

Broken Promises: Affordable Housing Lost, Not Gained, Since SoHo/NoHo Rezoning

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS



FOUR YEARS IN SINCE THE PASSING OF THE CONTROVERSIAL SOHO/NOHO/CHINATOWN REZONING PLAN, one could expect 732 units to have been built rather than zero units. At least eight rent regulated housing units have been destroyed. Photo credit: Village Preservation.

Despite city promises to the contrary, the controversial SoHo/NoHo/Chinatown rezoning plan passed by the city council in 2021, has yet to build a single unit of new housing, affordable or otherwise. Also contrary to city promises, at least eight rent-regulated housing units have been destroyed.

Speaking before the Community Board 2 Land Use and Housing Committee on November 12, Village Preservation Executive Director Andrew Berman recounted in relentless detail the city's broken promises and systemic failures. His presentation expanded upon a Village Preservation report

issued in May, *The Rezoning of SoHo/NoHo/Chinatown: Taking Stock at the One-Third Mark*.

Berman recalled that the city had pushed for the rezoning—dramatically increasing what developers could build “as of right” (without special approval) by arguing that “there was not enough housing being produced in the rezoning area and that it needed to change the zoning regulations to stimulate the production of more.”

The city's rezoning plan predicted that within 10 years, the rezoning would result in the construction of 1,829 new housing units.

Now four years in, Berman noted one could expect 732 units to have been built rather than zero units.

Further undercutting city claims that rezoning had been necessary, Berman declared that “in the four or so years preceding the rezoning, we counted over a dozen new residential developments in the rezoning area, containing hundreds of units of housing, mostly within historic districts.” The city had argued that “it's especially hard to create new housing in historic districts in general, and in particular in these historic

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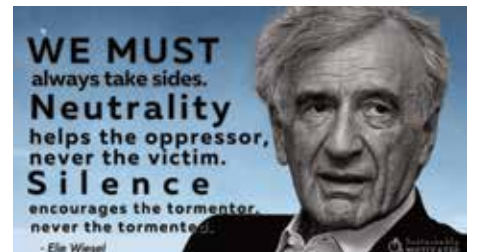
How the World Transformed Elie Wiesel — and How He Transformed the World

BY SIMI HORWITZ:

A Note from Arthur Schwartz: We live in an era of profound turmoil within the world's Jewish population. Believe it or not, there are only 15.7 million Jews in the world, which is only 0.2% of the world population (2 per thousand). 7.4 million live in Israel and 7.5 million live in the U.S. (2.4% of the population). That's pretty small; there are double the number of Sikhs, and Buddhists make up 4.1% of the world population. But the issues facing Jews, whether it be because of never ending antisemitism or the actions of Israel, are often at the top of the news. October 7, and the ensuing war in Gaza have caused fragmentation. In NYC, which is the second largest population of Jews of any city in the world, 30% of Jews voted for Mamdani, while 70% voted for Cuomo; this compares to an overall 50-40 ratio among all New Yorkers. I wanted to highlight this recent documentary about Eli Wiesel because his life reflected both the most important fighter against antisemitism ever, who also supported the fight against all ethnic/religious oppression.

Elie Wiesel, having experienced one of the darkest periods in human history, dedicated his life to ensuring that the horror imposed upon Jews under the Nazi regime was never forgotten, and championed the cause of human dignity writ large. The following quotes illustrate his vision.

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ELIE WIESEL.

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

The King of Backgammon

Having read with interest last February's *Village View* piece by Remington Davenport on a budding backgammon renaissance, I recommend to your readers my article, *The King of Backgammon*, on the late backgammon god Paul Magriel. First published in 1977 in the *SoHo Weekly News*, then *Gambling Times* magazine, the piece was the fruit of following Magriel for about six months. It is a seminal study of the man—a character's character who hung out at the Washington Square Park chess tables and the Village clubs—and the gamesplayer.

Pleased with my work, Magriel hired me to edit his *New York Times* backgammon column. We tortured over every sentence—sometimes debating punctuation, grammar, and style for hours!—until we were both satisfied. He was eminently charming, with many tony prep-school traits, but his erratic schedule and propensity for marathon working hours were enough to defeat an Olympian. He later decamped for Las Vegas and poker, eventually unraveling and succumbing, according to reports, to a lifestyle that proved lethal.

The King of Backgammon has been quoted, with and without attribution, by many publications, including *Sports Illustrated* and *Esquire*, as well as *The New York Times* in its 2018 Magriel obituary. I first dubbed his book, *Backgammon*, the “bible” of the game. The piece also gives the feel of the New York City “backgammon landscape” of the late '70s, itself a revival of the game.

Here's the link: nebackgammon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Gambling-Times_1978_Aug.pdf

Susan M. Silver

NYU's John A. Paulson Center - A Mercer Street Monstrosity

Architecture is a matter of taste and opinion. One man's Guggenheim is another man's Golden Arches or, more to the point, “JAP” the John A. Paulson Center, NYU's 735,000-square-foot, block-long, insufferably tall, black glass turd. Considered by a clique of severely taste-challenged sycophants as a “cultural magnet for community members,” and christened in honor of the “super investor who in 2007 made \$15 billion betting against subprime mortgage bonds,” this tasteless, totally inappropriate in scale and profoundly missguided black glass erection is a blot on a previously semi-sylvan slice of residential Greenwich Village. It looms now over Bleecker, Mercer and Houston streets as a grotesque monolithic carbuncle. One which makes this longtime Greenwich Village resident wish for a sonic boom capable of shattering its every window. It menaces our trembling neighborhood like a festering sore. It stands as a stench to the eye and a monument to a Wall Street player who profited obscenely from a lucky bet based on the misfortunes of thousands of ill-advised, bankrupt and now virtually destitute families left financially crippled by a corrupt Ponzi scheme-style mortgage bubble.

Fifteen billion dollars! Which generated a \$100 million “gift” to NYU from a man whose architectural tastes personify the term “abysmal.” What a colossal disaster. NYU has planted other grotesque edifices in our cruelly abused neighborhood. But the “JAP Center” takes the malodorous cake. Pity the Washington Square Village and Silver Towers residents doomed to mourn the loss of

their previous views and gaze at this glass pustule ad-nauseum. This calamitous dystopian nightmare should have been nipped in its unsightly bud. In fact it should *never have been approved for construction in the first place*. The inside story of how it was approved by whatever graft-friendly NYC board or agency supposedly responsible for monitoring new construction projects in our sleepy little town will someday make either a hilarious Bill Murray farce or a devastating, heartbreaking Ken Burns documentary. Hopefully both. NYU has been doing to Greenwich Village exactly what Donald “f’n” Trump is doing to America!

Your architecture critics / columnists, Brian J. Pape, Jean Tucker and Steve Reynolds have done terrific stories on the Village Alliance “Project Green” and the 43-49 Bleecker Street conversion. I'd like to see what they have to say about NYU's JAP monstrosity.

When we moved into our loft, the photo below was taken from the perspective of the vacant lot which had previously been graced by the Broadway Central Hotel, the



LOFT BUILDING at the corner of Broadway & Great Jones St., 1977. Photo by Nori Sherman.



“MONSTROSITY.” Photo by Howard Sherman.

infamous St. Adrian's Bar and on its Mercer Street side “The Mercer Arts Center” (the Studio 54 of The Village, where terrific performances by The New York Dolls, The Modern Lovers and other Village stalwarts performed unforgettably raucous sets deep into the wee small hours of the morning). Somehow NYU “acquired” that vacant lot and dumped upon it an equally monolithic eyesore, the God only knows how many stories tall LAW STUDENTS DORM!!!

Howard Sherman

In the Midst of Winter...

I am too much of an admirer of Albert Camus to resist commenting on what you allowed into print by accepting it was written by him.

— Leila Mustachi

Thank you for your letter. The passage in question, though widely circulated online with Camus's name attached, is in fact not written by Camus. Only the brief line — “In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer” — comes from his 1953 essay *Return to Tipasa*. The longer paragraph we printed originated in a 2013 reflection by American writer Jennifer Pastiloff, who expanded on Camus's famous phrase. —The Editors

Housing *continued from page 1*

districts” within the rezoning area. Yet, according to Berman “almost all the new housing construction prior to the rezoning took place in the historic districts.”

And the lack of housing production in the rezoning area can't be explained away by an overall downward trend. Describing the city's current housing production as “exceedingly robust,” Berman cited analysis from the state comptroller's office that “during the past four years, housing production in New York City has reached highs not seen in decades, with 38,000 units produced in 2024.”

Perhaps most disturbing, the city had projected the SoHo/NoHo rezoning would result in the development of “affordable housing” units, renting below market rate (but not necessarily affordable to average NYC renters). The prediction was 382 to 575 affordable housing units over 10 years.

“That should mean between 153 to 230 units of affordable housing would have been produced by now,” Berman remarked. “Of course, the number of units it has produced so far is exactly zero.”

Another broken city promise is that “no existing regulated affordable housing would be destroyed to make way for new

development enabled by the rezoning.” In fact, Village Preservation has documented the loss of eight rent-regulated units but “there may well be considerably more lost.”

“Another promise was that all new housing development would have some affordable housing within it,” Berman said. “Yet we've documented multiple new developments allowed by the rezoning” that would not have been allowed previously, “which have zero affordable housing attached to them.”

He gave the example of planned development at 40 Wooster Street, “a six-story commercial building, which is going to be converted into a four unit residential project, consisting of full floor and duplex luxury apartments, including one with its own private pool, and this conversion would not have been possible without the rezoning. None of the units will be affordable.” The dimensions of the project's ground floor retail space, which the new zoning requires, leaves the new floor area “just shy of the...residential space that triggers the affordability requirements,” Berman noted. “We repeatedly pointed out this loophole during the rezoning process and the city just refused to acknowledge that this was an issue.”

“Another example is 142 Greene Street, which is to be converted to a single-family

mansion with no affordable housing component,” Berman continued. “The building once contained multiple joint live-work quarters for artists, and under the old zoning this was not something that you would have been able to do.”

He described development plans for 242 Bleecker as “kind of a twofer. In addition to eliminating the existing rent regulated units, it will have no on-site affordable housing and will instead choose to pay into a fund that has not yet been established and has never built a single unit of affordable housing.”

A further broken promise is that affordable housing would be “completely integrated” into developments with market-rate housing. Berman reminded the committee that it had recently seen “the first case of... what could be called a poor building,” a planned development where “the required affordable housing units are completely segregated from the market rate units,” each in entirely separate buildings.

“Now, this was an issue that we and others raised during the rezoning process with the city. They said that while it was technically possible that somebody could do this, it would never happen. Of course, it is in fact now happening,” Berman lamented.

Berman observed that the lack of afford-

able housing construction could get even more stark if New York University succeeds in its legal challenge to the provision of the rezoning that prohibits most private university expansion. Private universities are exempted from affordable housing requirements.

He underscored that even if the city's predictions and promises were fulfilled, with all projected affordable housing being built, the ultimate impact would be to make our neighborhoods “wealthier and more unaffordable” than they were before rezoning, “because 70 to 80 percent of the new housing...would be market rate” or “unaffordable to about 90 percent of current neighborhood residents.”

Berman counseled Villagers to carefully scrutinize whatever the city is proposing and to insist that land use debate go beyond city planning predictions because their track record is “terrible.”

Could the city's prediction process be improved? Berman responded that the city's extraordinarily flawed process follows legal requirements with built-in erroneous assumptions, for example that buildings with rent-regulated units are inherently protected from becoming development sites. He noted that nothing prevents the city from adding an extra layer of analysis to correct for flaws in its process.

Coming Up In 2026 Political Races Affecting Our Readers

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ



ANTONIO DELGADO & FAMILY. Courtesy of Lisa Schwartz Delgado.

2026 will be a banner year for Democratic politics in Manhattan, with a serious challenge to Gov. Kathy Hochul, at least one open state Senate seat, four to five open Assembly seats, an open congressional seat and challenges to two incumbent congressmen.

GOVERNOR

Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado has launched a serious challenge to **Gov. Kathy Hochul**, whom one pundit described to me as “the most inept politician he’s ever seen in Al-

bany.” Could this be Zohran 2? A former congressman from Dutchess County, Delgado is a Harvard Law graduate and of Cape Verdean ancestry. His wife is a Jewish filmmaker and lawyer, and their children are being raised Jewish — an interesting twist in the race.

CONGRESS

Rep. Adriano Espaillat was elected in 2017 to represent the northern third of Manhattan. His challenger, **Darialis Avila Chevalier**, 31, a recent Columbia Ph.D., hopes to be the next AOC.

Rep. Dan Goldman represents Manhattan south of 14th Street, as well as Brooklyn Heights, Park Slope and northern Sunset Park — perhaps the most liberal district in the United States. He is being challenged by outgoing New York City **Comptroller Brad Lander**, who hails from Park Slope. Goldman, the wealthiest member of Congress with an estimated net worth of \$300 million, did not endorse Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani. Lander allied with Mamdani in the Democratic primary and, as a Jewish community leader, played a role in his win. Expect lots of hate mail from the pro-Israel lobby groups, AIPAC, accusing Lander of being a self-hating Jewish anti-Semite.

Rep. Jerry Nadler’s district runs from 14th Street to about 110th Street, stretching



BRAD LANDER WITH ZOHHRAN MAMDANI. Credit: Brooklynvegan on Instagram.

west to east across Manhattan. Candidates include **Jack Schlossberg**, grandson of President John F. Kennedy; City Council Member **Erik Bottcher**; Assembly Member **Micha Lasher** of the Upper West Side; and Assembly Member **Alex Bores** of the Upper East Side. Bottcher, 46, is the oldest candidate in the race.

STATE SENATE

Brad Hoylman-Sigal will become Manhattan borough president on Jan. 1. His Senate seat stretches into the West Village and up the West Side. A special election will be held to fill his seat. The only declared candi-

date so far is Assembly Member Tony Simone (Chelsea and Hell’s Kitchen). Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal may run, though she has been pretty quiet about it.

ASSEMBLY

Assembly Member **Deborah Glick**, who has represented the West, Central and East Village, along with SoHo and Tribeca since 1992, is retiring. Announced candidates include **Jeannine Keily**, former Community Board 2 chair and district leader; **Ben Yee**, state committee member; and **Ryder Kesler**, a developer-backed housing advocate with Open New York.

PLENTY MORE

Not only will Glick be replaced, but Assembly Members Tony Simone, Harvey Epstein, Micha Lasher and Alex Bores will also leave open seats behind. Manhattan south of 125th Street will be full of candidates running for office.

Arthur Schwartz is the Greenwich Village Democratic Party district leader. The view he expresses are his and not that of Village View.

If you are not a registered Democrat and want to have a say in who will be your Congress member, Assembly member or governor, switch parties before Feb. 14. Independents have no voice in the primary process.

A New Tool Helps Tenants Tackle Lead Paint Exposure

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

Does your building have lead paint? Now there’s a map for that, a digital tool (coopersquare.org/leadmap) that allows New York City tenants to type in their address and instantly determine if they may be at risk for lead exposure.

Released in October by the East Village-based Cooper Square Committee (CSC) and Lead Dust Free NYC, a tenant-lead citywide coalition, the map makes initial research easy. Buildings built before 1960—when the city banned lead paint—are, by law, presumed to have lead paint.

No safe levels of lead exposure

The map shows a vast sea of alarming orange—indicating potentially lead paint-contaminated buildings. Lead paint is ubiquitous in New York City, where 76% of all buildings pre-date the 1960 ban. Buildings built after 1960 may still contain lead paint, especially if they were built before the 1978 federal ban on lead paint. Even apartments that have undergone gut renovations may still retain lead paint.

The risk is huge. Lead is toxic, and ac-

cording to the World Health Organization, there’s no safe level of exposure.

In 2023 alone, more than 5,000 New York City children under the age of six were poisoned by lead paint, some facing irreversible harm—reduced IQs, learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, and behavior problems among other severe impacts.

Although lead exposure is especially dangerous to young children—and city law requires landlords to immediately remediate lead paint where young children are present—it is also dangerous to adults. Even low levels of lead exposure in adults increases the risk of cancer, and neurological, cardiovascular, and renal issues.

Children ingesting peeling paint and chips is just a small part of the problem. Lead dust, which can be invisible to the eye and toxic in tiny amounts, is the primary pathway for exposure. Normal abrasion of intact painted surfaces—such as window and door frames—can generate lead dust.

Lead dust generated via construction is also a widespread concern, especially among rent-regulated tenants dealing with

landlords who aggressively renovate their buildings, often without regard to city safety requirements. Last year, CSC and others issued a scathing report, *Left in the Dust*, condemning the city’s failure to address the poisoning of tenants via construction dust.

A previous report, *Collecting Dust*, documented the city’s failure to collect the paltry fines levied against landlords for exposing their tenants to lead. The report noted that the city’s Department of Health and Mental Health, responsible for collecting fines, had—in the 15-year study period—collected over \$5 million from street vendors guilty of infractions like letting their food cart touch a building, but just over \$10,000 from landlords with lead-related violations. Less than half of 1% of lead-related fines levied by DOHMH were collected.

What if your building is at risk for lead?

“Almost every aspect of protecting yourself and your family from lead paint hazards starts with a basic education about where lead paint exists in our housing,” said Brandon Kielbasa, CSC’s director of organizing.

Ultimately, you will need to ask your landlord to show you the results of their lead tests. Local Law 31 of 2020 required your landlord, by August 2025, to test for lead in your apartment and in the common areas of your building, if your building was built before 1960. Testing was also required in newer buildings, where the landlord was aware of the presence of lead. The landlord is required to keep this information for ten years.

If the landlord has not yet done this test, they must still do so by hiring an EPA-certified lead paint inspector. They are required to use an XRF (x-ray fluorescence) analyzer, which uses X-rays to analyze paint layers.

Kielbasa urged that you consider reaching out to other tenants before you talk to your landlord—in collective action there is strength. You can also reach out to CSC or other local tenants’ rights organizations for help. Contact CSC at LDFNYC@coopersquare.org.

Organizing can be key, CSC organizer Jodie Leidecker emphasized, noting that “Only after intense work on the part of tenants have I ever seen landlords attempt to follow the rules for lead safety.”

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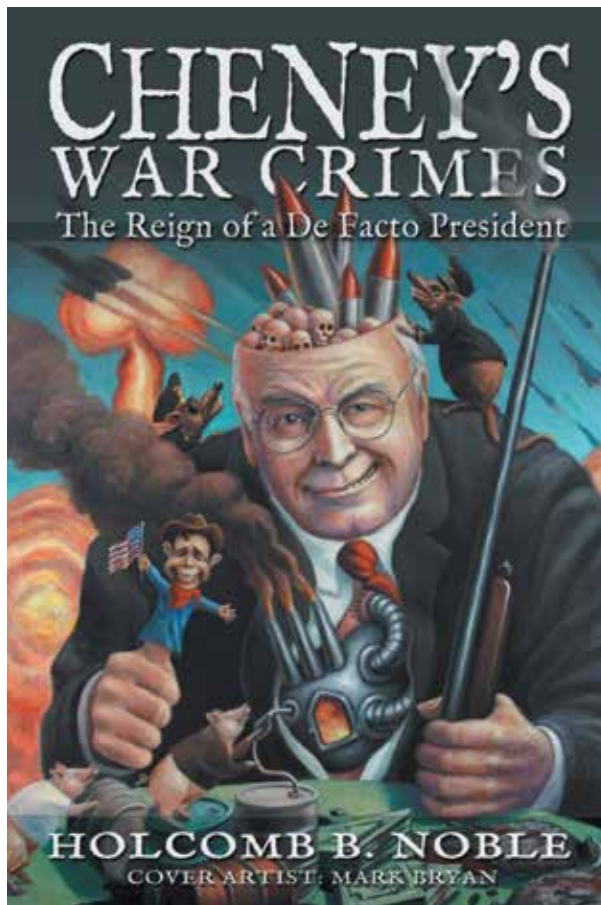
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Good Riddance Dick Cheney, Andrew Cuomo and Larry Summers

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

November marked the death, or fall, of some major personalities. Society is better off with the loss of all three.

Dick Cheney – Death of a War Criminal



BOOK JACKET COVER OF *CHENEY'S WAR CRIMES: The Reign of a De Facto President*, by Holcomb B. Noble.

Let him rest in...peace? The irony is a little too much for me to grasp as I contemplate the death of Dick Cheney at age 84. My wife says not to speak ill of the dead. But I can't let this go. Just because he spoke out against Trump after January 6, 2021, does not mean that we should forget the sum total of his horrible life.

Cheney was the mastermind and primary organizer of the "war on terror," which, in a 20-year span of insanity, cost the United States \$8 trillion and killed (murdered) nearly a million people according to Brown University's Costs of War Project. Cheney was a White House chief of staff, a congressman, a Cabinet member, and George W. Bush's vice president, as well as the CEO of Halliburton. The Iraq War was his most consequential action. It caused death, suffering, and loss and created instability in the region that resonates to this day. It was a colossal miscalculation, one of the worst in U.S. history. But more than that, it was based on one big lie by Cheney.

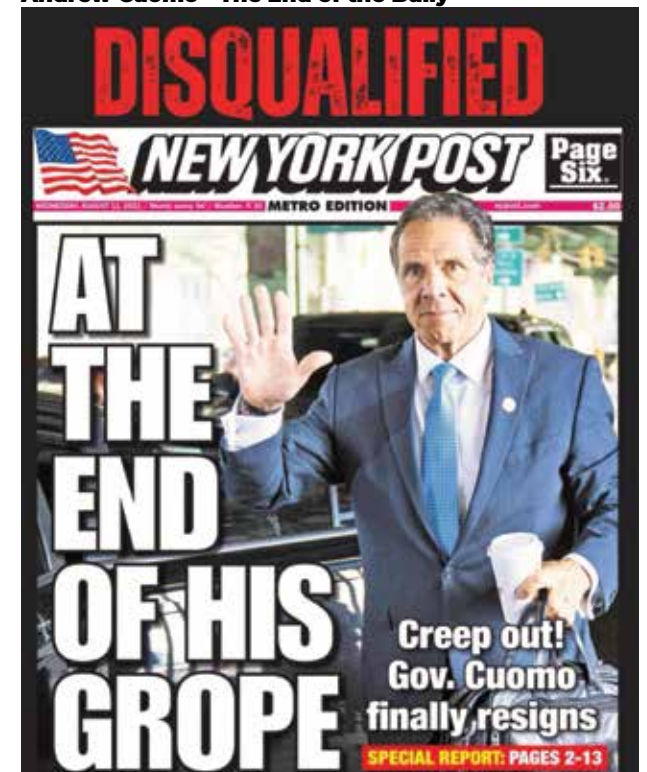
Bush and Cheney repeatedly made false statements about Saddam Hussein and the danger he presented. They routinely ignored intelligence that raised questions about Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction" and his ties to al Qaeda—both turned out to be nonexistent. In the summer of 2002, as the first anniversary of 9/11 approached, the Bush-Cheney White House launched a campaign to persuade the American public that a war against Hussein was necessary. This was not a consensus view on Capitol Hill or among Americans. On August 26, 2002, Cheney delivered a speech at a national convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars in Nashville which was loaded with hair-raising rhetoric. "The Iraqi regime," he declared, "has in fact been very busy enhancing its capabilities in the field of chemical and biological agents..." He cut to the chase, "There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has

weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us." But Cheney was lying. His lie led to a horrific war which killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, saw 4,492 U.S. service members die, 468,000 U.S. soldiers return with traumatic brain injury or PTSD, led to the rise of Isis, and cost the U.S. \$3.9 trillion.

Cheney also played a key role in developing the U.S. torture program and global secret detention program. In a 2008 interview, ABC's Jonathan Karl asked Cheney about Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was held in a secret CIA prison where he was waterboarded over 100 times. Cheney admitted authorizing torture as a means of getting information.

If there is a Hades, he surely belongs there.

Andrew Cuomo - The End of the Bully



NY POST Aug 10, 2021 in Curtis Sliwa Ad.

I was happy to see Andrew Cuomo go down, and not just because I found Zohran Mamdani inspiring. Cuomo's end means the end of the political career (I hope) of an entitled bully who views others exclusively as instruments of power or impediments to it. This type is often, old, white and male—and refuses to acknowledge that his time is up.

Ross Barkan, writing in *New York Magazine*, put it this way, "A certain kind of politics died with Andrew Cuomo's political career on Tuesday. He was, at his peak, the consummate Machiavellian masher. For him, it was always better to be feared than loved. During his 11 years as governor, he wielded the machinery of the government to unsettle and punish his rivals like few in the history of New York, and he was known, above all, as an executive who was never to be crossed. He was a bruiser, a bully, and as a mayoral candidate he hoped to export that cutthroat style to the streets of New York City. Courting voters was an afterthought. He would intimidate enough of the old power players in the shadows, collect his chits, and rumble to victory."

In the weeks before Cuomo's mayoral dream went up in smoke, a handful of independent groups backed by New York City's oligarchy spent more than \$55 million supporting the ex-governor or attacking Mamdani. Cuomo garnered just under 855,000 votes, with the would-be power brokers spending

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Open Up

BY TOM LAMIA

A story in the *New York Times* was the inspiration for today's lesson in good government. The Democrats and their causes had extraordinary results on November 4. The swell of hubris and hand wringing that followed is leading both parties to reassess their prospects. Though unlikely to be adopted, a good start for the Trump administration would be to release its grip on information flow to the citizenry. Throughout history, information has been managed by those in charge. Congress and the courts do their business in public view, but the executive branch—the chief creator and record keeper of actions and results—is saying less and restricting more. As the country's primary guardian of national security and strategic interests, the executive branch leads efforts to protect classified information and facilitate research for medical and industrial institutions. Not everything it knows can be shared with the public.

The First Amendment guarantees freedom for speech, the press, religion, assembly and the right to petition the government for the redress of grievances. These are the rights of the people against their government—guarantees that are the basis for an informed electorate. To know what is or is not being done on their behalf is essential for the people if they are to vote wisely. Accordingly, it is the government's highest responsibility to provide windows through which the public can see it at work. Press releases, public hearings, town halls and preservation of records are examples of these windows.

The Freedom of Information Act that became law in 1967 mandates that federal agencies provide unreleased information on request, with certain exceptions. The

exceptions have broadened over time through administrative interpretation. FOIA has become a useful tool for the press and individuals seeking information but it is slow, responses tend to be heavily redacted, and politics can be involved.

The Trump administration is controlling government information to an unprecedented degree. The press no longer has unrestricted access to the White House or the departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security. Inspectors general, judge advocates general and other neutral watchdogs are gone. Revenge prosecutions are priorities at the Justice Department. Presidential pardons without supporting mitigation or remorse are common. Dismissals and denials of promotions and honors among senior career military personnel disproportionately affect women and African Americans. Republicans have been advised not to hold town halls. The Supreme Court, overwhelmed by an avalanche of cases against the government, is following an emergency docket to catch up. Parties and judges in lower courts are left in limbo.

The *Times* article referenced above reported that the chairs of the Senate and House Judiciary committees (Grassley and Jordan) had written to Chief Justice John Roberts. They



OPEN UP IN THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE. Photo by Susan Lamia.

alleged that several dozen federal judges who were sources for a news article about the Supreme Court's emergency docket had violated their ethics obligations. They said the court's code of conduct requires judges to promote public confidence in the judiciary's impartiality and to refrain from commenting on pending cases. The letter is troubling.

The judicial branch, not Congress, is responsible for the ethics of federal judges. The letter writers are partisan heads of congressional committees. They are bringing political partisanship into the non-political issue of case management. That is beyond their legislative branch boundary.

Other information of importance to voters is being blocked. For example:

Congress is not briefed fully on issues under the management of federal agencies. Only Republican senators and representatives get briefed on national security issues. This is unprecedented and dangerous.

Agencies led by inexperienced political appointees cannot competently advise Congress or the people. Congressional hearings have been stalemated by witnesses at a loss for words when questioned about the operations of their agencies, resulting in unhelpful and combative testimony that fails to shed light on the subject under review.

Institutional knowledge and procedural norms are resisted, ignored or openly challenged by Republican appointees at top levels of federal agencies.

The president disregards his advisers, claiming he is his own best adviser. Some humility, if only to recognize that on occasion someone might know more than he does, would build public confidence. As it is, there is reason for concern that our pilot is flying blind in a thunderstorm with all of us on board.

The departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services are led by unqualified sycophants who are widely disrespected in the areas under their control.

Corruption is significant but goes unreported or unreviewed. Information that might lead to public knowledge is walled off from a press corps that now includes only friendly faces. Pardons have been issued to Jan. 6 co-conspirators. Government largesse goes to monopolists and donors. Nothing seems beyond the chutzpah of the president, who accepts valuable gifts from foreign governments and seeks "deals" with law firms and universities.

The erosion of transparency within the executive branch has undermined public trust in government. The selective dissemination of information and deliberate obfuscation of critical details hampers accountability and fosters confusion. This climate of secrecy makes it increasingly difficult for citizens to make the informed voting decisions that are fundamental to the health of a democracy.

No immediate relief should be expected. The president is a lame duck, increasingly unable to force his will on Congress and his party. An angry and vengeful lame duck, once a soaring eagle, could further restrict information flow to the people.

Cheney *continued from page 4*

\$65 per vote for a losing candidate. One group backing Cuomo unleashed a high-voltage ad featuring a photo of Mamdani placed over an image of the burning World Trade Center. It was an ugly campaign. Cuomo seemed to get angrier when his message was not resonating, so he tried to generate hate and fear of Mamdani.

His tenure as governor ended in disgrace in 2021 after multiple women accused him of sexual harassment. He resigned but continued to maintain that the accusations were meritless. Cuomo's supsize sense of self manifested itself not just in his resentment that sexual assault allegations ended his governorship, but in an assertion that Attorney General Leticia James had manufactured the whole thing. He ultimately regretted his decision to step down. Why he wanted to be mayor was never entirely clear — he hadn't lived in the five boroughs in decades and often spoke of them with great disdain — but it was obvious that winning City Hall was about redemption. His political obituary would have to be rewritten. Instead of

the governor who fell from grace, he'd be the mayor who found his way back to the political mountaintop.

When Cuomo started his campaign he was supported by 35% of the voters and Mamdani was at 3%. He only got 33% in the Democratic primary. In the end he got 40% and Mamdani got 50.4%. Cuomo then decided to run as an independent. His strategy was to knock everyone else out of the race and face Mamdani one-on-one. He described it as a "heavyweight championship bout." When asked if he should have done anything differently in the primary, he said should have done more on social media. Going out to meet voters hadn't crossed his mind. He didn't understand that Mamdani did well because he spoke to issues voters cared about and he spoke to them directly, even once walking the length of Manhattan in one day.

If Cuomo had a message that didn't involve only crime-doomerism and Islamophobia, it was that his opponent was young and less experienced. True. But that meant voters could project their hopes onto Mamdani and his simple and direct message about a more affordable city. Once upon a time Cuomo cre-

ated an ethics commission to clean up corruption in Albany, which he disbanded after it began looking into him and his allies. His chief of staff, Joseph Percoco, was convicted of bribe-taking. His gubernatorial administration was sullied by concerns over conflicts of interest. He actively eschewed transparency, with his staff using private email to conduct state business. He tried to build himself as an anti-Trump hero during the worst days of the pandemic, but it was discovered that he got his friends and supporters "firsties" on COVID vaccines, ordered that the ill be kept in nursing homes, and used \$5 million in taxpayer money to help write his self-congratulatory non-best-seller.

And I can tell you as one who engaged in some high level politics in New York, and who Cuomo tried to get fired from a big job, that he was as mean and vindictive as any politician in America, equal only to Trump.

So, goodbye to Cuomo and Cuomoism—sharp-elbowed, retributive and transactional. Cuomo backers must now pay attention to what the people of the city actually want and give respect to Mamdani, the candidate who won. Mamdani has a friendly

smile but he also can land a punch. He won the heavyweight title.

"I wish Andrew Cuomo only the best in private life," the new mayor-elect said on election night. "But let tonight be the final time I utter his name."

You and me both, I thought.

Larry Summers

He was once Treasury Secretary under Bill Clinton, a president with the "utmost of respect" for women. He went on to become president of Harvard, where he taught economics. He served on the boards of OpenAI, Bloomberg and Santander, was an opinion writer at *The Times*, and co-director of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

In the latest trove of Jeffrey Epstein emails Summers was seeking advice about how to cheat on his wife -- after Epstein was indicted for sex-trafficking minors. The emails were about the young daughter of a major banker in China. Outed and "embarrassed," he resigned from all of his positions, even at Harvard (where Epstein gave tens of millions of dollars through Summers.)

Another powerful man goes away (I hope).

ESG Gets Official City Park Status, But...

BY BRIAN J. PAPE, AIA, LEED-AP

It's official, sort of. Since 1822, the little spot of heaven called Elizabeth Street Garden (ESG), has officially been a dedicated recreation space for the NOLITA neighborhood. After more than 50 years in the city's neglected inventory, the ESG has finally gotten the recognition it has deserved. It was never meant to be a development site, and should never have been targeted for development by underhanded council members.

Fortunately, it is not too little, too late.

NYC Mayor Eric Adams' action was revealed in a November 3 letter from Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner Louis Molina, as first reported in the *Gothamist* blog by David Brand, Elizabeth Kim and Liam Quigley on November 12. "By this notice, the City unequivocally and permanently dedicates this property to public use as parkland," Molina wrote. "...We are committed to ensuring Elizabeth Street Garden remains a beloved community park and cannot be alienated in the future."

On November 19 the developers selected to build at ESG sued Adams and Deputy Mayor Randy Mastro. They charged both with violating the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure when naming ESG as a city park and filed to immediately impose a temporary restraining order preventing the park designation from being official.

"It is unfortunate that these developers have now brought a frivolous lawsuit to try to leverage a better deal in negotiations with the city," Mastro said. "The city has followed all proper procedures to designate this site as parkland, and this is a meritless lawsuit that does not have New Yorkers' best interest in mind." He said the city will ensure the garden will become an open public park.

This follows last summer's announcement by Adams and then NYC Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Sue Donoghue about a new \$30 million effort to transform



ESG IS NOW DECLARED by the city to be an official city park, hopefully saving it from further shenanigans by council members. Credit: Brian J. Pape, AIA.

vacant, abandoned lots into green space. This plan would put an additional 37,000 New Yorkers within a 10-minute walk to a park.

As the October 2021 *WestView News* article *The Double-Cross Continues at Elizabeth Street Garden* by this reporter recounts, the garden was deed-restricted to be recreation space in perpetuity when given over to the city. It was left fenced in and abandoned for decades due to lack of political will and funds.

From 1822 to 1970, neighbors in the NOHO (North of Houston) and SLID (Special Little Italy District), had a neighborhood recreation space. The ESG site was part of

the Free School Society's P.S. 5, built in 1822 with outdoor play areas, located between Spring and Prince streets, which was then donated to the city in 1853 for educational use, according to the deed restrictions. The city demolished the school in 1971 and in 1981 sold the southern part of the site to LIRA, a non-profit Section 8 affordable housing organization, for a 151-unit building at 21 Spring Street, reserving the northern part (the ESG site) "exclusively for recreational use."

Instead of abiding by the deed restrictions or making it available as recreation space,

the city allowed the site to deteriorate as a dangerous fenced-in garbage dump. The city even tried to pass off the site to the 21 Spring Street tenants, but they could not afford to maintain it.

Then in 1990, Elizabeth Street Gallery, a store selling antiques and architectural decorations, began renting the weedy, fenced lot from the city by promising to clean up the garbage. They did that and so much more. Since 2013, the lot has been open for neighbors including the seniors at 21 Spring Street. The garden is a godsend, as they have repeatedly testified at public hearings.

Yet in 2012, a councilperson for the Essex Crossing Redevelopment area made a backroom deal ear-marking the ESG site for affordable housing, despite the fact that 151 affordable units had already been built on the school site. The shady deal was made without informing the neighbors or Community Board 2 (CB2) until a year after the deal was made.

Once this double-cross was discovered, a concerted effort began to return ESG to the deed provision of "exclusively for recreational use." CB2 joined in recapping the disingenuous way the city has mistreated this district at its public board meeting on January 24, 2019. The community board studied the various issues for years, reported their findings at the open meetings, and strongly advocated for much-needed park space, as well as more consideration of for affordable housing close to community and recreational centers, public libraries and parks. Their findings seemed to go unheeded for years.

ESG was saved for all our children, first by the funding and work of a local merchant, Allan Reiver and his son Joseph Reiver, and then finally, this year, by Mayor Adams and City Council Member Christopher Marte's action to preserve it forever as the park it was meant to be all along.

A New Generation Steps In — Now Comes the Hard Part

BY ROGER PARADISO

There was a moment during this year's mayoral race when something felt different. Watching Zohran Mamdani on the trail, I thought: This smells like Clinton. This smells like Obama. Not in imitation, but in that unmistakable way a generational political figure announces himself. After decades of stale, transactional politics, here was a candidate who felt and sounded like fresh air.

Young voters had been tuning out civic life for years. Disillusionment became apathy, apathy became silence. And then along came Zohran. His cadence, his clarity, his insistence on speaking to the people who had stopped expecting anything from City Hall—those things mobilized the very voters we'd nearly lost.

Elections, however, are the easy part. Win-

ning by a healthy margin gives you a mandate, but a mandate is only useful if you can convert energy into policy. Now Mayor Mamdani must confront the great American immovable object: bureaucracy—council paralysis, legal red tape, and the lobbyists who prefer the status quo. The question before him is simple: Can he make government move?

As Barack Obama reminded us, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time... We are the change that we seek." Mandates mean nothing without results. And New Yorkers, especially the young and the working class, want results: affordable housing, reliable public transit, and the ability to buy fresh food without sacrificing half a paycheck.

Mamdani has already floated ideas bold enough to unsettle the comfortable—free buses, real affordability, city-run markets offering low-cost produce. If he delivers even two out of three in his first term, he'll earn a second on achievements, not slogans.

This is New York, a city that pretends to worship capitalism but runs on the labor of those who sweep the streets, stock the bodega, and keep the lights on. For every billionaire, there are hundreds of thousands living paycheck to paycheck. The balance has been lost. And as Scripture warns, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." You don't need theology to see the truth in that.

We've watched a "criminal White House"—from Trump to Musk and the other grifters—normalize corruption on a national scale. New Yorkers expect better. They expect a mayor who can clean up the swamp on the Hudson.

Mamdani's young supporters believe he can save them. If he saves them, he may save the rest of us. Because he will be mayor to every New Yorker, across boroughs and bank accounts alike.

For now, New Yorkers are watching. And hoping. Because we have seen enough candidates promise change only to fail to deliver. Mamdani has a chance to be different—a generational figure in a city that still sets the tone for the country.

All he has to do now is deliver.

Time for a Public Option

Social Housing is the Right Fit for the Mamdani Administration

BY IZIAH THOMPSON

Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani has proposed an ambitious agenda, topped by plans for addressing housing unaffordability. His platform calls for a historic investment in public sector development, harkening back to New York's trailblazing era as a "beacon of creative, public sector-led, affordable housing production."

But what does a plan that embraces this history look like? In a new report, the Community Service Society of New York answers that question, laying out a blueprint for the next era of social housing.

Local U.S. governments are embracing the idea of "social housing," a.k.a., a public option. Such publicly financed, democratically controlled housing is familiar to residents of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and Mitchell-Lama developments. Our new model includes permanent afford-

ability and economic sustainability.

At its heart is a New York City version of a "revolving loan fund." This NYC Revolving Housing Construction Fund (RHCF) would be a city-backed pool of low-cost, long-term capital to finance housing and replace expensive private debt. Instead of subsidizing private developers, the RHCF would make investments in city-built housing, recycling revenues back into the fund for future construction.

NYCHA and its subsidiary, the Public Housing Preservation Trust, are the perfect homes for RHCF investments. (The trust is a state-created public entity, akin to the School Construction Authority. It's authorized to build and renovate housing using enhanced and flexible procurement procedures and with accountability to its NYCHA residents.)

While NYCHA's capital project backlog and troubled past give reason for pause, tasking the agency with creating new housing is part of the solution. For decades, the agency has managed a massive portfolio with low rents and dwindling subsidies. Adding new, mixed-income buildings with healthy cash flows would allow NYCHA to build a strong balance sheet, advance its preservation goals, and finally add to the city's affordable

housing supply.

We modeled three hypothetical scenarios showing how this financing would actually work.

Imagine that a market-rate project in Brooklyn stalls. NYCHA could come in and use the RHCF to finish the job and allow the private firm to responsibly exit the deal. The agency would then own a strong asset. Another example: A full overhaul of a NYCHA development that also includes building a combination of new subsidized and market-rate apartments on site, heavily leveraging federal Section 8 low-income housing vouchers. And finally, a deeply affordable project in the Bronx could be made possible thanks to revenues from the other two.

Key to this plan is cross-subsidization: rents from higher-income households and vouchers support deeper affordability for lower- and middle-income ones. This mix builds stability, social integration, and financial sustainability. However, this requires letting go of two notions: one, that government shouldn't compete in the real estate market; and two, that public housing investments must only serve low-income people.

Detractors may ask, why not just target more resources at the private market? The answer is: we must do both. The private affordable housing sector is necessary, and we should leverage all tools, like the expanded Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and recent approved zoning and land use review changes.

The new administration

should squeeze every ounce it can get out of the private sector.

But it's also true that that will not be enough. Private real estate production is tied to the flow of credit and exposed to booms and busts. Existing programs help, but public development is crucial to truly smooth that cycle.

Additionally, increasing supply isn't the only reason to embrace social housing. The current system for building affordable housing rests on tax credits and complex deals, even as private equity demands high investment returns. Development fees for bankers, lawyers, and consultants eat up public dollars long before tenants move in. Social housing can move those kinds of costs into a public expense budget where technical experts can be used more efficiently.

Furthermore, democratic control is central to social housing. It eliminates the costs private developers carry in order to comply with necessary public oversight. Meanwhile, priorities like sustainability, resident health, and community needs are inherent, not add-ons. And most importantly, project cash flows don't go to investor trust funds; they go back into building more housing.

Of course, there is no silver bullet. This public option must be supplemented by a broad panoply of other housing policy reforms. That includes addressing racist, exclusionary zoning. Ending single-family zoning and allowing NYCHA to overrule odious restrictions is a start. The new administration must reorient housing agencies to find efficiencies and adjust NYCHA structure to take on this task.

Come January, the new mayor will have to confront the reality of a housing production system shot through with inefficiencies. It only gets into gear when credit is cheap and there is a profit to be made. It throws subsidies at and forgoes tax revenues from an industry that can almost always secure higher rents by other means. It relies on legal oversight to get landlords to behave with basic decency toward tenants. It rarely builds units in wealthy white areas, reinforcing patterns of racial and economic segregation.

Changing all that begins with believing that government can actually get things done. But if, using social housing strategies, Singapore, Vienna, Montgomery County (MD), Atlanta, Helsinki, and Shenzhen can do it, why can't New York City build again?

Reprinted by permission from Seth Moncrease, Center for New York City Affairs, The New School. IZIAH THOMPSON is a senior policy analyst at the Community Service Society of New York focused on housing. He writes a monthly newsletter about public housing issues called "NYCHA Needs to Know."



Photo by: nychajournal.nyc

Time to Give Zohran a Chance

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

As one can see from the map below, Zohran Mamdani won in Greenwich Village, getting far more votes in the East, and while winning the Central and West Village, the results differed block by block.

It was a vile campaign. As bad, if not worse than Rudy Giuliani's 1993 campaign against David Dinkins, which hinged on racial prejudice, including a police rally at City Hall where cops held signs that referred to Dinkins as a "washroom attendant" and depicted him as a racist caricature with bulging lips and an Afro.

This year's race focused a lot on allegations that Mamdani was an antisemite, with both Curtis Sliwa and Mayor Eric Adams saying that Jewish children wouldn't be safe if he were elected. There was the Islamophobic angle, with one ad showing a plane hitting the World Trade Center, comparing that to Mamdani winning. And then there were tirades about Mamdani being an anti-cop ultra-leftist. That stuff got Cuomo 42% of the vote and left many feeling uneasy about Mamdani's win.

But think about this. I'm 72. I cannot remember a mayor who left New York in better

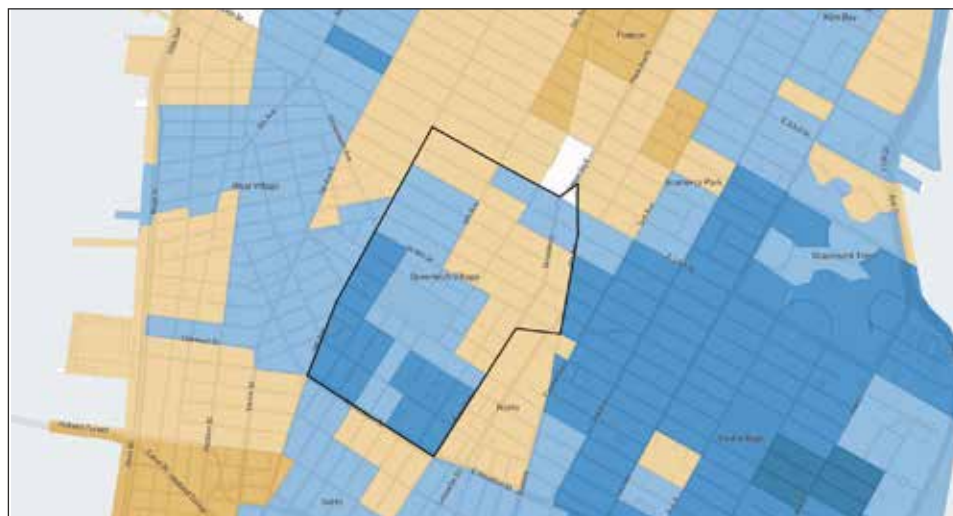
shape than when he started. That includes Bloomberg, whose zoning changes, school combining, and stop and frisk policing, left the city gentrified, unaffordable and racially divided. Bill De Blasio ran to end the "Two Cities," instituted universal pre-K, and successfully raised the minimum wage to \$15/hour—but he left office immensely unpopular, with the "Two Cities" still intact. And Adams, who announced that God put him

in office, left New Yorkers uneasy, even as crime dropped. There seemed to be no fresh ideas coming from City Hall.

I have watched Mamdani carefully and talked with him. He comes in with a positive approach. He was smart enough to not join the chorus against some City Charter amendments which give the mayor power to move housing construction faster. He pledged to keep Jessica Tisch on board as

police commissioner. She has been a breath of fresh air after corruption ripped through the NYPD. His first deputy mayor is Dean Fuleihan, hardly a radical, who has 40 years of government experience in City Hall and Albany. He has been kind to Gov. Hochul, whose help he needs to raise the billions of dollars to enact his programs. Somehow, he has even charmed Donald Trump.

continued on page 11



THE MOST DETAILED MAP OF THE N.Y.C. MAYORAL ELECTION

Cuomo

Gold = 60% or more; Yellow = 50-60%

Mamdani

Deep Blue = 60% or more; Light Blue 50-60%; Blue 50-60%

West Village – Mamdani +5%

Central Village – Mamdani +6%

East Village – Mamdani +42%

Soho – Mamdani +5

Chelsea – Mamdani +11

Tribeca – Cuomo +26

Flatiron – Cuomo +19

Noho – Cuomo +9

Map appears courtesy of the NY Times

On the Other Side of the Road—What I've Learned While Running for City Council

BY DOMINICK ROMEO



AUTHOR DOMINICK ROMEO during a debate in February. Photo courtesy of Dominick Romeo.

Everyone feels that they can do a better job than their current City Council member. For most of us running for office, it's just a thought, especially when realizing the amount of work and dedication it takes to make a change. Deciding to run for office was one of the biggest decisions I have ever made. Although I lost this election, I may not lose the next one in 2029 – who knows – anything is possible! But until that day I'd like to share a few stories from the campaign trail.

There is no blueprint on how to run for office. No website that walks you through the process from beginning to end. I started out as anyone would – through a Google search typing, "How to run for City Council in NYC." I came across just one article. Although it was helpful in many ways – providing a basic un-

derstanding of the NYC Board of Elections, petitioning, and the Campaign Finance Board – I learned that it left out a whole lot more.

Even though I am a lifelong Democrat, I made the decision to run as an Independent in the general election knowing that Council Member Erik Bottcher had a huge advantage as the incumbent and was part of the political machinery of the DNC.

I started my campaign a year and a half prior to the 2025 election and learned quickly that I was already running out of time. That's because it took me three months to figure out how all of this was done.

I needed to get an Employment Identification number [EID]. But what kind of EID? There are many types of EIDs listed on the IRS website. I had to open a small business account through a participating bank that was familiar with candidates. But what branch was that? Then I had to fill out the appropriate paperwork, register with the Campaign Finance Board, and take three required campaign finance classes – all before I would be considered an official candidate for the 2025 election cycle!

I was immediately warned by members of the Hell's Kitchen Democratic Club that the gay community (which I am an active member of) was busy plotting to kick me off the ballot for my stance on transgender sports rights. I believe that biological women are not as strong as biological men – that biological men (whether they are transitioning

or transitioned) have an unfair advantage in women's sports competitions.

I have been an activist/advocate in the gay community for decades and began fighting for transgender rights 20 years before it became "popular." I even wrote an article for *The Village View*, titled *The Transgender Games*, where I presented a logical solution for our transgender friends to achieve their dreams in sports.

Petitioning season starts in April prior to an election. Each candidate needs to collect the required 450 "legal" signatures to be on a ballot for City Council. To be considered "legal" a person must live in the district, be a registered voter and cannot have signed another person's petition in the same election year.

The major party candidates can begin to collect signatures in April while Independents are allowed to start collecting their signatures in May. This leaves very few legal signatures left because the Democrats and the Republicans collected most of them a month prior, leaving Independents with a disadvantage.

I was faced with two options. I could collect as many signatures as possible and hand my petition in on the last day allowed. Or, I could hand my signatures in early on the Friday before Labor Day when leaders in the gay community were busy partying it up on Fire Island. I chose the latter.

According to the NYC Board of Elections, anyone can challenge petitions – and they sure do! This is one of the main ways to re-

move someone from a race especially if that someone is not a part of the machine and not pulling the party line. In other words, me! They call politics dirty for a reason!

By handing my petition in early, I was spared any challenges by leaders in the gay community. But Luis Flores, who also ran against Erik Bottcher as an Independent, wasn't as lucky. Flores decided to collect as many signatures as he could before the last day permitted by the NYC Board of Elections. His petition was challenged by a prominent leader in the gay community who just happens to be besties with Council Member Bottcher!

Politics is a dirty sport, and I loved every second of it! One of the main problems with politics is that they make it impossible for anyone to figure out how to run in the first place. They don't want fresh ideas. They don't want newcomers to go against the status quo and they will stop at nothing to destroy you!

To get more people involved I have decided to create a website called HowToRunInNYC.com. This site will walk people through the process of running for office and provide a network for those who are courageous enough to put themselves out there. This website will include interviews with those who ran and lost as well as those who ran and won. It will be a step-by-step guide on how to throw your hat in the ring. I hope this site will inspire more people to run in the future because running for office is an experience that will change your life forever!

Open My Heart and You Will Find Michio's Pizza

BY ERIC S. MARGOLIS

Once upon a time very long ago there was a magical place in New York City called Greenwich Village. It was unfashionably far downtown and supposedly filled by lurking Italians with big mustaches and pistols. Polite people stayed away.

My mother, a daring foreign affairs correspondent wise to the ways of the Mideast and Balkans, loved the Village and recounted stories of its street vendors and mobsters to slightly horrified uptowners.

Though it sounds a fable, in those very distant days of the 1950s, old Italians actually used to stroll down the streets of the Central Village, singing Neapolitan folk songs, playing on their mandolins. The air was rich with the aroma of crusty, fresh breads from the glorious Vesuvio Bakery on Prince Street.

The Village was quiet and remote from busy midtown. Real artists lived there in walk-ups girded by iron fire-escapes, which for many New Yorkers became their sole retreat from the city's torrid summer days. A few jazz clubs drew hip avant-gardists from the Upper West Side.

For my cosmopolitan family, a confusing farrago of Lower East Side New York and wild Albanians, our central gathering spot was a rather dingy little shop on MacDougal Street named 'La Masquera,' or the 'Mask,' in old-fashioned Neapolitan — Italy used to have 11 languages or dialects. Thick, colorful

Neapolitan dominated in New York as well as Southern Italy. When I first got to Italy in the very early 50s, I didn't understand a word that people were speaking and asked if it really was 'Italian.'

My first job on this planet was running the cash register at the venerable Peacock Coffee House on MacDougal, the local watering hole for the neighborhood's Italian community. I struggled to make change and operate the ancient cash register. There were artists, poets, musicians, day-laborers and well-dressed gentlemen with splendid mustaches who were treated with great deference by everyone and hailed as 'don' and 'cavaliere.'

Then there was a scary old flophouse, the Greenwich Hotel, that occupied an entire block of Bleeker Street in the heart of the Village. They would rent you a room for a few hours and a large bottle of Muscatel wine.

The owner of the Greenwich Hotel was an early venture capitalist. He recruited rummies as his work force. Each wino was assigned a specific route heading uptown from the Village to around 42nd Street. They were to panhandle up their designated route.

At the end of this route, they would return to the Greenwich Hotel and hand the money they had gleaned to its owner. Then they were given a bottle of wine. Lest they be tempted to pocket some of the money

they were given, hotel accomplices were stationed along the assigned route to give the mendicants marked coins. If any were missing at the journey's end, the returning clochard would be given a thrashing and expelled from the hotel for good. Charles Dickens would have appreciated this early Industrial Revolution behavior.

At the eastern corner of the Greenwich Hotel was a verminous-looking pharmacy. I innocently asked the louche-looking owner if he had any illegal speed capsules for sale. It was impossible to get through economics exams without these efficient Benzedrine capsules to make one study economics, utter gibberish that at the time was considered the word of God.

'How many do you want, kid?' asked the evil-looking patron. 'The biggest bottle you have.' I got a 1,000-size bottle and scampered off with my treasure under my arm.

But of all the memories of the long-vanished Village that I hold dear, the most poignant was of the old pizzeria on MacDougal Street, La Masquera.

This literal hole in the wall was run by a single person, a titan of Italian gastronomy known to all as 'Michio.' He had wisps of white, eyes dancing with humor, and a stentorian voice. He was usually wrapped in white restaurant aprons. Out of his ancient pizza ovens came the best pizza I have ever

tasted. Even in Rome I heard about Michio's sublime pizza.

Michio was a loveable man who loved the opera almost as much as life. We were always assured of an especially magnificent pizza when one of the earth-shaking Italian operas was playing on his radio. He held his beautiful pizzas as if they were Tosca or Mimi, and cried into the pie as it emerged from the oven. Since Michio had no liquor license — refusing to pay the usual bribes to the city liquor inspectors — wine was served to us in coffee cups in case the inspectors raided La Masquera.

It's all gone now, like a summer dream. Honkey-tonk joints and bad restaurants flooded in. Real estate became impossibly expensive. Many Village residents moved across the river to Jersey and out to remotest Long Island. La Masquera closed after dear Michio died in his kitchen. A few of the old joints still cling to life but the heart and soul of the Village are long gone.

Still, as a New Yorker I expect a new Village to be reborn, maybe in Queens. But it won't be like the original one.

Eric S. Margolis is an award-winning, internationally syndicated columnist. He appears as foreign affairs expert on CNN, BBC, France 2, France 24, Fox News, CTV and CBC.

DOWNTOWN ROUNDUP

WRONG-WAY DRIVER KILLS PEDESTRIAN ON MORTON STREET

Fatal crosswalk crash exposes chronic issues with garage exits and street design in the Village.

A 27-year-old woman was struck and killed in early November when a van exited a Morton Street garage, turned the wrong way onto the narrow one-way block, and entered the Seventh Avenue crosswalk at speed.

Longtime residents say this was not a fluke — it was an accident waiting to happen. The garage exit merges directly into a crosswalk, with minimal signage indicating the correct traffic direction. One neighbor told *The Village View*, "I watch cars come out the wrong way nearly every day. We've begged DOT to fix this."

Advocates are now demanding immediate mitigation measures: curb-radius tightening, additional "one way" indicators, and consideration of removing or modifying certain garage exits entirely.

Why it matters: Historic Village streets aren't designed for modern traffic volumes. Without proactive redesign, more tragedies are likely.

WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK CALMS DOWN — AND COMES BACK TO LIFE

Heavy enforcement stabilizes trouble spots as musicians, dancers, and street performers return.

After years of headlines about disorder in Washington Square Park, a dramatic shift is underway. A sustained police presence — including overnight patrols — has restored basic stability to the northwest corner. With that stability has come something unexpected: a flourishing creative scene.



Jazz trios have reclaimed the fountain plaza. Modern dancers rehearse near the arch. Tarot readers and portrait artists are returning after years away. "The energy feels

more like the 1990s again," said one veteran busker.

But park advocates warn that success cannot rely endlessly on heavy enforcement. "If the park only works because 60 officers are here, that's not a plan," one community organizer said.

Why it matters: Washington Square Park is the Village's public square. Its condition reflects the health of the neighborhood.

'MEMBERS ONLY' OPENS MULTI-LEVEL BAR & BOUTIQUE ON WEST 8TH

'80s nostalgia meets nightlife as the Village attracts new experiential brands.

A neon-soaked cocktail bar, apparel boutique, and basement lounge have taken over 53 West 8th Street — courtesy of the revived '80s lifestyle brand Members Only. With retro cocktails, jacket displays, and influencer-friendly lighting, the space brings new energy to a block once dominated by small shops.

Fans say it's fun and adds life to the corridor. Critics argue it's another step toward a Village defined more by nostalgia-themed concepts than organic neighborhood culture.

Why it matters: It reveals which businesses can afford Village rents — and how

the commercial identity of the neighborhood is shifting.

ERIK BOTTCHE LAUNCHES RUN FOR NADLER'S CONGRESSIONAL SEAT

Popular District 3 councilmember enters a major congressional race with deep implications for the Village.

In a polished campaign video released mid-November, Councilmember Erik Bottcher announced he is running to succeed Jerry Nadler in New York's 12th Congressional District. Bottcher emphasized his personal story — surviving anti-gay bullying as a teen and finding a new life in New York City — and framed the run as a milestone: "This district has never had an openly gay representative."

For Village residents, the campaign carries outsized significance. His City Council district covers portions of the West Village, Greenwich Village, Chelsea, and Hell's Kitchen — neighborhoods undergoing intense change.

If Bottcher wins, his departure will open one of the most consequential local seats on Manhattan's west side.

Why it matters: The Village's political representation, both locally and federally, could shift dramatically over the next year.

...AND SO IT BEGINS

BY ALEC PRUCHNICKI

Those of us who supported Zohran Mamdani were very happy about his election and many of us listened to his victory speech carefully. One aspect that was somewhat surprising and encouraging was his challenge to President Trump to “turn up the volume” and “to get to any of us you have to go through all of us.” Trump, in an uncharacteristically short tweet responded “...AND SO IT BEGINS.” I was skeptical that he (or whatever staff member wrote the tweet) avoided his multi-paragraph tirades but the message is clear. We have a lot of potential problems on the horizon, so let’s get ready for them.

The most immediate problems are the ones Trump has already threatened. He said he would be withholding money to NYC if Mamdani were elected so now his threat might become a reality. But what can he really do? Much of federal funding to NYC is already in the law and how much he can subvert or ignore mandates that already exist is unclear. What is clear is that any attempt to cut funding will be met with court challenges by the city and maybe the state. This can go from immediate court decisions to months or years. If cases go all the way to the Supreme Court there is an additional problem. They will end up going to *this* Supreme Court and there is no telling if they will be in a Trump-friendly mood or a more objective one.

Trump might also be slowed by the potential for attacks on NYC resulting in a significant backlash that injures him. His announcement that the new Hudson Tunnel Project is to be terminated may have helped Mikie Sherrill get elected and that is exactly the blowback that he would want to avoid as we approach the 2026 midterms. Several New York Republican congress members are in swing districts and every nasty act by Trump will be hung around their necks.

One major threat is the increased placement of federal forces in New York City. Some, like aggressive immigration enforcement agents, have already sparked opposition throughout the country and NYC opposition is likely to be at least as intense. Are

you listening Representatives Malliotakis and Stefanik?

The placement of federal forces here in New York and in other places around the country leads to a potential problem that could, without exaggeration, be an existential threat to democracy. Around the time of the 2020 election there were reports from various sources in the Trump administration that he was asking about having the federal government seize local ballot boxes. Several of his close advisors told him that this couldn’t be legally done and he backed off. What about now? Would the spineless invertebrates in Congress oppose him? Would the hand-picked minions in his administration oppose him?

Look at the people around him. Would Pete Hegseth (Defense/War Department), Kristi Noem (Homeland Security), Kash Pa-

tel (FBI), Tom Homan (Border Czar), Pam Bondi (Department of Justice), and the numerous Republican governors who volunteered their National Guards troops say no? All of these individuals have military, para-military, or law enforcement forces at their disposal and have shown no hesitation about using them to enforce their own Trump-friendly policies.

At first, I thought I was being paranoid for thinking about a ballot box seizure in November 2026. But recently Illinois Governor Pritzker stated that he thought that was exactly what Trump had in mind by getting such forces into Democratic states and cities over the objection of local officials and people. Since there is no limit to the evil imagination of Trump when it comes to making up false claims, this is entirely possible. Maybe even likely.



What can we do to fight these threats? For the cutting of funds, there are the courts and public opinion leading to anti-Republican blowback and election losses. For the intrusion of federal forces there are the courts and massive demonstrations, including satirical ones like the inflatable costumes in Portland.

For protection of the voting process in the mid-term elections, preparation should start immediately. The simplest, and most widely accepted tactic is to avoid going to the polls by extensive use of mail-in ballots and early voting. Of course, Trump knows this and he and the federal government will try to interfere so this will require planning, with publicity to the general public and voter turnout.

Leading up to the election there will have to be court fights and demonstrations to object to unnecessary forces being in cities, regardless of what made up excuse Trump uses. In the past, on Election Day, Democrats have had lawyers in place and courts identified to get immediate injunctions when abuses occurred. Now that ICE and other government agencies are using intimidation as much as justifiable reasons, reaction will have to be swift. If voters are seized on Election Day and held without cause, it won’t do any good to have them released the next morning. The Supreme Court has already given permission for the government to use racial profiling in seizing people during immigration raids and some of those people are citizens who have the right to vote. The Democrats will have problems reclaiming the Hispanic vote if every person with a brown skin and slight accent gets locked up for 24 hours. Maybe if abuses like this get up to the Supreme Court soon, the folly (or maybe intention) on its part can be reversed and racial profiling will no longer be so easy. The Court seems to believe that race should not be a factor when it comes to college admissions so maybe it will apply that logic to this issue. But Court hypocrisy is an issue for another day and a much longer essay.

And so, it begins. This round of the fight starts immediately and lasts until November of 2026. After that, who knows?

Pass the New York Health Act

BY ALEC PRUCHNICKI, MD

For about 30 years, progressive politicians in New York State have been advocating for the New York Health Act. It would establish a single payer state-run insurance program that would provide medical coverage for everyone in the state and eliminate the need for private insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and virtually all out of pocket costs for the public. But why is such a program needed?

There are massive problems with healthcare in the U.S. It is incredibly expensive compared to other industrialized nations, both by costs and share of GDP. The U.S. spends about 17% of its GDP on healthcare

whereas the other most industrial nations spend 12% or less. Yet U.S. healthcare outcomes are poor in virtually every medical outcome from maternal and childhood mortality to average lifespan. About 8% of Americans have no insurance and all medical costs must be borne by the individuals.

The inflated costs are due to several factors including high drug prices, high hospitalization rates, and overall administrative costs. Private insurance covers about 65% of people and so the overhead for private insurance, both profit-making and non-profit, are about an order of magnitude above pub-

lic programs like Medicare and Medicaid (about 25% vs. 2-5%). Private insurance companies have administrative costs to track monthly enrollment, high compensation for upper management and stock holders, profits, advertising, and bureaucracies needed to administer prior authorizations. Not only do these costs fall on the insurance companies but also on any medical practice or facility which must interact with them.

A single payer system eliminates many of these costs. Although a national system would be the best long-term arrangement, and bills have been proposed over the years

in Congress, any chance for this is minimal, at least for the next few years. Many states have tried to control costs and improve outcomes, and the New York Health Act is designed to do this. It would cover all benefits currently covered by all private insurers and public plans. This would include preventive care, in-patient care, community-based care, medications, medical equipment (glasses, hearing aids, dental work, walkers and wheelchairs) and even long-term nursing home care. It would be available at no cost to all New York residents.

continued on page 12

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Mamdani *continued from page 8*

Mamdani will face a steep set of challenges when he takes office on Jan. 1. He campaigned on an expansive and expensive set of solutions to the city's spiraling living costs: making buses free, expanding government-funded childcare, freezing the rent on nearly a million rent-stabilized apartments, and building hundreds of thousands more apartments without relying on developers whose vision of affordability has made New York unaffordable. Mamdani has not come off his win as some wild-eyed radical who believes that he can ignore the power structure in our city. And he has repeatedly pledged, displaying the compassion that he learned as being a dark-skinned Muslim growing up in New York City, to be vigilant against anti-semitism – something that his critics, from Adams to Cuomo to Bloomberg, never got a handle on, despite their rhetoric and support for Israel's actions in Gaza.

In almost every area that featured prominently in the mayoral campaign, Mamdani can improve life in New York by marrying his admirable ambition to pragmatism and compromise.

- He has a plan to build 200,000 rent stabilized apartments while being open to working with the real estate community.
- He has pledged to make buses free and faster. He doesn't control the MTA but the Transport Workers Union believes it can

be done. It may require a tax, but don't believe the B.S. that he will tax anyone making less than a million dollars a year with a bigger focus on raising New York's corporate tax rates up to the same level as New Jersey.

- Free childcare is doable; they just enacted it in North Dakota. The additional ability of parents to work will generate significant tax revenue all on its own.
- His plan is to improve public safety by addressing the mentally ill on the streets with professionals and not cops. Some of these ideas have shown promising results elsewhere. They typically require collaboration between social-services workers and police officers. If we can address affordability, and get people out of homeless shelters, my prediction is that crime will continue to drop. And maybe Mamdani will go back to David Dinkins' idea that cops get out of their cars and walk our streets.
- Mamdani hasn't spoken much about our subpar schools. But he is a graduate of the NYC public school system and has recognized the problem of overcrowded, understaffed schools.

Give him a chance, my neighbors. New ideas, if they work, can become infectious. NYC is in the middle of a country full of horrific problems. Just maybe NYC will be a shining light.

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Faded Memories of Macy's

BY BRIAN J. PAPE

We received a letter in response to the *Village View's* November article *The Transformation of Sixth Avenue at 14th Street*, and our question about Macy's origins. Frank Quinn wrote "I believe the original Macy's was at 56 West 14th. I remember in the late 70s when I first came to NYC the original Macy's sign, which was metal, was still hanging between the two masks."

That was enough for *Village View* to look further at this address. The answer was confirmed in numerous sources and led to additional information. We thank Frank Quinn for his interest.

In November 2015, Village Preservation wrote a blog about Macy's early presence in Greenwich Village, since the iconic department store started out on the southeast corner of Sixth Avenue and 14th Street. R.H. Macy Dry Goods originally opened in a small building (since demolished) on this corner in 1858 and, as its success grew, it expanded into a number of neighboring buildings.

Macy's is said to have "pioneered such revolutionary business practices as the one-price system, in which the same item was sold to every customer at one price, and quoting specific prices for goods in newspaper advertising." Known for its creative merchandising, Macy's was the first to introduce such products as the tea bag, the Idaho baked potato and colored



FADED RED STARS on the terra cotta decorations at 55 East 13th Street, built in 1891-94 by Isador and Nathan Straus. This was part of the original Macy's complex. *Image courtesy of Village Preservation.*



56 WEST 14TH STREET was built in 1898 by Isador and Nathan Straus, and landmarked in 2011. *Photo sent by Frank Quinn. Credit: Google Maps.*

bath towels.

After R. H. Macy's passing in 1877, the company remained in family hands until 1895, when brothers Isadore and Nathan Straus took over. In 1898 they built 56 West 14th Street but four years later they moved their department store to its present location on Herald Square. There, it was proclaimed to be the world's largest department store!

In December 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission paid homage to the past by voting for landmark designation of the lovely Neo-Classical building at 56 West 14th Street – called Macy's 14th Street Annex, as



14TH STREET looking east from Sixth Avenue, showing Macy's on the right, which had expanded into a number of neighboring buildings. Note the entrance to the Sixth Avenue elevated train at the bottom left. This photo ca. 1892 was taken before 56 West 14 Street was built, probably in the lot just beyond the Macy's signage band. *Image courtesy of Jason Cochran and Village Preservation.*

part of the original Macy's complex.

It is not clear if any retail took place in the Macy's 14th Street Annex or if it was just used for offices, storage, or rental space. According to the Landmarks report, "The former Macy's 14th Street Annex, owned by the Straus family until 1939 and internally connected to the 13th Street Annex through the 20th century, housed a variety of firms over subsequent decades."

Fourteenth Street was an upscale shopping district in the mid-19th and early-20th centuries. The area was originally known as Ladies Mile because it was lined with department stores frequented by fashionable women. The name later came to encompass a larger area that also included Broadway down to Wanamaker's and Fifth and Sixth avenues from around 14th to 25th streets. Macy's would have been at the entrance to this very stylish district.

Faded reminders of Macy's presence also appear on another of its former buildings at 55 East 13th Street, which the Straus brothers built in 1891-94 and which now belongs to the New School.

Health Act *continued from page 10*

Not only would enrollees save money, but they would have a greater freedom to pick their own doctors and hospitals rather than have it dictated by their insurance plan. Patients want to choose their own providers and whatever insurance plan gives the widest choice is the one most people would want. A single payer system gives the widest choice and puts the final decision in the hands of the individual.

A system this extensive is going to be expensive. It is estimated that it would have a total cost of about \$40 billion. But the same estimates have projected a \$60 billion saving spread throughout all aspects of the healthcare system. The \$20 billion difference would allow coverage of all New York residents so that all other expenditures, which can be substantial and unpredictable, are completely eliminated. Any additional costs would be covered by a progressive tax on high income individuals (and maybe businesses) and a share of the

tens of billions of dollars the federal government sends to New York every year.

We are constantly warned that anything that sounds too good to be true probably isn't true. But we don't have to guess about this system and hope for the best since every other industrialized country has a single payer system of some type. They have overall better medical outcomes at a significantly lower cost. They believe that it is an obligation of government to provide healthcare -- not private individuals or the invisible hand of the profit driven marketplace.

Opposition to a single payer system in New York comes from several sources. Republicans have never supported the New York Health Act, or any other single payer system on the federal level. All support so far has been from Democrats. Insurance companies are opposed to this existential threat to their profits. Also, many labor unions are opposed to this approach. By obtaining medical insurance coverage through negotiations, they can justify their existence and success to their

members. Also, they might be more comfortable with a medical plan that they manage and are familiar with rather than something as new as a single payer system. However, each negotiation requires some give back and over the years attacks on union-provided medical insurance have increased. The recent narrowly avoided attempt by New York City to force retirees into managed care insurance plan demonstrates this.

What can individuals do to support the New York Health Act? The Campaign for New York Health (nyhcampaing.org) organizes lobbying for this legislation and has extensive information about the act along with political action suggestions. Union members can approach, or maybe demand, that their unions support it rather than go through a life-or-death negotiation with every new contract. This will vary from union to union but if successful it would show that unions can bring about progress for the general public and not just themselves. This is how we got Medicare 60 years ago.

Many Democratic politicians support this legislation at various levels of intensity, depending on their closeness to unions involved with the issue. Mamdani supported this bill when he was in the legislature and might re-address the issue once he is mayor. Letters to the governor could also help.

There is even acknowledgement of the benefits of a single payer system by a very unexpected source. During his first term in office President Trump spoke very well of the single payer systems in other countries. He praised the Scottish system where he has one of his golf courses. He complemented the Prime Minister of Australia and admitted that they have better healthcare than we do. His clearly stated opinion was that it works in other countries and the tone of his voice made it seem that even he understood that it would work in the U.S.

You have to start somewhere while waiting for a national system, and New York is as good a place as any.

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The Mothership Connection Lands in the Meatpacking District

On 2 September 2025, British-Caribbean artist Zak Ové's monumental Afrofuturist sculpture *The Mothership Connection* was installed in Manhattan's Meatpacking District as part of a major public art activation led by NALA Projects and The Meatpacking Business Improvement District, marking the sculpture's New York City debut. This installation follows extended stays at London's Regency Park and Detroit's The Shepherd, a cultural arts center.

Standing just short of 30 feet tall and lit up like a beacon, *The Mothership Connection* merges African iconography with sci-fi mythology, resembling a futuristic African rocket ship, crowned with a super-sized Mende headpiece. The work draws from Afrofuturist legacies and diasporic symbolism, and is a vibrant and dynamic display of cross-cultural connections and histories, a testament to New York's renowned destination and home for cultures across the globe.

Built from brightly colored stainless steel blocks, the work reimagines iconic architec-

tural forms historically constructed through enslaved labor, transforming them into symbols of survival, dignity, and cultural memory – forming a powerful visual metaphor for the African diaspora's foundational role in shaping the modern world. *The Mothership Connection* highlights and pays homage to the invisible stories that built the world we know today.

The sculpture looks brand new and well cared for, despite its extensive travels.

With *The Mothership Connection*, Ové challenges dominant ideals fixing Western modernity as the future, and the relegation of African cultures to the past. Ové's artwork is an emissary of African cultural histories, presence, and futurity – a powerful act of cultural remembrance and imagination: affirming the past whilst projecting new possibilities into the future.

As New York City celebrates its 400th anniversary, the sculpture creates a radiant testament to the multicultural history and internationalism of New York and the Meatpacking District.



THE MOTHERSHIP CONNECTION by artist Zak Ové has touched down and stands just short of 30 feet tall in the Meatpacking District, corner of 14th Street and 9th Avenue. Lit up like a beacon from within and resembling a futuristic African rocket ship, this sculpture is especially fascinating to view at night. Credit: Brian J. Pape, AIA.

A Cabinet of Curiosities— The Thrift Store at St. Luke's

BY ISIS O'FLYNN-SHAHAF

Connected to the St. Luke's Cathedral at 487 Hudson Street is an underground thrift store, or as store manager Elana Steinberg puts it, "a cabinet of curiosities." Just a few concrete steps downstairs and you are transported into a world of antiques, vintage clothing pieces, a variety of books, collections of vinyl, glass, silver and china dining sets, and memories of the past. Originally an old parish house, this magical shop has been transformed into the home of the beloved belongings of the West Village community.

Perusing the store feels like you are Alice falling down the rabbit hole. Time stops for a while as 70s classic rock plays softly in the background. From sorting through hats older than the vinyls to finding cast-iron shoe forms perched on the windowsill, every few steps leads to a unique discovery. Some items are not for sale, including Socksy, the store's woven-wood guard dog who wears diva sunglasses and a new hat for every season.

Run by Elana Steinberg and her husband Andrew Forell, with the support of a few volunteers, St. Luke's holds a very special place in the heart of the community.

A sanctuary for the art of thrifting, St. Luke's values the preservation of history, passing on stories, and capturing a person's life through their clothing and belongings. Steinberg has the opportunity to step into the world of hundreds of strangers every day. "What they choose to hold close and collect really describes a lot about who they are, what their experiences are, and what's important to them," she said. She once received a hand-sewn prom dress from a woman who had collected her mother's designs from the 60s. "It is so cool, it's like so mod'...her mom sewed all of that and sewed it with love," Steinberg said. That piece was eventually sold to a young girl who was attending her first high school prom.

Filled with hundreds of fascinating items, Steinberg ensures that their stories are cherished and never lost through transaction. She explained, "We get the most unusual things that are jarring and incredibly beautiful, and they describe life. And whenever somebody drops something off, I always ask them...what do I need to know about it? Because people want to know the story. And if I have enough room on the tag, I'll write the story." This is one of the many reasons why people keep coming back here. There is dinner with a show through an object and its often intricate backstory, "...people love that feeling of connection through an inanimate object...it existed before all of us did."

Having the opportunity to chat with Steinberg and learn about the roots of the items you are purchasing is what makes St. Luke's stand out from other thrift stores. You come in with the intention of buying something vintage, and leave with a new perspective on



ELANA STEINBERG, ANDREW FORELL AND VOLUNTEER SUSAN WHITNEY at St. Luke's thrift store. Photos by Isis O'Flynn-Shahaf.



A SMALL PORTRAIT OF THE UNKNOWN WOMAN hangs by the back window. Her history is unknown, but she is famous to St. Luke's shoppers and staff.



SOCKSY, THE GUARD DOG, sits at the front of the store to greet customers. Her hat for the season is an orange, bedazzled turban.

the beauty of thrifting all together.

As I walked around the store with Steinberg, we came upon a very small portrait

hanging on the wall of an older woman with large pearls draped on her neck, a cream sweater, cat-eye glasses, a perm, and a mis-

chievous smirk on her face. "The amount of people who have tried to buy her have no idea who she is. I don't even know her name. They family didn't know her name. But she's kind of the patron saint of the store," said Steinberg.

Some donations have become part of the thrift store and will never be up for sale. This collection makes St. Luke's a museum of lives over the centuries.

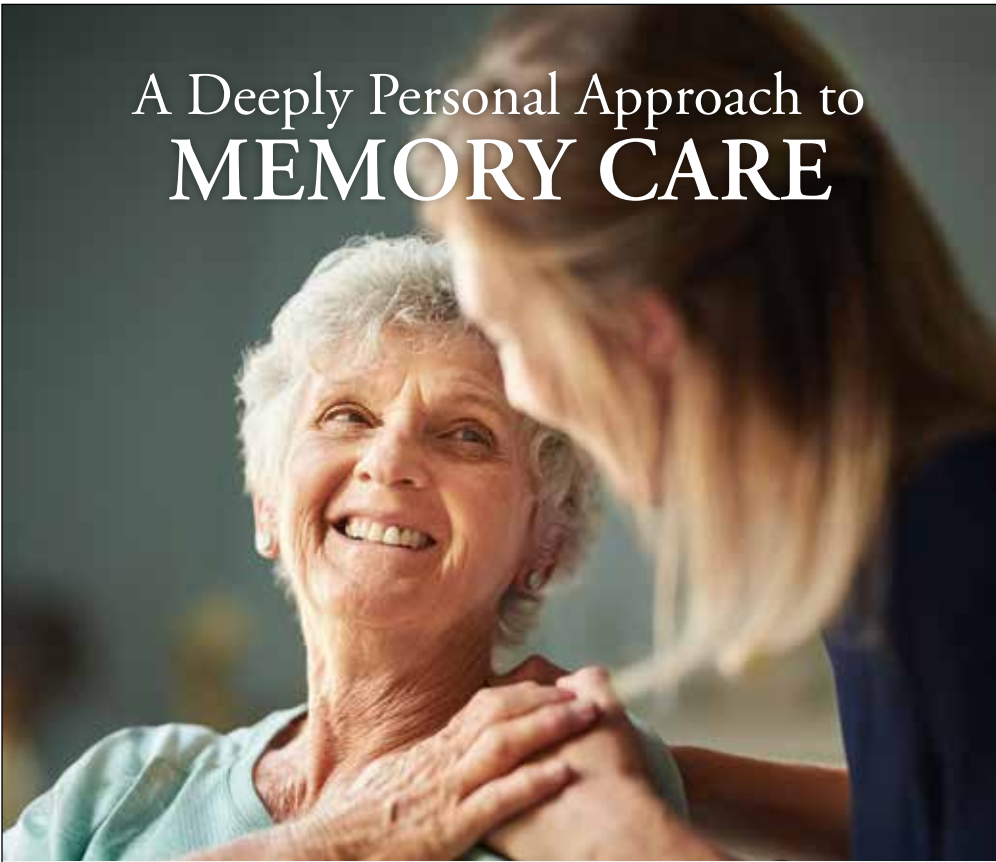
There is no shortage of donations consisting of "bags, bags, bags, and bags." Steinberg will spend days, weeks, and months sorting through the plethora of gifts from the community. She chooses pieces based on their condition and the season. The majority of the drop-offs are from people moving out of their homes, either from the younger crowd who try out New York and leave, or from the elderly population transitioning to assisted living. Parting with trinkets and items that represent someone's entire life and hold sentimental value is never easy, but St. Luke's is the place where people feel safe leaving their lives behind. "We go through each and every one of them," said Steinberg. "For me, everything has value, not in a monetary way, but in terms of experience. Because once that person goes, that story goes too. So what remains is part of their life, in an object, you know?" The best part of Steinberg's job is collecting bits and pieces of a person's life and eventually giving those items a new one.

The shop gives all of the proceeds, as well as some clothing, to outreach programs run by the church. Community Closet, which happens every Saturday, was established for people experiencing poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity. The program opened to families once a larger population of asylum seekers began showing up in need of assistance. The Art and Acceptance program supports LGBTQ+ members living with AIDS. It also serves as a safe space that provides food and free legal advice for marginalized LGBTQ+ youth.

Steinberg said, "It's a real outreach which, in a difficult world, is more and more important to prioritize. The church, thrift store, and outreach programs give more than bible study sessions, clothes, and food. It's also a safe place for a lot of people. This includes older people who meet their friends and just kind of sit and chat for a while."

It is obvious from speaking to Steinberg that her team is a cohort of generous people passionate about helping others, and St. Luke's feels like their second home.

As a local business that has been around for decades, St. Luke's is sacred to the West Village. Make sure to stop by this cabinet of curiosities for an experience of the past, a better understanding of your neighbors, or a hand-made dress from the 60s that you can wear to your next dinner party.



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IT’S ALL MY FAULT

Not on Christmas

BY DUANE SCOTT CERNY

Several holiday seasons ago, an opportunity arose to have my antiques store appear on a nationally syndicated morning television show. We were told there would be four live spots: an opening teaser, followed by the main segment, a brief recap, then a short good-bye. Two and a half of minutes of air-time, tops. Merry media Christmas!

The store was decked out in its glittering Christmas best. With wide ribbons of red and gold laced above our heads, the color we were most concerned about was the green needed to fill the cash registers. For holiday shoppers, this can be a wonderful time of year, but for those who work with the public, it’s sink or swim in the cold water of retail reality. If you have any doubt, check out all those empty storefronts that pop up in February and March. The owners aren’t in their vacation homes; they’re in hock.

After much discussion, the staff pulled together an appropriately elaborate display of vintage holiday items to appear on this live televised segment. Viewers would first see a glass showcase filled with Bakelite jewelry, Christmas tree pins and wreath clips in seasonal colors. Next, we assembled four silver, aluminum Christmas trees from the



1960s and set them beside one another. The branches crisscrossed in a reflective forest of kitsch, creating a veritable wall of aluminum foil pom-poms, hanging Christmas lights, and ornaments.

We projected in our collective heads that as the television camera passed by the Christmas tree display, it would discover our festive

showcase of holiday cocktail shakers and barware — the showstopper of the segment. Nothing says the holidays like your drunk Uncle Bob saying something inappropriate before a crying Baby Jesus. Why not buy him a cocktail shaker? Uncle Bob, that is.

However, when the television crew arrived, it quickly became evident that the host and

cameraman had very different ideas about almost everything. Someone assuredly woke up on the wrong side of the camera’s focus.

As I was interviewed at the sales counter, the cameraman unexpectedly moved right past “A Bakelite Christmas.” This guy was going holiday rogue and fast. With an unwieldy camera atop his right shoulder, he barreled forward and crashed directly into our deep forest of sharp aluminum Christmas trees. Branches flew in every direction, holiday lights blinking in panic as they dropped to the carpeted floor below. Christmas balls fell like a group testicular cancer test. You could have turned your head and coughed tinsel.

The host continued to yammer on with some confusing introduction to plastic jewelry and a few disparaging words about our prices. But the visual to these complaints was the sight of dozens of multicolored aluminum branches crushing your television screen in a holiday blur. It was as if some psychedelic, acid-infused candy cane had been licked and the trip visualized for the coffee-starved, barely awake morning audience.

“Are we still on?” I whispered to the host. “Can’t we go to commercial?”

Inexplicably, the cameraman continued to

continued on page 17

THE PINT-SIZED PALATE — A KID'S TAKE ON NEW YORK FOOD

Thai It Up!

BY CHURCHILL STONE

Sappe

240 W. 14th St.

My sister and I love Thai food. My mother loves it too and my father lived in Chiang Mai, so it's popular with our whole family.

So when a new Thai place opened up on 14th Street between Seventh and Eighth avenues, we all wanted to go. It was a rainy Sunday and we went by earlier in the day to make sure the place would work for kids, including my toddler brother.

It was a little odd to have a new restaurant on 14th Street because it's mostly just fast-food places and a couple bakeries. Sappe sits between a tattoo place (Red Baron Ink), a liquor store (North Village Wine and Liquor), and right under Screaming Mimi's vintage clothes. But you definitely notice it because the outside of the restaurant is painted bright yellow.

We got there at 6 p.m., a little wet and with big appetites. Inside, it was already super-crowded and very busy. Sappe (pronounced "Sep") means to eat happily. The restaurant has one very large room with lots of tables, all full with people eating with friends and family, and talking loudly. It reminded me of our school cafeteria but with lots of colorful Thai posters, disco lighting and peppy mu-



THESE ARE A FEW of my favorite (Thai) things. Photo by Katrina Robinson.

sic. At the back there is a window where you can see the kitchen. There were people of all different races and ages; singles and families. Our server ushered us past the large room into a smaller back room where kids can't bother couples on dates (but we were able to do that in the small room anyway).

They do not give you chopsticks or knives at Sappe because Thais do not use those. They only give you a spoon and a fork. That way you can always get sauce from the dish.

Us kids started with Thai yuzu lemonade. It was not your typical lemonade; it almost tasted like flowers and had a few petals floating on top. The taste was a little more grown up, but I liked it. My mom told me that the lemonades were \$15, almost the same as cocktails.

Unlike other Thai restaurants, they had many different types of skewers. There's a whole skewer menu including pork, pork belly, chicken, and beef —and we tried them all. Our favorite was the Moo Ping, which was the pork skewer — so tender and juicy. My sister and I love this dish and Sappe's was the best I have ever had.

Then I had the Mama E-La which is egg noodles with glazed beef on top. It was spicy

continued on page 17

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Christmas

continued from page 15

move forward into a tinsel­ed nothingness. If his intention was splitting through a forest of Christmas trees like a festive bulldozer, he would eventually end up in a dealer's booth — one that was not necessarily prime-time ready. And that is exactly what happened — without pause, he drove through the fake forest and created a path for himself and his camera that did not previously exist.

Do fake trees not fall? Oh, they most certainly do, and with them fall more ornaments, more lights, more decorations. Yes, it sounded as bad as it looked — and it looked very bad, as the trees so roundly fell over like a cushioned crashed catastrophe in slow motion. It was our Shelly Winters/*Poseidon Adventure* moment. Timber!

To the viewer at home, it must have appeared that a lost holiday hiker had finally broken through the tinsel forest and into a small clearing. But with no pre-planning involved in this live segment of the calamity, the camera's focus now centers on an old typewriter sitting on a small art deco desk in the middle of a dealer's booth. It's a nice typewriter. Clean. Working condition. The camera continues to glide slowly forward, moving Godzilla-like on its path toward the typewriter. A crisp sheet of paper appears to have been inserted into the machine. Oddly, and to my mind, there were no words previously typed on the page.

Ho, Ho, Oh, No!

Now, the camera moves in closer still, and

the typewriter fully frames the television screen, blocking in square to the viewer's eye. Breakfast kitchens across the country pause to see this precious holiday moment.

Like a demonic Norma Desmond, the camera prepares to film its final close-up of the all-caps words typed on the page:

I HATE YOU. I HATE YOU. I HATE YOU. I'M
PREGNANT—SEND ME MONEY, ASSHOLE!

But the camera doesn't pan away; it just lingers longingly, leeringly. Five seconds. Ten seconds. Either the cameraman is in similar shock, or he is a very slow reader. And yes, for many inexplicable reasons, people are compelled to express themselves inappropriately on random typewriters found at antiques stores. I don't know why that's a thing, but it is one that people do. And it is rarely "Now is the time for all good men ... blah blah blah."

So, an unknown customer had unwittingly scored her 15 seconds of fame and gotten her message across bigly — and on live television.

That Christmas, we could have sold the smutty typewriter a dozen times over.

Duane Scott Cerny takes the blame for most everything in his monthly satirical column, It's All My Fault. Best-selling author of "Selling Dead People's Things" and "Vintage Confidential," he is the co-owner of Chicago's Broadway Antique Market and is a guest favorite among fearless podcasters. Contact him at E-ThanklessGreetings@yahoo.com.

Thai continued from page 16

for the kids, but I liked it a lot. My sister and I got our own sticky rice so we were happy not to share. This rice was not as sticky as I'm used to, but still very good (and I know what a good sticky rice is.) Sticky rice is good to eat if your Thai food is too spicy.

The adults had some other dishes that were mostly green vegetables and mushrooms. We were warned that they were super spicy so us kids were less interested. That said, the plates were all clean at the end of the night!

But we wanted dessert. The Mango Sundae was very good and kid friendly — mangos, sweet sticky rice, and vanilla mango gelato with condensed milk. We also had Buk Prao which was a large coconut with jackfruit and sweet sticky rice inside and coconut gelato on top. Delicious. Finally, we tried the Chao Guay which was chewy jelly bubbles with gelato and brown sugar. Even though these desserts were not typical, all the kids at the table were very happy.

Sappe says they want to be like Thailand in the 1950s with the “ambiance of a train station.” On the way out, I saw couples and groups of friends lined up along 14th Street, excitedly waiting to be seated inside. Sappe is definitely different from other Thai places where I have been, but I think that makes it better, and possibly one of the best.

* * * *

VILLAGE VERSES

LONG-AGO LOVER

December-decorated evening,
Streets that revel in the gaudy.
Beyond, a sacred orchid-sunset
Slips into the horizon's envelope,
And a tale of winternight begins.
Why ever should thoughts of you
inspire me,
Long-ago lover, episode laid
To rest by divergent natures and
Directions? My memories tilt,
As though I'm in flight,
perspective askew:
Bedeviling darkheart blond,
You, playmate who loved me tropically,
Grasped my greenish heart and left
A wounded clearing, where now remains
An empty lot. Despite the ruined joy,
Lad lost to me, and now a stranger
Having morphed into full manhood,
Why ever should you now inspire?

*Susan M. Silver, 2013, 2014, 2025.
Previously published in
Breath & Shadow, Winter, 2014.*

VILLAGE PET PAGES

BY JOY PAPE AND BRIAN PAPE

AN EMERGENCY CARE PLAN FOR YOUR PET

Saving Maggie, a Heartbreaking Tale of Love, Loss, and the Heroic Act that Saved a Tiny Beagle

BY LYNN PACIFICO

We started 2025 off with this article written by Lynn Pacifico. We'd like to share this "in case of emergency" plan for your pets once again because it's so important.

Years ago, George, a quiet professor, lived in our building with his beagle Maggie. They were in love and devoted to each other. It was a pleasure to encounter them as George, who always had something pleasant to say, was a very large man and Maggie was tiny. They made an adorable pair.

Unexpectedly George passed away in his apartment. As George left no instructions on who was to take Maggie, police took her to New York Animal Care and Control (NYACC.) Poor Maggie's beloved guardian had died. Alone and grieving, she stood by George until he was discovered. Then, strangers took her away from her home and everything she knew. The NYACC is filled with the sights and smells of fear, illness, death, and loud sounds including the desperate wails of many dogs in distress. This would be terrifying for any dog, but especially for coddled little Maggie who was used to being in George's safe arms.

Neighbors, including Maggie's dog walker Sheila Sim, who had stopped by the building to feed a cat, stood in front of the building in shock at George's death. I noticed the determined look on Sheila's face. First she called Maggie's best friend's owners who had a car, then she called Maggie's vet to ask that he write a letter stating that Sheila was Maggie's "in case of emergency" person. He did

and this letter allowed them to rescue Maggie from the NYACC. When stepping out of the car on returning, Maggie tilted her head back and let out a long hauntingly mournful wail. I will never forget it.

Maggie's heart was broken, and although traumatized, she was home. Her dog walker was her hero and the kind neighbors, who had helped with her rescue and who owned Maggie's play buddy, took her in. Respect and appreciation to Sheila and people who adopt suddenly homeless canine neighbors. If that happened more, shelters might not be in such dire crisis.

The 6th Precinct's Community Affairs Officer, Evrim Can, told me that unless there are written "in case of emergency" instructions which gives authority over a pet to someone, out of concern for the animal, the responding officers take the pet to the pound. He also said that if there is a will, that, along with the pet's information, should always be left in a visible place.

Maggie's case is unusual as most pets in this situation, whose owners do not keep pet info organized and visible (on their fridge is good), and who do not have a dog walker as capable as Sheila, sadly end up in the pound. These pets are in shock after losing their person. They are confused, not sure why they are at the horrible place, they watch ceaselessly for a familiar face to come for them, they tremble, cry, refuse to eat, cower at the back of their cell/cage. It is traumatic at best and many dogs and cats do not make it out alive. Maggie was a very lucky pup. Does

your dog walker know who your dog's vet is?

It is our duty, as loving pet guardians, to keep our pets out of the pound by providing a safety net in case of our incapacitation. There is peace of mind in knowing that if something happened to you, someone would move heaven and earth to see that your pets are safe and taken care of going forward. Maggie lived out her life in the building where she

had always lived, in a sweet little family, with her canine sister, Annie. "We were so happy to have Maggie with us."

Another hack for pet safety in case something happens to you, is to carry a wallet-sized card on your person that states that you have a pet at home and the name and contact info of someone who will go take care of them.

EMERGENCY PET CARE INFORMATION

Keep a copy on your fridge and in your pet's go bag. Update as necessary and send updates to vet, daycare, boarding, and all emergency contacts.

Owner/guardian information

Name

Phone

email

Address

Owners next of kin w/contact info

Emergency contact to take charge of pet

Name

Phone

Email

Emergency contact close by for temp help/care for pet

Name

Phone

Email

Veterinarian

Name

Phone

Email

Address

Emergency contact alternatives

Pet #1 name

Type of animal

Describe [Include recent photo]

Breed/Mix

Weight

Birthday / Age

Preferred Food/Brand

Feeding Schedule

Walk Schedule

Current Vaccinations / Expiration date

Dog License Number

Dog Microchip Number

Estate Planning (Do you have a trust set up for your pet?)

Medications, Dosage, Timing

Pet's hiding place/s

Certifications

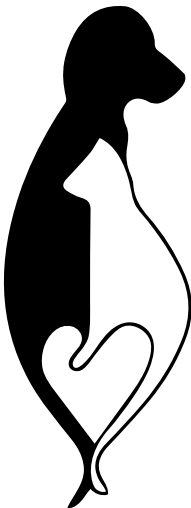
Behavioral Issues

Misc Notes

Location of pets Go Bag, crates, carriers, papers

Location of pet's walking gear: leashes and harness/collar, coats, etc.

Pet #2 Name (etc.)



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A Tale of Two Sparrows

BY KEITH MICHAEL



LINCOLN'S SPARROW: West Village Bird #118, dressed up in his pin-striped best.

It was the best of sparrows, it was the worst of sparrows.

Bird watchers primarily fall into two clutches: those who love sparrows and those who dismiss them as not worth the bother. I'm not speaking of the ubiquitous black-bibbed male or the arguably drab vs. demure female European House Sparrows, which along with pigeons and starlings, are one of our most populous urban birds. House Sparrows are nearly unanimously, though no matter how wrongfully, despised by all. (To be bird-nerdy: House Sparrows are really "old world" sparrows so shouldn't be judged against our native sparrows at all.)

Firstly, I'm among the bird watchers who enjoy being able to discern between the different kinds of sparrows, along with other tricky birds like gulls and shorebirds. Secondly, I'm talking about the nearly 20 stripey-brown species of local sparrows who call NYC home or visit regularly. Thirdly, I am a fan of urban birds in general for their spunk, adaptability, and yes, their beauty.

When you saw this article, you likely looked at the photos first, then checked out the captions for "the twist." If you've read this far, you want to know more. My two Sparrows of the Month are the Lincoln's Sparrow and the Clay-colored Sparrow. Both topped my list as my new West Village Birds #118 and #119, respectively. Both were seen in Hudson River Park, on consecutive days, on the south lawn of Gansevoort Peninsula.

Hooray that we live in such a birdy city.

I've seen both of these elusive species before in New York City: a Clay-colored weaving in and out of an outfield fence on Randall's Island as well as one at Beach 26th Street in Far Rockaway, and a Lincoln's, most recently, plying the gardens of LaGuardia Place, tantalizingly close to the West Village. Neither are year-round residents but both hold annual time-shares during the winter months.

When compared side by side, these two might look entirely different from each other. The Lincoln's Sparrow looks ball-shaped and striped. The Clay-colored Sparrow looks tall, sleek, and pale. But this is a little like seeing a friend curled up at home reading a book or running a marathon. One might see a bird svelte and alert or snuggled into their downy feathers. Maybe their head is buried in the grass or they just took flight at a loud noise. Perhaps they recently walked through mud or just took a bath. They could be out in the sun or eating lunch in the protection of deep shade. Any small change in what a bird is doing can drastically change what it looks like.

What do I like about sparrows? Selfishly, they're often easier to see. Unlike warblers galloping through the tops of trees or raptors flying high overhead backlit by the sun, sparrows are often quite cooperative to watch near the ground. If they're foraging in grass or leaves, they might even let you get fairly close if you don't make any

sudden movements. They're quite skittish. When they're singing, they'll frequently perch right in the open on an exposed branch, grass stalk, or fence post. Once you see them, they always seem busy. Eating. The enticing challenge of sparrows, is discerning the subtle variations in stripes and shades of brown. Identification is also, frequently, a game of, "Which of these things is not like the others?" An additional convenience is that with only about 10 relatively common ones and another 10 more that are casual visitors, there aren't too many different kinds of sparrows to keep in your head.

Scanning a group of LBJ's (Little Brown Jobs) one might first ask, "Are there any that aren't House Sparrows?" The local House Sparrows do travel in congenial gangs, but sometimes there are a few local relatives mixed in. At this time of year, the most common party-crashers are the winters-only White-throated Sparrows—very helpfully named—or the striped-breasted Song Sparrows. The Song Sparrow's name is most helpful in the summer when they're frequently seen perched in some prominent location letting everyone know where they are. If a brown, stripey bird has a dark smudge in the center of its chest, it's most likely a Song Sparrow. The next two candidates are the pink-billed, baby-faced Field Sparrow, and

the yellow-stripe-over-the-eye Savannah Sparrow. Adult White-throated Sparrows also have a snappy yellow dot above and in front of their eye, so look closely. I think that this might be enough for Lesson One. I sense some eyes glazing over.

After looking at thousands of sparrows over the years, what stood out about these two, singular, new kids on the block? First of all, you really do have to look for them. They won't jump out of a bush with a nametag helpfully pinned to their blazer like at a high school reunion. At Gansevoort Peninsula, I like to just sit on a rock in the sun and wait for them to come to me. I'm always looking for the bird that's slightly different from the others. A Clay-colored Sparrow is very pale-feathered, compared to other sparrows, with a contrasting face pattern and a gray collar. The Lincoln's Sparrow just seems classily dressed. Take a Song Sparrow, slim down the stripes like bespoke stitching on their waistcoat, and give a faint toffee watercolor wash to their vest to bring out the details. This dude is decked out for a fancy-dress holiday party.

The next new sparrow on my list to see this season is the Vesper Sparrow—confusing in every way with other sparrows except that they have a super-obvious white ring around their eye! Or so I've been told. Oh, goody.



CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: West Village Bird #119, standing tall to be sure to be counted. Photos by Keith Michael.

CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE

Patricia Laraia, Community Advocate

BY BRIAN AND JOY PAPE

Since Patricia joined the Community Board 2 (CB2) in 2017, her presence has been felt. I (Brian) have worked with Patricia on CB2 since 2018, and appreciate her dedication and friendly cooperation with everyone. She has done so much for the community, we wanted you to get to know about her.

VV: Tell us about yourself and what you want the community to know.

PL: I am a doer at heart. If I see a problem I can't help but try to find a solution. In 2014 my sons were just two of the 800 students at PS3; the school was so overcrowded - with zero outdoor space. I was a young mom and didn't even know where to start, but I figured out who the decisionmakers were, and connected with Jeannine Kiely, who was the Chair of the Community Board 2 (CB2) Schools & Education Committee to make Grove Street the "Play Street" the school and children enjoy to this day.

I also spent years fighting for a zoned middle school on the west side with the 75 Morton Community Alliance. I remember many meetings with the Department of Education, the School Construction Authority, and CB2. That effort culminated in the establishment of 75 Morton (MS 297), which is now in its seventh year and stands as a testament to what grassroots advocacy can achieve.

Where are you from, and where do you live now?

I'm Jamaican by birth, grew up in Long Island and have called the West Village home for the past 26 years.

What brought you to the Village?

When we were dating, my husband Craig and I loved coming to the Village. He's an amazing cook - and so we'd go to Faicco's for the meat for his traditional Italian gravy, Murray's for cheese, and bread from Zito's. We spent a lot of time around Commerce and Barrow going to shows at Cherry Lane and having dinner at Grange Hall. Some of our favorite memories are of the Bedford Barrow Commerce Street Fair.

In our travels we got to know the local shop keepers, restaurant staff and many of our future neighbors. The warmth of people, the quiet cobblestone streets, St. Luke's garden and the Hudson River - even then it felt like home - so we decided to plant our roots and raise our family here.

What was the beginning of the pandemic like for you?

It was a frightening time, especially after our dear friend lost his spouse. During the lockdown, our building's rooftop garden was our sanctuary - we were lucky to be able to garden and talk with our neighbors safely. Serving on the Commu-



PATRICIA LARAIA. Credit: Brian J. Pape, AIA.

nity Board during that period allowed me to continue my educational advocacy work and connect with the greater community. It was the last year of high school for my oldest, Devin. He missed prom and didn't get to walk at graduation, and after starting college in 2020, he had to come home just five weeks later when everything went virtual. I know many families are still feeling the impact even now.

What feels different in the neighborhood now?

I've watched the neighborhood change so much over the years - gentrification is nothing new. But, so many people left for greener pastures during the pandemic and didn't return. Now it's even less diverse and too expensive for most. There are a lot of transplants, and it doesn't feel like it used to.

That's why I feel a sense of hope with Mayor-elect Mamdani. His affordable housing initiatives give me hope that my own sons, who are now young adults, might one day be able to settle and raise their families nearby.

How do you get around the city?

I walk a lot and take the subway when I want to get somewhere fast.

Tell us about your work.

I am a community organizer and education advocate. My work is about effecting change where I live. I've served on Manhattan Community Board 2 for the past 8-years. I am the Chairperson of the Schools & Education Committee and Vice-Chair of the Cannabis Licensing Committee. Formerly I served on the Arts & Institutions, and SLA Committees and co-Chaired the Equity Working Group.

I'm very active in my club, Village Independent Democrats (VID). I sit on its Executive Committee and Chair its Schools Committee. I was elected in June to County Committee, and as a Judicial Delegate, which involves vetting local judges that will be on election ballots.

What is your favorite thing about your work?

Solving problems and honoring history. As CB2 Schools Chair, I've helped secure much needed capital improvements, and programming for 12 of our district schools like new bathrooms, technology upgrades, water fountains, play yards and play streets for safety and fresh air.

As co-chair of the Equity Working Group, I helped ensure that NYU honored the former site of the African Grove Theater by naming a planned theater at 181 Mercer Street in honor of the 1821 Black theater.

What is the most challenging part?

The biggest challenge is when you don't achieve the change you've advocated for, or when it's difficult to build a consensus. Anyone who does this work knows they may never see it come to fruition - but the work is the point - not the rewards.

What are you passionate about?

Family, community service, and gardening.

Do you have favorite spots in the Village?

Yes, I love L'Accolade on Bleecker Street and Palma and Oscar's Place. Some of our favorites are gone but not forgotten like Ithaca on Barrow St, Po, Grange Hall, Leroy House and En Japanese Brasserie which have all closed and were my old stomping grounds. Many anniversaries and birthdays were celebrated there.

Any parting words?

My hope for the Village is that any housing that gets built is truly affordable for working class people. We must ensure the next generation has the opportunity to find the same beauty and peace in this neighborhood as my family. I encourage everyone to consider joining their community boards to help make New York better.

VILLAGE VERSES

2025

By Jan Crawford

Between the physical pain
and the ongoing national tragedy
I am stunned to see
what is most overwhelming
to this frail old mind and body: the amplification of beauty
the total acceptance of life
and myself as we actually are
and gratefully, unlimited inspiration

My New Year's Wish For You is
May you nourish the silence within you
Letting the Earth carry you around the Sun
Without any effort to hold on
Your toes and hands free
To play in the sand

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Tunisia88: Transforming Youth Groups One Concert at a Time

BY KAJU ROBERTO



TUNISIA88, a youth empowerment program NGO led by Juilliard concert pianist Kimball Gallagher performs in Washington Square Park and at The Yale Club New York. Photo by Kaju Roberto.

On November 4, a remarkable group of young musicians from Tunisia – some of whom helped lead a grassroots movement that reached every public high school in their country – performed in Washington Square Park and at The Yale Club of New York as part of their first-ever U.S. tour. The performances featured original compositions, powerful cross-cultural collaborations, and a rare glimpse of what happens when young people are given the tools – and the trust – to lead.

The Tunisia88 Alumni Choir was born out of a revolution. In the years following Tunisia's 2011 Arab Spring uprising, these students launched music clubs that are now in all 590 public high schools across 24 regions in Tunisia – places where student voices had rarely been encouraged. They wrote original songs, staged concerts, and created something lasting in a system that wasn't built for them. Now, they've brought those stories, songs, and that spirit to American audiences for the first time.

Tunisia88, with 2,500 active members, is a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) started in 2015 by Juilliard-trained concert pianist Kimball Gallagher. Gallagher had been teaching music to high school students in Tunisia for a few years when he was approached by the Minister of Education of Tunisia who said, "I want to see a piano in every school." The goal was to revive all the cultural clubs.

The tour was led by Gallagher, who founded 88 International, the nonprofit that helped support this movement. His own journey

– crowdfunding his first piano (88 keys, 88 donors), performing at distinguished venues in 30 countries across seven continents – and turning performance into purpose – led to the founding of 88 International.

88 International's Humble Beginnings

This all started when Gallagher – upon graduating from Juilliard – didn't have a piano. One of his mentors said, "Why don't you ask 88 people to sponsor each one of the keys?" The money raised from each key on the piano became an effort to buy a piano. It was the first time Gallagher really saw music, not only as something for performance and concerts, but as something that could build community.

88 International has become a global nonprofit that uses music to help young people essentially find their voice, build community, and lead their own positive change where they themselves live. That's really why Gallagher built 88 International, to turn a sort of sense of personal impact and occasional intimate moments in concerts into more of a movement at some scale.

During an epiphany, Gallagher realized that as an individual artist, he could touch only a few lives at a time. But if he wanted to reach thousands at a much larger scale and to make a lasting change, it required structural partners, institutional partnerships, and some kind of vision that was far beyond one person.

"I had been working in Tunisia before the Arab Spring Revolution, and then throughout the revolution. I taught piano and song-

writing. The classic way of having music clubs in Tunisia was with the teacher as the director of the club. We wanted to put the teacher as the facilitator – which in Tunisia was a big deal – and allow the students lead the clubs," Gallagher said.

One or two particular songs became a spark for a national movement. With the Ministry of Education wanting to promote this program, Gallagher was able to bring in support and shape the curriculum.

How Tunisia88 became a Transformational Youth Music Program

Gallagher explained how Tunisia88 became a transformational youth music program. He said, "88 International needed an NGO partner for financial support. And through the Ministry of Education we did get that NGO partner – a Tunisian NGO called Action Solidarity Development. Then the European Investment Bank, and the U.S. State Department became involved, followed by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Canadian Foreign Service and many private Tunisian supporters."

"One of the very interesting things about this program, which is part of its self-sustaining mechanism, is that the alumni of the clubs run the majority of the content of our program. Now the old club members, who became university students, were trained to give training," he continued.

"It took about three or four years. We started with a pilot program and then had a

huge acceleration from 2019 through COVID to early 2021 where we went from something like 100 to 500 schools in about a year and a half. We have 78 training sessions a year all the different regions. We have song contests on a national scale. All of these activities are managed in a large part by a group called the Executive Alumni. It's actually the Tunisian youth who are driving the engine of this."

Washington Square Park and The Yale Club

It was a beautiful experience to be part of the outdoor and indoor concerts held at Washington Square Park and The Yale Club of New York.

Gallagher and a small team of musicians and conductors guided 26 alumni choir members from Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, Myanmar, and the Gambia. They sang songs represented by these countries in English and native languages. Gallagher accompanied songs in Swahili on piano. On at least one song, the choir was joined by a percussion player. The night ended with alumni from Yale joining the choir to sing the Yale alma mater.

Tunisia88 toured universities in eight U.S. East Coast cities from October 30 through November 10 on its highly successful inaugural U.S. tour.

Kaju Roberto is an accomplished musician, singer/ songwriter, journalist, and an award-winning producer. He is the artist Rad Jet on Spotify

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Wiesel *continued from page 1*

December 10, 1986, on the dangers of neutrality: “Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.”

December 11, 1986, on our duty to protest: “There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”

May 24, 1992, on racism and collective judgment: “No human race is superior; no religious faith is inferior. All collective judgments are wrong. Only racists make them.”

This documentary should remind us, that despite having witnessed inconceivable horrors, Wiesel combined both a zeal to expose those horrors, matched with a zeal to prevent inhumane mistreatment and prejudice against others from happening again, including Palestinians.

Elie Wiesel: Soul on Fire traces its subject's journey from Holocaust survivor to international hero and human rights leader

Perhaps the most torturous image in Oren Rudavsky's searing documentary, *Elie Wiesel: Soul on Fire*, is that of a child being



CHILDREN AT AUSCHWITZ. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

hanged in Auschwitz. Dangling from the gallows, his legs twisting this way and that, the child took half an hour to die because his body was so light. It's a scene of relentless anguish witnessed by hundreds of concentration camp inmates who were brought together to collectively observe the punishment for crimes unknown. “Behind me,” Wiesel recalls in voice-over, “I heard ‘Where is God now?’ And I heard a voice within me answer him, ‘He is hanging here on these gallows.’”

Living in a godless universe where all morality has ceased to exist, Wiesel is nonetheless a profoundly religious man, a complex, contradictory figure. He is the iconic Holocaust survivor, witness, and storyteller, the latter his self-defined role. The film, which depicts a philosophy, a sensibility, a life emerging from unfathomable Holocaust

horror, is told through archival material and original interviews with historians, students and family members. The narrative is largely revealed through extraordinary expressionistic hand-painted animation by Joel Orloff. The black-and-white painted swirls start out as one picture, then merge and reappear as a second picture, and then morph into a third, and so on.

I'm generally not a fan of animation, especially in documentaries where its deployment can feel extraneous. But here, the animation is at once haunting and brutal and, most important, organic to the aesthetic, which subtly underscores the central themes. The evocative score by Osvaldo Golijov also works remarkably well.

Best known for the documentary *A Life Apart: Hasidism in America*, which he co-

directed with Menachem Daum and was short-listed for the Academy Awards, Rudavsky has forged an intriguing and provocative fast paced flick that gives the viewer a glimpse into Wiesel's private world. As Wiesel recounts, his childhood in Sighet, Romania, was almost Utopian: Jewish children singing optimistic songs about a future in Palestine and lovely Shabbat dinners awash in candle light and ritual. Only later does he question his elegiac memories in a place he called home. Indeed, much of the film is about the power of memory and sometimes its distortions.

By the time Wiesel was 15 in 1944, his life had turned upside-down as the Nazis advanced, rounding up and deporting the Jews while the family's gentile neighbors, who had previously seemed companionable and welcoming, sneered or looked away. At Auschwitz, his family was torn apart. Ultimately, his mother, grandmother and sister were murdered, though two other sisters survived and were later reunited with him. Wiesel's last image of his younger sister was the red coat she was wearing, a present for Passover.

His mother's final words to him were to stay with his father no matter what, and he complied until his father succumbed from exhaustion and disease following their death march to Buchenwald. For the rest of his life, Wiesel was troubled by the voice of his dying father calling out to him, desperate to tell him something.

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How Anthology Film Archives Keeps Experimental Cinema Alive

BY MICHAEL JACOBSON



ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES neon lighted sign.

The Anthology Film Archives, located on Second Avenue and Second Street in Manhattan, is a rare fixture among downtown screening venues. For over 60 years, it has maintained its mission of preserving and exhibiting independent, experimental, and avant-garde cinema, treating film as a serious art form worthy of preservation and critical study. Its curators are not chasing the latest festival hit, and Oscar nominations carry little weight here.

A visit to this venerable film house evokes memories of when the East Village was a hotbed for independent filmmaking. At that time, an aspiring filmmaker could buy a used 16 mm Bolex camera for under \$500. Though these cameras required hand-cranking and produced only short silent clips, many innovative works emerged despite technical limits—some of which are now preserved at the Anthology.

Witnessing the Avant-Garde: A Review of *Fogo do Vento*

Recently, I attended the Anthology's New York premiere of *Fogo do Vento* (Fire of the Wind), a compelling new Portuguese feature directed by Marta Mateus.

Abandoning conventional narrative, Mateus presents a hypnotic portrait of a resilient community of women in Portugal's Alentejo region. Static shots transform ordinary events, such as grape harvesting and communal rituals, into meditations on memory, labor, and the tensions between tradition and modernity. This fusion of stark rural realism and mythic allegory can be challenging, but it richly rewards patient viewers.

The film evokes a profound sense of place and spiritual intensity that transcends mere entertainment. It is exactly the kind of formally rigorous, demanding work that the Anthology exists to champion—a cinematic experience aligned with the Archive's long-standing dedication to experimental art.

The Birth of a Film Museum

While downtown Manhattan still hosts several art-house cinemas, the Anthology Film Archives is unique—a globally recognized center dedicated to both the history and future of challenging cinema.

This international center was founded on the vision of Lithuanian filmmaker, poet, and artist Jonas Mekas (1922–2019), often called “the godfather of American avant-garde cinema.” Mekas arrived in New York City in 1949 after surviving a Nazi labor camp. He began documenting daily life, developing a personal, fragmented style of diaristic cinema in landmark films like *Walden* (1969) and *Lost, Lost, Lost* (1976). Mekas soon realized that this marginalized form of filmmaking needed a permanent home.

In 1969, Mekas, with philanthropist Jerome Hill and filmmakers/critics P. Adams Sitney, Peter Kubelka, and Stan Brakhage, laid the groundwork for the institution. The founding principle was to treat film as an art form worthy of preservation and scholarly study—making Anthology the first museum in the world devoted exclusively to this idea. The initial iteration, opened in 1970 at Joseph Papp's Public Theater, centered on the Essential Cinema Repertory, a canon of groundbreaking works screened under optimal conditions to preserve their integrity.

The East Village Incubators

Before Anthology became a permanent institution, the independent film scene thrived in accessible local venues. The Charles Theatre on Avenue B, though primarily a commercial house, became a key hub for underground films in the 1960s. Mekas curated regular screenings of amateur cinema there, providing a crucial public venue for radical new works. This environment inspired artists like Andy Warhol to experiment with 16 mm filmmaking, helping incubate the diaristic (relating to or in the form of a diary) and experimental styles that now populate Anthology's vaults. Some other notable filmmakers who got their start at the Charles: Kenneth Anger, Jack Smith, Shirley Clarke, Robert Frank, Barbara Rubin, and Yoko Ono.

Another cornerstone was the Millennium Film Workshop, a nonprofit founded in 1966 by filmmaker Ken Jacobs on the Lower East Side. Its mission was to democratize filmmaking by offering low-cost equipment, access to optical printers, and instruction. Howard Guttenplan, who directed the workshop at 66 East 4th Street from 1974 to 2013, established the Personal Cinema Series, a forum where established artists like Stan Brakhage and emerging filmmakers like Todd Haynes and Jim Jarmusch could screen work and engage directly with audiences. While the Charles and Millennium focused on cre-



JONAS MEKAS, above.



CINÉMA LAIKA by Veljko Vidak sequence with Amy Taubin and Jim Jarmusch. Credit for all photos: Wikimedia Creative Commons CC-BY-2.0.

ation and early exhibition, Anthology's role has always been distinct: preservation and historical context.

The Archives Today: A Continued Commitment

Today, Anthology continues to safeguard this cinematic heritage. The institution screens nearly 900 public programs annually, including the ongoing Essential Cinema Repertory and presentations from contemporary avant-garde filmmakers.

Preservation remains a core mission. Anthology protects an average of 25 films per year and maintains the world's largest paper collection devoted to the history of avant-garde cinema, accessible to students, scholars, and curators worldwide. Through this meticulous work, the Archives honor Mekas' legacy while serving as a fortress for the most challenging and innovative cinematic visions.

Despite the presence of other film art houses in our neighborhoods, many could benefit from greater openness to New York's

independent filmmakers. Venues should consider emulating the Charles Theatre and Millennium Film Workshop, which gave emerging voices access to screens when theaters were otherwise underutilized. Such collaboration could enrich local film culture while providing new revenue streams for the theaters themselves.

Find out more about the Anthology Film Archives: anthologyfilmarchives.org
Find out more about *Fogo do Vento*: locarnofestival.ch/festival/program/film.html?fid=477cfaf4-bc20-4a1f-a5e8-76027c2a1928&eid=

Michael Jacobson is an independent New York filmmaker. He curates and hosts a bi-monthly screening of short films by New York Metropolitan filmmakers at New Plaza Cinema. His latest documentary: “The Cornelia Street Cafe In Exile” will be screening at New Plaza Cinema on Friday, December 19 at 6 PM.

Stanley Jordan: The Guitar Genius with the Magic Touch Plays Jimi

BY KAJU ROBERTO

I'd place Stanley Jordan right up there in innovation on the guitar beside Jimi Hendrix and Edward Van Halen all day long. In my humble opinion, he doesn't get the credit he truly deserves. With a plethora of bedroom Instagram guitarists out there all trying to one up each other in acrobatics, the word "genius" is used far too loosely today.

However with Stanley, this term is absolutely truly accurate. He is indubitably the real deal. He has always been the real deal guitar genius ever since I started following him in the early '80s when he was busking in New York City before the term even became fashionable.

Go to YouTube and check out his live renditions of *Eleanor Rigby* and *Stairway to Heaven*, and you will know why.

LEGENDARY PLAYING STYLE AND WORLD RECORD

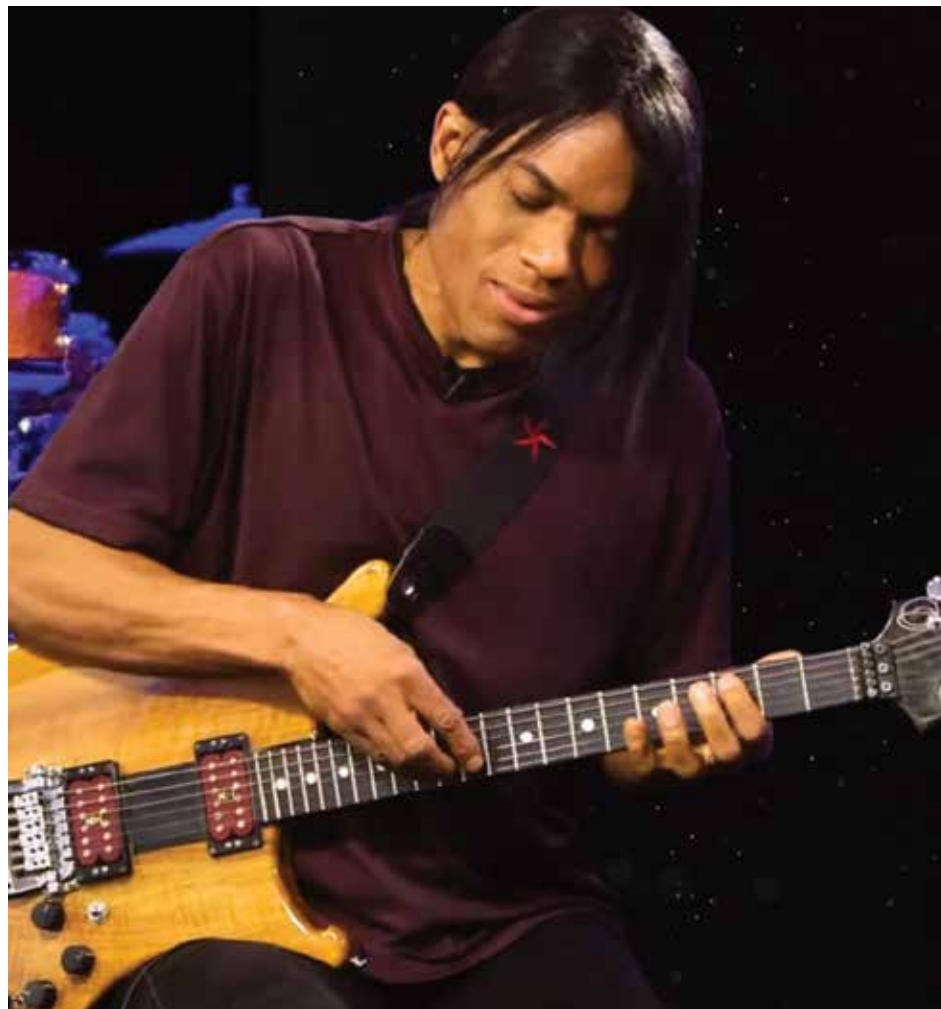
Back in the early '80s, Stanley established a two-handed tapping technique with multiple chord voicings using multiple fingers simultaneously that was far ahead of its time, expanding on the instruments' vocabularies, and capabilities where Van Halen and others left off.

In 1985, his first album, *Magic Touch*, debuted on a revamped Blue Note Records and remained on the Billboard Jazz chart for 51 consecutive weeks—a record that still stands. Today after years of performing solo shows—and with a variety of the music elite—he has created a must-see live tour. It is an intriguing project called *Stanley Jordan Plays Jimi*, where he has envisioned what Jimi Hendrix would sound like if he were still living and touring today.

Stanley performs Jimi's full catalog with his incredible trio of Kenwood Dennard on drums and West Wirth on electric bass. I can't think of a more worthy player and trio more equipped and qualified to honor the great Jimi Hendrix's vision.

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

As a fan of all the great virtuoso guitarists and a guitarist myself, I was truly humbled to interview the great Stanley Jordan recently at Washington Square Diner in Greenwich



STANLEY JORDAN the Magic Touch Guitar Innovator dazzles audiences by performing his groundbreaking 10-finger guitar technique. *Photo by Kaju Roberto.*

Village. Here are a few excerpts.

Welcome to the one and only Stanley Jordan. What do Yngwie Malmsteen and Stanley Jordan have in common?

Um, we both know the harmonic minor scale? (laughter)

That's a good second guess. I would say you certainly do know neoclassical. But, the real answer is that you both first picked up the guitar on the day that Jimi Hendrix died. September 18, 1970.

Wow. Well, in my case, it's close. When I got the news that he died, that's when I made up my mind for sure that I was going to play a guitar.

Because my whole life as a guitar player

in a sense is a kind of a footnote to Jimi, and when you look at how I started, I wanted to basically continue his legacy. But the most important thing that I got from Jimi is that the guitar is a personal instrument and you can find your own voice.

That's amazing. I take it that your parents really supported your creative sparks?

They did. And I feel really blessed about that. You know, especially thinking back on where we were positioned in the society. We were an upwardly mobile Black family living in the suburbs in the area that is now called Silicon Valley.

A lot of people were moving there because

they were part of the high tech boom. They had dreams of success in their careers. And certainly we had lived on the East Coast. We moved there because my father got a job. He was actually the first personnel manager at Hewlett Packard, and he hired Roy Clay, who we just lost last year.

Does it take both the right side and the left side of your brain to come up with a new way of playing the guitar?

That's a good point. Because it was very scientific in how I went about it, and I knew what I was trying to accomplish. I tried a bunch of different things, tried this and that and I worked it out.

I wanted to touch upon how you approach reworking classics like *Eleanor Rigby*.

Wow. What a great question. Going back to Keith Jarrett, his solo piano improvisations, where he just sits at the piano totally open with no idea what he's going to do, he just lets the music flow through him.

The other extreme is I'm a sheet music originalist. There's some people who say that you don't have any rights that aren't explicitly enumerated in the Constitution. I'm always somewhere in-between on that continuum.

I was fascinated by your Jimi show. Explain your thought process for how you envisioned Hendrix's sound and musical choices would've changed if he were performing today?

Well, the main thing is that late in life he was moving into jazz and jazz influenced things and kind of fusion influenced things. He also was doing a lot of Middle Eastern scales with the augmented seconds and stuff. He was also a fan of Dick Dale, the surf guitar guy. And Dick Dale, turns out, is from Lebanon.

I really enjoyed listening to your fascinating stories Stanley, you're such an intellect.

www.stanleyjordan.com/en/

Kaju Roberto is an accomplished musician, singer/ songwriter, journalist, and an award-winning producer. He is the artist Rad Jet on Spotify.

Where
do I find
THE
Village
View?

PLEASE VISIT THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES FOR COPIES OF THE PAPER

Caffe Reggio
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Hudson Park Library
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Jefferson Market Library
Kettle of Fish
La Lanterna di Vittorio Restaurant
Northwell Greenwich Village Hospital
Lilac-The Chocolate Store
Mercer Street Books
Player's Theater
The Red Lion
Village Revival Records
Washington Square Hotel

ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE villageview.nyc



Jefferson Market Library

BY CORINNE NEARY.

Last month at Jefferson Market, we held two book discussions on Daniel Kehlmann's recent novel, *The Director*, translated from German by Ross Benjamin. This book has left a lasting impression on a few of us on the staff, and it has several avenues of interest that might draw you in, as it weaves real historical figures through horrifying situations. (This book also just made the NYPL's 25 Best Books of the Year list!)

Based on the real-life star silent-film director G.W. Pabst of Germany's Weimar Republic, born in Austria and perhaps most famous for 1929's *Pandora's Box*, starring Louise Brooks, the book imagines the struggles he faced when he initially left Germany for Hollywood during the rise of the Third Reich. Unable to enjoy the artistic freedom that he had been accustomed to in Europe, and feeling himself diminished, he returns to Paris, and then through a series of unfortunate events, to Austria. Kehlmann is amazing at building a mood of oppression and horror through the story of Pabst and his family, as he makes movies at the demand of the Reich's Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda.

As silent film fans, we were drawn to the book, in part, for its depictions of the stars Pabst worked with, Greta Garbo and Louise Brooks to name two. Pabst was credited for discovering Garbo for his 1925 film, *The Joyless Street*, revolutionary at the time for depicting residents of a slum going about



GRETA GARBO in *The Joyless Street* (1925).

their daily lives in despair, and forced to do things they had never considered in order to survive. We were inspired to show this film, but found that it was never released in its complete form in the United States, heavily cut by censors for unapproved content, and also to highlight Garbo's storyline, while basically eliminating that of its other female star, Asta Nielsen.

This sent us on a not unpleasurable mission to find the film in as close to its original length as possible, and we finally discovered that Berlin's Filmmuseum released a new restoration in 1998. As it turns out, before American censors got their hands on the film, it had already been cut down considerably by the Germans, who considered it too provocative. This Filmmuseum cut brings

the film back close to its original, at well over two hours. Because of its long length, we decided to show it on a December Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m., giving us plenty of time to finish up by our closing time of 5 p.m. And being inspired to come up with a theme, we're running three silent features on December Sundays.

Please join us for our special Sunday Silents screenings, starting December 7 at 2 p.m. with Lillian Gish in 1920's *Way Down East*, directed by D.W. Griffith. Gish plays a woman deceived by a man, and forced to rebuild her life after having a child out of wedlock. Next up, on December 21 at 2 p.m., the aforementioned Louise Brooks in *Diary of a Lost Girl*, directed by the also mentioned G.W. Pabst. Sensing a theme here, Louise's unmarried character also falls pregnant, and embarks on a surprising life path. Finally, on December 28 at 2 p.m., we get to Pabst's Garbo vehicle, *The Joyless Street*, which as previously stated, was an absolutely pioneering in showing the struggles of impoverished people. Pabst's cinematography and Garbo's beauty are a match made in (Joyless) heaven!

We'll also have our regular Monday and Thursday 6 p.m. film screenings all month, including our annual holiday showings of *Meet Me in St. Louis* and *The Poseidon Adventure*. As always, check our online listings for the most up-to-date program information. We hope to see you soon!

VISIT US ONLINE • VILLAGEVIEW.NYC

Losing the War Against Pirates, Copyrights and Trademarks

BY ROGER PARADISO

According to Ruth Vitale of CreativeFuture, "the film and television industry comprises 2.32 million U.S. workers and earns \$229 billion a year. Of the 122,000 American businesses that make up this industry, 92% are small businesses that employ fewer than 10 people. The film industry produces a \$15.3 billion trade surplus, more than each of the telecommunications, transportation, insurance, or health care sectors."

Vitale emphasizes that AI is and will be a major concern to this industry. As there are concerns about piracy and copyright and trademark infringement, I expect that this will attract a huge movement against AI and a boycott of the major and minor businesses involved in film and television. Of course, when one says "film business" they are referring to the past. The current trend is a digital business and the process is streaming. There will be a fight, and it will get ugly. Why? Be-

cause rogue AI will make piracy and copyright legitimate by disrupting an American apple pie movie business that has since the early 2000s gone sour due to algorithms and poor residuals to artists.

A good source of information is the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's *2020 Piracy Landscape Study*, authored by Brett Danaher, Michael D. Smith, and Rahul Telang as noted below.

"As with physical piracy, government and industry studies suggest that there is substantial economic harm from digital piracy. For example, Blackburn et al. (2019) find that, worldwide, there are approximately 26.6 billion illegal pirated viewings of U.S. produced films each year as well as 126.7 billion pirated viewings of U.S. produced television shows. The authors estimate that this causes a loss to domestic revenues of \$29.2 billion to \$71 billion per year, which implies

losses between 11% and 25% of industry revenue. The authors also find that this leads to between 230,000 and 560,000 lost jobs in the U.S. each year."

AI and the internet will finish off the job of eliminating independent artists within a few years. It is time we declare a war against piracy which is just as lethal as drugs.

Since we had little piracy in the analog days, I asked a tech friend why we changed our system of putting film in metal canisters and delivering them to theaters. It is hard to pirate five cans per film. And then you need a theater. And a projector. And an audience. pirate-proof. My friend said it was cheaper — but it was not well thought out — unless you believe, as I do, that it was done on purpose to eliminate workers or copyright.

Film died in 2003 and every technology after film has been a disaster. Each has led to an uptick in piracy and copyright violations.

That includes VHS tapes, DVD movies, and links to films. My friend said it would take him a very short time to pirate any film on a digital link. And the quality would be great.

So, why did every tech advance lead to record levels of piracy? And why do generations since the 1980s think that piracy and copyright violation is ok? Pirates now have an audience ready to sacrifice artists in a blink of an eye — that includes most of our children and any adult under 40.

Now we are in the AI age and I don't believe that the experts and the Congress will have effective guard rails without great pressure by the people.

We are at the Oppenheimer Moment and we need to act.

For More Information

United States Patent and Trademark Office
[uspto.gov](https://www.uspto.gov) › [USPTO-Piracy-Landscape.pdf](#)

December 2025

EVENTS

**in and
around the
West
Village**



Photo by Susan M. Silver.

Christmas 2025

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Tuesday, December 9 at 7:30 PM

The Merchant's House Museum

29 E 4th St

merchantshouse.org/christmascarol

A live performance of Dickens' classic Christmas story, presented in an intimate setting.

2025 WASHINGTON SQUARE TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Thursday, December 11, 6:00-7:00 PM

Washington Square Park

washingtonsquarenyc.org/events

A free tree-lighting ceremony in the heart of the Village with live music, decorations and holiday atmosphere.

EATER UNDER WRAPS HOLIDAY MARKET

Saturday, December 13, 11:00 AM-8:00 PM

& Sunday, December 14, 11:00 AM-6:00 PM

477 Broadway

eater.com/press-room/925041/eater-under-wraps-holiday-market-new-york-2025

A festive pop-up in SoHo featuring holiday shopping, food & drink workshops, immersive decor and cocktail lounge—great for gift-shopping outing.

HOLIDAY IMMERSIVE ART EXPERIENCE – ARTECHOUSE NYC “HOLIDAY SPECIAL”

Dec 15 – Jan 4

ARTECHOUSE NYC

439 W 15th Street

meatpacking-district.com/calendar/artechouse

A limited-run immersive art installation/experience themed for the holidays, running through the turn of the year—ideal for a festive art outing.

A VERY SWING OUT HOLIDAY

Tuesday, December 9 - 14

The Joyce Theater

175 Eighth Avenue

joyce.org

Holiday-themed swing dance performance featuring the Eyal Vilner Big Band and Lindy Hop champions, with a fun on-stage jam session post-show.

ANNUAL CAROLING WALK

Saturday December 20 at 2:00 PM

Starting at Our Lady of Pompeii Church

25 Carmine Street

westvillagechorale.org/holiday-events

The 51st annual caroling walk through the West Village led by the West Village Chorale—join in singing holiday favourites outdoors in the neighbourhood.

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

Tuesday, December 16, 7:30 pm

Thursday, December 18, 7:30 pm

Saturday, December 20, 4:30 pm

Church of the Ascension

36 Fifth Avenue at 10th St.

Voices of Ascension Chorus

Now in its 36th year, Voices of Ascension's Candlelight Christmas Concerts remain a treasured holiday tradition for New York audiences.

WASHINGTON SQUARE CHRISTMAS EVE CAROLING

Wednesday, December 24, 5:00-6:00 PM

Washington Square Park

washingtonsquarenyc.org/events

The traditional time to celebrate the holiday with carols near the Arch. The Rob Susman Brass Quartet, song leader, and the revelers from all over the city will lustily sing out the familiar tunes.

Chanukah 2025

ABINGDON SQUARE CHANUKAH FESTIVAL

Sunday, December 14, 4:00-5:00 PM

Chabad West Village

Abingdon Square

chabadwestvillage.com/abingdon-square-chanukah-festival

This annual festival features a 10-foot menorah lighting, a parachute gelt drop with the FDNY, live music, and traditional treats like latkes and sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts).

JAZZUKAH

Sunday, December 14th, 11:00 AM & 1:00 PM

Groove

125 MacDougal Street

eventbrite.com/e/jazzukah-tickets-1758009135649

The Jazzukkah Project is an ensemble of musicians putting a jazz spin on the beloved canon of holiday music. From “Maoz Tzur” to “Sevivon,” fresh arrangements blend swing, soul, and celebration.





Radiotheatre's 15th Annual Edgar Allan Poe Festival

Limited NYC Run Only

Saturday, December 27 at 5:00 PM & 7:00 PM

Sunday, December 28 at 5:00 PM

Under St Marks Theater

94 St. Marks Place

Box Office Open 30 Min Before Show Time

radiotheatrenyc.com

Come in! Down the cold stone steps into a dark cellar below St. Mark's Place in the heart of the historic East Village. For the past 50 years, this venue is legendary for its experimental theater. And, so, it is here that the multi-award-winning, critically acclaimed Radiotheatre, now in its 23rd Season in NYC, once again presents live on stage five classic tales of terror and suspense by the Grandmaster of Horror in its 15th Annual EDGAR ALLAN POE FESTIVAL!

THEATER

BREAD & PUPPET: OUR DOMESTIC RESURRECTION REVOLUTION CIRCUS + THE CHRISTMAS STORY

December 3-14

Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave
theaterforthenewcity.net/shows/

The legendary Vermont troupe returns with a double bill of political pageantry and a folk-pageant nativity.

MIKE: BAND OF THE CENTURY LIVE

Select nights in December

Cherry Lane Theatre

38 Commerce St

cherrylanetheatre.org/shows/mike

NYC rapper/producer MIKE debuts a new live band for three intimate nights.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL (MUSICAL BY SGOUROS & BELL)

Multiple performances in December
The Players Theatre, 115 MacDougal St
theplayerstheatre.com/a-christmas-carol.html

A long-running village tradition—family-friendly musical adaptation.

WHAT IF THEY ATE THE BABY?

(XHLOE & NATASHA)

Through December 22

SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam Street
sohoplayhouse.com

Fringe First-winning absurdist two-hander, direct from Edinburgh.

THE LARAMIE PROJECT – 25TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT READING

December 4-6

Minetta Lane Theatre (Audible Theater)
18 Minetta Lane

audiblexminetta.com

Limited-run concert reading of the modern classic.

MUSIC

CHRIS BOTTI HOLIDAY RESIDENCY

Dec 8-31 (nightly; multiple guests)

Blue Note

131 W 3rd St

bluenotejazz.com

The trumpet star's beloved month-long run returns with special guests (Veronica Swift, Chris Potter & more on select dates).

KENNY BARRON QUINTET

Dec 16-21 & Dec 23-28, 8pm & 10pm

Village Vanguard

villagevanguard.com

Two weeks of lyrical piano mastery with changing lineups.



BETTY HOLIDAY CONCERT

Joe's Pub @ The Public

Sunday, December 7, 6:00 & 8:30 PM

425 Lafayette St

publictheater.org

Power-pop trio's festive annual blow-out returns to Joe's Pub.

VANDOREN HOLIDAY SAX SECTION

Monday, December 1, 7:00 & 8:30 PM

Zinc Bar, 82 W 3rd St

zincbar.com/calendar

A saxophone-forward holiday kick-off; Zinc hosts jazz nightly all month.

JR. MACK BAND

Wednesday, December 3, 10 PM

Terra Blues, 149 Bleecker Street

terrablues.com

Fiery blues guitar hero anchors a December packed with late shows.

LPR — JAZZ FROM HELL FESTIVAL

Friday, December 12, 7 PM

Le Poisson Rouge

158 Bleecker St

lpr.com

One-night experimental jazz bacchanal at Bleecker's eclectic hub.

CAFE WHA? HOUSE BAND (WEEKLY)

Wed-Sun throughout December

115 MacDougal St

cafewha.com

The famed house band keeps the Village dance-floor jumping multiple nights each week.

GREENWICH HOUSE MUSIC SCHOOL STUDENT RECITALS

Thu, Dec 12 (All-Ages, 6pm); Fri, Dec 13 (Senior Recital, 7pm); Sat, Dec 14 (Junior Recital, 1pm)

46 Barrow St (Concert Hall, 2nd floor)

greenwichhouse.org/music-school/concerts/student-recitals/

Community recitals featuring GHMS students and ensembles.



FILM

ADIFF NYC 2025 (AFRICAN DIASPORA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL)

Through Dec 14 (daily screenings)

Cinema Village, 22 E 12th St

cinemavillage.com

Feature films + Q&As spotlighting Africa and the diaspora; multiple premieres.

"YOU GOT GOLD:

A CELEBRATION OF JOHN PRINE"

Opens Fri, December 5

Quad Cinema

NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE SCREENING:

THE FIFTH STEP

NYU Skirball

nyuskirball.org/events

SPECIAL EVENT

NYC TIME CAPSULE: TRIVIA NIGHT WITH THE MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY

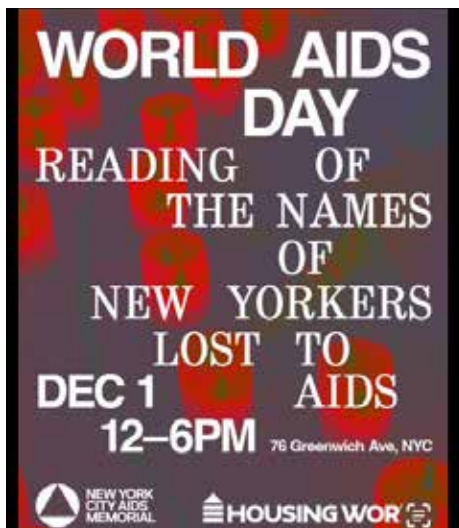
December 2 — 6 to 8 PM

The New York City Department of Records and Information Services/ Municipal Archives

31 Chambers Street

eventbrite.com/e/nyc-time-capsule-trivia-night-with-the-municipal-archives-and-library-tickets-1803450110829?aff=community

Test your knowledge of the city's rich past and unique records, with questions highlighting everything from iconic moments to forgotten landmarks in New York City's history. This is your chance to show off your smarts, bond with friends, and maybe learn something new along the way! Teams of up to 5 are welcome! The top two teams will take home some fantastic prizes! Spots are limited, so don't wait.



December 12-13

NYU Skirball, 566 LaGuardia Place

nyuskirball.org/events/new-york-city-gay-mens-chorus-winter-gay-dream/

Holiday program with the New York City Gay Men's Chorus.

8 Questions Sellers Should Ask Brokers..... Before they Hire One!

COMPASS

The difference
between a successful
sale and a stressful
one starts with
selecting an agent
you can trust.



Price and commission
are important
considerations. But, is
that all?

1. What is your marketing strategy? What steps will you take so I receive the maximum market exposure, hence the maximum price?
2. What is your valuation and pricing strategy for my property? How will you help me price my property so I get the top dollar for it and do not leave money on the table? But in the same time we do not scare most of the buyers away.
3. How will you protect me from the risks of sale not closing with buyers with mortgage contingency in the sales contract?
4. How will you protect me from losing all buyers in the multiple bids situation?
5. Is now the best time to place my property on the market? Why? If not, when is it and why?
6. Please explain in detail the difference in the range and quality of services I should expect from you and your firm? And how is that different if I hire a discount broker?
7. Why do you think you are the best person for this assignment?
8. Is there anything else I should be asking you?



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