tools and techniques used by Yoga Therapists include but are not limited to the following: meditation and mindfulness techniques and practices, asana/posture as well as stretching, functional movement, relaxation techniques, stress reduction tools, sleep hygiene, breath awareness practices, journaling and self-inquiry, and daily routine suggestions. Yoga Therapy features the utilization of a comprehensive assessment done by the Yoga Therapist. Some of the areas assessed include but are not limited to the following: posture, functional movement parameters, range of motion, breath, biopsychosocial components of well-being, daily routine, and meditation experience and opportunities for more training.”

What are some prerequisites you need in order to enroll in a Yoga Therapy program?
I-AYT (International Association of Yoga Therapists) accredits Yoga Therapist training programs and certifies Yoga Therapists internationally. As per I-AYT guidelines, a certified yoga therapist has undertaken specialized training beyond that of a Yoga Teacher, in accordance with I-AYT educational competencies for the training of Yoga Therapist or has met IAYT’s requirements for certification under alternate pathways. The prerequisites for entering any I-AYT accredited program is at least 200hrs of Yoga, teacher training, at least one year of teacher training experience and a regular personal practice.

How does Yoga Therapy differ from traditional Yoga?
A hallmark that differentiates Yoga Therapy from Yoga teaching is the presence of an individual intake and assessment. Yoga Therapists use the assessment process to identify any risk factors or contraindications to ensure the safety and appropriateness of the yoga therapy intervention and develop an appropriate therapeutic and tailored plan.

Here in NYC, where can you gain access to Yoga Therapists?
The field of Yoga Therapy is a burgeoning career, and the field couldn’t be more apropos to take control of one’s self-care and well-being. IAYT was founded in 1989 by Larry Payne, PhD, and clinical psychologist Richard Miller. Larry went on to establish Loyola Marymount’s Yoga Therapy Rx program within LMU’s Center for Religion and Spirituality, currently in its 17th year with 1,000 graduates. Richard Miller developed the i-Rest Yoga Nidra protocol which is practiced worldwide across VA hospitals, active-duty soldiers, the homeless population, the incarcerated and people experiencing issues such as sleep disorder, PTSD, chemical dependency, chronic pain and related disorders. Based on current studies with iRest in the military, the Defense Centers of Excellence has approved iRest as a Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Currently, Yoga Therapy is not covered by insurance (it’s a work in progress), but wellness centers such as Health Quarters in NoHo offer Yoga Therapy as a wellness service, and in the coming years, they will open locations in the Upper West Side and Brooklyn. Some hospitals within NYC that offer integrative wellness services for patients are NYU Langone, VA Hospital, New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center and The Dean Ornish Program, which is reimbursed by Medicare nationwide, is the only integrative lifestyle program scientifically proven to reverse heart disease. Currently, the closest Ornish Reversal program to NYC is New Jersey or Pennsylvania.

How long is a normal course of Yoga Therapy treatment or is it ongoing?
It depends on the individual, the idea is to meet the person where they are. One session is better than none, but to experience the true benefits of Yoga Therapy, one-two sessions a month for at least six sessions is ideal.
I Swim, Therefore I Am

By Vicki Polon

Who would believe a $15.99 piece of plastic could change your life?

At 73, I was already taking statins when my cardiologist, the exuberant and wise Dr. Klein, said I needed more cardio in my life. Do you work out, he asked? “Well, I swim every day in summer when my husband and I are at our little lakeside cabin.” He nodded and said, “Good. Swimming is good, and the best cardio-boosting stroke is the crawl. You probably know that.”

I hate the crawl. Facedown in the water, my eyes burn, I usually swallow mouthfuls of water, hair covers my face and I can’t see anything. Worse, compared with a nice easy sidestroke or breaststroke, the crawl is exhausting.

For me, swimming is transportation to the wooden float in the middle of our lake. From my shoreline, the float is just 1,142 feet away. It could just as well be in the next zip code, but every day at four o’clock, it’s where I meet my BFF, whose cabin is on the opposite side of the lake. I’m happy just to get there and back.

But I made a deal with Dr. Klein. I would crawl my way to cardiooomph. The thought of just one swallow of fish—poop-filled water filled me with dread, but I bargained with myself, “Just do it. The mind will win and the body will follow.”

I waded into the lake, thinking every stroke, swallow and splash would bring me closer to a healthy heart. Not even halfway to the float, my resolve was dissolving and my mind was spinning. “What’s the point of this torment? I have excellent genes. My father lived to 93, my mother to 95, and unless golf counts, they never exercised a day in their lives.” Halfway there, I switched to the old familiar sidestroke. The crawl was too much like work—sweat free or not.

When I finally climbed onto the float, another lake friend was basking alongside my BFF. She is a serious swimmer and I often watched her effortlessly swimming the crawl all around the lake.

I whined about my current predicament. My swimmy friend listened and said, “Here. Try my goggles. It might make a difference.” “Really?” I asked. “Try it,” she repeated. I swam around in her goggles for a few minutes. Without water or hair in my eyes, I became aware of my breathing and the arm-windmill thing. I wasn’t struggling! What was happening? When I climbed back onto the float, she said my stroke was completely different than sans goggles. Maybe this goggle thing would free my inner Esther Williams.

I swim home doing my fastest ever side stroke and told my husband what had happened. Because the boundary of his life is no more than 18 inches from his computer, those same goggles were Amazon-ing their way to me by the time I finished the story.

It wasn’t long before I was doing the crawl to the float and back. Soon enough, I was swimming across the lake, turning my head to inhale, exhaling noisy bubbles face down in the water in a steady rhythmic, meditative pace. Swimming was no longer transportation: it was transporting.

I swim in big lazy half-mile circles in the morning and at night. I swim in the cold, the rain, and into the middle of October, when we closed up the cabin and returned to our city life. I’ve been thinking about swimming all winter and can’t wait to get back in the water and crawl some more. My goggles hang on a hook in our cabin, ready when I am.

Buggy Whips vs Batteries

By Gordon Hughes

I was having lunch the other day in the Village with two friends, good friends, for whom I have great respect. They were both of the firm conviction that battery power would never replace fossil fuel energy for automobiles, farm equipment or household electrical needs etc. They sincerely believe there is no real future in battery power just as they don’t believe in climate change. That is when I said to them “you guys should invest in the buggy whip business”. My grandfather told me, when I was just a kid, that when he was just a kid, folks would yell at people who owned automobiles that got stuck on a muddy road “get a horse”. Then they would laugh at the poor bloke. Well we now know how that worked out. I am no engineer, scientist, or futuristic guru, however I see some subtle and not so subtle changes occurring. While out in California on two recent trips I was fortunate to stay at a couple of great resorts. I was struck by their groundskeepers’ array of tools. They were using lawn mowers and leaf blowers as well as other equipment that were battery, not gas powered, and therefore silent. When I inquired about these tools, which I’d never seen before, I was informed that it was to please the guests and parenthetically create less air pollution. This combination thrilled the guests who were delighted not to be awakened at six am to the annoying array sounds. I have a nephew who is a Southern California builder and knows all the modern innovations in housing from gardening tools to electrical sophisticated household upgrades. With rolling blackouts and 100-degree temperatures, having no air conditioning is becoming very problematic. He explained to me that battery storage and the improvement therein is a big deal now. Currently newer homes are being fitted with garage walls that serve as major electrical/battery storage units. These walls can store electricity longer than ever before. When the sun goes down these homes can continue to run on the stored electricity. He tells me that it works well but is still in a highly primitive state. Much as the early automobiles were not as efficient as the horse. Yesterday I saw a story on battery powered aircraft. It appears that all the major aircraft companies are establishing battery powered planes. Airbus and Boeing are currently in development of large battery powered aircraft (New York Times Sunday Business Section 4/17). They are following the automotive business model. So Tesla in the air. Newer smaller batteries are also in the developmental stage. The world is indeed changing.

So back to my two pals, I told them that as I replace my farm equipment I am going electric.

I just replaced my gas leaf blowers, for Spring clean-up with an electric version. Best of all I do not have to use a choke and pull that annoying cord. Think how you used to start a motor boat or motor cycle. Now just push a button and you are off to the races. My friends are still thinking of paper weights in offices, from the 1930’s when without a paper weight papers would fly around the office. That was before AC when we used fans. There is no longer a need for paperweights. I said “Just imagine an electric street sweeper (noiseless) going down Hudson St. while you are having an outdoor coffee at Cafe Panino Mucho Gusto”. All new innovations take time. R&D, failure, retooling and finally a well running new idea. Tesla and other cars are here now and sales are growing. The day will come when electric cars will surpass the gas guzzling current automobile. Yes it will happen, and really in the not too distant future. Battery size is the issue of the day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day. Somewhere there is a team of scientists that will reduce that wall of battery’s day.
Thinking of Moving Out of New York City? Some Cautionary Words.

By Gary Stern

First of all, full disclosure. My wife and I have owned a home near Woodstock, NY for years. My wife was brought up surrounding by nature in Pennsylvania and thrives on feeding birds and chipmunks, and I was born on 50th Street and 8th Avenue and am energized by street life, asphalts, and the A train. We live in the West Village, and have for many years, including through the pandemic.

As has been well-publicized, a slew of New Yorkers, no longer bound by having to go into the office full-time or at all, have been gravitating to living in the Hudson Valley, the Hamptons, the Berkshires, and elsewhere. While many are moving back, many others are surely still considering a move out of the five boroughs for greener pastures. But if you move from the city, here’s what you’re going to be missing. You’ve been warned.

1) YOU’LL BE WALKING A LOT LESS. Living in the city is to love to walk and wander through its streets, its neighborhoods, its history and character. On a walk in Chinatown, one sees plaques of where writers were born and where historical documents were signed, and ends up on Doyers or Pell Street for delicious dim sum. In the suburbs, you won’t be walking anymore—and if you do, it has to be planned, a drive to a hike. The main reason you won’t is in most of these locales, there are no sidewalks or shoulders on the road. If you walk, you could die. And because you'll be driving everywhere, you're going to be gaining weight and feeling lifeless. New Yorkers (of the five boroughs) weigh eight pounds less than the average American because they often walk miles daily, while we're even thinking of it.

2) SAY GOODBYE TO BODEGAS. In virtually every neighborhood in the city, whether Windsor Park or the East Village, there's a bodega or small deli, oftentimes several, that has all of the basics you need, from ice cream to toilet paper. There'll be no more bodegas in the suburbs or country-side. Now you'll be driving to a supermarket and wandering the giant aisles where bagels and lox are considered foreign foods.

3) EVERY STREET IN THE CITY CARRIES MEMORIES. The East Village is where you used to drink egg creams at Gems Spa, the Upper West Side is where you made stops at Zabar’s, and DUMBO is where you went for pizza at Grimaldi’s. Or whatever your versions of this as a city traveler. Each neighborhood has its own aura, feeling, and joie de vivre. But upstate, it doesn’t work that way. Kingston is a small city, with a street called Broadway, filled with gas stations and Chinese take-out joints. A nice place for a weekend getaway.

4) THE SUBURBS SLEEP. New York City’s subway runs 24/7, many pharmacies are open all night, and you can get a sit-down dinner at midnight with ease. That won’t be happening in the Hamptons or Berkshires. Some Berkshire restaurants have their final call at 8 p.m., and some stay open later, until 9 p.m. At 10 p.m., most everything is closed.

5) WHOM YOU’LL BE MEETING. In New York City, I have friends who were originally from Davenport, Iowa, Allenstown, PA, Nigeria, Kenya, and Australia. Upstate and in the Hamptons, you'll be meeting, almost exclusively, ex-New Yorkers. And most of them will simply tell you over and over again how overjoyed they are to have left a crowded, dirty city.

6) NATURE CAN BE TOUGH. While nature is not the prevailing value that New York City offers, there is plenty of it in the five boroughs and worth exploring if you haven’t. The coyotes who have roamed the West Side Highway, the owls in Central Park, and the falcon who nests off of Washington Square are all New Yorkers. But in the Hudson Valley, the 600-pound bears will eat your birdeed, turn over your garbage cans, and hide in the woods when you’re barbecuing then try to steal your steak and burgers. And did I mention the ticks that cause Lyme disease? They’re everywhere. You've been warned.

7) WATCH OUT FOR THE DRIVERS. On local roads upstate, in the Hamptons and Berkshires, drivers speed. They know every twist and turn, and tend to drive 50+ on a 30-miles-per-hour road. Moreover, they often don't make full stops at stop signs because they’re in a rush, likely for ice cream at Stewart’s because there are no bodegas in walking distance.

8) HAMLETS ARE HAMLETS. In the town of Woodstock, which has about 7,000 or so residents, many people know one another and travel in similar circles and track each other's movements. They know the people who own the local health food store, where they spend their winter, and what their children are up to. Everyone knows each other's business. In the city of New York, with 8.8 million people, only your close friends know about you, and the remainder of the city's denizens pays no attention to you and let you live your life gossip-free.

9) ADJUST YOUR SENSIBILITY. In the city, if you’re looking for a cup of coffee and there are five or six people on line, you’re not going to wait. You’re going to walk 65 steps and find the next coffee spot. In the Hamptons, Berkshires, and Upstate, you’ll wait. If you walk 65 steps, you won’t find another cup, you’ll find a parking lot.

10) YOU’RE GIVING UP PROXIMITY. Most things in New York revolve around proximity. You get to know your neighbors in your building, the bodega owner and workers, and others in your community. You can walk to do many things and you can get public transit to do everything else. Anything you could want to do, from a museum to a show to a baseball game to a hike to a continuing education class to shopping to you name it, is not far off. If you live in a house upstate as most people do, often in the woods, with no neighbors around, proximity won't operate. You're on your own but for a lengthy drive.

Gary Stern is a New Yorker. Article reprinted with permission of the author.

Meters continued from page 1

right. Some people wind up with more than one $100 fine and still don’t understand how their utility got so much power over them. The publisher of WestView News, George Capis, fits into this category. John Margolis, a resident near Hudson Street and 10th Street has gotten two such fines. Oddly, his meter is in the basement next door, so he can't give Con Ed access. One service rep implied that if he didn't pay the fine, Con Ed would shut off his electricity. He and his landlord have gotten bounced back and forth between Con Ed and two different contractors with no resolution. John could opt out, but still feels disadvantaged because Con Ed charges $9.50 per month to send a meter reader. Remember when we weren't charged for our monthly meter reading. Remember when employing people mattered?

Calling Con Ed for an explanation is an interesting experience. The reps are trained to say things like, "There are no safety issues with smart meters. They comply with FCC guidelines". Now you can answer back saying the Appeals Court for the District of Columbia ruled on Aug. 13, 2021 that the FCC failed to conduct a thorough evaluation of the scientific evidence expected of a federal agency in violation of federal law, calling its decision to not update its guidelines "arbitrary and capricious." So currently, there are no RF exposure guidelines. Then demand that Con Edison send technicians with equipment to measure the levels of pulsed microwave frequencies, in other words, the levels and frequencies of spiking frequencies. If they did, the readings would show peaks thousands of times higher than what's considered safe for long-term exposure by the Building Biology Institute. We are in uncharted territory. What if you own or work in a small business? The smart meter policy gods have decreed that commercial customers cannot opt out. Ask Con Ed why and their answer is "businesses are non-residential". Where's the logic? There is none. While you're at work, if you've got a panel of smart meters nearby, nobody is looking out for you. You can try to have your boss purchase smart meter covers for around $75 each. Otherwise, you'll need some pricey protective clothing to want to avoid exposure to pulsed microwave radiation. If you work from home and your office is considered a commercial space, you're in the same predicament.

Why is it that we have to opt out in the first place? Shouldn't we opt in if we feel there is a benefit? Not according to our state Public Service Commission. This is a "quasi-legislative" agency you probably never heard about, with six commission-appointed by the governor. When the Commission wanted consumers of electricity, water, and gas to switch over to digital smart meters, they knew how to be covert about it. They placed a request for public comment in the New York Register. You've never heard of that either? Too bad. It turned out, only 14 New Yorkers posted comments. The policy to replace safe analog meters with microwave-emitting smart meters was easily pushed through. The utility industry could not have a better friend. Then to embark on the nearly impossible task of overturning the policy, one has to file an Article 78 proceeding within 120 days. Steve Romine, of Woodstock, NY, actually did. I just happen to know him. This is how I became aware of how the Public Service Commission operates and how they can rely on "deference" by the courts. The abuse of power by the Commission and what surely looks like collusion by the NY Supreme Court is an affront to democracy in the public interest.

There are many ways this issue affects every New Yorker. Exposure to hazardous levels of microwave radiation from a technology that we were uninformed about, and deprived of the right to consent is just a glimpse of the problem. What you can do is learn how key legislation is necessary to effectively regulate smart meters as well as wireless antennas we see every 2-3 blocks in the city. Go to https://rebrandy.ny/safe-meter-and-broadband-policies.

Signing the petition will help make state politicians aware they must get fully informed and take the necessary steps to protect the public. Also, call your NY State senator asking them to co-sponsor and vote for S 8765. This is a bill that will make it much easier to keep our analog meters. Otherwise, the industry backed by the Public Service Commission will continue to shape policies that implement undesirable technology that affects our daily lives, our health, and finances without regard for what really is best for consumers now and into the future.
It’s rare to find someone who has lived in the West Village their whole life.

As a lifelong resident of Waverly Place, no one can express the value of living in the most coveted neighborhood in the city like I can. You know the magic of the village, and all it has to offer. You live in the greatest place in the city and need someone to appreciate it the same way you do!

From one West Village icon to another, if you have questions regarding your most valued asset, feel free to reach out to me and we can chat over coffee at Ye Waverly Inn.

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Matronalia to Mother's Day: The Impact of Women and Mothers on Society and Culture

By Anastasia Kaliabakos

Lance Conrad once said, “I can imagine no heroism greater than motherhood.” How true that is! To celebrate my wonderful mom, along with all the mothers who will also be celebrated this Mother’s Day (May 8th, 2022), I thought it would be fitting to explore the origins of this holiday. I enjoy discovering connections between modern celebrations and those of antiquity in my articles, and Mother’s Day certainly did not disappoint.

In ancient Rome, Matronalia (or Matronales Feriae) celebrated the goddess Juno. The word “Matronalia” gives us the modern English word “matron,” who is a married woman in charge of domestic affairs. Juno was in particular regarded in the ancient world as the “mother goddess” and also was considered the goddess of marriage, women, fertility, and beauty. She was said to watch over women who were pregnant to ensure safe deliveries of their children. Therefore, since Matronalia was so deeply connected to Juno, the holiday itself was notably imbued with the themes of motherhood. Celebrated on March 1st—the first day of the year in the Roman calendar—the annual festival emphasized the role of mothers and their importance to Roman culture and society.

Matronalia was considered a holy day and most of the festivities would take place in places of worship, like temples. Traditionally, women would wear their hair adorned with flowers and their clothes loosely in order to express their fertility. Flowers were also offered at Juno’s designated temple. Praying was a common practice during regular worship, but special prayers were offered on Matronalia for pregnant women asking for Juno’s help in birthing their children. At the Temple of Vesta, goddess of the hearth, home, and family, the sacred fire was put out by the Vestal Virgins, who were the priestesses of Vesta. This fire was supposed to be constantly tended to by the priestesses and was not allowed to go out at any other time of the year. On Matronalia, the fire was relit in order to represent birth.

By the 16th century and as Christianity became more widespread, ancient Roman traditions in Europe began to fade into the background. Early Christians in England initially used the day of Matronalia to honor the Virgin Mary, the mother of Christ. They would decorate the church, which they referred to as the “Mother Church,” in a similar manner as Juno’s temple, with jewels, flowers and other offerings. Within the next century, a clerical decree broadened the celebration from one focused on the Virgin Mary to include everyday mothers and called the occasion “Mothering Day.” This holiday was especially important for working class mothers in England, as their sons, who could have been anything from trade workers to servants, were allowed to travel home to visit their families for Mothering Day. When English settlers first arrived in America, they discontinued the tradition of Mothering Day due to the difficulty of their lives and their harsh surroundings. However, the first North American Mother’s Day was conceptualized with Julia Ward Howe’s “Mother’s Day Proclamation” in 1870 and was a different twist on the similar English holiday. Howe was an American poet and author, known primarily for writing the “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” She was also an advocate for the abolition of slavery and for women’s suffrage. After the Civil War, Howe sought to protest the violence and carnage caused by the fighting and called for an international Mother’s Day to celebrate peace and motherhood. An excerpt from her Mother’s Day Proclamation says:

“From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with Our own. It says, “Disarm, Disarm!” The sword of murder is not the balance of justice! Blood does not wipe out dishonor Nor violence indicate possession. As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war… In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask That a general congress of women without limit of nationality May be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient And at the earliest period consistent with its objects To promote the alliance of the different nationalities, The amicable settlement of international questions. The great and general interests of peace.”

By 1873, women’s groups in 18 North American cities observed this new Mother’s Day. In fact, a women’s group led by a woman named Anna Reeves Jarvis began to celebrate an adaptation of Howe’s holiday called Mother’s Friendship Day, which was meant to unite those who had been divided between the Union and Confederate sides of the Civil War. After Anna Reeves Jarvis died, her daughter Anna M. Jarvis campaigned for the establishment of an official Mother’s Day to honor her mother and her values. On May 10, 1908, the first official Mother’s Day celebration took place in both West Virginia and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. With this success, Jarvis decided to devote herself to creating an international Mother’s Day.

In 1910, a U.S. Senator from Nebraska named Elmer Burkett proposed making Mother’s Day a national holiday. Although the initial proposal was defeated, the movement did not stop. Ultimately, in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed it into national observance, designating the second Sunday in May as Mother’s Day. Today, over 70 countries around the world observe Mother’s Day, and most of their celebrations and traditions are modeled after the United States’ version of the holiday. Mother’s Day is personally one of my favorite holidays because I am able to show my own mom how much I appreciate her. Throughout my life, my mom has made so many sacrifices to give me the opportunity to get an excellent education and has supported me in every way imaginable. Although I hope my mom knows how much I love her no matter what day of the year it is, Mother’s Day is a great excuse for me and my dad to spoil her with gifts and affection. I hope that you are able to take the time to visit your mother if she is alive or remember her in your heart and your actions. Additionally, remind the women in your life how much they mean to you, whether they are mothers already or hope to be some day.

Anastasia (Stacey) Kaliabakos is a graduate of the Brearley School and is currently a Dana Scholar at the College of the Holy Cross majoring in Classics and Philosophy. She is an opinions editor for Holy Cross’ newspaper, The Spire, editor-in-chief of the Parnassus Classical Journal, and an avid matcha latte consumer. Anastasia has contributed to The WestView News since 2018 and has been featured in NEO Magazine and The National Herald.

LATE BREAKING NEWS...

As we were going to press, WestView News learned of one of the most egregious abuses of tenant rights we have ever heard—displaced tenant Deborah Privitello facing off against billionaire landlord Francis Greenburger/Time Equities. Her family’s home is the last rent-stabilized unit in one of Greenburger’s buildings, and it’s been decimated from flooding, a leaking roof, collapsing ceilings, structural damage, a defunct boiler, floors caving in, corroded pipes, toxic mold—the list is endless. Visit westviewnews.org/slumlord to learn more.
**Notes from Away**

**A Golden Opportunity**

By Tom Lamia

Oh the fighting that is going on in the trenches of party politics as the midterm elections approach. Both the House and the Senate are on the tipping point of losing (or gaining) a majority of members who would join together to deny the minority a voice in running the country. Whether one thinks that this is a design flaw in the Constitution and must somehow be tolerated for a few years, or is of the contrary view that this is impending disaster that reflects a flaw in our populace that cannot be tolerated any further; either way there is real fear that a new majority will cause a radical change.

One such fight, a critical one, is in Maine’s Second Congressional District. Jared Golden holds the seat, one of two allocated to Maine. The First District is where the well to do and well educated live (Portland, Rockland, Brunswick, Augusta). That seat is safe for Democrats. The Second District covers everything else, from industrial towns (Lewiston) and Maine’s second most populous city (Bangor) to the down east coast (Bar Harbor, Belfast, Machias). Representative Golden’s district includes the vast expanse of the farming and lumbering interior up to the Canadian border and the windswept Acadian coast of adventurous recreation and hideaway second homes overlooking the bold Atlantic.

The Second District is not safe for either party. Trump won the district by nearly eight points in 2020. Golden faced an incumbent in his 2018 run and won by one point. In 2020 his margin against a first time challenger was six points. This year the Republicans in Washington are targeting Golden, out fundraising him six to one (by his count). One would think that the nature of the district (rural), the mood of rural voters and the candidacy of Bruce Poliquin, a two-term incumbent before losing to Golden by a whisker in 2018 when the race was decided by Maine’s ranked choice voting rules, would make Republicans believe they have a good shot at flipping the seat. Poliquin is fired up and ready to go with money from Republican PACs behind him. This is a battle that could decide control of the House. No stone will be left unturned. Golden will have some protection locally from his voting record. He has voted with Republicans on several catnip issues—Trump impeachment, background checks for gun purchases, Build Back Better, American Rescue Plan—and has made himself prominent in most of these votes by being the only Democrat to do so. These votes may appeal to the strong conservative makeup of his district but like Senator Susan Collins on the Republican side, by taking positions supported by his opponent’s party he risks losing the support of voters in his own party. The current rigidity in party politics requires nothing less.

Revenge seems to be the motivating passion for both sides in these midterm elections. Each talks of having been done wrong and of the need to get even. “They did this to us and now we are going to do it to them, only more so.” Trump is the bogeyman of Democrats so whatever it takes to dethrone him, as party leader and kingmaker will appeal to Democrats. Control of Congress is crucial to achieve this goal. It will determine the fate of the January 6 commission, deflake the ambitions of several Republican leaders and likely strip away a layer of protection against prosecutions.

Few Democrats fall neatly into the categories that Republicans use to describe them (Socialists, Woke Progressives, Ultra Leftists) and few Republicans answer to the pejoratives Democrats use for them (Fascists, Birchers, White Nationalists). Some do, but effective governing and thoughtful debate do not benefit from the name-calling. This wanton hostility does damage to our politics, feeding a trend to negative, partisan attitudes that hold us back. The outcome of this midterm election in Maine is important. More important is the conduct of the candidates and their supporters. Campaigns can bring out the worst in our political traditions. Negative campaign messages show a lack of respect for the process and the participants. They are characterized by overstatement and shading of facts that incite responses in kind and can lead to violence. There are consequences, as can be seen in our history: Burr and Hamilton, facing off on the New Jersey heights in 1804; the savage caning of Senator Charles Sumner on the Senate floor in 1856; the vitriol-laced rhetoric of Father Coughlin in the 1930s; the treason charges (of McCarthy and the John Birch Society) during the Cold War. There has never been a shortage of fighting words in the halls of Congress or among politicians. Violence is not a stranger to politics. It is always there on the margin and its presence does not end with victory or defeat in an election. The winner is full of swagger and the loser seeks revenge. We risk more than we think when we cast our differences as “existential” or “Manichean” or even “irrefutable.” There is much that goes with compromise. We need more of it.

In Maine we have politicians who are known to compromise. There are many examples. Senator Susan Collins is one. Another is Jared Golden. Each has had to deal with the exasperation of those they disappoint when they vote independently. Democrats worked hard to defeat Susan Collins in the 2020 election, but Collins won. Had she lost, which was expected by many, the Democrats would likely have taken control of the Senate even before the former President did the job for them by angrily trashing the voting process in Georgia and thereby dissuading Republicans from voting, causing the election of two Democrats to the Senate. This gave the Democrats control of the Senate by the slimmest of margins—one seat, plus the vote of the Vice President. The outcome in Maine’s Second District in November could prove similarly critical to control of the House.

**Woodstock**

By Jeff Hodges

On August 14th, 1969, we threw some camping gear into a van emblazoned with a big white peace sign and set out for Bethel, NY. We were 18 years old, we had our tickets to the Woodstock Music Festival, and we were ready for three days of peace and music.

We departed Woodstock Monday morning, just as Jimi Hendrix was finishing his set. As we wound through mountains of garbage, his rendition of The Star Spangled Banner stopped us in our tracks. When that searing musical indictment of America’s hubris came screaming across the post-apocalyptic landscape, it began to dawn on us that the party was ending.

When we got back to the van, there was a girl inside, asleep. She apologized profusely, and hurriedly climbed out, but we persuaded her to stick around and help us set up the giant can of peaches we had left behind.
95 Morton Block

By Brian J Pape, AIA

Built for manufacturing and warehousing ca.1911, this building dominates the full block of Washington Street, and sports a roof terrace with unobstructed Hudson River views for now. 95 Morton Street is the main lobby address for the office uses in this 220,000 SF, fully leased building. Capital Real Estate Ltd. has its name set in concrete at the street wall, although RFR Realty LLC, founded by Aby Rosen and Michael Fuchs, is the current property manager. At 117 Barrow Street there is a separate lobby for Venmo and its parent company Braintree, which had long established itself on the 5th floor; PayPal acquired Braintree in 2013. When PayPal split from eBay in 2015, PayPal headquarters occupied the 6th floor, and then expanded by two more floors here in 2018, leasing 95,000 SF total. Auditorium seating for about 100 persons is visible from the Washington Street windows, along with lounges and gymnasium and a bike garage (but no car garage). Not surprising, catered complimentary breakfasts and lunches were offered, plus free snacks, at least pre-pandemic.

A sign on the loading dock door next to PayPal’s lobby advertises retail space available of 878 SF ground floor and 16,123 SF on the lower level.

The extent of current repairs include restoration of brick coursing and parapet walls, plus roof work for mechanicals and terraces, ensuring that this will be a desirable business address for years to come.

On the left side of the photo, the salmon colored brick façade of 111 Barrow Street is stylistically intact, matching the 1911 building except for slightly darker brick. This original Vita Herring Factory was built in 1920, and converted to condominiums ca. 1987, for 39 loft units and the luxury of a 24-hour doorman and common roofdeck, thoughtfully designed with separate outdoor rooms.

The east storefronts of this portion of the block feature the Bright Horizons pre-school at 644 Greenwich Street, while an NYU housing facility at 636 Greenwich Street occupies the southeast corner of the block.

In total, this block of loft buildings features the deliberate effort by various enterprises over years of development to harmonize the architectural style of the disparate buildings, so that they match floor levels, height, building materials, window scale, and even parapet ornamentation.

In the right foreground are the West Village Houses from the 1970s.

THE EXTENSIVE EXTERIOR REPAIRS being made to this cream-colored brick eight-story loft building on Washington Street, center looking east in the photo, continue to follow up the major interior improvements in recent years. This part of Greenwich Village was never included in any historic district, but the work being done preserves the original character of this block. Credit: Brian J Pape, AIA.
Are Fire Sprinkler Inspections required in NYC to avoid FDNY violations?

Yes. NYC requires all buildings with at least (1) sprinkler head to conduct at minimum monthly visual inspections.

NFPA code 25 is the standard that lays down guidelines for the proper inspection, maintenance, and testing of fire protection systems across the US. When automatic fire sprinkler systems are properly installed and maintained, they have consistently proven to be the most effective means for protecting both life and property against fire.

Since January 1, 2011, New York City has adopted the National Fire Protection Association Standard 25.

If you are a building owner, you are legally responsible to ensure that all NFPA 25 inspections and tests are performed by a licensed individual. At Buckmiller Automatic Sprinkler Corp., our technicians hold both S-12 (sprinkler) and S-13 (standpipe) Certificate of Fitness licenses, qualifying us to perform these inspections.

You could be subject to loss of your liability insurance coverage and/or suffer harsh fines. We are waiting to assist you with the visual inspections, maintenance, and testing procedures that are designed to help you reach and maintain compliance and most importantly -- give you peace of mind.
By Brian J Pape, AIA, LEED-AP

**THEN:** The University of the City of New York was incorporated in 1831 as a non-dominational modern university, supported by private donations. The University Building, shown above, was constructed in 1832-35 as the first and only original building for the campus, at the entire Washington Square East blockfront between Waverly Place and Washington Place. This conspicuous five-story Gothic-style structure of light-colored limestone contained classrooms, laboratories, museum and observatory, and the residence for professors.

The founders envisioned an institution for students “who devote themselves to scientific or literary pursuits,” and for those preparing for “the learned professions, commerce, or the mechanical and useful arts.” City University of New York, CUNY, dates back to the formation of the Free Academy in 1847 for the purpose of “extending the benefits of education gratuitously to persons who have been pupils in the common schools of the ... city and county of New York.” The Free Academy later was absorbed into the City College of New York, making it the oldest institution among the CUNY 7 colleges and numerous other schools. Perhaps to avoid confusion, the private University of the City of New York had been popularly known as New York University since its inception but was officially renamed New York University in 1896.

In a major pivot in 1891, the University bought a 40-acre Bronx site intended for its University Heights campus, with the College of Arts and Philosophy, technical schools, and the Graduate Seminary (founded in 1886). Its Beaux-Arts buildings, which included the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, were designed by the celebrated architect Stanford White of McKim, Mead, and White. (The Moses King Handbook incorrectly identifies this University campus as located in Washington Heights.)

The Schools of Law (founded in 1835), and Pedagogy (founded in 1890), and part of the Graduate Seminary, were maintained at Washington Square, along with one of the country’s first university-affiliated business schools (founded in 1900). The University Medical College (1841), Colleges of Dentistry (1865) and Pharmacy (1829) were located elsewhere in downtown Manhattan.

**NOW:** The current 10-story building, called Main Building, shown bottom left, was designed by Alfred Zucker, a German born and trained architect, in 1892. Zucker maintained the foundation and many other features of the original university building, but not the Gothic façade.

Initially, the light brick, stone and terracotta edifice housed University College and the School of Law. During those early years, in addition to serving as NYU’s main academic building, Main Building rented offices, studio space and residential apartments, and the American Book Company also rented space in the building. This combination of institutional and commercial tenants was expressed in the building’s tripartite facade design. The university’s academic presence on the three top floors was distinguished by engaged Ionic columns capped by pediments, and a set of balcony balustrades.

In 1927, due to the pressures of a growing post-WWI student body, NYU cleared out commercial tenants, to use the space for academic purposes.

A number of new graduate schools complemented NYU’s undergraduate growth: the College of Nursing (1932), the Institute of Fine Arts (1933), the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences (1934), and new colleges in continuing education (1934) and public service (1938), the latter founded with the encouragement of Mayor La Guardia, himself an NYU alumnus. With the largest private college enrollment in the country—an astonishing 47,000 students by 1939—NYU had in many ways become the great urban university its founders dreamed of.

The post-WWII decades were also a period of continued growth for NYU, as returning GIs swelled the student body. Schools of social work (1960), the arts (1965), and individualized study (1972) were added; and plans were made for a central library. By 1973, however, as New York City reeled from years of rising crime and financial troubles, and NYU enrollments declined, running up annual deficits since 1964, NYU reluctantly sold its University Heights campus in order to regain solvency. All undergraduate liberal arts education was consolidated at Washington Square in 1973.

Bronx Community College, part of CUNY and now located there, got the original University Heights buildings declared a National Historic Landmark. In 2002, Main Building was renamed the “Silver Center of Arts & Science” in honor of Julius Silver, an alumnus. Renovations have dramatically improved the facility while maintaining the historic features. NYU owns nine other buildings designed by Zucker, that were built in this commercial area as lofts and wholesale stores. The 10-story Brown Building (formerly the Asch Building, ca. 1901) was the site of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911, the industrial tragedy which generated many of New York City’s current labor and building safety laws.

The Brown Building of Science and the Waverly Building occupy the same block and have been internally connected at the ground floor as well as by stairway and elevator (with the idiosyncrasy of adjacent floors that do not correspond by floor number) so that the three buildings are known collectively as the “Main block.” The Silver Center for Arts and Science at 32 Waverly Place continues to serve the greatly expanded NYU.


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Brian J. Pape is a citizen architect in private practice, serving on the Manhattan District 2 Community Board Landmarks Committee and Quality of Life Committee (speaking solely in a personal, and not an official capacity), Co-chair of the American Institute of Architects NY Design for Aging Committee, is a member of AIANY Historic Buildings and Housing Committee, is LEED-AP “Green” certified, and is a journalist specializing in architecture subjects.
By Robert Kroll

Hanging art in a small apartment, with few walls that don’t have doors and windows can be a problem. What if your furniture, your dining table, buffet or cupboards were created so that art could be displayed from them?

That was the task I set myself to in my Dumbo design studio. By chance, I happened upon an article about an obscure Japanese wooden joint, known as the Kakushi Ari Kata Sanmai Hozo joint, that set off light bulbs in my head and sent me to the drawing board,

The joint can be described as a mitred dovetail that is used at the corner of a table or cabinet to join two timbers at right angles. If you were to lace your fingers together at the knuckles, palms down, then twist your hands slightly toward each other, you’ll get the general idea.

Like so much in the world of Japanese joinery and woodworking, this joint is self-sustaining, meaning it holds itself together without metal fasteners or potentially without any adhesive.

In the drawing the dark areas are the ends of horizontal support/beam at the top of a table. The light areas are the end grain on the top of each of the table legs at the corner. The joint is made like an inlay, i.e., a picture, and the inlay is half an inch thick. This is an extremely strong joint in every plane. It can’t be twisted in any direction. The legs and top of the table become like one.

Theoretically, a high-rise building could be put together with a steel frame and this type of joinery instead of rivets and bolts.

What’s the point of this type of joinery and what are its virtues, its opportunities, and its meaning in the greater scheme of things?

In Western style table design, the slab top is actually a part of the structure of the table and gives it sheer strength. Anyone who has had a table that has gotten weak or collapsed at the joints and had to be re-glued, screwed together with thick steel straps and still have a wobbly table will understand. This table is one and done. Absent abuse, it will last several lifetimes and can be passed through generations. Anyone who has purchased an oak or mahogany table from an antique shop, or, God forbid, an Ikea mass produced table from Thailand, expects to get a couple of good years use out of it before putting it out on the sidewalk for recycling.

But the more important feature of this structural method is that it creates an extremely strong “picture frame” at the top. Artwork, especially photos, can be inserted in the frame and the whole table covered with a thick (1/2”) sheet of glass. Now you are displaying your art collection in a way and in a place that in the normal course of life would be covered with place mats and condiments.

The artwork could be an oil painting, a watercolor, any two-or-three-dimensional piece or even one that is backlit from below by a light box. Among the endless possibilities for framing art in a tabletop are selfies; photos of one’s grandchildren or grandparents; a Torah scroll parchment from your bar mitzvah, or anything you might want to view during a meal to calm the nerves after a hard day’s work.

Mark my words: you will never, or long remember, the phrase Kakushi Ari kata san mai hozo. Don’t even think about Googling it.

Robert Kroll is a woodworker, Co-op Super, retired lawyer and legal journalist.
IN and OUT
by Caroline Benveniste

Not Closing!
Last month we reported that Florence Prime Meat Market (5 Jones Street between West 4th and Bleecker Streets) had plans to close. As soon as the April issue of WestView News came out, we were bombarded with angry phone calls telling us that we had gotten it wrong. So this month, we are pleased to report that plans have changed. It is true that Benny Pizzuco, the owner, had decided not to renew the lease, and instead focus on the wholesale business which is based in Huntington, L.I. But Aristeo Quiñonez, the head butcher at Florence, took over the business and negotiated a new lease with the landlord. He told me that Florence is now a family business: his two daughters and wife are also working at the shop. Quiñonez came to the US from Mexico in the mid-80s. He was a teenager then, and worked at Florence making deliveries and cleaning the store. Over time he became the head butcher, a job he held for more than 25 years. Florence Prime Meat Market was founded by an Italian immigrant, Jack Uhaldt in 1936. Uhaldt sold it to a longtime employee, Tony Pelligrino in 1975. Pelligrino ran the shop for about twenty years and then sold it to Benny Pizzuco. In a way history is repeating itself since the shop is once again owned by both an immigrant and a longtime employee.

by Caroline Benveniste

Top Opening

GOURMET GARAGE. Photo by Maggie Berkowitz.

Gourmet Garage – 99 Bank Street at Hudson Street
After Mrs. Green’s closed in December 2016 (it had opened in August 2015), the topic of who would be replacing them was hotly debated. The Villager reported that Westside Market would be taking over, but when I spoke to the manager at the 110th Street store, he told me that they were in negotiations, but that nothing had been finalized. Finally, in February 2020, word came that Gourmet Garage would be opening a location there. But like for many other businesses, the pandemic delayed things and people started to wonder if it would ever open. Now the opening date (April 29) has come and gone, and judging by the number of people who had contacted me to tell me, there was great excitement about the opening.

Also Open

Arometam Cakes (47 8th Avenue at West 4th Street) is a new shop offering remarkable cakes, most of which need to be ordered two days in advance. Some of the cakes have Asian influences/ingredients (such as Ube, a purple yam, Sakura flowers, etc.) but they also offer very elaborate buttercream cakes with pandas, moon and stars and Micky and Minnie. The store replaces an ambitious Japanese restaurant, Shuraku, which closed during the pandemic. Mollusca (1 Little West 12th Street between Hudson Street and 9th Avenue) is a restaurant dedicated to seafood in general, with an emphasis on mussels. The chef was born in Savonna, Italy where he worked in his family’s restaurant from a young age. He has opened four Mollusca restaurants in Russia, with the original in Moscow. Blank Street Coffee (19 Eighth Avenue between 12th and Jane Streets) has opened a third location in the West Village. The other two are on 7th Avenue near West 13th Street, and Bleecker Street near 7th Avenue South. Mr. Z Famous Asian Cuisine (313 6th Avenue between Cornelia and Carmine Streets) has opened in the old Xi’an Famous Foods space. It is one of the more cheerful looking storefronts on the block. The menu features typical Chinese dishes, as well as some more unusual ones, like Beef Tripe, Chicken Feet and Crispy Durian Pie. There are also some pan-Asian offerings like Thai Fried Rice, Ramen, and Crispy Vietnamese Rolls. The owners immigrated to the US from China and worked in the restaurant business here from a young age. Intelligentsia Coffee New York Training (114 Christopher Street) is not a retail establishment—it is a kind of coffee lab for the brand’s wholesale partners. Eva Joan (22 8th Avenue at West 12th Street) is a store that does tailoring/mending, embellishment and embroidery. This is not a typical tailor: the vibe is edgy, and the results can be a little out there, but they are committed to helping you “make the garment of your dreams”. less&more Nail Lab (491 6th Avenue between 12th and 13th Streets) replaces Kim’s Vougue Nails. However, this shop touts their use of recyclable, non-toxic, cruelty-free products, sustainable packaging and reusable tools. During their soft opening they are offering 20% off services.

Closed

Silver Spoon NY (204 West 14th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues) abruptly shuttered. The “bar for foodies” had opened in February of this year, and was getting very positive feedback on its food. But without warning, two months later it was gone, and a real estate agent was showing the space to other clients. Even though they were not there very long, they will be missed. Also, this month the West Village lost two Chinese restaurants. Junzi Kitchen/Nice Day Chinese Takeout (190 Sullivan Street at Bleecker Street) opened in 2018 and was the result of work done at the Yale Entrepreneurial Institute by some students who wanted to open a fast casual Chinese restaurant which served authentic Northern Chinese food. During the pandemic business slowed, and the team, which also had plans to take over struggling restaurants serving Chinese-American food, decided to turn Junzi Kitchen into their vision of an updated Chinese-American eatery. They called the refurbished restaurant Nice Day Chinese Takeout and it opened in November of 2020. Now, Nice Day has closed, and out of the three restaurants they operated in NYC, only the one near Columbia University remains. With the high rents in New York City, their new plan is to open Chinese-American restaurants in the suburbs first, before eventually returning to the city. Clay Pot (270 Bleecker Street at Morton Street), a Chinese restaurant that served rice and toppings in heated clay pots has closed. The sister restaurant in the East Village is also gone.

Coming Soon

St. George Coffee (74 7th Avenue South at Barrow Street) will be a French boulangerie (bakery) and café. It is opening in the large triangular space that has housed many different restaurants over the years. Fava Bistro closed in 2019, and before that Carine Maloto, Duet, and Centeno Vinospec. Ferdi Restaurant (15 Seventh Avenue South between Leroy and Carmine Streets) has signage up. It will be a family-owned restaurant serving Italian fare. A new wine bar called Moon Flower will open at 201 West 11th Street (between Greenwich Avenue and Waverly Place) where another wine bar, Vin Sur Vingt, used to be (Vin Sur Vingt moved around the corner to a larger location on 7th Avenue). Shoppe Balloo NY, a children’s apparel store started by a West Village mom who also sells some women’s apparel and home goods is coming to 353 Bleecker Street (between Charles and West 10th Street). Next door at 355 Bleecker Street, Olfactory NYC, a fragrance store that allows you to develop your custom scent will take up residence. Now You’re Clean, a self-service dog wash spa is opening at 113 West 10th Street (between 6th and Greenwich Avenues). Their flagship location is in the East Village.

There is so much going on, we can always use your help. We love hearing from you, so please get in touch at: wvnewsinout@gmail.com

GOURMET GARAGE. Photo by Maggie Berkowitz.

Sevilla Restaurant & Bar
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62 Charles Street Corner of West 4th Street
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A View from the Kitchen

By Isa Covo

As the year started, we were hopeful it would be a better one than the two that preceded it. There were still many mourning the deaths of relatives and friends, and there were still COVID patients, but thanks to the vaccines, and the government mandates regarding masks and obligatory vaccination for most jobs, we thought that we had turned the corner, and celebrated that we were on the path to recovery and to a more normal life.

Then, out of nowhere, before we had time to eat the chocolates, before the flowers we received for Valentine’s Day (a day celebrating love) had wilted, we learned that Russian troops and armaments were advancing toward the Ukrainian borders. The people in the region, despite warnings from US intelligence, considered that a provocation, rather than an aggression which is what it turned out to be.

The brutality of the attack however brought back memories of Hitler’s war. He too never considered that he would find resistance from the Soviets. (That said we must not forget that the Stalinist regime was a brutal one, persecuting and terrorizing its own citizens.) The brutality and the cruelty of the German military is echoed in some measure by the acts committed by the Russians in Ukraine, such as shooting civilians at random and bombing blocks of residential and civilian buildings. There have also been reports of individuals being tortured before they were shot, as well as rapes and kidnapings.

In Russia itself, lies and disinformation are the trend. Putin had expected to conquer Ukraine in a matter of days. He never expected to find such united, fierce and effective resistance.

It is hard to guess how long it will take, but I am convinced that in the end the victor will be the Ukrainian people. To help, and perhaps also spread up things, we, on the outside, must support them as best as we can, and one essential way is to donate to reputable organizations that are sending aid to Ukraine, or directly to its government through its consulate.

Spinach Pie

This pie, with different ingredients according to the tradition of the region, is served in several countries of Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. This is a Greek version.

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ teaspoons dried, crumbled dill
- 3 tablespoons fresh mint leaves, chopped fine
- 1 lb. spinach, stems removed
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 3 tablespoons fresh mint leaves, chopped fine
- Or ½ teaspoons dried, crumbled Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- Rinse the spinach very well to remove all sand, if there is any; drain as much water as possible from the spinach, place it in a large saucepan, and wilt over medium heat, stirring for about four to five minutes. Drain in a colander and rinse again in cold water. Press handfuls of the spinach to remove as much moisture as possible.
- Chop the spinach coarsely and squeeze it again to remove some more of the moisture.
- In a medium skillet heat the oil over medium heat, add the spinach and stir a few minutes until moisture evaporates. Transfer to a medium bowl and set aside until it cools completely.
- Fold in the crumbled cheese and the egg, reserving one-half teaspoon of the egg. Fold in the rest of the ingredients.
- Heat the oven to 375 degrees; lightly grease a 9-inch tart pan and line it with half the dough. Roll out the remaining dough and cover the filling. Pinch the edges of the dough together to encase the filling.
- Mix the reserved egg with two teaspoons of water and with a pastry brush coat the top of the pie, including the edges with the egg wash. Prick the surface of the pie with the tines of a fork four to five times so that steam can escape while it is baking.
- Bake in the bottom half of the oven for 50 minutes to 1 hour, or until the top is golden and the pie releases easily from the pan.

Yield: an 8-inch savory pie, about 6 servings.

Notes: Traditionally this pie is served with plain Greek yogurt. In some recipes, the filling contains a medium onion, chopped fine and sautéed until golden in 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, or a large leek, white part only, chopped fine and sautéed in 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, or ½ cup finely sliced scallions, white part only, sautéed or not. In some recipes dill replaces mint.

The Right Pick

By Teddy Capsis and Gabriela Beavers

Welcome to The Right Pick, your guide to confronting the city’s most overwhelming predicament: “Where should we go to eat?” This monthly column will feature a variety of date spots that you won’t want to miss, so keep an eye out for what’s to come.

With the explosion of new dating apps, there’s consequently been a similar explosion of first dates. When walking around the city, first dates stick out like tourists in Time Square. Oftentimes, they are visibly awkward and involve two people disconnected from their surroundings and, unsurprisingly, searching for their next one.

The challenge of securing a reservation at a well-known date spot within a week is compounded by the never-ending list of options—something we would not wish upon our worst enemy.

Stalking Resy a month in advance is necessary to reserve a seat at one of the West Village’s most exclusive spots, and even that’s not guaranteed! How often do you find someone visiting New York from out of town expecting to have a life-altering experience with you as their tour guide? They expect a Sex in the City lifestyle but want it at a budget similar to their hometown upstate. The West Village is full of restaurants where you can flex your wealth, but what restaurants can seriously impress while not breaking the bank?

Keep in mind that as a couple in our mid-twenties, we don’t have the privilege of taking advantage of some of the West Village’s finest on a whenever-we-want basis, but we do have a couple places that will leave your guest impressed and are perfect for reasonably priced occasions.

Starting off, let us introduce you to one of our absolute favorite spots: Malatesta Trattoria. This restaurant greets its guests with a warm homely ambiance, exquisite food, rolling availability, affordable drinks, and a lack of influencers promoting their new beauty samples. Not that we have anything against influencers but, admittedly, we prefer our food before our phone does. In terms of their food, Malatesta offers some of the best Italian fare in the neighborhood and, yes, we are fully aware of I Sodi, Don Angie, and L’artusi around the corner. Their pastas are rich with deep flavor and the quaint ambiance feels as though you’ve stepped out in Roma. Authentic touches, like their handwritten menus, combine an unpretentious feel with high-end flavor. We recommend starting off with the sautéed mussels and tuna avocado frisée, and following with the spinach gnocchi and tagliata casale as entrees. For a perfect finishing touch, top the night off with two cups of espresso and their decadent tiramisu.

If you’re unable to snag a spot at Malatesta, its sister restaurant Malaparte is a stone’s throw away and just as spectacular. We only can assume that after a great meal at Malatesta, you’ll need a next move to keep the night going. Less than five minutes away, you’ll find Orient Express, a swanky cocktail bar themed after a passenger train. The intimate dimly-lit atmosphere has a cozy vibe and the bartenders here provide excellent recommendations according to your taste.

MALATESTA TRATTORIA
Tel: 212-741-1207
649 Washington Street
New York, NY 10014
malatestany.com

HOURS:
Dinner every day from 5:00-10:00 p.m.
Weekend Brunch 12:00-3:30 p.m.

Malatesta Trattoria
649 Washington Street
New York, NY 10014
malatestany.com

TUNA AND AVOCADO FRISÉE SALAD. Photo by Gabriela Beavers.
A Walk in the Park

By Keith Michael

It’s Tuesday evening after work and the temperature has passed that imprecise degree which brings out the throngs to indulge in the warmth of the sunset. Accompanied by a lively band of Crows cawing overhead, I too have marched to Hudson River Park for the same reason and to see what birds might be doing likewise.

The promenade is jammed with walkers, baby strollers, skaters, selfie-takers, and dogs cheerfully pulling their humans by their leashes, all underscored by the rhythmic footfalls of an endless parade of joggers. It’s difficult not to get caught up in this incessant human tide and stand calmly watching for birds. Focus.

Ah, up there in the budding elm, flashes of white direct me to a trio of dueling Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers challenging ownership of their freshly chiseled sap wells. Many trees in the park are decorated with these bracelets of evenly spaced rows of holes. This is the hard-won initiation ritual of these arboreal tattooists. Surprisingly, even at this distance I can see beads of sap glistening on the trunk, and even more surprisingly, the Sapsuckers’ usually faint namesake yellow breasts are beaming in this golden hour glow.

A silly from a lower branch now catches my eye. An Eastern Phoebe swoops out fly-catching, returns to its limber perch, bobs its tail a few balance-catching beats, and then dives toward its next quarry. These entertaining birds are one of the first spring arrivals and have already been gorging on our northern cuisine for weeks.

Still not moving my feet, but looking down now, the aeration of the lawns by the meticulous HRG gardeners has provided a smorgasbord for our resident red-breasted American Robins. Here and there, near and far, a choreographic canon is being performed: run, run, p-a-u-s-e, head tilt, foot tap-tap-tap, bend forward, nab a worm, tug it out of the ground, pause with the prize, look around, disregard table manners, and dispatch quickly. Repeat. Their dexterity and success rate are impressive. Oh, one of these birds is not like the others. Nearer the bushes, a timid Hermit Thrush, slightly smaller, browner with a spotted white breast and reddish stand-up tail, is gleaning bugs from the grass for supper. This cousin to the Robin is a nice find for tonight.

Also wending their way along the shrubbery line are several foraging sparrows. Our resident House Sparrows are the most vocal. The black-throated males are in courtship mode—fluffing up, lowering their head and wings, and hovering, in what I always think of as a flamenco dance, accompanied by their rat-a-tat-tat chatter—while the females seem more attentive to the newly seeded lawn than to these macho antics. One bird flies up to a branch. Ah ha, this one is no neighborhood sparrow but a subtly dashing Savannah Sparrow in brown pinstripes with fetching yellow eye makeup. Is that another one? No. On a higher branch is a darker-striped Song Sparrow with a bull’s-eye blotch at the center of its breast. Round out the sparrow contingent for the evening, a suitably-named White-throated Sparrow comes scratching out of the leaf debris. This fellow has been a winter visitor and will soon be heading north to his, “Oh, sweet Canada, Canada, Canada.” His whisked refrain, will be missed.

My binoculared perusal of the bushes has been receiving a few skeptical stares from picnicking couples and groups spread across the lawn. I’m amused as a Canada Goose pair descends from the blue at full vocal throatiness perturbed that “their” lawn has been invaded by another species. I’m further amused at the synchronicity of the two species’ behavior defending their turf: both the gander and the male homo sapien puff themselves up, shout loudly at each other, and vigorously flap their wings/arms while the hen calmly browses the grass buffet and the female of our species lounges on her blanket eating grapes. You can’t make this stuff up.

Amidst the braying of this interspecies duet, I hear the mimic mewing of a Gray Catbird nearby and a far more subtle tsee tsee high in the elm. I recognize this call as a Golden-crowned Kinglet, but seeing it is not as easy. This tiny bird, about the size and weight of a dinked teabag, does have a tiny yellow flag on its head which one would think would be helpful but it is endlessly on the move. The trick is to maintain a wide view of the still branches and catch any peripheral flutter of movement. There, to the left, now to the right, a tiny blur blows from twist to twig. Unless it comes to a lower branch, I’ll just have to take my word for it that I saw it. But beyond the top of the tree, a much more obvious tedy phalanx of Double-crested Cormorants is heading toward the East River for the night.

Suddenly, something changes in the air. All the background twittering goes silent and pigeons seem to be fleeing for cover in every direction. Hmmm. High above, a pair of Peregrine Falcons glides north. I imagine the ground birds are hoping the falcons have already had dinner. It will take a while until the avian “All Clear” sounds. It’s the perfect time to put away the binoculars and find a spot on a bench to watch the sunset show.

Visit keithmichaelny.com or follow @newyorkittyswild on Instagram.

Lifetalk With Roberta Russell:

Basking in the Sunshine of Love

By Roberta Russell

I am always on the lookout for others who want to join me in the ongoing endeavor of embracing the rigors of arriving and staying at the right weight and enjoying a healthy lifestyle. It is easy to find people who want to lose weight, but very hard to find those who are willing to do what that takes for the long term.

There is nothing like sharing the thrill of letting go of the transient comforts of addictive eating or excessive drinking or repetitive heartless sex in exchange for the excitement of paring down to one’s shapely fit body, and enjoying the high of clearer thinking and, ultimately, more intimacy. I have watched fellow travelers emerge from the karmic mist of life-numbing addictions with wonder, joy, and hope. They were guided by the discernable facts and the dedicated support of acquaintances and friends. I experienced this privileged exposure in the course of my work on myself, and with others in the free Calorie and Exercise Logging groups that I started 21 years ago after consulting outcome evidence you can download and read about my work on my report on Permanent Weight Loss.

A long post-widowed search for a significant other, I now awake early in the morning next to Manuel. He smiles at me. Lexi, my white standard poodle, a naturally adept therapy dog, shifts her position from the foot of the bed to the floor and looks up expectantly, letting me know with a low guttural sound that she is ready for her pate breakfast. Manuel has started to be the one who serves her canned breakfast al fresco on the terrace in a familiar blue bowl with finger holes on the sides. He has also installed a new slick black Swiss Jura coffee machine that grinds the fresh coffee beans and makes cappuccino and expresso without the use of polluting plastic K-Cups. The grinds are alleged to be good for plants because they contain nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous. We are into recycling here.

The comforts of coupled habits are returning. My updated appetite, the one not induced and fueled by frustrated need and disappointment, is now guiding me to the lower ends of my normal body mass index (BMI) boundaries. I am being fed from another source.

You may choose to check your BMI here.
Arts at St John’s in the Village: May 2022

The Art of Lucas Goossens in Revelation Gallery. Large, vibrant oil-paintings with luminous, tropical energy. 11am to 3pm Monday through Thursday. Enter at 224 Waverly Place.

Thursday 5th at 7pm Johanna Will in Concert Up-coming German soprano, Johanna Will, gives a recital of aria, art song, and lieder.


Saturday 7th at 3pm Passionate Voices Celebrating Opera A concert of arias, duets, and ensemble pieces performed by young professional singers. Music by Wagner, Strauss, Puccini, Verdi, Massenet, Gounod, and more.

Saturday 7th at 7pm (in the theater) Three Persian Concerts Fusion from Iranian Folk music to Avant garde jazz, featuring Mahya Hamedi, Taranah Mousavi, and Martin Gohary. Enter at 224 Waverly Place.

Sunday 8th at 4pm (in the theater) Solo Setar Concert Solo setar performance by acclaimed Persian soloist Amir Nojani. Enter at 224 Waverly Place.

Tuesday 10th at 7pm Traces of the Trade A screening of the film Traces of the Trade, looking at one northern family’s involvement in the slave trade, including discussion and Q&A with the director.

Thursday 12th at 7.30pm John Urban in Concert John Urban presents a program of classical masterpieces for the piano. Music by Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Chopin.

Friday 13th at 7pm TRANScend A concert of choral works, both sacred and secular, by NYC’s premier transsexual choir, TRANScend, the vocal ensemble of Odd Voices NYC.

Saturday 14th at 8pm Connection in Solitude Soprano Isabel Springer offers a recital of aria and art-song reflecting upon isolation and distance.

Sunday 15th at 2.30pm New York Gregorian Chant Project: Community Chant Choir Sing the timeless music of Gregorian Chant (plainsong) under the direction of chant expert Lawrence Harris.

Tuesday 17th at 8pm Singer-Songwriter and Spoken-Word Artist Night (Revelation Gallery) A curated evening of local and not-so-local singer-songwriters and spoken-word artists sharing their work. Curated by poet Gordon Gilbert and pianist/singer Hannah Reimann. Enter at 224 Waverly Place.

Tuesday 17th at 8.30pm Western Wind Ukraine Benefit Concert The internationally acclaimed vocal sextet Western Wind gives a concert of Renaissance and Baroque music in aid of the people of Ukraine.

Friday 20th at 7pm Piano Nights: Ballroom Dance Alexander Chaplinsky, prize-winning pianist, chorus master, and conductor, invites you to enjoy a gourmet selection Ukrainian, Polish, Hungarian, Danish, German, and Russian piano music. With Stanislav Serebriannikov and Abram Korsunsky. Chopin, Chaplinsky, Schumann, Schubert, Serebriannikov, Grieg, Liszt, Lysenko, Mozart.

Saturday 21st at 2pm Ryan DeFranzo - New York Zendo Benefit Sokyu Ryan DeFranzo offers an afternoon of piano music to celebrate, share gratitude, and inspire generosity towards New York Zendo and its ongoing mission of providing a home for the cultivation of tranquility, insight, and compassion within the clamor of New York City.

Saturday 21st at 7pm Can We Talk?: About Our Home Ember, the chorale of Schola Cantorum on Hudson, with chamber orchestra.

Sunday 22nd at 3pm Come Sing Chant! The New York Gregorian Chant Project’s all-abilities gathering to introduce music-lovers to this unique medieval music. Learn how to read the notation, pronounce the medieval Latin, and sing the music with ease, flow, and finesse.

Wednesday 25th at 6.30pm Sung Eucharist of the Eve of the Ascension of our Lord & Outdoor Supper The men of St John’s professional choir sing Gregorian chant at this celebration at the unique outdoor altar in St John’s Colony Garden, not normally open to the public. A supper follows in St Benedict’s Courtyard.

Saturday 28th at 12 noon Ginevra Petrucci in Concert Ginevra Petrucci, Principal Flute at Chamber Orchestra of New York, presents a concert of Classical, Romantic, and contemporary music for solo flute and for flute and piano.

Saturday 28th at 3pm Odeon Presents: Colin Fullerton and Pierre Ferreyra A recital of solo guitar music performed by guitarists Colin Fullerton and Pierre Ferreyra. Odeon Classical Guitar is a classical guitar series dedicated to exploring the multicultural and boundless world of music, through the medium of six strings.

Saturday 28th at 5pm Twelve Strings and a Pipe Karry Mayorga (classical guitar) with colleagues on classical guitars and flute, presents a concert of Spanish and other repertoire for plucked strings and flute.

Saturday 28th at 6.30pm Judith Baumel book-launch (Revelation Gallery) New York poet Judith Baumel invites you to the launch of her new collection of verse Thorny. Includes premier of settings of poems from Thorny by Sidney Marquez Boquiren, performed by Boquiren with soprano Barbce Monk. Followed by an outdoor reception. Enter at 224 Waverly Place.

Sunday 29th at 3pm David Oei Salon Series Pianist David Oei presents his monthly chamber-music concert. Joined by Eriko Sato and Gary Kosloski (violins), Gerald Robbins and Benita Meshulam (piano), and Joseph Piscitelli (flute) he offers music by Mozart, Mendelssohn, Berio, Poulenc, and Beethoven.

For details (including information on live-streaming), ticketing, and pricing: stjvny.org

admin@stjvny.org

212.243.6192

St. John’s in the Village
Tibetan Art Exhibit

MYSTERY OF LIFE
June 7 - 21, 2002
Here Now Space
Rabkar Wangchuk, solo show
Michela Martello, guest artist

By Hannah Reimann

The work of Korean Nam June Paik, Chinese Ai Weiwei and Japanese Yayoi Kusama emerged and broke ground over decades, both commercially and as trends. These days, contemporary Asian painting, sculpture and installations are more visible and appreciated, easily identified in galleries, museums, open spaces and periodicals. Asian art was once associated with antique scrolls and dainty jade snuff bottles, object d’art etc., due to their beautiful design, references to Buddhism, Hinduism and other spiritual traditions, and has come a long way. Recent sales of Ai Weiwei sculptures sell easily for six figures and sometimes millions.

Contemporary Tibetan artists are not far behind in being acknowledged, deserving the adequate exposure received by the better-known Asian countries. Stereotypical works of Tibetan art are prayer flags, Thangka and wood painting, new or old, amulets for enthusiasts of Asian philosophy and spiritual teachings. There is so much more to offer from Tibetan art. There is so much more to offer from Tibetan art, the paintings, works of art, and sculptures which are often inspired by Tibetan culture. Made with clay, ceramic, glaze and lustre, Martello integrates all of the five natural elements of water, fire, earth and wood, making this a sort of slow meditative process. The first vase of the series is dedicated to the eight auspicious symbols. The other seven contain Buddhist figurative elements or other symbolism attached to a particular Dharma practice. One vase is dedicated to Dakini – the energetic beings in female form, evocative of the movement of energy in space where another one was created to honor of the Water Tiger, the 2022 spirit animal.

To write this article, I had one of the most inspiring conversations I’ve ever had with a curator, someone who has helped create history and continues to nurture art and artists from the ground up. As we all emerge from our pandemic cocoons and visit more museums and art spaces, I urge people of all backgrounds to visit this unusual exhibit, to purchase Rabkar Wangchuk’s work, and to meet him and Paola Vanzo. It’s just a few blocks away from you to experience this light-filled, uplifting and tranquil space, reception, artists’ talk and evening of meditation. If you have children, bring them along – the work is very kid-friendly.

The exhibition included 32 canvas paintings plus sketches, watercolors, installations and sculptures.
Losing Cornelia

By Robin Hirsch

I’m losing my oldest child. Cornelia. She’s 41. She’s unlikely to make it to 42. I have two children by my present marriage. 30 and 27. Cornelia is from an earlier relationship. She really had three parents. In 1977 three of us, all artists, stumbled across a dilapidated storefront on a tiny one-block street in Greenwich Village and thought it the perfect place to open a café. After two months of sanding, plastering, painting, plumbing, and doing the intricate dance one does with the authorities who live beyond the Village, mirabile dictu, we opened the doors—toaster oven, espresso machine, refrigerator display case, tiny bar, six stools, 12 tables, 18 chairs, two banquettes—and, voilà, The Cornelia Street Café. Cornelia.

Over the years Cornelia grew. She acquired the side room. Weekend brunch got really busy. One of her parents would be running up to Macy’s every weekend to get a new toaster oven. Eventually they realized they had to bite the bullet, and at a very early age (around 4½) Cornelia lost her virginity—she opened a kitchen. It was tiny. With the sister of one of our comedians, who was a cook (the sister, not the comedian), we developed an elementary menu. We took over what is now the back room—the apartment in which Helen, the previous owner, had been immured and where she had spent her last days.

And shortly thereafter, busy as we were, we realized we might have to excavate the basement. A young neighbor introduced us to her mother, a poet, who suggested she might like to read with a poet friend. Who? Eugene McCarthy. Yes, Senator Eugene McCarthy, the good Senator McCarthy, who was also a poet—six published books. And we realized that, even if we kept it to ourselves, word would get out and none of our upstairs spaces would suffice.

The Fun Days of Greenwich Village of Yesteryear

By Robert Heide

I arrived in Greenwich Village in the early Fifties in the midst of when the area was regarded as the place where the true bohemian lifestyle was the order of the day. My father moved me into my apartment on Christopher Street just across from St. John’s Church my Village community headquarters where everyone gay or straight was welcome. Though I didn’t mention it to my father, I had read in Confidential Magazine that Marlon Brando and Wally Cox were roommates in an apartment in the Village. It said that the two were big slobs and that after starting to paint the place purple, gave up, and left the paint cans on the floor. I later learned that their address was 124 Waverly Place. The first gay bar I went to was Lenny’s Hideaway on Tenth Street, a downstairs cellar dive that is now called Smalls Jazz Club, still a fun place although not gay as it was in my heyday. The proprietor then, Lenny, wanted it just to be a gay man’s enclave for hanging out and meeting sex partners. In those promiscuous times it was primarily the pick-up spot for a one-night stand. Sure, committed relationships were part of the scene but gay marriage was a long time off in the future. The full bar at the end of the small space was tended by a young handsome man named Robbie who invented a special and expensive Lenny’s ‘get high quick’ drink ‘The Clinker’ which consisted of a high alcohol level Brandy with other secret ingredients and served in a large copper cup with a handle. Of course a bottle of beer was the mainstay. I didn’t meet Marlon or Wally here but the place was where I had my first meeting with Edward Albee who was standing at the bar with his companion of thirteen years William “Bill” Flanagan, an esteemed music and theater critic whose uptown job was the old-time Italian bar and restaurant known called Henrietta Hudson, three blocks south from Lenny’s Hideaway. Edward had not yet inherited the money from his grandmother (which when received enabled him to jumpstart his playwriting career with the producer Richard Barr and these plays one-act plays. Edward connected with Smith, The American Dream and other plays. Edward connected with the producer Richard Barr and these plays were first presented off-Broadway at the Provincetown Playhouse and the Cherry Lane Theater. Later, of course, with Virginia Woolf, it was Broadway all the way ultimately leading to three Pulitzer Prizes.

There were many other hot ‘gay’ spots in the Village, including the oldest bar in town, Julius’ on the corner of 10th Street and Waverly Place still going strong. Eighth Street between 6th and 5th Avenues was where Mary’s and The Old Colony held forth for many years. Later, of course, Christopher Street was home to Pieces, The Stonewall, The Monster, Boots and Saddles, The Hangar, and Tys, some still functioning today as well as the Lesbian bar Henrietta Hudson, three blocks south of Christopher. On MacDougal Street the top place to have fun and see was the old-time Italian bar and restaurant San Remo which was the home of Village Beatnik regulars including Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. There is a bronze plaque with the names of many other famous habitués. It was there one memorable night that quite a celebrity crowd gathered after the rave reviews for Albee’s Virginia Woolf? came out—people had come to see the newly-minted American playwright in the flesh, and he arrived that night attired in a dramatic white cable-knit turtleneck sweater. I met up with my director friend Ron Link who came with Billy Linich, later as a photographer at the Warhol factory renamed Billy Name; sitting at the bar was Leonard Bernstein, Living Theatre impresario Judit Malina, French actress Simone Signoret and others.

Through all of this Bill Flanagan turned to writing having been a young Marine to bolt for the door. He’s my lover man!” prompting the young Marine to bolt for the door. The story of sitting one night with Jimmy Hendrix who was wearing a lavender silk shirt, crushed velvet culottes with matching colored boots in the Café Feenjon on Macdougal (now the Olive Tree Café.) That night a drunk Marine, staggering up to our table, asked us how to get around the Village and then loudly commented, “I can’t stand to be around Village queers.” Jimmy embraced me closely and said, “He’s my lover man!” promising the young Marine to bolt for the door.

Thinking of Hendrix and Edward Albee and Terrence McNally and Joe Cino, and so many other friends who have passed away, I remembered a song entitled “Death” written by John Wallowitch, now departed himself, that he often sang at the opening or closing of his nightclub appearances and on his musical television shows. It had an upbeat and fast rickety-tick odd-ball sense of off-beat existentialism. Smiling and rolling his eyes and pouncing on the piano keys, John sang.

Death! It’s the latest—it’s the end.
Take your life and chuck it.
Death! Go and kick the bucket.
Death! Let’s transcend.
It’s gonna getcha in the end.

would scoff at me when I told them that I was interested in movies made before 1990, or that I didn't know that. Friends of mine would tell me that they just weren't shared by many of my peers. The set was wonderful, as they were able to make so many different locations out of only a few objects, like a piano, a large TV, and a table. The cast was great and each actor, and actress was perfectly suited for their role.

I recently was viewing Harmony: A New Musical, a new show at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in the National Yiddish Theater Folksbiene, and I was delighted! The set was wonderful, as they were able to make so many different locations out of only a few objects, like a piano, a large TV, and a table. The cast was great and each actor, and actress was perfectly suited for their role.

The songs and dances they performed were catchy and deeply moving, as a lot of these songs were depicting sorrow from the Holocaust. The story was based on true life. It was magnificent, and historically accurate. If you are a fan of 30s and 40s song and dance, or a World War II history buff, you will love this play, as I did. It is touching, deep, humorous and inspiring. I would caution parents about bringing children any younger than me to this show because of rough language and adult themes, but I'm old-fashioned.

It is about a man who wants to create a musical group and he makes his dream come true. Once together they tour the world. Then, they return to their home country, Germany. The War is beginning, and due to some of their band being Jewish, a shortage of money, and Nazi Germans, they have to split up and go their separate ways.

After the show was over and I was on my way home, many questions arose in my mind, one of which included, “are they still alive?” Answer: yes, the last singer is 85 and lives in California. Though he does not make any official music anymore, he occasionally sings at the local temple.

I began to watch films based on recommendations from family members, and before I knew it, I was obsessed. I was constantly researching movies to watch, organizing and reorganizing my top 10 list, and familiarizing myself with different directors and styles. Film saved me. However, I found that my interest in classic films was not shared by many of my peers. Friends of mine would tell me that they just weren't interested in movies made before 1990, or would scoff at me when I told them that I liked an old movie. It wasn't that my friends had no appreciation for classic films, they just didn't know classic films.

People debate about whether or not classics are “better” than contemporary films or vice versa, but the topic is entirely subjective. It is more useful to recognize that these two film styles serve different purposes, and are driven by different motivations. Many contemporary films are an escape from life. They seek to thrill or excite an audience. Modern horror films, such as It or Halloween seek little more than to frighten an audience, and the use of modern special effects only makes it easier. Many modern comedies exemplify “slapstick” qualities, with no real message or meaning. In many classic films, comedy was used as a way of portraying a director's point of view on life. Lines like “gentlemen, you can't fight in here, this is the war room!” from Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove hold both insightful and comedic value. When Hitchcock made his 1960 horror film Psycho he was not able to benefit from the technological advancements of our time, and had to rely on his own expert filmmaking. In the famous shower murder scene, music and a masterful use of camera angels and shadows made the scene great, not overly gory visual effects. None of this is to say that I dislike all or even most current films. There are many films today that use modern technological advancements to enhance their storytelling. Rather than trying to convince others that one era of film is finer than the other, we should acknowledge the good elements from both to better the movies of the future.
...and Action!

By Kieran Loughney

Walking on West 12th Street about this time last spring, I was astonished to see a subway entrance at Greenwich Street that did not exist the day before. The ad for a 1960s Volkswagen on it further disoriented me until I looked between the iron railings, and saw no steps leading underground, heard no rumbling train below. Clearly a prop for a film shoot had appeared. Within a few days the subway stop had vanished.

This winter, while binge-watching the HBO series The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, I spotted the faux station providing the backdrop for Rachel Brosnahan’s title character. The West Village often seems as showbiz adjacent as Hollywood itself. My siblings in Idaho have never visited me here but they’ve become familiar with my neighborhood through its many onscreen appearances.

While on an errand last fall, I spotted a film crew on Perry Street. They were, as true fans of the TV series Sex and the City would know, filming a scene at Carrie Bradshaw’s brownstone. I snapped a few cell phone shots of the crew and cast in action.

I returned home and reported the shoot in progress to my partner, Patti. She asked if I’d seen Michael Patrick King on the set. I hadn’t but while reviewing the pictures I’d just taken his face surfaced among the crew. King, the long-time writer-director of the series, grew up in Scranton, our hometown. Patti and he were classmates and as a kid I had once been in a play with him. His parents worked at the doughnut shop owned by Patti’s father. At Patti’s insistence we dashed back to Perry Street. King greeted us warmly on the set and briefly excused himself to direct a scene of Sarah Jessica Parker being carried up the brownstone’s steps by a beefy gent in a powder blue onesie. As soon as he finished, we continued our reunion. We would see a photo of that scene on the brownstone steps in an online article the next morning and watch the episode on TV a few months later.

It’s great fun seeing our neighborhood onscreen, but we apartment dwellers in the West Village regard our parks as urbanities do their front yards. It’s a big ask to turn Abingdon Square into your set for days, film folks. Throw our local charities a cupcake outside Magnolia Bakery if Carrie Bradshaw and her friends hadn’t gone there! And being the setting for a pivotal scene in The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel must be helping La Bonbonniere’s bottom line.

Many stars who work on projects in the West Village also have homes here. (An actor I loved in The Big Lebowski stood next to me as we waited to cross Bleecker Street one afternoon. A multi-Oscar nominated, instantly recognizable actress introduced herself to me at a local coffee shop. Just last week, an actor from the Princess Bride sat at a café table as I passed. Inconceivable! This influx of the famous has caused a spike in housing costs. Restaurant prices seem more geared for folks stepping off the red carpet than for the average West Villager entering from West 4th street.

TV and film production teams come to the West Village to add atmosphere to their projects. Our streets and parks provide their shows and movies with authenticity and aesthetic appeal. We’re glad they think so highly of our neighborhood. Please respect our home when you visit, production personnel, so we can remain a place where art and creativity have always flourished.

A Rabbi for the Village and for All Time: Irving J. Block

Carol F. Yost

Rabbi Irving J. Block (1923-2002) thought it was important that he had been born on St. Patrick’s Day, his brother Allen was born on All Saints’ Day, and his son Herbert was born on Easter Sunday at the beginning of the third day of Passover. To him it meant “we were an ecumenical family.” As he says in A Rabbi and His Dream: Building the Brotherhood Synagogue, a Memoir (1999), he devoted his life to fostering interfaith understanding.

With the Reverend Dr. Jesse William Stitt and the Rabbi working together, and the heartfelt participation of both congregations, the Brotherhood Synagogue and the Village Presbyterian Church shared the same building on West 13th Street for nearly 20 years, and earned their place in world history. Today, years after the heartbreaking ending of this relationship caused by a new minister who was not in agreement with its mission, the Brotherhood Synagogue, now hard by Gramercy Park in a former Quaker meeting house, tries to foster interfaith understanding in memory of Rabbi Block.

His very moving and surprising account of the Village partnership could make you cry and laugh by turns.

Rabbi Block and Reverend Stitt were interviewed on TV numerous times. They became world famous; they traveled extensively across the country and abroad, giving talks to much acclaim, planting seeds of interreligious understanding.

The Rabbi is fondly remembered today. Sadly, however, he was a Zionist, unquestioningly supportive of Israel, and he insisted that both the Christian and Jewish congregations on West 13th Street must agree. He took part in Israel’s so-called War for Independence. Apparently he did not know that 750,000 Arabs had been driven out of Israel at gunpoint when Israel was founded; many froze or starved to death. The survivors and their descendants are still not allowed to return. In the last chapter of his memoir, Israel as I See It, he states, “There is no vision for Israel the people without Israel the land.” He sees Arabs as tyrannical by culture and tradition: “The clash between Arabs and Jews since the beginning of the twentieth century has been, I have always felt, less about acquisition of land than to thwart the Western influences and democratic ideas the Arabs feared would undermine their culture.” He says: “As Jews around the world vowed to reestablish a Jewish state in their ancient homeland, Arabs vowed to destroy it.” He represents Israel as on a “quest for peace.”

Repeatedly, Gaza has been bombed by Israel, killing thousands, including many children and elderly people. In addition, Palestinians are attacked in the streets almost daily. Israel has an army, navy and air force, and nuclear warheads. Palestinians have none of these things, and when Palestinians respond to the attacks with rifles and homemade bombs and rockets, we are told Israel “must defend herself” by Zionists of today. We are confronted with the lies of American politicians to justify the ironclad support of $3.8 billion a year that Israel enjoys from the U.S.

Josh Ruben, the Jewish American historian-actor, wrote on Facebook recently: “As Israel continues to wantonly kill Palestinian mothers, fathers, and children, violently attack Palestinians worshipping in their holiest site during the holy month of Ramadan, and impose collective punishment on millions of people, to me the meaning of Passover is clear: ‘Free Palestine from Israeli military occupation, apartheid, and settler-colonialism.’” I could quote many other Jewish scholars along the same lines. I wish I could talk to Rabbi Block now. The beautiful understanding he sought, with a whole heart, between Christians and Jews should have included the Palestinians. His legacy is sadly mixed. We can only hope and pray that his life-giving philosophy of ecumenism will never die. As a Christian I am grateful to Rabbi Block for it.
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