



VOICE OF THE VILLAGE AND THE LOWER WEST SIDE

## Mayor Adams' Christmas Gift to Greenwich Village: A "Hudson Mosaic" Tower to Replace the Tony Dapolito Center

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

After months of review, the outgoing Adams administration has announced plans to build a residential complex called "Hudson Mosaic" on Clarkson Street—demolishing and replacing the landmarked Tony Dapolito Center. Preservationists are livid. But a new political reality promises more.

The project would take the form of a 35-story tower. Local preservationists, who would rather see the shuttered landmark repaired than obliterated, are furious. Some housing advocates and city officials, meanwhile, are quite pleased. The new development—which would be spearheaded by Camber Property Group, Services for the UnderServed, and Essence Development, none of which are traditional profit-making enterprises—would include a new recreation center.

The residential tower is slated to include amenities such as an outdoor terrace, a fitness room, a computer room, a kids' playroom, in-building laundry services, a social services suite, and multiple "community lounge" rooms.

Acting Housing Preservation & Development Commissioner Ahmed Tigani said in a statement, "Hudson Mosaic is a demonstration of HPD's commitment to building homes and neighborhoods that give every New Yorker the chance to thrive and live a life with dignity." He



A RENDERING OF THE PROPOSED "HUDSON MOSAIC" residential complex, which would end up replacing the landmarked Tony Dapolito Rec. Center on Clarkson St. Rendering by Hudson Mosaic Development Team.

added that the project would be a "rich and vibrant community [asset]." New York City Parks Commissioner, Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, issued a laudatory statement as well. "The new recreation center at Hudson Mosaic will offer year-round access to affordable, accessible, high-quality amenities that support health, wellness, and community connection. We're proud to help bring this transformative space to life," she said.

Village Preservation Executive Director Andrew Berman has been spearheading a campaign to "Save Tony Dapolito," pointedly described the Hudson Mosaic rollout as "shocking and disappointing." They added the plans "are neither surprising from the outgoing mayor nor are they anywhere near approved or assured." This past summer, the advocacy group demanded that \$51 million in earmarked funds go towards conducting much-needed repairs, which were initially supposed to move forward after the decaying space was closed to the public in 2020, as well as a promise to preserve (and move) its famed poolside Keith Haring mural. Berman argued that such a sum is cost-minimal compared to the \$164 million—according to the latest city estimates—that would go towards building something such as Hudson Mosaic.

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## More Political Mish-Mosh, More Choices on the Ballot

Bottcher Stepping Down from City Council; New City Council Election Coming

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

There have been some pretty shocking developments since our political recap.

First, Erik Bottcher, who has been City Council member for the Village west of Sixth Avenue since 2021 has decided to run for what seems to be the uncontested state Senate seat which Brad Hoylman-Sigal will leave when he becomes Manhattan borough president on January 1. If the schedule holds, the Democratic County Committee members in that district will nominate a candidate on January 11, and there will be a special election in early February. The seat goes from Bank Street to West 103rd Street, and is west of Seventh Avenue until 26th Street, where it zigs over to Eighth Avenue. There is still a chance that Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal may throw her hat in, but right



ERIC BOTTCHER WITH CHIEF OF STAFF CARL WILSON, who wants to replace him. Photo courtesy of Chelsea Community News.

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# Roselind Schwartz – Quite A Life

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

On December 7, at 11:02 p.m., my mom, Dr. Roselind Shirley Schwartz passed. She was 103 years, 7 months and 14 days old. She spent 15 of those years as a Villager, living on West 11th Street, working at her second career as a travel agent, arriving at age 70 and leaving at 85, still going strong.

Her life was extraordinary and inspiring. She was the one who instilled the concept of public service in me. She grew up near Fordham Road in the West Bronx, daughter of an English immigrant mom, and a dad of Russian stock, who had been born here. The family name was Grant, bestowed on my great grandfather at Ellis Island by some immigration agent who couldn't understand his multi-syllable Russian name. Her mom didn't spell well, hence the unique spelling of Roselind. She was known as Roz.

Roz went to all-girls Walton High School and NYU Washington Square. There weren't very many women at NYU, or any college, in 1940. She met my dad, Herman Schwartz, at NYU, also of the north Bronx, a first generation son of a "Russian" family, who was in a seven-year U.S. Army paid-for B.S. –M.D. program. My mom graduated in 1944 and they got married. She could have gone to medical school too – she was summa cum laude – but chose to go to podiatry school because she could have a practice at home. There were only two women in a class of over 60.

They both graduated in 1947. My mom always insisted on being called Dr. Schwartz, not "Mrs." During my dad's Army travels, they had a son, Joel.

Joel, at age 1, developed a brain tumor, which in 1949 required literal removal of a large chunk of skull and brain tissue. He survived and my parents bought a brand-new attached two-bedroom house in the north Pelham Parkway section of the northeast Bronx, now called Allerton. My mom opened her "by appointment" podiatry practice in the basement.

But things didn't go well with Joel. He stopped learning, had seizures, and acted out violently. My mom didn't work much. My dad, who was a staff anesthesiologist at Presbyterian Hospital and taught at Columbia Medical School, became depressed. But when Joel was 5, they tried again, and I was born. I flourished, even in a very chaotic setting, so they tried again when I was 1. This time, during my mother's



**ROZ SCHWARTZ**, above, led an extraordinary life: among many things, she was a pioneer in the world of women in medicine, an advocate for disabled children, and an active parent who instilled the concept of public service in Arthur Schwartz. Photo by Ray Schwartz.

pregnancy, Joel would repeatedly punch her in the stomach. He understood what was happening. My mom's pediatrician, the famous Virginia Apgar, told her that if she wanted two normal kids, she had to institutionalize my brother. So, at age 8, with the classification "retarded" (a word not used any more except by imbeciles like Trump), Joel had been unable to learn to read and could not attend school, so he was placed at Letchworth Village in Rockland County.

We visited Joel every Sunday. I remember listening to Giants football or Yankees baseball on the radio. It was a

confusing place, some "Mongoloid kids," some adults still called children, and some normal-looking kids like my brother. My mom became the champion of the institution. She helped create the Welfare League for Retarded Children, and each year chaired a luncheon at the NY Hilton, which raised \$50,000 or more to help fund programs (\$50,000 in the late 50s, early 60s was like \$250,000 today). She got celebs to MC the event: Jackie Robinson, Mike Wallace (many times), and Joan Kennedy (wife of Senator Ted Kennedy, who had a disabled sister). And the event would always feature Letchworth Village residents who would sing or read poetry. The money from the luncheon made sure that there was a school, with trained teachers. Her work made sure that it was a far cry from Willowbrook. And on a number of occasions, she joined RFK as he toured other institutions, including Willowbrook, and denounced New York state, especially Governor Nelson Rockefeller, for the horrific conditions created by underfunding. When these large institutions were finally banned in 1975, my mom worked hard to find my brother a group home in Orange County, which was fully staffed and funded.

At the same time Roz didn't leave me and my brother behind. She was always the class mother, then the parents' association president. She was also president of our synagogue's sisterhood, organized a youth program, and made sure we had mandolin lessons, tap dance lessons, and got our homework done, all while she had a thriving neighborhood podiatry practice. And her car dominated the neighborhood – a pink and white 1959 Olds 88, with huge fins.

In 1972, with my brother and me at Columbia, my dad, who was not thriving, got an amazing job offer at UCLA. He had a California license, she didn't. So, at 50 years of age, they left NYC, ultimately landing in a house in Bel Air with a pool. It was thousands of feet up, with a view of the LA Harbor. My mom decided to become a travel agent and joined a shop in Beverly Hills. They took annual month-long trips to Africa, China, India, and Europe.

Eight years later my dad, only 58, died of a massive heart attack. By 60, my mom had had a face lift, sold the house, and moved to sea level. She started dating a jazz musician, and *continued on page 4*

## Ballot Choices *continued from page 1*

around Christmas, Hoylman-Sigal and Congressman Jerry Nadler, who represents the district north of 14th Street, endorsed Bottcher.

Bottcher's move opens up his City Council seat, effectively for an 11 year term. (I ran against Bottcher for this seat in 2021, and came in second, but I am not running.) The candidates, thus far, are four. There will be more.

**Leslie Boghosian Murphy** is a long-time Hell's Kitchen resident living in Midtown for over 17 years with her husband, Paul, daughter, Cecelia, and rescue pup, Bailey. Boghosian Murphy began a career in journalism as a SAG-AFTRA union member. Her investigative stories and hard-hitting interviews for CNN, ESPN, the YES Network and HDNet won her accolades and awards, including an Emmy Award for societal concerns programming. Leslie serves on Community Board 4, where she sits on its Budget Task Force, and Hudson River Park's Piers 40 and 76 Task Force. She has worked as an in-class assistant for Children's Aid Society, an on-site aide for Homes for the Homeless in Hell's Kitchen and on special projects for NY Cares.

**Layla Law-Gisiko** was born in Paris to a French father and a Tunisian mother, and earned master's degrees in French literature and journalism from La Sorbonne. At age 25, she came to New York to build a life of opportunity. She traveled across the United States producing and directing

documentaries on police brutality, labor abuse, and other hard truths, listening to people from every background talk about their struggles, hopes, and fights. Establishing a home in Chelsea, she spent nearly two decades as a community board leader (including Chair of CB 5) and now serves as an elected district leader for Chelsea. She has played a major role at various groups, slowing down, and probably stopping Governor Hochul's plan to tear down a ten square block area as a part of her design of a new Penn Station. She hosts the public-affairs podcast *Carte Blanche*, where she brings neighbors, experts, and policymakers together for frank, solutions-driven conversations.

**Carl Wilson** is originally from Maryland, outside of Washington D.C. He moved to New York in 2009 to go to college (NYU). He was a drama major studying to be an actor. Once he graduated, he pursued acting for a while and had a little bit of success. After Trump's election in 2016 he was a founding member of the Hell's Kitchen Democrats, a political club. He then got a job as community liaison (to CB4) in City Council Speaker Corey Johnson's office. He then took some time away from the council and went to work for a Business Improvement District for Fifth Avenue, which was a whole other side of how government works and functions. In 2021, after Erik Bottcher became a City Council member, he asked Wilson to be chief of staff, where he also serves as Community Board 4 liaison. I had been to basically every single meeting the

community board had for almost four years. At CB4 he has worked on the Transportation Planning and the Waterfront, Parks & Environment committees.

**Lindsey Boylan** spent almost a decade in urban planning and management, including the oversight of Bryant Park, Herald and Greeley squares, and pedestrianizing major segments of Broadway Boulevard and several other public spaces in Manhattan. Boylan also previously served as Governor Andrew Cuomo's deputy secretary for Economic Development and Housing for the state of New York, where she oversaw the state's chief economic development agency. During her time in government, Boylan secured millions of dollars for underfunded public housing, led the state's efforts to provide assistance for the people of Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, and pushed to enact a \$15 minimum wage and paid family leave policy for New Yorkers. Boylan previously served on Community Boards 5 and 7 in Manhattan. She received her undergraduate degree from Wellesley College and her MBA from Columbia University. Boylan is married to her husband LeRoy and together, they are raising their daughter Vivienne. Boylan was the first woman to publicly accuse Governor Cuomo of sexual harassment, and she plans to take the governor and his close advisors to court over accusations of retaliation, which were backed by Attorney General Tish James. She ran for Congress in 2020, and borough president in 2021.

# Joyous Community Celebration as Harvey Epstein Sworn In as New City Council Member

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

It was a bit like *American Idol*, but hamish (Yiddish for homey) and very East Village—a rousing chorus of tribute to community, diversity, and “for-the-people” politics. It was new District 2 City Council Member Harvey Epstein’s community swearing-in ceremony, in a packed auditorium at the 14th Street Y on December 6.

Middle Collegiate Church choir director John del Cueto brought the crowd to its feet, urging the audience to stand and sing a rendition of *Lean On Me*. Decrying a contemporary culture of “spectators...waiting for someone to hand us something,” he exhorted the room to “give me everything you’ve got...in solidarity with all those detained by ICE, all those people living in the streets, all those people hoping for a government that doesn’t lie.”

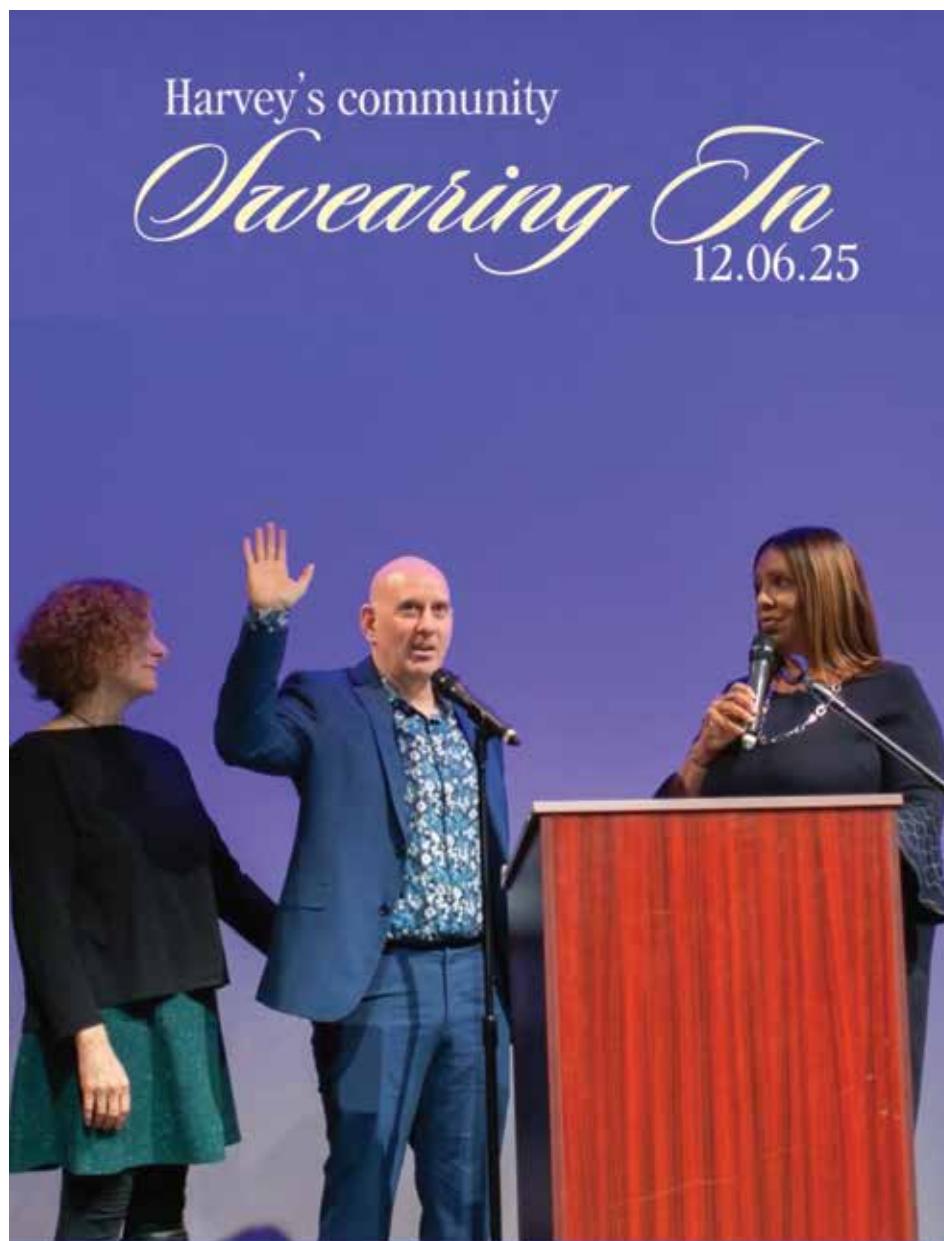
Shaheeda Smith, introduced as “our local environmental justice warrior,” offered her powerful a cappella version of Marvin Gaye’s *What’s Going On*. This seemed to spur the cheerfully competitive instincts of many who belted out lyrics of inspiration and anguish along with speeches to honor the council member-elect.

Former District 2 Council Member Margarita Lopez did not sing, but set a tone of blunt warm sentiment, describing herself as a “radical feminist” who nevertheless voted for Epstein, instead of one of his three female primary opponents. She praised Epstein as “almost a lesbian,” joking “almost, I said, not completely. He’s trying.” Lopez told the crowd their work was not done, that they would need to support Epstein’s social justice agenda as he “lean[s] on us.”

Epstein’s daughter, Leila Elliot, described Epstein-at-home as exactly like Epstein-in-public, entering “every room loud, opinionated, and constantly looking for vegan food.”

State Senator and Manhattan Borough President-elect Brad Hoylman-Sigal spotlighted Epstein’s history as a tenant advocate, including his leadership of Housing Conservation Coordinators and his years as the tenant representative on the New York City Rent Guidelines Board, where he helped achieve a rent freeze. “To have someone who’s a tenant leader, to have someone who is a former member of the Rent Guidelines Board, coming into the New York City Council is extraordinary,” he said, “especially when our mayor-elect [is] Zohran Mamdani with his own focus on housing and affordability.” Hoylman-Sigal also listed the many progressive laws Epstein had shepherded through the state legislature as an assembly member.

State Senator Kristen Gonzalez—representing District 59 which includes



**NEW DISTRICT 2 CITY COUNCIL MEMBER** Harvey Epstein's community swearing-in ceremony on December 6, 2025. Image credit: 'harveyforny' Instagram.

Stuyvesant Town, Kips Bay, and Murray Hill—joked she had been asked not to sing. Gonzalez praised Epstein as a fighter who’d been on the frontlines of recent battles to save Beth Israel Hospital and oppose Manhattan casinos. Witnessing Epstein behind the scenes, she declared him “the same person behind closed doors that he is on the streets.” She also touted his commitment to diversity, asking him to “take this moment and see...how diverse this room is because it is a testament to all the incredible work that you have done.”

Ayo Harrington, once a proud member of the famed African American female a cappella group “Sweet Honey in the Rock,” joked she was “pissed” that she had not been asked to sing, and treated the audience to a stanza of *Ain’t Nobody Going To Turn Me Around*. Co-chair of CoDA, a Lower East Side political club, she recalled first meeting

Epstein years ago through the local PTA and being impressed by his outspoken advocacy against the “school-to-prison pipeline,” the systemic channeling of kids, especially kids of color, out of schools and into jails and prisons.

She also noted that this summer, when she complained about local elections being held on Juneteenth, the federal holiday celebrating the end of slavery, Epstein immediately wrote a bill to stop it, which was enacted this session.

City Council Member Julie Menin, expected to be the next council speaker, spoke of her happiness at having Epstein as a new colleague. “Affordable housing is the number one issue...and there’s no one with more experience, Harvey, than you,” she said. “So I know you’re going to lead in the city council. We need you. We’re going to utilize you and we couldn’t be more excited to have you

as a key part of our body.”

Menin observed that her partnership with Epstein dates back to their days as leaders of adjoining downtown Manhattan community boards after 9/11, when they confronted federal stonewalling on toxic air. She also praised Epstein as “one of the most compassionate people I know.”

New York State Attorney General Tish James—beloved as a successful Trump adversary who so got under his skin that she is a top target of retribution—wowed the crowd with a speech both personal and political. She noted how moved she was to follow Epstein’s mom, Barbara, as a speaker, “Because today is my mom’s birthday,” she said. “She died when I was a member of the city council, and she had no idea what I did. And the reason is because I didn’t tell her. You see, she grew up in the South, and she was afraid that I would get hurt, she was afraid for me as a Black woman. And when she got sick and I would take her for a walk, she would ask, ‘Why does everybody know your name?’ And I told her, ‘Cuz I’m head of the block association.’ And she said, ‘Well, just be careful.’ And I said, ‘Okay, mom.’”

James urged Epstein to keep his mom and his family close, and pressed the audience to “just wait, don’t disturb him,” when they see Epstein out with his family.

She then credited Epstein with being—along with the late tenant leader Michael McKee—one of the two most impactful individuals on housing policy in New York state. “He recognizes that housing is a human right,” she said. “He also understands that during these challenging times...that this is not a time to hide. This is not the time to give in, to give up, to concede, to capitulate. This is not the time to be fearful. This is the time to be fearless, and to just stare them in the face. And to let them know that there’s more of us than there are of them.”

“Just remember,” she continued, “those seven million people who came out on the streets during No Kings Day.... And so we’ve got to continue to stand together, arm in arm...with no space between us, standing up to this government.”

Following cheers and applause at the conclusion of her speech, James swore Epstein in as a New York City Council member.

Others who spoke included poet Debby Gonzalez, Epstein’s former chief of staff John Blasco, Epstein’s son, Josh Epstein, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, Brooklyn Assemblymember Rodneyse Hermelyn, and outgoing City Comptroller (and newly-announced District 10 congressional candidate) Brad Lander.

## Dapolito *continued from page 1*

"There is broad support for development on this site that would include both public recreation facilities and affordable housing...[but] this plan is really a big middle finger to this community," Berman added. He clarified that any new recreational facilities should "supplement," rather than replace, the recreation center.

Berman noted that Village Preservation was looking to have "a much more reasoned and rational conversation" on

the project with incoming Mayor Zohran Mamdani, City Council Member Erik Bottcher (who has since this statement announced his move to run for state senator), and incoming Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal. In other words, by April an entirely new local political leadership will be in place. Hopefully, the community will be dealt a new hand of cards... and a quickly revised replacement to Mayor Adams' parting "gift."



**A rube named Karoline Leavitt, who holds the title of White House Press Secretary, recently said that Cher's activism is "irrelevant, outdated, and rooted in a world that doesn't exist anymore."**

## Cher's response:

**"Let's get real for a second honey. Karoline Leavitt, born 1997. Former White House assistant - tenure: eight months. Lost two congressional races - both by double digits. Hosts a podcast with fewer weekly listeners than my cat's Twitter account. Advocates 'free speech,' yet blocks anyone who challenges her. And her latest accomplishment? Calling a woman who has topped the charts in six different decades 'irrelevant,' while trending for all the wrong reasons. Baby girl, I've been fighting for rights, touring the world, and reinventing myself since before your parents went to prom. I've faced critics louder, harsher, and far more meaningful than anything you can type. And yet, here I am. Still here. Still singing. So if you want to talk about relevance... Sweetheart, take a seat."**

As seen on patriots against traitor trash trump

## Schwartz *continued from page 2*

frined a guy down the hall, whose feet she worked on, named Marvin Gaye. I got off a plane to visit her one day, and she greeted me first with news that she had scheduled me for a flying lesson, and then told me she had tickets to see the Talking Heads at the Hollywood Bowl. Once there, she had no problem joining in the audience festivities.

In her 60s she had a scare with cancer, and her sons started having grandchildren, so she came back to NYC, and lived upstairs from me on West 11th for the next 15 years. Three years after that, with travel agents becoming dinosaurs, I asked if she wanted to work with me at my office, at the front desk. She immediately said yes. She was 89, and had moved to Atria Assisted Living on 86th Street. For the next eight years she was best friends with all of my clients (who heard lots of stories about me), kept our office running like a clock, and kept the books. She learned the Access-a-Ride system and was never

late. She finally called it quits at 96 (!) after a medical scare.

She continued to go strong until she was 100, when an elevator door hit her walker, knocked her down, and she broke her pelvis. The next three years were trying, and she eventually lost mobility, as her vision and hearing faded. When she died, she was living in Gateway Plaza in Battery Park City.

She left behind six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. One granddaughter is a lawyer, one is starting medical school, and another is headed there. She was a pioneer as a medial professional, and her eyes sparkled when I told her that her granddaughter, Jordyn, had gotten into medical school. She was a pioneer in the world of women in medicine. In 1944 she would have never imagined that more than half of medical school students today are women.

Roz Schwartz, Villager, lived a rich life. She will be missed.

# Who Wants to Dump Dan Goldman?

BY JACK LOURIE

We are witness to a government that is continually less reflective of its constituents and more partial of its donors. We often say we are at a crossroads in politics, but it seems more like a slide. Each election feels special, because they represent moments to reflect on the worsening material conditions and political sway of everyday people.

Maybe we should try to understand our elected officials better. What is important to them? Who do they take money from? Do they have a history of public advocacy? Does their worldview adequately advocate for the most marginalized? Those questions bring us to Dan Goldman and a Dump Dan Campaign that would argue his positions would be unsavory.

Goldman has represented New York's 10th Congressional District since 2023, when the seat was opened due to redistricting. He covers lower Manhattan down through Sunset Park. According to *The Stanford Daily*, Goldman is worth up to \$253 million. This money comes from his great-grandfather, who was the president of Levi Strauss & Co.

Goldman's top two contributors are the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and Blackstone Group (Open Secrets). Blackstone is "the world's largest alternative asset manager" (Blackstone). Private equity currently controls 10% of apartments in the United States, with Blackstone representing the largest share (MultiFamilyDive). Beyond corporate donations, Goldman's immediate and extended family donated over \$200,000 to his NY-10 campaign during an early fundraising push (*Politico*).

In 2023, as it became clearer that Israel was conducting a genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, many residents reached a breaking point with him. Unfortunately, he sought to protect Israeli interests above Palestinian human rights. For example, Goldman expressed disgust at South Africa for filing the case against Israel on the grounds of violating the Genocide Convention in the International Court of Justice (*The Intercept*). At that time, over 26,000 Palestinians had been murdered.

Frustration towards Goldman led to a petition, created by his constituents in a group called NY-10 Neighbors and co-sponsored by NYC Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), appealing to him to retract his statements on Palestine, call for a ceasefire, and allow aid into Gaza (*ActionNetwork*). The petition received over 1,300 signatures. But nothing really changed.

Goldman's constituents began leading local organizing efforts to hold him responsible for his inaction on behalf of Palestinians. They spearheaded a campaign in the general election to write in Hind Rajab as a protest vote against Goldman. Hind was a child who was the sole survivor in her family's car after Israeli Defense Forces shot hundreds of rounds into the vehicle, killing everyone else. When para-

medics arrived at the scene to save her, they were all bombed (*Sky News*). "I was heartbroken, and I know many other people were about the idea that there was no clear challenger, we could not bring ourselves to vote for him, and we wanted to do more than leave that section blank," one of the organizers of the effort told me. At least 1,284 people wrote in in Hind's name (*Independent*).

Going into the 2026 primary, people in the district are feeling inspired by the results of the NYC mayoral election of Zohran Mamdani and the D.R.E.A.M. campaign that helped defeat Andrew Cuomo. They are laying the groundwork to help elect a real progressive Democrat. "Our biggest fear is that we would get to another congressional race and we wouldn't have a challenger," said one of the volunteer organizers. Their culminating disappointment of Goldman has led to the formation of the Dump Dan Campaign, a grassroots movement to unseat the Levi-Strauss heir. "Dump Dan is somewhat of a desperate cry to have someone viable come and challenge him," they added.

"There are a lot of people who do not support Dan's positions on Palestine/Israel, but also on other issues," said another one of the organizers. "Comments he originally made on abortion, on Medicare for All, showed he was not a left progressive voice on those issues when he was running. He's moved on those issues, but one thing he has not moved on is listening to his constituents saying that they do not want their tax dollars funding Israel's genocide of Palestinians."

They say he doesn't advocate for all people equally. "Goldman has ignored issues of Islamophobia. When a group of neighbors in the district had a tag sale to raise money for a family in Gaza, one of my neighbors was pepper sprayed in the face, and he was silent about that," a constituent said. Goldman has, however, been vocal when Jewish restaurants are vandalized. "One thing that has bothered me is that he mentions Jewish safety in isolation when really, what we want is a vision of collective safety," they added.

With Brad Lander entering the race, the team is now rallying behind this unified opposition candidate. Lander has endorsements from the Working Families Party, Zohran Mamdani, Bernie Sanders, Alexa Avilles, and Yuh-Line Niou. The Dump Dan team is excited to work behind a candidate who shares many of the values that got them engaged locally in the first place.

Dump Dan sits at nearly 1,900 Instagram followers, gaining over 600 between November 7 and December 18. The Dump Dan campaign helps us answer our original questions about what is needed in this moment from our politicians. Do we think Dan Goldman's moral disposition is one that can adequately help marginalized people in need, and combat increasing wealth inequality in American politics? Likely not. It is time to Dump Dan.

# Landmarks: Finding Long-Term Solutions for Short Term Issues

BY BRIAN J. PAPE, AIA



**THE 446 BROOME STREET FAÇADE**, the tallest one at this corner and connected to 491 Broadway, still features historic double-hung-type windows. Credit: Brian J. Pape, AIA.

The Landmarks Committee members of the Manhattan Community Board Two (CB2) were presented with two difficult submissions for our historic districts at their December meeting.

The first of these was for 491 Broadway and 446 Broome Street, a ca. 1897 L-shaped mixed-use building that wraps around a smaller corner building, with narrow exposures on the two streets. The building now has the 9th floor residential owner applying to replace the older wood-framed windows with new high-performance windows. The applicant presented several styles of new windows, some for each façade.

Most of the floors have the older style double-hung windows, which maintain the historic original character. It was difficult to tell if other floor units had recently changed their windows, but since the dominant style is like the original double-hung windows, the committee did not recommend approving the suggested windows unless they were changed to the double-hung style, still in the high-performance quality.

Equally concerning for CB2 is the lack of a Master Plan. A Master Plan would be a cooperative effort by the building's owners to present a type of window that would then be recommended for all window replacements,

avoiding every future applicant from going through the long review process for approval and avoiding the crazy quilt of unmatched windows. Although CB2 could not demand a Master Plan before proceeding, it did make a strong recommendation to consider it, since that is a better long-term solution.

The second application with long-term considerations was for 54 Greene Street,



**THESE SIDEWALK VAULT LIGHTS** are at 54 Greene Street at the Broome Street corner. The circles are glass beads that allow daylight into the basement vaults. Credit: Beyhan Karahan & Associates.



**THE 491 BROADWAY FAÇADE**, the tallest one at this corner, still features historic double-hung-type windows. Credit: Brian J. Pape, AIA.

a ca. 1873 corner 6-story loft building also facing Broome Street in the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District. When the building was granted an occupancy change from manufacturing lofts to mixed-use residential, the city's stipulation was that "the application includes a report from the Landmarks Preservation Commission stating that a continuing maintenance program has been estab-

lished that will result in the preservation of 54 Greene Street and that the proposed use and bulk modifications contribute to a preservation purpose."

That referenced maintenance program included preserving the vault lights. Vault lights are panels of glass beads set into metal frames that provide a walking surface at the sidewalk but also give daylight to the basement vault below it. This application requested covering the leaking and deteriorated vault lights. The damage in the basement is extensive. The applicant's architect, Beyhan Karahan & Associates, is well experienced working with SoHo buildings, and described the methodology of preserving the original vault lights in place by waterproofing and covering them with diamond plate, a heavy metal plate. Although there may be several manufacturers of these vault lights, the quality or warranty or price couldn't be confirmed at the meeting (except to say they are quite expensive).

CB2 was encouraged that should circumstances in the future allow the building owners to reverse the work and replace or preserve the vault lights, it can be done. This preserve and cover method could be a template for all vault lights, whether there are other special restrictions or not.



**THIS CLOSE-UP OF THE 54 GREENE STREET** vault lights shows broken glass beads and cracked metal frames, allowing water to penetrate into the basement vaults. Credit: Beyhan Karahan & Associates.

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*This newspaper is a grass roots effort, proudly created by residents of Greenwich Village. A true community effort!*

# Things Fall Apart

BY TOM LAMIA



THE OONIE WITH HIS COURT, A YORUBA WOOD-CARVING. Photo by Susan Lamia.

## THINGS FALL APART

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

— W.B. Yeats from *The Second Coming*

When I was a mere lad of 29 and a recent law school graduate full of adventurous spirits, I was a lecturer in law in Africa for two academic years; the first in Nigeria, the second in Zambia. There were others like me at the time (1966 to 1968). Our help was welcomed to fill lectureships left vacant or newly created as British colonial rule was transferred to exuberant but unready leaders, experienced in political struggle but untrained in government administration.

The setting for this story is Nigeria at the time of its independence. The independence celebrations lifted all spirits in 1960 but were soon followed by ethnic conflict and civil war. It is a textbook study in disastrous consequences from high expectations. A country with enviable natural and human resources burdened by a legacy of ethnic rivalries that exploded at birth. With every good intention, its elites failed in a series of miseries brought on by unyielding tribal competition, such that the best qualities of each of its major ethnic groups were subsumed to tribal loyalty. Military coups removed the constitutional design of shared power among the major ethnic groups and set off a cascade of tribal violence that made national institutions unworthy of the name. The military held the balance of power, but was neutralized by tribal divisions among Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba-led battalions. Throughout Nigeria corruption ruled, as it always had.

These were the conditions that led to the Biafran War (1967-1970), a civil war between seceding Ibo-led forces from Nigeria's Eastern Region and Federal Republic forces in the West, North and Mid-West Regions. The Ibos declared their territory to be the Republic of Biafra. Many lives were lost on both sides before a negotiated peace was achieved.

Regional boundaries were redrawn and a new capital reduced the frictional element of tribalism. Nigeria survived as the homeland of Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba peoples and of many smaller ethnicities, but the heady expectations of independence were gone. The indigenous talent and resources remain.

When I arrived in 1966, Nigeria's population was estimated to be 50 million. Today that estimate is 240 million. One could say the country has done well. I would say, yes, but so much better was possible.

Chinua Achebe published his novel *Things Fall Apart* in 1958. It is a story of Ibo village life at the turn of the 20th cen-

tury, when leadership went to village strong men who risked loss of influence, even death, for moral or physical weakness. "The White Man" arrived with Christian missionaries who carried an opposing message: faith, community, love, moral guidance; a message that pushes the strong man aside. The resulting confrontation produces a standoff between tradition and revelation that ends in tragedy (the suicide of the strong man) and a leadership vacuum filled by a rebellious son who lives on to father the hero of Achebe's next novel, *No Longer at Ease* (1960). So, things fell apart and horror prevailed as Yeats' poem describes. Like the poem, the novel tells of the horrific consequences of a clash of civilizations.

Yeats wrote his poem in 1922 when the world was besieged by the chaos, destruction and calamitous forces let loose by WWI, the Easter Rising in Ireland and the Russian Revolution. The poem is full of dread for the future, blame for those responsible and abject pessimism for a path forward.

Are we at such a juncture today? Our constitutional republic and its rule of law is gravely threatened, as I have been saying in these pages for several months. The threat comes from a theory of a "unitary executive" interwoven in Article II of the Constitution. This theory has no textual basis in the Constitution and no legal precedent in the Supreme Court's jurisprudence. It would give the president the power to make law as well as execute it. In the fevered atmosphere of right-wing politics this theory lives, like states' rights, as a lever to lift the Constitution off its foundation.

On the day of my arrival in Nigeria, the tension in the country was palpable. My London-Lagos flight was met on arrival at 3 a.m. by armed soldiers who conducted an hours-long inspection of luggage, papers and passports. The news of that day was that a military coup had occurred; the president, an Ibo, had been deposed and ethnic killings of Ibos were occurring throughout the country.

The next morning, I had my first meeting with the students who had registered to take my contract law class. A roll call produced the unsettling result that of the 25 to 30 registrants, all six to eight Ibos were missing. The local newspaper headline banner shouted the news that a massacre of Ibos was taking place. My remaining students reported that no Ibos remained on campus. They had all left for their homeland in the Eastern Region.

This is where I first read *Things Fall Apart*. As a privileged American bringing legal instruction to the heirs to independence from British rule, I did not recognize or immediately relate to a connection between the 1958 novel and the Yeats poem, but Achebe certainly did.

In his 1992 introduction to Achebe's work, NYU professor Kwame Anthony Appiah led with the excerpt from the Yeats poem. The relevance to our chaotic time today jumps off the page. It is the relevance of bridging differences or suffering bad consequences. The center will not hold unless we shore it up with our voices.

# The “Oppenheimer Moment”

BY ROGER PARADISO

There is much euphoria coming from AI tech companies, just like the over exuberance on social media with the advent of Facebook.

My sense of distrust back then led me to call Facebook a marketing scheme. I was looked at like some fool. But I ask you today, what have you gotten from Facebook that has changed the world? It has made the founders very wealthy and is a powerful force in culture and politics. But for regular folks, it hasn't done much.

I love new tech when it helps people. I find Apple's phone and camera revolutionary. It has created a vigilante news agency out of thin air. Plain citizens can turn the lens on government overreach. So, with the appropriate guard rails Apple has been a friendly tech company.

As for AI, I think I should fight the early euphoria and look into what experts are telling us are the danger signs. I was fascinated by this article by Mike Thomas entitled *15 Dangers of Artificial Intelligence (AI) | Built In*. It leads to what I call “The Oppenheimer Moment.” It is that moment in time where individuals have to speak up against danger or forever live with their silence. Here are some excerpts from the article.

## What is AI?

AI (artificial intelligence) describes a machine's ability to perform tasks and mimic intelligence at a similar level as humans.

## Is AI dangerous?

AI has the potential to be dangerous, but these dangers may be mitigated by implementing legal regulations and by guiding AI development with human-centered thinking.

## Can AI cause human extinction?

If AI algorithms are biased or used in a malicious manner — such as in the form of deliberate disinformation campaigns or autonomous lethal weapons — they could cause significant harm toward humans. Though



**THERE IS MUCH EUPHORIA COMING FROM AI TECH COMPANIES**, just like the over exuberance on social media with the advent of Facebook.

as of right now, it is unknown whether AI is capable of causing human extinction.

## What happens if AI becomes self-aware?

Self-aware AI has yet to be created, so it is not fully known what will happen if or when this development occurs.

## Is AI a threat to the future?

AI is already disrupting jobs, posing security challenges and raising ethical questions. If left unregulated, it could be used for more nefarious purposes. But it remains to be seen how the technology will continue to develop and what measures governments may take, if any, to exercise more control over AI production and usage.

As noted in the *Built In* article these are some of the dangers of AI.

- Automation job loss
- Deepfakes and social manipulation

- Privacy violations
- Algorithmic bias caused by bad data
- Socioeconomic inequality
- Weapons and military automatization
- Market volatility
- Increased criminal activity and child safety risks
- Psychological harm and overreliance

Here's what former presidential candidate Andrew Yang had to say to on the matter: “It's going to get bad. I certainly don't think 99% bad.”

Using his 44% vulnerability benchmark, Yang offered a rough projection: if the U.S. “churns through” even half of those jobs over the next decade, the country could see 30 to 40 million positions eliminated. Yang suggested that to subsidize displaced workers the major benefactors of AI should pay the \$1,000 a month. - *Business Insider*

I also happen to think AI may destroy the

commercial entertainment business. A few weeks ago, Pope Leo had an audience with creative artists at the Vatican. He said, “The logic of algorithms tends to repeat what works, but art opens up what is possible.” He urged filmmakers to defend “slowness, silence and difference” when they serve the story.

*Built In* wrote that altohyrtins in “social manipulation also stand as a danger of artificial intelligence. This fear has become a reality as politicians rely on platforms to promote their viewpoints, with one example being Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., wielding a TikTok troll army to capture the votes of younger Filipinos during the Philippines' 2022 election.

According to *Built In*, “The key question for humanity today is whether to start a global AI arms race or to prevent it from starting.” They also wrote, “If any major military power pushes ahead with AI weapon development, a global arms race is virtually inevitable, and the endpoint of this technological trajectory is obvious: autonomous weapons will become the Kalashnikovs of tomorrow.”

I would add some humor by noting that the great Dudley Moore, a comedian and Hollywood star, had a show called *Beyond the Fringe* in London and on Broadway in the nuclear 1960s. In the sketch they said the safest way to protect yourself during a nuclear catastrophe would be to put paper bags on your head. Thank God we haven't had to do that yet.

Perhaps an astute future Congress and White House will come up with some guard rails to protect us. Our European friends have already been putting in some laws and rails for their countries.

In these days of buffoonery in Congress, I would say to save all the strong bags you have and practice putting them on your head.

*15 Dangers of Artificial Intelligence (AI) | Built In*

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

**Is NY Becoming the Great Garbage Patch State?**

In his recent *Village View* article, *The New Emerald City* (published September 2025) Siggy Raible writes, “another bugaboo about fossil fuels, plastics are derived from oil.” New York has a plastic pollution crisis. As the fourth largest state in the country, our state can make an enormous impact by curbing plastic production and use. An average of 6.8 million tons of packaging waste is produced each year in New York, constituting 40% of the total waste stream. Most of this packaging is sent to landfills, burned in incinerators (NY state holds the distinct honor of having more incinerators than any other state), or winds up polluting our streets and parks and beaches, with much of it getting into rivers and then into oceans.

Patch is a mass of plastic pollution twice the size of Texas that sits in the Pacific Ocean. It's the result of the unsustainable overproduction and over consumption of plastic that has occurred in the past 25 years. There are 1.71 TRILLION pieces of plastic in our oceans, that is 500 times the amount of stars in the galaxy. One reason is that almost 50% of plastic is from disposable packaging, of which less than 6% is recycled in the U.S. With an average shelf life of minutes, it has led us to a life of convenience, with grim consequences. The movie, *Plastic People*, highlights the grim reality of the health implications and the shocking fact that 1.5 billion plastic bottles of water are sold every day, that's more than one million bottles a minute.

We need a transformational change in both policy and consumer behavior. As stated in Judith Enck's excellent new book, *The Prob-*

*lem with Plastic*, “it's time to take real action, and limit plastic production, detoxify plastic products, and hold polluters financially responsible for cleaning up the mess.” There is good news, our state Assembly members have a strong and powerful solution of EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) legislation, The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (PRRI) (A1749/S1464) ready to pass in NY state. The bill, introduced by Senator Harckham and Assemblymember Glick, would also limit plastics' harmful health impacts by banning the use of 17 highly toxic chemicals, including PFAS, bisphenols, formaldehyde, mercury, lead, and cadmium in packaging. It would also save New Yorkers \$1.3 billion in 10 years by shifting the cost of dealing with this wasteful, polluting single-use plastic packaging from us taxpayers to the companies responsible for creating it.

For those unfamiliar, The Great Garbage

Kristin Shevis  
Beyond Plastics Speakers Bureau,  
NYC resident and NY state constituent

## CHARACTERS OF THE VILLAGE

# Jeannine Kiely, District and Community Leader-Problem-Solver Extraordinaire!

BY BRIAN AND JOY PAPE

In a November 23, 2025 City & State NY article, Celia Bernhardt wrote that Assembly-member Deborah Glick (District 66, who is not running again) is backing local District Leader Jeannine Kiely to fill her seat saying that Kiely has "not just the intelligence but the experience and commitment and the knowledge of the neighborhood" needed to take over the job. District Leader Arthur Schwartz also supports Kiely, "She's wonderful—a community-oriented, activist-to-her-bones person."

Kiely has been active in the community long before Brian got to know her and see her dedication on Community Board 2 Manhattan (CB2). Now that Kiely is campaigning for District 66 State Assembly seat, we asked her to fill us in on her background and qualifications.

**Tell us about yourself.**

I was born and raised in Santa Clara, CA, where my parents were public school teachers. This instilled a lifelong love of education that I carry with me as both a parent and public servant. I am the oldest of four daughters, raised by a single dad. My mom passed away when I was 12, and my sisters were 11, 5 and 3. My dad's favorite word was "initiative" which ingrained in me the desire to find solutions and take action whenever I see an opportunity to improve our community.

I graduated from UCLA with a degree in international economics and moved to NYC in 1990 to attend Columbia Business School. Graduating with a master's in finance, I worked in public finance at Citi, advising on nonprofit healthcare and higher education financings.

**What do you think is important for our community to know about you?**

I'm an activist with a deep proven record of action in our community.

In 1995, I moved to West 9th Street for a decade before moving to SoHo and now NoHo. My husband and I raised our two sons, who are now 20 and 18 years old, in the Village, where they attended nursery school at Children's Aid Society on Sullivan Street. That's where I first became active in local issues. After an announcement that the school would close on extremely short notice, I organized with other families to keep the school open for a full year to find new seats at new schools. I later served as the PTA co-president and on the student leader-



**JEANNINE KIELY** in front of the 75 Morton Street Campus building that she worked for years with others to bring to fruition. Credit: Brian J. Pape, AIA.

ship team at my son's middle school, PS/IS 276 in Battery Park City.

My boys played Greenwich Village Little League, Steady Buckets, DUSC soccer and flag football through the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center. I remain active in Champions, an affiliation of youth sports leagues seeking to improve and expand field space downtown. We successfully advocated for improved fields at Pier 40, for the governor to veto legislation that would have permitted office development on Pier 40, and to plan new fields on Gansevoort Peninsula.

In 2010, I joined Green Below 14, a non-profit dedicated to improving parks and playgrounds below 14th Street, and worked to fund a \$2 million renovation of DeSalvio Playground in Little Italy. We then turned our efforts to Elizabeth Street Garden (ESG). I am thrilled that the city has designated ESG as a public city park, and committed to building more than 620 affordable units nearby.

I've been a member of CB2 for nearly 14 years. I chaired the Schools and Education Committee from 2014 until I was elected board chair in 2021. I now chair the Traffic and Transportation Committee and remain

active on the Parks and Land Use Committees. As part of CB2, I have supported building affordable housing in our district.

**Tell us more about your community involvement.**

I co-founded Literacy Academy Collective (LAC) with six other extraordinary women, which to date has opened the first two, free, district public schools for students with dyslexia. LAC seeks to break the cycle of illiteracy for students with dyslexia, language-based learning disabilities, and other struggling readers. I currently serve as board chair to support our mission to build and support a network of NYC public schools to allow struggling readers achieve academic success by bringing culturally relevant, structured literacy to students at the intersection of race, poverty, and disability. The documentary *Left Behind* chronicles our efforts to open the first school in 2023. We never took no for an answer when it came to serving these kids.

In 2019 I was elected Democratic district leader for the 66th Assembly District, Part B, which gave me a wider platform to advocate for our community.

I believe that rezonings must include zoning and financial incentives to build affordable housing, otherwise that housing will not be built. In 2013, CB2 supported mandatory affordable housing for the Hudson Square rezoning, but the city only approved optional zoning bonuses. As a result, in 10 years, Hudson Square only produced 17% of the projected affordable units as many developers opted to build office space instead, a loss of 2,682 total units and 562 affordable units.

In the 2016 rezoning of 550 Washington Street development, nearly 1,000 housing units including 298 affordable units were lost to text changes, while 598 housing units including 178 senior housing were saved.

In the 2021 SoHo NoHo Chinatown rezoning, CB2 pushed for many changes that would reduce incentives for office space and eliminate dormitory construction, but the city pushed through its version. To date, no housing has been built.

I strongly support building 100% affordable housing on government-owned property – at Gansevoort Plaza, 5 World Trade Center and 2 Howard Street. The city recently selected a developer to build 280 affordable apartments and a state-of-the-art recreation center at 388 Hudson Street.

We need to build both workforce and deeply affordable housing so the next generation can afford to live in and enjoy our amazing public schools, parks and culture.

**Do you have a favorite spot in the Village?**

I love the Christopher Street Pier at the western tip, for the sunsets, the calm, peaceful views and the lush lawn. I frequently meet friends for coffee at Merriweather on Hudson Street or Hungry Llama on Washington Street.

**What is your favorite accomplishment?**

Joining parent and community activists and our elected officials for a dozen years of advocacy to open 75 Morton in 2018. The state-of-the-art gut renovated building now serves District 2 and District 75 middle school students. This is a reminder that change takes time, persistence and relentless advocacy.

**Any parting words?**

I'm humbled by the outpouring of support from our local leaders. I am proud of what I have been able to achieve with colleagues and the Village community. Serving as Assemblymember will allow me to continue this work at a greater scale.

# Inside the Magical World of Li-Lac Chocolates

BY ANTHONY PARADISO

During my first visit to Li-Lac's chocolate factory in Brooklyn, I was taken on a tour by co-owner Christopher Taylor and corporate sales manager David Landeros.

Landeros started the tour by comparing the hustle and bustle at the factory during the holiday season to the world of sports. He said, "This is our most fun time of year because we're gearing up. It's game day for us in December."

The hard work has been paying off as Taylor said that online orders had increased 36 percent in December 2025 compared to the previous December and that they had broken the previous single day record (445) on four different days this December with the highest number (766) set on December 2, 2025.

Before we entered the factory, we walked through a retail shop. Inside the shop, there is a candy case which holds 96 fresh chocolate items at all times. Above the candy case were big posterboards showing photographs of the original Li-Lac shop which was located at 120 Christopher Street and opened in 1923 by founder George Demetrious. Today, Li-Lac has expanded to six locations including two in the Village: one at 75 Greenwich Avenue and the other at 162 Bleecker Street.

For the first 82 years of Li-Lac's existence, all of their chocolate was made in the back of the Christopher Street store. In 2005, then-owner Martha Bond moved Li-Lac to Jane Street in Greenwich Village. The factory opened in 2014 and today, visitors can watch Li-Lac's enrobing machine and the



(L-R) VIEW OF THE EXTERIOR OF LI-LAC CHOCOLATES' FACTORY IN THE SUNSET PARK NEIGHBORHOOD OF BROOKLYN. Inside are several businesses as well as Li-Lac's Industry City retail shop and its factory where employees use original recipes and production methods dating back to the company's founding in 1923. Photo by Anthony J. Paradiso.



WHO'S JOLLIER? Li-Lac's Jumbo Chocolate Santa or co-owner Christopher Taylor, who poses here with a chocolate mold of Saint Nick and a 32-inch chocolate Champagne Bottle. Both molds were produced at Li-Lac's factory in Brooklyn using original recipes in preparation for the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Photo by Roger Paradiso.

kitchen through windows located in the lobby at 65 West 35th Street in Brooklyn.

Taylor explained how the windows impacted sales, "The second we put the window in the store; sales went up 30 percent."

Li-Lac is more than just a company that sells quality chocolate—it's a survivor that has stayed true to its original recipes and production methods in an era when few other chocolate companies have.

When we got to the kitchen, Landeros described the care that goes into making

\$50,000 worth of fresh chocolate every day. He said, "In this factory, we hand-make every single piece of chocolate. We don't make it anywhere else. We still use the same recipes that we've had since the original founder in 1923, and we do all the molding here."

As we moved on, we saw large marble-top tables, copper kettles and scales that date back to the company's founding. Employees were setting and cutting French mint bars on the marble-top tables. "This marble table is the best way—because it's so cold—to get

that beautiful gloss onto the chocolate...You don't walk into a lot of chocolate companies and see this kind of dedication and detail-work," said Taylor.

I asked assistant chocolatier Cameron Angel Baylem what he likes about working for Manhattan's oldest chocolate house. He replied, "I'd say the day-to-day, everything's done by hand and locally. We don't rely on modern machines and systems. It's more like us doing the work every day. We're that passionate about our customers. I also like the creative aspect of working in the factory, like coming up with better ways and new recipes."

It wouldn't have been a proper tour if we didn't sample chocolate and I was given a maple fudge square, a dark chocolate pretzel and an almond toffee square. Each tasted amazing, but my favorite was the dark chocolate pretzel because it struck just the right balance of savoriness and sweetness. Regarding the toffee, Landeros said, "We like our toffee very soft, very delicate and very buttery. We don't want it too hard where you're going to crack a crown." I can say that the toffee was as advertised.

Ninety percent of Li-Lac's sales are milk and dark chocolate. The other 10 percent comes from sugar-free, white and sweet chocolate. The type of chocolate product that sets Li-Lac apart from other companies is their mold collection which is one of the largest in the world. One of their most popular molds in the U.S. is their Jumbo Santa Claus. Lan-  
continued on page 17

## In Defense of Caving In

BY ALEC PRUCHNICKI

When eight Democrat and Independent senators voted to end the government shutdown, they were severely criticized for giving in to the Republicans. Other Democratic leaders, like Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer, also caught flak for not fighting harder or somehow controlling the senators and preventing them from caving in. Rachael Maddow, of *MS NOW*, complained that after all the fighting for health insurance subsidies, they received nothing in exchange for their inability to hold the line and continue the shutdown. But immediately afterward, Lawrence O'Donnell, also of *MS NOW*, listed benefits the Democrats did receive.

The most important compromise by the Republicans was to allow a vote on the Affordable Care Act subsidies, a vote which is underway as I write this article. This measure is likely to fail and massive increases in health insurance costs will occur over the next few months. Forcing the Republicans to take an actual vote--where every one of them will be held responsible for insurance rate increases--is something they very much wanted to avoid. Now they will be on record for causing the increases. O'Donnell also pointed out that the two Democratic

senators from Nevada were watching their state's tourist-related economy deteriorate rapidly due to air traffic disruptions which make it difficult for people to get to the state to gamble. There were other provisions having to do with limited layoffs of workers. In general, these small victories weren't the overwhelming success that Democrats had hoped for—but would continuing the shutdown have been successful if they held out longer?

Senator Angus King, an Independent who votes with the Democrats, simply stated that they were not going to win this standoff. Politicians hate getting into fights they can't win and after a while it seemed overwhelmingly likely that they were not going to force the Republicans to give in. Why not?

The hope was that a shut down would so injure government workers, the overall economy, and members of the public who are helped by government programs, that people would rise up and put increasing pressure on Republicans to compromise. It was a beautiful theory and tactic but it was destroyed by some ugly realities. The major fact is that Republicans don't care if their own constituents live or die. I don't mean

that as a figure of speech but as literally true.

Lax gun control laws are supported by Republicans even after horrific mass shootings in GOP-controlled states. Guns are the number one killer of young people. Reproductive rights and abortion restrictions lead to high rates of maternal mortality from miscarriages and complicated births. During COVID, shut downs, isolation rules, vaccination programs and requirements, and political support for vaccine availability were all undermined by Republicans resulting in at least several hundred thousand preventable deaths. These were mostly concentrated in Republican-led states and GOP-controlled areas of Democratic states. Finally, ten states completely or partially controlled by Republicans have not utilized the Affordable Care Act expansion of Medicaid eligibility, denying health insurance coverage to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of their own constituents. No coverage means less access to basic medical care and more deaths. The Republicans don't care about any of these issues.

Sometimes this neglect occurs because these spineless Republican invertebrates won't stand up to Trump, and sometimes

these are beliefs and behaviors that pre-dated Trump's rise to power due to hostility to government programs or hostility to the people who might need them. In either case, they don't care if their own constituents live or die.

This is the level of opposition the Democrats faced as the shut down continued. I'm sure some were getting calls from constituents they were actually trying to help, or at least keep alive. How much of this pressure, that they hoped would be successful against the Republicans, did they have to resist as the situation dragged on? I don't know what I would have done if I were an elected official answering to a Democratic voting base. I like to think that I would have found some way to hold on and continue pressure on the Republicans. But there are only so many emails and phone calls from people in immediate distress that I could have tolerated while waiting for the long-term victory that might never come.

So, the fight continues. The behavior of the Republicans and the damage caused to the people, including many of their own voters, will have to be explained and publicized as much as possible in upcoming elections. Lives depend on it.

# A Cup of Coffee with the “Mayor of Greenwich Village”

BY KATIE KENNEY (REPRINTED FROM HER SUBSTACK CALLED “BOLDIES”)

Arnie, how do you know everyone that walks by?

“Let me tell you my secret, be nice to people. Say hi. Smile. Tell your neighbors good morning.”

And that’s exactly how I met Arnie. I was walking down Waverly one summer day a few years back, and he smiled and nodded, “Good morning! Beautiful day isn’t it?” Then we had a conversation. And now he’s a regular presence in my circle and neighborhood coffee routine.

Arnie on aging, reflecting back on his life:

“It’s the fourth quarter. The clock is running... I have no timeouts but then I look up at the scoreboard and I did pretty good! I’m way ahead.”

Advice that he repeats frequently:

Stay focused.

Treasure your friendships.

Never give up.

One of the best things about New York in addition to his beloved wife, Aedin...

“There are so many good people in this town, people you never hear about who are working with youth programs, with the elderly, in churches and soup kitchens throughout the boroughs. Their everyday efforts ensure the vitality of the city and the well-being of the people who live here.”

## Early Life

Arnaldo Segarra grew up in the Johnson Housing Projects in East Harlem. Born on July 13, 1942 (he likes to say 1992 – ‘The state department messed up my birth certificate!’) both his mother and father immigrated from Puerto Rico in the 1930s.

“They came here for a four-letter word: WORK,” he says.

The way he describes Spanish Harlem in the 60s is quite similar to the neighborhood scenes in *American Gangster* coming to life. He talks about the Black Panthers, crossing paths with Frank Lucas, playing stick ball in the streets and the tensions in the neighborhood.

Arnie’s love of basketball, and the skills he learned on the streets of Harlem, ultimately landed him a spot on the team at Benjamin Franklin High School and subsequently, a scholarship to Paul Smith College in the Adirondacks in Brighton, New York. He looks back and recognizes how this was his ticket to a different life, a life outside of the 10-block radius his whole world existed in until this point. He reflects, with felt gratitude, on all the luck and good fortune he’s had in life. Though acknowledging luck is important, Arnie is also a prime example of someone who didn’t sit on the sidelines, but played every card he was dealt in life.

## POLITICS

### Aide to Mayor John Lindsay

Post college and back in Harlem, Arnie was working for the East Harlem Tenants Council coalition in his early 20s. New York City Mayor John Lindsay wanted to understand what was important to the community in Harlem and met with Arnie to discuss.

“I show up at Gracie Mansion wearing my torn jeans – which I hear are stylish now? – and [Mayor Lindsay] asked me to stay after the meeting. And the rest is history,” Arnie recalls. Mayor Lindsay brought Arnie onto his staff as the Special Assistant for Puerto Rican Affairs and his career in politics began. Arnie was “in charge of mediation and troubleshooting”... meaning that he used his street wisdom to help keep troublesome situations in East Harlem from boiling up into violence.”

Four-term Congressman Lindsay catapulted into the lime-light during the 1965 New York mayoral race, when his walking tours of Harlem and other black neighborhoods helped him capture 45 percent of the black vote and win the election – a remarkable achievement for a Republican from Manhattan’s Silk-Stocking district. His neighborhood forays later



**“THAT GUY? HE’S A LEGEND.”** At the Joe’s coffee shop on Waverly Place, Arnie (above) is greeted warmly by various customers. Photo courtesy of Katie Kenney.

helped New York avoid the ugly race riots that afflicted so many American cities during the sixties.

But Arnie didn’t let politics tarnish his loyalty to his community. He lost the job with the mayor after siding with members and sympathizers of the Young Lords, a cadre of Puerto Rican activists, when they occupied a church in an attempt to force it to provide space for a free breakfast program for the community.

### Working at Watergate in 1972

After his time with Mayor Lindsay, Arnie went down to Washington to help establish the office for Hispanic Affairs for the Democratic National Committee. His office, per chance, was in the Watergate building. And on June 17, 1972 there was a notorious burglary in the office. Arnie recalls he got a call one day that summer back in NY (no caller ID back then he reminds me). “They said this is the FBI. I thought it was about the Black Panthers or the Young Lords, so I hung up. They called again. So I called my buddies up – told them to come downtown – and make sure you’re packing – I didn’t know who these guys were! Were they legit? And I met them at the Riveria Cafe. Turns out they were real FBI, right out of central casting with the thin black ties and sunglasses and everything. They wanted to talk about Watergate – at the time they suspected the Cubans could be involved and wanted to ask me what I knew about them [from my work with the DNC].”

### Aide to Mayor David Dinkins, 1990-1993

During his time working with Mayor Lindsay, Arnie was introduced to four prominent New Yorkers in Harlem – Charlie Rangel, Percy Sutton, David Patterson and David Dinkins. All four men went on to make significant impact on the city as a civil rights attorney, NY congressman, and state governor, but it was Dinkins’ run for New York City mayor in the late 1980s that changed Arnie’s life yet again. Arnie was one of Dinkins’ first calls when he decided to run and he was instrumental in helping him land the seat. Dinkins was the first African American to be elected as Mayor of New York City on November 7, 1989. Arnie served as his personal aide during his tenure and was known as the man who “whispered in his ear.”

During his term, Arnie supported Dinkins in key efforts that revitalized the city. “David Dinkins simply set this city on a better path,” Mayor Bill de Blasio said. He lowered the crime rate and was considered a racial reconciler or “political Jackie Robinson” during a time of high racial tensions. Additionally,

Dinkins brought the U.S. Open to Queens and instigated the transformation of Times Square. Lastly, he served as a champion for the poor and underserved in the city, establishing after school programs and health care clinics across the boroughs. And during it all Arnie was frequently seen a half step behind Dinkins, whispering in his ear (said the *NY Times* on 7/14/92, orchestrating behind the scenes).

“If there is a photo of the former New York City Mayor David Dinkins campaigning, or walking up or down the City Hall steps, it is a good bet that Arnie Segarra is in the picture, usually close on Dinkins’ heels.” (*The New Yorker*, 2020)

Arnie still gets emotional reflecting on his time with Dinkins: “He was truly a great man. I miss him very much.”

## FRIENDS & FAMILIAR FACES

Living in Greenwich Village in the 70s and 80s meant that Arnie encountered many of the names you’ve heard about in magazines or history books – Nelson Mandela, Jessica Lange, Harry Belafonte, and Bob Dylan, to name just a few. He tells stories of nights out at Max’s Kansas City and Studio 54. And even worked at Chez Jose as a host at one point.

On moving from Harlem to downtown in the 1960s:

“Why Greenwich Village? Oh man, it was the place to be! It still is the place to be...I came to the village in 1967 and my neighbor and I would always say hello to each other. Turns out he was Jimi Hendrix. His studio was across the street from me on West 8th.”

## The Stonewall Riot and Lion’s Head Regulars

His first apartment was at 18 Christopher Street where he paid \$350 for a one bedroom. “It sounds cheap, but you gotta remember the salaries were \$8,000 back then!” Living there during the summer of ‘69, he recalls witnessing the Stonewall Riot right across the street. He would hang out at the Lion’s Head – a neighborhood bar at 59 Christopher (Kettle of Fish, present day) that was an institution in the Village. “It was a big hangout for writers, Jack Kerouac and the like. Politicians and activists of many decades. And I met a waitress there who was an aspiring actress, told me about a movie she auditioned for. Turns out it was the remake of *King Kong* and the waitress was Jessica Lange. She still lives nearby you know, I just ran into her over on 6th!” he exclaimed.

## GREENWICH VILLAGE + JOES COFFEE SHOP

Arnie’s life story is woven through the streets of New York. For the last 16 years he has lived with his wife Aedin Moloney – a native of Ireland and long-time Village resident.

You can find the ‘mayor of Greenwich Village’ – as some fondly call him – most mornings sitting on the benches outside Joe’s Coffee on Waverly, greeting the many neighbors and familiar faces walking by and holding court with the eclectic group of regulars that he lovingly refers to as his “focus group.” It feels like a snapshot of New York’s ethos – all ages, background, walks of life congregating outside the coffee shop, greeting each other by name, discussing current events in the world and the neighborhood. Arnie sits at the center of that group on most mornings from April through November. Dressed in bright colors, he looks like he’s just stepped off the beach – which is where he does spend the remainder of the year – and has a signature style. Black Ray Bans, Adidas track suits, vintage t-shirts with storied New York logos, brands like Ralph Lauren, and a sneaker collection that the youth would consider “on trend.”

In the coffeeshop, Arnie shuffles in and orders his typical cup of coffee with a blueberry muffin. He’s greeted warmly by various customers and turns heads. “Who’s that?” someone murmurs. The young barista working whispers to a customer, “That guy? He’s a legend.”

# Three Little Italy Neighborhoods

BY ALEC PRUCHNICKI

What gives a neighborhood an ethnic identity? Is it the ethnicity of the people who live there, the history of the area, the ambience created by local businesses (restaurants, bars, souvenir shops, etc.), or something else? Here is my description of three neighborhoods frequently described as "Little Italy" ... so you decide.

Those of us who grew up on Arthur Avenue always referred to it as "Arthur Avenue" and seldom "Belmont" or "Little Italy in the Bronx." The population was almost entirely Italian and Italian American with many restaurants, bars, specialty Italian food stores, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, and an indoor city-run market. Like many communities around the country, immigrants came mostly from southern Italy around the time of World War I. It was a working-class area from the start. In *The Sopranos*, Carmela puts down an arrogant relative saying roughly, "Why is he so high and mighty, he came from Arthur Avenue." The movie *A Bronx Tale* by Chazz Palminteri gives a pretty accurate description of growing up there.

But the neighborhood started to change in the 1970s. Italian Americans moved to other parts of the Bronx and Westchester. Albanians, Puerto Ricans, and later, Mexicans moved in. In 2020, the main census tract for Arthur Avenue (Tract 391) listed 7.8% of the population as non-Hispanic white. I can't tell how much of this is Albanian or Italian residents but the other 92.2% is overwhelmingly Hispanic.

They say you can never go home again. When I visit, it looks more Italian now than when I was growing up, at least in the heart of the area around Arthur Avenue and 187th Street. Many of the same restaurants, bars, and specialty food stores are still there, along with new Italian gourmet cafes and restaurants. Those coming to the area, in addition to local residents, include people from the suburbs and other states, tourists from Manhattan, and folks just wanting good food.

But there have been changes. There are now a few Albanian restaurants and pizza shops, Mexican restaurants and diners, and even a small mosque for the local Albanian Muslims. Several apartment houses near Fordham Road have been taken over by nearby Fordham University and are now dormitories for the students. There are also a few sports bars. The Enrico Fermi Public Library offers literature in English, Italian, and Spanish. During the summer there are typical Italian street feasts, along with Ferragosto in September, which we never had years ago.

How have these vestiges of my old neighborhood survived and expanded? Besides attracting visitors to the area, many of the businesses are family owned. One restaurant claims five generations in the same family. The largest bread store, Madonia, is run by Peter Madonia who is also the head of the local Business Improvement District and an advisor to several NYC mayors. A few years ago, I was having dinner in a local place when

thru Avenue, the Italian population has diminished over the years. The census counts 34.5% of the population of Tract 41 as being non-Hispanic white with most of the rest being immigrants from adjacent Chinatown. The white population probably reflects students from nearby NYU along with gradual gentrification as indicated by the increase in condos over the decades.

The heart of the neighborhood is now a four-block stretch of Mulberry Street from Canal to Kenmare, at least as measured by the restaurants and souvenir shops. There are also street fairs, especially the Feast of San Gennaro, held every September since about 1926. I have attended this feast for most years it has been held and look forward to it as a major cultural and historical event. I do know that many of the long-time residents of the area have bemoaned the ethnic changes and the fact that this area that started extremely poor, became working class, then gentrified, and is now among the most expensive zip codes in the U.S.

But it is holding onto its heritage. The Italian ambience still exists on these four blocks, along with a few Italian restaurants north of Kenmare Street. Last year the Italian American Museum opened on the corner of Grand and Mulberry streets and traces the history of Italian Americans in NYC and across the country. Those of us who remember the area and return frequently, along with hordes of tourists, keep the atmosphere intact, at least for now.

I've only been to the North End of Boston a few times, but I felt right as if I were back in the Bronx. The area is large and filled with Italian-themed restaurants, pastry shops, food stores, and at least one souvenir store. Several restaurant staffers told me the area has changed considerably and just about all the Italians have moved out. Although the census describes the area as 84% white in Tract 304, locals described the newcomers as students from nearby colleges. The restaurants, as far as I can tell, range from the basic red sauce places serving the food I grew up on, to fancy gourmet type places. The historic Old North Church, that signaled Paul Revere to start his ride, is still there. The location, history and ambience have kept the area looking as ethnic as any other.

Not all Italian American neighborhoods have survived. East Harlem used to have the largest Italian population in the U.S. but as Italians moved out and Puerto Ricans moved in, the area became known as Spanish Harlem. These three neighborhoods have maintained their character only by a narrow definition. None of the three has an Italian or Italian American population. But all three have the ambience of being Italian with strong histories and deep involvement in the Italian community. I don't know if these areas will stay the same or for how long. I only know that I will get to San Gennaro, Arthur Avenue, and maybe the North End for as long as I'm able.



(TOP): OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH on 187th street in the Bronx. (BOTTOM): THE ITALIAN AMERICAN MUSEUM on Mulberry Street. Photos courtesy of Alex Pruchnicki.



my friend told the maître d' that I grew up on Arthur Avenue. He asked if I knew Artuso's Pastry Shop and I mentioned that I went to elementary school with Anthony Artuso, the head of the family business. He pointed out Anthony sitting at the bar and I went over to speak with him. How many neighborhoods in NYC can you walk into a restaurant and bump into a childhood friend who you haven't spoken to in 60 years?

My history with Little Italy in Manhattan is not as detailed. When I got my first car as a teenager, one of the first trips was to Little Italy on Mulberry Street. That was about 60 years ago and I have gone there every year since, except for the two years I lived in Los Angeles. The original neighborhood stretched from Houston Street to Canal Street and part of it overlapped with the Italian part of Greenwich Village. Like Ar-

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## My 36 Resolutions for 2026

BY NANCY DAVIDOFF KELTON

1. Go to the gym three or four times a week.
2. Use as many machines as I do towels.
3. Do not count by threes when I do sit-ups.
4. Do all the stretches on the list my physical therapist gave me.
5. Do not expect the stretches to make me taller.
6. Do not work out at the gym when my husband is working out there. He burns more calories on the bike, holds his plank poses longer, and is in better shape than I am.
7. Remind myself that his shape, stamina and age—he is younger than I am—are not the reasons I love him.
8. Tell him more than once a day that I love him and not just when he is cooking a terrific dinner or doing the dishes.
9. Do not gossip.
10. Forget # 9. Do not gossip with anyone but my friend Molly. She knows more and talks faster than my other friends.
11. Practice the piano three times a week and improve how I play Chopin and Beethoven.
12. Practice kindness daily.
13. And forgiveness.
14. Do not hang out with people who lack empathy, sensitivity, and the wisdom to know they lack them.
15. When I come across them in work or especially at family gatherings, do not personalize. Their lack of empathy and sensitivity is their problem.
16. And these people are stupid.
17. In restaurants, do not say I am skipping dessert and then eat half of everyone else's.
18. Stay in touch with my college friends who live in Arizona, on the west coast, in Europe, or are orbiting in another galaxy.
19. Stay in touch with my high school friends even the ones who majored in cheerleading.
20. Stay in touch with my dreams.
21. Do not get defensive when a relative wonders why I do not have a cleaning woman, a microwave oven, a desire to watch current episode TV shows, and a desire to walk with other people rather than alone.
22. Do not get defensive when she wonders about the other ways I am not like her.
23. Continue to cherish my time alone.
24. Remind myself and people who know and like me that I enjoy being a guest far more than a host.
25. Remind myself that not all the hosts to whom I bring babka from the best bakery in town like babka.
26. Eliminate chocolate chip cookies from my diet.
27. Unless they are chewy.
28. Write regularly even when it is hard to caucus with my muse.
29. Appreciate how terrific it was that my mother gave me a copy of *The Feminine Mystique* when I was 15 and told me to read it so I will understand her better and have a better life than she did.
30. Understand how my peers said their mothers would never dream of giving them that book nor would they read it themselves. They thought that my mother's giving me *The Feminine Mystique* was a no-no and was like giving me *Peyton Place*.
31. Appreciate that after I took one ballet class, my mother stopped at the store to buy me toe shoes and when I said I didn't want to get out of the car, get the shoes or take ballet, because I didn't like it, she said fine and drove home.
32. Appreciate how understanding and loving my mother was in ways I did not see when I was growing up and then spent considerable time as an adult discussing in therapy.
33. Appreciate that when I was eight my parents took me to see *The Diary of Anne Frank* on Broadway—we lived 400 miles away. Every year after that, until I moved to New York City at age 20, we drove here for shows.
34. Appreciate how much I wish I could tell my parents in heaven that I treasure their gifts and how much of their caring wonderful selves they gave me. Right on top were a sense of humor, a love of books, and a love of the theater.
35. Continue to appreciate and love my funny, smart, sweet, kind, generous children and grandchildren and take enormous pride in them more than I can ever say.
36. Put this list in a drawer to use again next year.

## VILLAGE TRIVIA

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY BRIAN J. PAPE, AIA

## *A Tree Guard Becomes Gobbled*



Street trees have a hard time surviving in the harsh urban settings of New York City, and Greenwich Village is no exception. In fact, it may be worse here due to the narrowness of many sidewalks and the small tree pits saved for their roots to grow.

Remarkably, some trees do manage to prosper, despite all odds. This London Plane tree was planted years ago, as a sapling, just as others are being planted today. These trees seem to have stood the test of time and climate, as they remain park favorites.

This particular tree was carefully protected as a sapling by a tall metal fence guard, meant to avoid car bumpers from scraping the tree bark. With four vertical bars on each of four sides, held in place by two horizontal

bars at about 2' and 4' height, the fence has stood steadfastly for many years.

What has happened as the tree has grown strong and mighty over the years is that no one has noticed that the tree guard has squeezed against the tree trunk, and no one has expanded the fence to allow room from the tree.

Did the tree say to itself, "Well, I guess I'll have to stop growing, since the tree guard is not going to get any bigger?" No. Rather, the tree just did what it was meant to do, to grow to its intended size, engulfing the tree guard into its trunk almost entirely.

Do you know where to find this hardy tree and its guard?

See page 22 for the Trivia Answer.



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# When ICE Comes Knocking

## *The Village Independent Democrats Show How to Answer the Door*

BY ISIS O'FLYNN-SHAHAF

On Saturday, December 13, small businesses of the West Village were approached by 21 members of the Village Independent Democrats (VID) to help educate them about their rights against ICE. Informational pamphlets, in both Spanish and English, were handed to staff members. One is a sign to put outside a business's private area, which ICE officers cannot legally enter. The others include phone numbers such as Legal Aid Society and Human Rights First, as well as QR codes to help find lawyers. There is also information to help make an emergency plan, a list of documents to carry and not carry, how to find a detained person, bond funds, and videos on safely interacting with ICE. A red card is attached to every pamphlet listing the holder's constitutional rights on one side, with the other to be shown if stopped by an agent.

VID member since 2017 Melissa Carty guided the volunteers on their Saturday task. During these terrifying times, approaching people about ICE raids is intimidating. "You could knock on someone's door thinking they're a Democrat but they actually turn out to be MAGA," Carty says of her experience canvassing in the region. Although born and raised in the suburbs of New Jersey, ever since moving to NYC after college, Carty has felt protective of her NYC peers. This was her fourth canvassing event: "This is a sanctuary city...we will not make

this easy for them [ICE officers]," she said. She is a full time financial consultant and active community member who typically spends five to six hours per week dedicated to VID efforts. These include board meetings, setting up and attending events, and helping spread word on the cause.

I followed Carty and Sara O'Neill, a fellow VID member, to their assigned streets; Bleecker and Christopher. The duo reached a total of 25 businesses. After having entered Fiacchettia, a cozy Italian restaurant, one of the workers came back out to ask for more flyers.

Moesky Ahmed, an employee at Christopher Munch Shop, accepted the flyers appreciatively. He had never received this kind of information before and said "...it gives me hope that there will be change." Ahmed hopes to see less "unlawful enforcement" everywhere and for immigrants to feel safe in the city. His friend Manny Jimenez, general manager of L'industrie Pizzeria in Brooklyn, was born and raised in the Bronx. Jimenez feels passionately about immigrant safety, "What bothers me the most," he said, "is that everyone is an immigrant...if it wasn't for immigrants, nobody could be here." Jimenez hopes to see: "...a whole new administration." Having worked in the food industry for over five years, Jimenez comments that: "Pizza, Mexican, Halal, the delis, the bodegas...all don't happen without immigrants."

Both Jimenez and Ahmed are frustrated to see so many people who represent the core of NYC stripped of their rights.

Muré + Grand, a sweet clothing store on Bleecker Street was jam-packed with eager customers, but regional manager Indee E. took the time to absorb Carty and O'Neill's education. Her team has faced no concerns regarding ICE, but she recalls witnessing the Canal Street raids "...we saw all the military trucks down the block. It was scary." Her fellow store managers and staff members have casual conversations about what to do if ICE comes knocking, but the VID's canvassing was the first time the store had formal training. Indee has an optimistic view on the future of immigrant livelihood, saying that everyone has each other's backs and that there is a strong sense of community.

The duo stopped by The Flowery, a cannabis store on Christopher Street, where they spoke to the shift lead Raven Davis. Davis has always been passionate about social justice and spreading awareness on issues that she believes deserve more attention. She is proud to see people taking a stand against ICE: "New Yorkers are not having it...you are taking our people, community and culture." She, like many others approached by the VID, was appreciative of the information they received and said, "It is great to see this...authorities won't protect us, so we have to protect each other."

Preparing immigrants to safely handle the current political climate is no easy feat. To ensure confidence and success among members and volunteers, the VID partnered with Indivisible Harlem. Rebecca Saletan, a founding member, trained them for their canvassing. Founded in 2016 after Trump's first election, this group advocates for progressive values in the Harlem neighborhood. Laura Daigen-Ayala first established this project in Inwood: "She was the spark for all of this, we just picked it up and spread it...this whole thing would not exist without Laura," commented Saletan. The efforts have been highly effective: "In lots of places we go into, they've gotten an email from corporate...and they don't look at the emails...the employees don't see them, but if you go in with actual detailed, colorful, well-written, accessible material that gives them everything they need, then you are really reaching people...who most need the protection." Last weekend, Indivisible Harlem had 16 groups canvassing the neighborhood.

At the end of 2025, the VID completed six ICE canvassing events. This has been the group's first major effort in helping the immigrant community, but they have always supported immigrant rights. Currently, the West Village remains safe from ICE. With the VID as neighborhood superheroes, there is more hope for the protection of the immigrant community that has built the city we love.

# Awakening is Alive and Well

BY JAN CRAWFORD

Awakening is another word for becoming aware of deeper realities. It is a synonym for increasing openness to what is learned, be that painful or pleasurable. Jean Kline, the late French Advaita non-dualism teacher, encourages us to be open to openness itself. He even goes so far in *Invitation to Silence* to propose "Openness is your real nature. It is all you are."

And most of us would say we want to be open—to be awake to the present moment of our experience. We want to be receptive to new ideas and to the truths of others in all their richness and complexity. In today's parlance that also means being called "woke."

"Woke," a term originated by Black people to mean being aware of racial prejudice and injustice, grew into a word used across the culture. Now it has been weaponized, a slur derisively hurled at those who supposedly try too hard to be attuned to and aligned with others. And as we examine what "woke" might mean to us, perhaps we can first consider how awake we are or might be.

Every day I learn new ways my heart and conditioned mind are still contorted into selfishness, apathy or simply caught in automatic defenses. As an elderly Caucasian woman, I continue to be surprised when I

see yet another way reflexive judgements are still stealthily embedded in my "very progressive" psyche.

It is likely that some of my colonizing early ancestors were among those who took part in the murder and land theft of the 95 percent of Original Peoples in our country. But when I first began to open to that reality, I felt I was somehow ungratefully betraying my ancestors' beliefs and actions. Finally, however, I began to understand they would be relieved that someone could now acknowledge both their challenges and these truths.

As we begin to see what justice could look like, many of us are examining these unconscious blind loyalties. But why are so many of our present rulers so rabidly "anti-woke?" What terrifies them so much about reality that they are vigorously attempting to criminalize being conscious and being conscientious? Are they afraid they will no longer be able to take, by any means, advantage of those they obviously consider inferior, underserving or just plain expendable and replaceable? Are they frightened they could never be loved just for themselves? What, for example, do they fear would happen if they lost control over women's bodies? And how has the Gold-

en Rule—the basis of wokeness—become "Do unto others whatever will make you feel more powerful and perhaps even get you a more impressive golden toilet?"

But what are the costs of this new or renewed level of denial? For me personally, denial keeps me encased in the iron cocoon of both the subtle fantasy of exceptionalism and, as a woman, the fantasy of fragility our culture has required me to occupy. It also impedes opportunities to learn from and enjoy each other's cultures. And it interferes with my efforts to repair, where I can, the damage of my family's and my racism. Just as importantly, it obstructs my own joy in the relief of sweet freedom to give and receive love in a much wider world. And for us as a country, denial is epically dangerous. We see daily the heart-breaking amount of damage those are doing who now use the word "strong" to describe actions that are actually pure ruthlessness.

However, the next time you hear someone gleefully proclaiming "Woke is dead" remember the unprecedented recent national protests against injustice or some particularly stunning act of courage and resistance. Those acts confirm what is ultimately undeniable: the sacred knowledge that the lifeforce itself

moves us toward being more fully human.

Acknowledging difficult truths can be like slowly coming out of a long culturally imposed coma. Until our eyes acclimate, the light of some truths may seem just too painfully bright. However, as sight gradually returns, we begin to see the world as it is: complex, tragic, and filled with exquisite beauty and unlimited opportunities to contribute whatever each of us uniquely can.

Movements like those for racial justice or women's rights are, at their core, challenges to the pretenses Rosemerry Trommer speaks of in her poem, *The Awakening*. Our open, awakened, woke actions show us clearer and kinder paths forward. So, if anyone critically implies or even "jokingly" accuses you of being woke, as non-defensively as possible, just respond, "Thank you."

## THE AWAKENING

By Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

We are every day, more each other  
and still somehow ourselves. If only we could trust  
our uniting currents as unthinkingly as the rivers  
follow gravity – always with the least amount  
of resistance. How long will we pretend  
we are separate?

# Bird of the Year 2025

BY KEITH MICHAEL

Welcome to these high-flying festivities on Pier 57 at Hudson River Park's Discovery Tank for the 20th Annual West Village Bird of the Year Awards 2025—The Millies! Last year, this ceremony took place a few blocks south of here at "Millie's Bench" on possibly the coldest, blustiest morning of the winter. A handful of hardy, hearty celebrants donned thermal layers to applaud the birds of NYC. Gracious thanks to Hudson River Park for offering this cozy venue.

These awards began in 2005 at the corner of West 4th and West 12th streets where a pink House Finch became Bird #1 on my NYC bird-counting list—now up to #338 species. In 2012 the awards were dubbed "The Millies" in honor of my indifferent birding accomplice: a singular, red and white Pembroke Welsh Corgi. This is the fifth ceremony without Miss Millie's unscripted disdain. Even in her absence, she has now inspired 14 years of monthly avian tales with her combination of mirth and side-eyed disapproval. Everyone, please let out a resounding "Awooooo" in her memory and as thanks to *The Village View* for continuing to host this annual neighborhood celebration!



**EXTRALIMITAL.** A Pileated Woodpecker pair breaks the morning silence.



**CUTEST BIRDS.** Great Horned Owlets on a damp morning.



**MILLIE'S WEST VILLAGE NEW BIRD OF THE YEAR.** A discreet Eastern Wood-Pewee.



**FEMALE BIRD OF THE YEAR.** "Astoria" the Wild Turkey of Battery Park.

Before we begin, a reminder of the founding criteria for The Millies: "Birds must be seen in, above, or from the five boroughs of New York. Voting is weighted toward those birds observed during Millie's daily walks in the West Village. Additional points may be given to those candidates actually seen by the award's namesake." The Awards Committee continues to honor the anarchic disregard Millie had for ANY rules while comparing the attributes of each new avian candidate. The competition in 2025 was, as always, feather-ruffling!

Traditionally, these first three awards were programmed mid-ceremony because Millie disapproved and it gave her the chance to get a drink of water or nap.

**EXTRALIMITAL.** Several choices flew across my path for this "you have to work for it" category honoring birds seen outside of New York City. A cheeky pair of Canada Jays pilfering peanuts from the palm of my hand in the Adirondacks were the prime runners-up. The honor of this traveler's award goes to a duo of unapologetically noisy Pileated Woodpeckers who



**OWL OF THE YEAR.** A Barred Owl in Central Park.



**SAFETY IN NUMBERS.** A cloud of Sanderling in Queens.



**JUST BECAUSE.** Osprey with a fine catch.

woke me up on a Pennsylvania campsite the morning after, memorably, the side of my tent was grazed by a bear.

**CUTEST BIRD OF THE YEAR.** Honestly, this award was never given on Millie's watch. She prohibited any acknowledgment of cuteness other than herself. The Piping Plover chicks of Fort Tilden, Queens are perennial contestants. Other viable contenders are the multiple ducklings hatched in Hudson River Park or a pipsqueak Winter Wren who photobombed the rarer Connecticut Warbler in the Trinity Church Cemetery. However, this judge unanimously chooses a plush-toy pair of Great Horned Owlets—watched on a soggy morning from a respectful distance at an undisclosed location.

**NOT A BIRD.** While out looking for birds, other critters invariably show up. If I expanded this category to consider extralimital creatures, my first sightings of a Weasel family (NY) and a Fisher (PA) would tie for this accolade. A triple tie could easily include that PA campsite bear! Leaving behind the awesomeness of NYC whale and dolphin watching, other "at home" candidates include: a winter Ghost Crab on a Queens beach methodically balling sand out of its burrow, dozens of Italian Wall Lizards sunning themselves on the gravestone slabs at Brooklyn's Washington Cemetery, or a Central Park Raccoon family that secured air-conditioned summer housing in Glen Span Arch. After years of searching and waiting for him, the champion is the white squirrel of Prospect Park who finally made an appearance for me. Behold Mr. Bumble.

**REALLY NOT A BIRD.** This was a new category for honorary citations added last year. The first is a PLUS: The January spectacle of the Hudson River freezing which we hadn't seen in years. Millie might actually have liked this acknowledgement because the other-worldly sloshing of the icy pancakes always perked up her ears. The second is a MINUS: With new construction in Hoboken, in the coming year the celestial spectacle of the sun or full moon setting behind the Erie Lackawanna Tower will fade into the gossamer past. Look for it now.

**TRY, TRY AGAIN.** An explosive Bronx cheer is all that these three birds deserve. I tried four times for each of them. Stigmily, each failed to make an appearance: a lime green female Painted Bunting out in Far Rockaway, an American White Pelican that spent the summer at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, and a diminutive Cackling Goose at Pelham Bay Park in The Bronx. Boo. Hiss.

**CYRANO DE BERGERAC PRIZE.** This is an eccentric award for eccentric physiognomy. Is the most extravagant orange bill the carrot honker of the Caspian Tern? The clownish spear of the American Oystercatcher? Or the candy corn schnozzle of the Black Skimmer? "Your nose is rather large," you say? Admire the intricate sculpting of the Surf Scoter's prow.

**JUST BECAUSE or I'M PRETTY AND I KNOW IT.** The nominees for this brawl of a category were many and varied—too lengthy to potentially leave anyone out. Argue amongst yourselves, but the winner is an Osprey, savvy at ordering takeout.

**FEMALE BIRD OF THE YEAR.** This one's easy. The one and only "Astoria," the resident Wild Turkey hen of Battery Park, is the hands down winner, representing the fairer 50% of the bird population.

**BEST PARENTING or LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.** This award is blatantly unfair. Owls and eagles and geese, oh my. Each of the tens of thousands of parent birds who successfully raise offspring within NYC deserves this accolade. Nevertheless, a Red-tailed Hawk pair deserve worldwide credit

for tending a nest on the equator of the Unisphere, symbol of the 1964/1965 World's Fair, in Flushing Meadows Park.

**TWO BY TWO.** Kudos go to two birds who posed photogenically together. The subtle spectacle of two Solitary Sandpipers (that's their name) brushing wingtips at Ridgewood Reservoir in Brooklyn vie for the glory against a pair of roly-poly American Woodcocks in Bryant Park, and a territorial couple of Soras scuffling in Queens. But this year's duo receiving the accolade is an elegant pair of Bald Eagles who materialized out of the mist on Shooter's Island off of Staten Island.

**SAFETY IN NUMBERS.** Just as people congregate in cities for their own greater good, birds flock together for survival. A highlight crowd this year was an extralimital sunset murmuration of tens of thousands of Purple Martins along the marshes of Maurice River, New Jersey as they staged for their migration south. Closer to home, a punk-rock flock of 150 Royal Terns surprised me at Jacob Riis Park in Queens. However, at the same beach, I was truly bedazzled by a synchronized congregation of thousands of winter Sanderlings whooshing by me close enough to feel their wingbeats. They get my vote.

**OWL OF THE YEAR.** Six species of owls graced my path this year—each of them memorable, each of them screeching for an award. I'm going to have to give this one up to a ridiculously cooperative Barred Owl whoooo delighted, perhaps, thousands of rubbernecks this fall in Central Park.

**MILLIE'S WEST VILLAGE NEW BIRD OF THE YEAR.** Since Millie was a neighborhood-only kind of gal, this was her favorite award because these are the birds to whom she could have given her highest praise: to ignore them in person. Remarkably, there were five new birds for me this year in the West Village: #115 Horned Grebe, #116 Eastern Wood-Pewee, #117 Northern House Wren, #118 Lincoln's Sparrow, and #119 Clay-colored Sparrow. Millie's selection is the one she could have seen right around the corner from her front door—if she had deigned to look up: the more often heard rather than seen Eastern Wood-Pewee,

**NEW NYC BIRD OF THE YEAR.** This year's quartet of contestants was a varied lot. There was a Thick-billed Murre hanging out with the multitude of black-and-white winter ducks in Gravesend Bay, a way off-course from Central and South America Fork-tailed Flycatcher on Randall's Island, a living-up-to-its-name Little Gull seen oh-so-distantly at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in Queens, and this year's prize winner: a foraging white-eye-ringed Vesper Sparrow picked out on the vast parade ground of Van Cortlandt Park in The Bronx.

**BIRD OF THE YEAR 2025.** This is a heartbreak/exhilarating moment in this birder's year. It's time to choose just one superlative bird possessing a combination of rarity, resilience, accessibility, and beauty. The envelope, please. The Bronze Medal: Green-Wood Cemetery's young, dashing male Red-headed Woodpecker who worked for weeks filling larders and refurbishing multiple home sites to woo a damsel who never arrived. The Silver Medal: the Halloween-colored Varied Thrush, a wayfarer from the west coast, who entertained bird enthusiasts for weeks in Brooklyn's Prospect Park. But now, raise your mugs of hot chocolate. The Gold Medal goes to an especially dreamy color morph of our already runway-ready common Wood Duck, who frequented Kissena Park and Oakland Lake in Queens: the devilishly handsome "Silver" Wood Duck.

It's always hard to bring this ceremony to a close, because it means the end of another borough-hopping birding year in this birdiest of cities: New York City. Don't take my word for it. Go out and see the Birds of NYC for yourselves in 2026!

## SAVE THE DATE

In celebration of National Bird Week, Keith Michael will do a live reading of these Bird of the Year Awards 2025 (with improvisations and photos) at The Pier 57 Discovery Tank in Hudson River Park, Friday, January 9 at 4 p.m. The Discovery Tank is located at the back of Hudson River Park's Pier 57. Enter Pier 57 at West 15th Street and walk through the market to the back of the building. Enter the classroom through the double doors, across from El Bar.



NOT A BIRD. Mr. Bumble of Prospect Park.



BIRD OF THE YEAR 2025. The "Silver" Wood Duck.



NEW NYC BIRD OF THE YEAR. One more brown, stripey sparrow, the Vesper Sparrow.



BEST PARENTING. A Red-tailed Hawk pair finds parenting equilibrium.



CYRANO DE BERGERAC. The modern art of the Surf Scoter's bill.



REALLY NOT A BIRD. This Erie Lackawanna Tower view will disappear. All Photos by Keith Michael.

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

## Worth the Wait

BY CHURCHILL STONE

## DANTE WEST VILLAGE

## 551 HUDSON STREET

It was a snowy morning when my mom brought me along to have brunch with a friend. She used to be an international journalist and I was very excited to go out with her.

Originally, my mom had booked a table at Dante Aperitivo, but our reservation was moved to Dante West Village because Dante Aperitivo had a private party. This was very exciting because I had never been to Dante West Village. It's the restaurant on Perry and Hudson that always has a line outside.

Unlike most restaurants I visit, this one actually has a Kids Menu which is very good. It has pastas, grilled cheese, a cheeseburger and more. But since I'm ten and a half, I decided that I might like the regular menu more, and I did.

But first they gave us a cocktail menu. I asked if they had lemonade, and they did—this is generally a good sign for a kid-friendly restaurant. A tall glass with a tower of ice arrived and it was very tasty. My mother convinced her friend to order a "Fluffy Margarita" because that is the famous cocktail at Dante, and each Dante has their own special margarita.

My mom had a cappuccino which arrived with the cutest picture of a bear holding a ball in the foam! I was still thirsty after my lemonade and since we were having a ladies' lunch, I asked if I could have a mocktail. My mom said, "Sure, go ahead." I ordered the Cosmo Mojito which had a bright magenta color, two orange slices, basil and teeny tiny cute ice



FINALLY, MY MOM LET ME HAVE DANTE'S delicious dessert!  
Photo courtesy of Webster Stone.

cubes which were good to munch on. But like the lemonade, it was only a five-sip drink. I grabbed the mocktail list again, but my mom cut me off.

Before ordering, I asked the waiter about some of the best dishes. He mentioned the granola, the burrito, and the huevos rancheros, so we ordered all three including two of the burritos. The steak burrito seemed to be on everyone's table, so I had to try it. It had eggs, a stew of meat and beans, cheese, and tomatoes and onion. I was excited when it arrived, but I don't like tomatoes and onions so I tried to get them out of the burrito. It got messy. Our friend ordered the same burrito but asked to not have the steak as she is a vegetarian, and they were happy to do that for her.

I had never had granola before and this was a good one for my first try. My mom said it was "high-quality," but by then she was full from her huevos rancheros. So, I ate half and brought the rest home for my dad who loved it.

In the end, I still had a craving for something sweet. I remembered that one dessert on the Kids Menu sounded very good – "Soft-baked sugar cookies and rainbow sprinkles in panna ice cream." My mom said, "No way" because we had already ordered a lot. But her friend convinced my mom that I should try it since it was the holidays. And it was so good. I would recommend this dessert even for adults!

We walked back out into the cold weather, happy with our brunch at Dante. I was still thinking about that scoop of sugar cookie ice cream, like a ball of snow with rainbows.

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## VILLAGE PET PAGES

BY JOY PAPE AND BRIAN PAPE

# Two “Abys” Are Better Than One

BY EMILY AND STUART

Neighborhood dogs are outside but not often the cats, especially in this weather. We haven't seen one outside lately but we have new neighbors who have two cats. What a great way to welcome them by introducing them to you.

Abyssinians are often called the “dogs of the cat world,” and our two-year-old cat, Busy, has certainly lived up to that description. She is smart, loyal, and always on the move, with an impressive amount of energy for a small cat.

A few months ago, though, we began to notice that being “Busy” no longer seemed quite enough for her.

Even with plenty of attention, new toys, and lots of playtime, Busy had turned into what people call a “velcro cat.” She followed us from room to room, meowing and clearly looking to us for constant interaction. Whenever we left our apartment, we felt guilty imagining her sitting there alone, waiting for us to come back. It became clear that she didn't just need more stimulation—she needed a companion.

Deciding to add a second cat took some time. We spent months talking it through and weighing the pros and cons. We even debated whether a male or female cat would be a better match for Busy. Our informal “cat advisor” emphasized that the key was avoiding a power struggle — Busy needed to remain firmly in charge. We eventually chose another female, hoping for a good fit, and learned that personality matters much



**BUSY AND ELFIE** (right) love to cuddle together. Photo by Emily and Stuart.

more than gender.

We brought home a four-month-old Abyssinian kitten and named her Elfie, inspired by her oversized ears and her endearing nature. Naturally, we were nervous at first. Would Busy be jealous? Would our quiet Village apartment turn chaotic? We took things slowly, introducing them over several days and letting them get used to each other

through careful, gradual interactions.

Fortunately, our worries turned out to be unnecessary. Busy quickly seemed to recognize that Elfie was a kitten and treated her with surprising patience. She stepped into the role of big sister, showing Elfie the best window views, the warmest spots to nap, and the most interesting corners to explore. They now behave very much like siblings, espe-

### Li-Lac *continued from page 9*

deros added that Li-Lac uses molding equipment that you can't find anymore rather than cheaper polycarbonate equipment.

Any person can have a custom-order made. This only requires a picture. Meanwhile, almost all of Li-Lac's corporate orders are custom orders such as bars with a company's logo on them.

Each business day, \$50,000 worth of chocolate (\$250,000 per week) is driven in a shuttle van to Li-Lac's warehouse at the Brooklyn Army Terminal for storage before it is shipped. At the time of its construction in 1918, the “U.S. Army Military Ocean Terminal” was the world's largest concrete building complex and served as the United States' largest military supply base during World War II. Back then, 25,000 military and civilian personnel worked there. Now over 100 businesses rent offices and warehouse space there.

The warehouse is twice the size of Li-Lac's factory, and it needs to be because they store a lot of chocolate. During the summer, or the

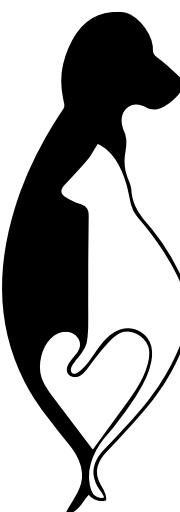
“snacking season” as Taylor likes to call it, Li-Lac ships as little as 10 boxes a day, but during Christmas, as many as 2,000. The company has mastered the chocolate business from every angle; from producing volume without sacrificing quality to maintaining a high level of aesthetics. This care and commitment is reflected in Li-Lac's most loyal customers and Landeros described these relationships, “I still have some people that say ‘I used to go to Li-Lac when I was six years old. After school every day, my mother would bring me over and we'd grab chocolate. Now I have that same tradition with my kids and now my grand-kids.’ So, it's really fascinating to see how many traditions we're a part of.”

Li-Lac now has dairy-free and sugar-free collections, which include the new 30-piece continental assortment of fruits and nuts. With the holiday season winding down, Li-Lac will be shifting its focus onto Valentine's Day.

The last word goes to Landeros who explained what makes the factory tick. He said, “We all give each other little tips about little details here. We all just try to become like one really big team. After 10, 15 years with a

lot of people, I see these people more than I see my family so it's a really great feeling to

be around people who are so passionate and creative and artistic and just love chocolate.”



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*Susan F, client*

cially when it comes to sharing—or reclaiming—old toys. Elfie has a talent for rediscovering toys Busy abandoned long ago, which somehow makes them exciting all over again.

Their bond is especially noticeable during grooming time. At first, Busy tried to groom Elfie constantly, while Elfie wriggled away, uninterested in sitting still. Over time, Elfie caught on, and now they can often be found sitting together on the cat tree, grooming side by side.

The loneliness we once worried about has been replaced by the sound of frequent wrestling matches and the sight of the two cats curled up together afterward. As it turns out, even the busiest cats benefit from having a close companion.

### GET TO KNOW BUSY & ELFIE

**Breed:** Abyssinians (“Abys”)

**Favorite Activity:** Waiting until we go to bed, then wrestling until they wear themselves out, followed by sleeping in a shared “cuddle puddle.”

**Neighborhood Watch:** Both cats take kitchen supervision seriously and compete for the best vantage point, whether on the loft or a bar chair.

**Favorite Treat:** Squeeze treats and freeze-dried chicken from Zoomies.

**What We Love Most:** How naturally Busy welcomed Elfie and took on the role of big sister.

*Follow on Instagram @busytinthevillage*

# Last Dance at Westbeth for Graham Studio

BY J. TAYLOR BASKER

Dancers need space. Space is at a premium in New York City. Since its inception, Westbeth has provided a premium place for dancers to run, leap, skip and spin their healing magic. The vicarious experience of a dance audience is unique for both mind and body. If you can't dance, just watching is valuable for your health!

But sadly, Westbeth is losing the 11th floor dance studio initiated by Merce Cunningham in 1971, shortly after Westbeth's founding. It was then transferred to the Martha Graham Studio in 2012.

The final dance performance was an appropriate tribute to the history of modern dance by the important company Dances We Dance, whose director, Francesca Todesco, draws much of her choreography from the founders of modern dance. The concluding performances in this historic space evoked the spirits of Doris Humphrey and Isadora Duncan whose techniques were incorporated into the contemporary choreography of Todesco and the Sokolow Theatre Dance Ensemble.

The program was divided into two parts. Part 1 *Repertory Works* featured performances of the original choreography of Humphrey and Duncan. Part 2 *Harmonic Dissonance* added the choreography of Todesco, Rosie Gentle and a tribute to Anna Sokolow. The performances were riveting and exhilarating.

The performance began with a startling scene, made more effective since there was no separation between the dancers and the audience. Into this darkened space, a light gradually grew on the stage, revealing a Rodin-esque sculptural group of figures, black and still, in the quixotic shadows right in front of our chairs! Then the figures began to move; light exploded revealing the contrast of many dancers in rose-colored gowns, reminiscent of Grecian-type chitons, weaving through their long gold scarfs, evoking ancient Greek himations. These were close copies of the costumes Humphrey used, and these dark figures seemed to have emerged from the past revealing the splendors of the classic piece that she choreographed to Bach's *Air for the G String*. Her lyrical, ethereal choreography was achieved by using the body's ability to travel between the polarities of balance and imbalance. Bodies gracefully fell to the floor and recovered. Backs became liquid, arms and legs forcefully reached through space, hands and feet embraced the earth and clouds, even necks became limbs stretching in rhythmic arcs. Partners were poles of energies; groups were gleeful spirits celebrating the power of the body to defy gravity and any constrictions. Freedom was celebrated. Gail Corbin's solo was strong and sure, affirming her close connection to Humphrey, whose foundation she directs. Together with Charles Weidman she reconstructed this piece for the José Limón Dance Company, all pioneers of modern dance. This piece expressed Humphrey's use of fluid movement, musicality and rhythmic structure as the core principles



**QUARTET-ROMANZE, OP.18: NO.1.** Music by Robert Schumann, choreography by Francesca Todesco. Dancers: Haley Wolfersberger, Colleen Edwards, Rosy Gentle, Kathleen Caragine. Photo by Jaqlin Medlock.



**SCHUBERT SYMPHONY #9** - Andante con Moto choreographed by Isadora Duncan (c.1914), staged by Francesca Todesco. Photo by Jaqlin Medlock.



**AIR FOR THE G STRING** choreographed by Doris Humphrey in 1928, staged by Gail Corbin. Dancers: Gail Corbin, Rosy Gentle, Haley Wolfersberger, Colleen Edwards, Kathleen Caragine. Photo by Julie Lemberger.

of her choreography. The result was an exciting and expressive kaleidoscope of bodies, scarfs and space.

The second piece was choreographed by Duncan to Schubert's *Symphony #9 The Great*. This work is famous for its break from symphonic norms giving woodwinds and brass prominence, and for its energetic and expansive quality. These characteristics harmonized with the work of Duncan, who also rejected classical forms, and emphasized a free flowing and improvisational structure, what she termed the "law of wave movement" in nature. Her choreography to Schubert's music parallels both the gentle,

nostalgic lines of Schubert's wistful, romantic mood that then erupts into the fierce energy of triumph and elation with dancers marching, kicking and leaping. The piece soon softens into a ritual, with quiet solemn procession and imagined offerings. A male soloist leaps into this sacred space, in a bright red toga, depicting a priest or tyrant, a strong male authority figure, directing and dominating the females. The first performer, Ian Bell, was more tyrant while the next night Oscar Rodriguez, with his Mediterranean classical features, was more priest, despite his bulging muscles and bandaged ankle. The unique interpretations each gave

to this challenging role is a reminder that viewing dances with different performers is quite worthwhile. In the concluding scherzo, Duncan's structured approach incorporating patterns of movement as opposition, succession and unison were playfully executed. The world becomes a cheerful place in which to frolic, Schubert's melancholy is dispelled and enchanting joyful gestures orbit and captivate the viewer.

Part 2 entitled *Harmonic Dissonance* was a series based on Duncan's *Scriabin Études*. Introduced by Todesco using Duncan's choreography, she employed Duncan's technique of sharp distinctive gestures that matched the pointed intent of Isadora Duncan, who was sympathetic to the Russian Revolution, the suffering of the oppressed and the tragic losses to violence, war, famine, imprisonment and torture. Todesco describes the mood of these dances – with frequent falls and expressive hands grasping tragedy. In Schubert's *Impromptu*, danced by the Sokolow Ensemble, some of the movement is so smooth it is as though the dancers' feet were on rollers, yet this velocity dramatically collapses onto the floor. Then the movements become both gentle and acrobatic. There are spins, leaps into partner's arms, and tangible tenderness using the drama of wide black skirts as a unifying element between figures, one of whom is a male also in a voluminous skirt. The *Impromptu*'s uncertain tonalities end in a sustained tension of a cascade of figures tightly grouped, again reminiscent of a Rodin sculpture unified by the verticality of the dark skirts.

Returning to *Scriabin*, the dances become apocalyptic. There is panic watching the sky, bodies, no escape, only death. Todesco evokes the paralysis of war and grief in her choreography. Returning to Duncan's choreography and *Scriabin*, the tragic mood transforms into defiance. Dancing in darkness, red light, with clenched fists, imprisoned, with movement in convergent paths of death and farewell. I thought of the soloist, Coleen Edwards, as a Charlotte Corday, who murdered Marat during revolutionary times. The duo of Ballard and Todesco was angular, as two vectors that have magnitude and direction radiating from the solar plexus as Duncan directed. Geometrically directed, the movements are strong but free of cliché or artifice. Gentle's solo choreographed by Todesco, brings Duncan's emotive strength to a scene of angst and anger. Duncan knew personal grief; she lost her three young children. The world seems to collapse. Violence and hate prevail. Do we accept it or do we scream, as the dancer's contorted face implies as she concludes this dystopian vision, that is so contemporary and painfully familiar to us today.

These performances are not just brilliant dance and a lesson in modern dance history but vibrant visions of the extremes the human spirit endures, from ecstasy to extermination. Westbeth will miss being crowned with such dance on our top floor.

# First Impression: Monet and Venice

BY ERIC UHLFELDER

One can only wonder what Claude Monet first thought when he finally set foot in Venice in 1908 so late in life.

A possible clue comes from an unrelated architectural traveler, Claude Bragdon, who had first visited the city a decade earlier. Reporting back to the States, he wrote, "Everything I had read was clean forgotten, swallowed up in wonder—and during my first moments on the Grand Canal I suffered from a sort of indignation that no one had in any way prepared me for what I found there. How should one convey the idea of light to a blind man or of such color as is there to dwellers in the grey-brown cities of the North? Venice is a shattered rainbow, built into a city."

The Brooklyn Museum, in collaboration with the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, insightfully explores these questions about the artist's initial reaction and artistic response to the city through its current exhibition, "Monet and Venice."

The first formal show devoted to Monet's Venice in over a century, the exhibition brings us alongside the artist during his only visit to the city by weaving the Venetian works of Canaletto, Manet, Sargent, Turner, and Renoir around Monet's. They are complemented by postcards, letters and personal remembrances of the trip, serenaded by a commissioned symphonia inspired by the exhibition.



PALAZZO CONTARINI

More than half of Monet's 37 finished Venetian canvases have been assembled from various institutions.

Lisa Small, senior curator of European Art at the Brooklyn Museum, is thrilled "to reunite so many of Monet's radiant paintings of Venice, including Brooklyn's own Palazzo Ducale, which was acquired in 1920."

Small, who co-curated the show with Melissa Buron, observed that "Monet found the lagoon city an ideal environment for capturing the evanescent, interconnected effects of colored light and air that define his radical style . . . conjured in prismatic touches of paint, (that) dissolve in the shimmering atmosphere like floating apparitions."

Despite how closely we link Monet and Venice, this connection almost never was. We learn from the exhibition that Monet didn't want to go to Venice.

His only trip to the Laguna was born from a need to escape from his obsessive struggles with Giverny's water lilies. Knowing her husband, Alice suggested a trip to Venice.



CHIESA SAN GIORGIO MAGGIORE

Monet, then 68, lamented "the city is too beautiful to be painted" and he was "too old to paint such beautiful things."

How could one originally render this historic city that has been endlessly rendered to the point of romantic cliché, echoing the thoughts of Bragdon: a city impossible to envision from a distance. (And it surely didn't help that Monet arrived to a rainy and windy September.)



GRAND CANAL

Small provides an answer, "Monet renewed the city by dematerializing its history—in fact, by making it appear ahistorical—reclaiming for it in delicate touches of paint its essential reality: shifting light on stone and water." Monet as modernist.

In forging this original path, he conceded the city had indeed cast its spell on him. And this experience expanded his sight, having helped him see things anew, and reenergized his work after returning to Giverny.

Co-curator Buron, who had been in charge of curatorial affairs at the Fine Arts

Museum of San Francisco and is now head of collections and chief curator at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, wrote that "Without Venice, the work for which Monet is best known today might not have reached the height of its creative expression."

For those who know the city well, this splendid celebration of Venice, however, is tinged with a melancholy about what might have been: had Monet come to Venice as a

younger man and had returned in different seasons...with different light... and an ever-evolving vision.

J'agine.

**MONET AND VENICE.**  
**The exhibition runs through February 1, 2026 at the Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway. For more information, see [brooklynmuseum.org](http://brooklynmuseum.org).**



PALAZZO DARIO

# Marty Friedman on His Life as a Guitar Hero: Dreaming Japanese to a New Reality

BY KAJU ROBERTO



**MARTY FRIEDMAN**, prog metal guitar hero, celebrity and author performs with his band from Japan at City Winery. Photo by Kaju Roberto.

One of the most fascinating musicians I've ever known, Marty Friedman has been and remains a rock star, a guitar hero, and a man who after achieving his wildest dreams through huge music success in America during the 80s and 90s, completely started over and became an unlikely media celebrity in the early 2000s in a country half a world from his homeland.

It's hard to believe that Friedman has now lived in Japan for almost 23 years.

"The problem with paying your dues is that it never ends," Friedman eloquently opines in his 2024 autobiography *Dreaming Japanese*. "You never stop paying your dues. Every single day."

From his riveting book, I've gathered Friedman's life has always been about recurring reinvention and adaptability. He gets knocked down repeatedly and has to get up and completely start over again, followed by feelings of isolation and deep reflection, which ultimately leads to a resolution of an improbable reinvention that propels him to greater heights.

Through his relentless perseverance Friedman struggles to start again from nothing, going from tasting local band success as a teenager in rural Maryland, to the verge of homelessness in L.A., to ubiquitous rock superstardom followed by a near nervous breakdown, to a radical reinvention as an American living in Japan as a mainstream TV celebrity and J-Pop musician.

I interviewed Friedman about his extraordinary life and career that continues to be an

open book while visiting City Winery in the West Village. Earlier this year, I'd seen Friedman perform in this same venue with his eponymous band during their U.S. Tour.

#### Friedman's Early Life

Born in Washington, D.C. in 1962 and raised in rural Maryland in a Jewish household, Friedman was destined to live and thrive in an unorthodox lifestyle, whether through his social interactions with his peers or fledgling music career.

Friedman admittedly grew up from a place of privilege and security compared to other big-league musicians. His father was a National Security Agency (NSA) executive working on highly classified projects. Friedman often moved to different parts of the world for years at a time with his family due to his dad's assignments, adjusting to life in Germany and later forming and performing in bands in Maryland, Hawaii, California, and Japan.

While life moved on, Friedman lacked motivation until accidentally discovering the guitar at the age of 14 inspired by his enthusiasm for the band KISS.

Here are some excerpts from our interview.

**KR:** I went to see you at City Winery in New York City on February 4th. What a fun show! One thing I totally loved is your on-stage vibe with your band.

You always have another great guitar player in the band, and you not only unselfishly pass the baton and allow them to shine,

you turn it into a hilarious comedy act, especially during the call response solo of *Tornado of Souls*. You constantly badger him. It's funny, dude. How did that shtick start?

**MF:** You know, it's one of those things you never know what people are gonna like about any parts of your career. People still bring up that song, *Tornado of Souls*, and they really connect to it. So instead of me playing it, he plays it and then I stop him. I get pissed off at him for playing my solo. Then we argue on stage and everyone loves it. You know, like you said, it was really funny!

We do that in every country in the world. And the language barrier or lack of language barrier just makes it a completely different, hilarious experience. I think the funniest has to be in Japan because Naoki doesn't speak English, but I speak Japanese to him and he's from Kobe, which is in Osaka.

So we argue and when I speak in his dialect, it just sounds completely ridiculous. It kind of adds to the whole craziness of the situation. We have fun with it and bring the audience into it!

**KR:** Joking around about stuff with your buddy guitarist Jason Becker was also a big thing back in *Cacophony*. I can feel that special camaraderie you guys had when you did that U.S. tour in 1988 having extracurricular activity after the concerts. You met a Latino one night in one of the southwestern states and he really teased you about that.

**MF:** Ha ha. That was funny. I put all that kind of lowbrow humor in the book. People like to think if I'm a musician or someone they admire that I'm somehow like a really classy guy. I'm just like everybody else — just as crude as the next guy.

I like to disarm people in that way. We're all the same, and we all think about the same things, and we all kid each other about the same things. So I put a lot of that stuff in the book.

**KR:** What do you think of the younger generation of shredders today? Ichika Nito, Marcin, Tim Henson and Max Ostro. Do you think they're missing something despite their technical proficiency?

**MF:** Absolutely not. I'm friends with all these guys and have worked with all of them. I'm here to tell you that they're all fantastic.

I've done the most work with Ichika. We're ready to put something out together in the next couple of days. He's the real deal. Marcin is just mind blowing and Tim Henson is really great. I'm very happy that these guys came up because it revives interest in guitar.

**For more information visit:**  
[Martyfriedman.com](http://Martyfriedman.com)

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

# Alan Berliner's *BENITA*

## *Excavating the Archive to find the Unspoken in BENITA*

BY MICHAEL JACOBSON

Recently, the 16th annual DOC NYC was held in Lower Manhattan where more than 300 documentaries were showcased. I was fortunate to see Alan Berliner's *BENITA*, a feature-length documentary directed by the veteran New York City filmmaker. Berliner is an acclaimed American independent filmmaker known for his deeply personal and innovative essayistic documentaries, such as *Nobody's Business*, *The Sweetest Sound*, and *First Cousin Once Removed*. Berliner's forte has been to focus on his family's mishegoss (craziness). Through that process, he has been able to reveal bits of himself.

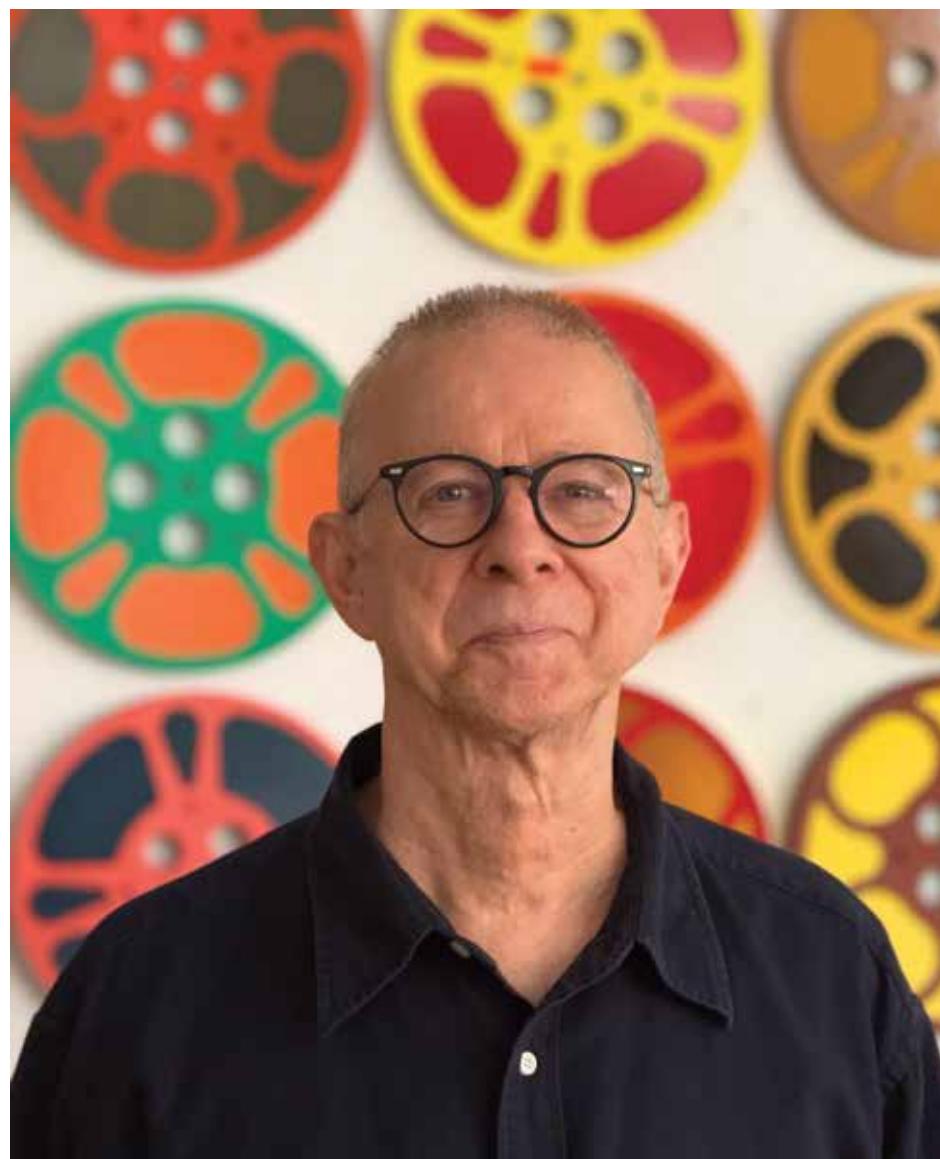
In *BENITA*, Berliner for the first time documents a protagonist outside his inner family circle. *BENITA*'s narrative may have a sad ending, but the journey to that end exposes us to Benita Raphan, a caring and gifted New York City filmmaker and visual artist. Berliner's documentation of her creative life is a wonder to behold.

A few days after the screening, I interviewed Berliner at his downtown Manhattan studio. He generously shared his motivation and techniques for making this engrossing film. Berliner describes his relationship with Raphan as one of dual dimensions: "We were colleagues, and we were friends." Though their filmmaking approaches differed—Raphan favored short, experimental portraits of artists and innovators; Berliner favors long-form personal films—they both occupied the boundary-pushing experimental side of the documentary space. After Raphan's death by suicide, Berliner's initial decision to make the film arose from a deeply felt obligation, born from the grief and reflection that follows such a shocking and inexplicable loss.

### The Obsession of the Archive

The making of *BENITA* became an act of archival excavation, a meticulous search for the subject's soul within Raphan's creative remnants. Berliner spent a full year immersed in her files, reading "every word she ever wrote...and looking at every photograph or QuickTime video she ever took." He was confronted by the chaotic nature of the archive, which was "a vast, unfiltered collection" of files... "hundreds of folders... with countless photographs labeled with just numbers for names." Berliner realized he had to "suffer the patience it took to look at every single one of them, which took a lot of time, a lot of obsessive energy, but I did it."

The crucial breakthrough—the "aha moment" that framed the entire film—came when he found a numbered QuickTime file buried in one of her hard drives. Raphan had recorded herself saying she no longer wanted to pursue a film about canine cognition (the one she had received a Guggenheim fellowship for). Instead, she wanted to make a



VETERAN NEW YORK FILMMAKER, Alan Berliner, above.

film about how COVID had impacted people struggling with mental illness.

"When I found that digital file, I understood how I could structure the film," Berliner explained, "and how COVID would become a character in the story." This discovery gave him a profound sense of permission—but also a responsibility—to honor and finish the project Raphan started before she

took her life: a film about mental health.

This realization presented a searing irony. "Had Benita not taken her life and told me that she was going to make a film about how COVID had impacted people with mental health struggles...guess who would have been the creative advisor on that film? I would have been the first person she came to for advice," said Berliner.



BENITA RAPHAN, the subject of Alan Berliner's documentary, above, was a caring and gifted New York City filmmaker and visual artist.

### The Stylistic Role of the Translator

In navigating the stylistic difference between his structured editing and Raphan's abstract, layered visuals, Berliner embraced the role of "translator." He made the conscious decision that almost everything in the film must come from Raphan's own archive—conceiving of the film as a collaboration. This voluntary limitation "pressurized the creative decisions in a constructive way," ensuring the film honored her unique visual language. Berliner viewed his process as an act of translation, one that required him to feel as if he was "channeling Benita" in making his creative choices. He concluded that to omit the darkest, most difficult material from her journals "would be like making a portrait of Benita without using the color black or dark gray."

His ultimate goal was to make a film that is "real, that's honest... that's transcendent," giving the artist an enduring posthumous legacy.

### The Uncharted Territory of Illness

The commitment to making the film took an unforeseen, deeply personal toll on the filmmaker. Berliner reveals that he got cancer in the middle of making the film. His subsequent battle with chemo and radiation put him in "a very dark space." He explains that his personal ordeal provided a terrible, unique empathy. "I understood in a different and more profound way what hell was, or what Benita's experience of hell might have been like, and it impacted my level of understanding and empathy." This experience, he says, "changed the way I look at life and the world," lending an unparalleled honesty to the final portrait.

I admire the commitment and the success of Alan Berliner. He started his career as a freelance sound editor and became an independent filmmaker who has created several personal documentaries that have been screened around the world. To my amazement, his films, to a great extent, are a one-man band. And for four decades, he has managed to stay independent as he continues to create marvelous and engaging documentaries. I look forward to more in the future.

To find out where you can see *BENITA*, visit Alan Berliner's appealing website: <https://alanberliner.com/>

Michael Jacobsohn is an independent New York City filmmaker. He recently completed the "Cornelia Street Cafe In Exile" which is a full-length documentary on the venerated Cornelia Street Cafe. In addition, he curates and hosts a bi-monthly screening of short films by New York Metropolitan filmmakers at New Plaza Cinema.

# Two True Villagers on Why the Village Still Matters

BY ROGER PARADISO



**REVEREND BILLY** preaching with the choir. Photo courtesy of Reverend Billy.

*My friends Reverend Billy and James Drougas got game. I asked these true villagers about the past, present and future of the Village.*

## Reverend Billy

You can see and hear Reverend Billy most every Sunday when he preaches at the Quaker House. He is joined by his Stop Shopping Choir which performs the best church music in the Village. The Quaker House is located at 15 Rutherford Place in the East Village area. Here's what Reverend Billy has to say.

"I believe in having neighbors. Mayor-elect Zohran was all about neighbors and neighborhoods. When I ran for mayor in 2009 it was all about neighborhoods. Knocking on doors. Not sending emails and texts. It's a time of radical change. And I think the East Village will be ready to deal with that change. In particular Washington Square Park, Tompkins Square Park, and Union Square Park. These are outdoor theaters where the police can't control us.

"There is NYU, a wealthy university, and

the big conservative rich people who want to control these parks especially Washington Square Park, but they can't.

"I predict huge radical changes. Radical changes about the earth, about people who are in jeopardy with what they are paid and with their health care... People chased around by illegal cops, by fake cops with masks.

"I see a big uprising. Greenwich Village will lead this uprising. There's ICE everywhere around the world. There are Trumps all around the world. And rich people around the world. And they think they own us. I think Greenwich Village will rise again.

"The magic is in the air. The strongmen, computers, and AI and over blown military will be blown away by brilliant, eccentric, wonderful Villagers."

## James Drougas

Jim Drougas owned Unoppressive Non-Imperialist Bargain Books on Carmine Street. He was displaced after COVID and closed the classic store because of the rent. Here's what Jim had to say.



**THE NEW MOBILE DROUGAS BOOKSTORE.** Photo by James Drougas.

"The first quarter of the 21st century has been daunting at times — 9/11, Trump, COVID, Trump again. Now, the Village is re-thriving, almost too good to be true in pockets of neo-gentrifying itself all the more. Unaffordable for many, and yet still a fine playground for all of us.

"My part as a bookseller is ready to re-emerge imminently in the form of a lovely, tall book mobile with 65 linear feet of sturdy bookshelves. Everything fit in just right with synchronistic precision. The inventory of titles is as fine as ever. I am excited to roll it out to the public.

"Magnetic signage with life-sized *Sgt. Pepper* album cover styled images of favorite authors will cover the outside and inside. Unoppressive Non-Imperialist banners will unfurl on all four sides. I am also invited to set up a new pop-up bookselling station in another restaurant in 2026. Unoppressive rides again.

"It is exciting and perhaps heralds a new moment together with all optimism of a new mayor who is acknowledged effusively

by even the more cynical figures as the new youthful spirit of support, manifesting the power of AOC/Bernie/tens of thousands of tremendous groundswells that are borne out of sheer joy and untrammeled optimism. Even the most skeptical among us cannot dismiss the sheer joy and spunkiness of it all.

"The resolve is sweeping us up in huge measure. It comes with the joy of watching Trump fawn over Zohran hilariously or the sight of the brave woman in the polka dot dress holding both middle fingers up to the giant military ICE vehicle on Canal Street in an astonishing defiant posture a few weeks ago. NYC safety is increasingly more about safety against ICE than about crime as such.

"The Village and the city are always going in cycles on a pendulum of Dark Nights of the Soul and brilliant creative impulses of emergent, powerful, young and old voices of important, meaningful dynamics. It is impossible to give up hope despite all the setbacks."

*Happy New Year to all the Villagers around the world!*



## WRITE FOR THE VILLAGE VIEW

**This is YOUR neighborhood and YOUR news.  
Please contribute!**

**Direct all submissions to  
articlesforvillageview@gmail.com**

## TRIVIA ANSWER FROM PAGE 12

This mighty tree and its pit is located at 55 Morton Street, a particularly quaint part of Village streets. The tree has not avoided all indignities, for besides the girdling guard, the trunk has been split open on this side, although it has tried to close the wound. It remains a sentry for the street, year 'round.

## SCENE FROM THE STREET

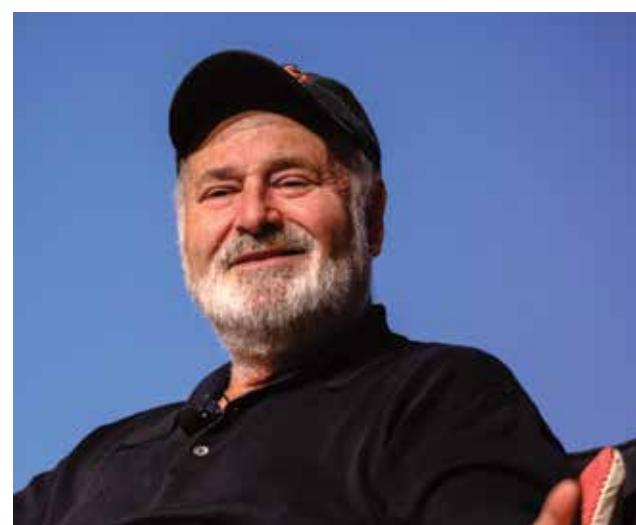
TEXT AND PHOTO BY BRIAN J PAPE, AIA

One Sunday in mid-December, New York was blessed with a rare winter scene. Moisture-laden snowfall during the early morning hours had clung to everything it touched, giving every tree and bush a cake icing from nature. The pure white coating brightened every street and every park as the sun rose that morning in the cold temperatures.

It seemed no one could resist snapping photos of the unusual scene, for it was a sight to behold. For some visitors, it might have been their first experience with snow (can you imagine?) but even for a northern boy like me, it brought beautiful memories of childhood to mind. And now, this too is an unforgettable memory to keep.



WALKING THROUGH WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK took on a whole new aura after a snowfall coated everything with white. Credit: Brian J. Pape, AIA.



ROB REINER IN 2016. Photo credit: Neil Grabowski via Wikipedia Commons, CC-BY-2.0.

The death of Rob Reiner and his wife, Michele Singer, has caused great sadness. Yet, during his life, he brought us many moments of laughter and tears because he was a tremendous actor and director.

Rob's only connection to the Village seems to be the famous *When Harry Met Sally* scene at Katz's Deli on the Lower East Side (more on that later). But there is one profound connection to New York City. This Hollywood icon was born in the Bronx. His father, Carl Reiner, was a legendary writer, performer and director who worked on sitcoms, plays and films, including the *Sid Caesar Show*, *Dick Van Dyke Show*, *Where's Poppa?*, *The Jerk* and *Oh God*.

Rob's show business family moved to Los Angeles where he went to Beverly Hills High School. No surprise that Rob studied film at UCLA and had some minor parts in the Hollywood landscape when he was young.

However, it was the television show, *All in The Family*,

## RIP Rob Reiner

BY ROGER PARADISO

that brought young Rob to a national audience. The Norman Lear production was groundbreaking in its presentation of Archie Bunker, a bigoted character who brought us to laugh at him without mocking him. Lear was trying to open doors not burn them down. Rob played the son-in-law called "Meathead" by Archie Bunker played by Carroll O'Connor. Meathead, the young idealist son-in-law, tried to bring out the humanity in Archie. This endeared Rob to a national hit TV show audience—and it provided all of us with great comedy that tried to project a viewpoint that we were "all in the family."

Rob then went on to direct some classic films. His first film, *This is Spinal Tap* (1984) was the ultimate rock 'n' roll satire. Who could forget Nigel, the guitar player, bragging about how loud his amp was? When challenged by Marty, the mockumentary director played by Reiner, Nigel points to the volume knob of the amp and says, "These go to eleven."

He went on to do *Stand By Me* (1986) partly funded by his second "father" Norman Lear. The young actor, River Phoenix, plays a boy moving towards adulthood. The most famous lines of the movie were reportedly written by Rob: "I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was 12. Jesus, does anyone?"

*When Harry Met Sally* (1989) featured the famous Katz's Deli on the Lower East Side. Out of the blue, Meg Ryan stuns Billy Crystal by faking an orgasm in the filled-to-capacity deli. Rob's mother, Estelle, cast by Rob, turns to a waiter, and says, "I'll have what she's having."

Rob was a political figure, and he had legendary clashes with President Trump which in a strange way mimicked his clashes with Archie Bunker.

He will forever be remembered for his creative work in film and television. Thank you, Rob, for your classic contributions to our film and television history. Rest in Peace.



1989 FILM WHEN HARRY MET SALLY. Sally (Meg Ryan) and Harry (Billy Crystal) are catching up at Katz's Deli.

# Turning 80!

BY RICHARD ERIC WEIGLE

On July 7, 2025 I was ecstatic to turn 80. I had survived almost dying of amoebic dysentery in the Peace Corps in the 60s. I survived AIDS which devastated so many right here in Greenwich Village. I survived 911, Super Storm Sandy, the first term of Donald Trump and just for spite, I am determined to survive his second term.

So I am proud to have made it to 80, but how did I become a cliché? I have spent years going to the gym, taking yoga, benefitting from reflexology, acupuncture and massage, having a good diet, taking supplements to boost my immune system, staying creative, finishing books I do not like just to prove I can do it, trying not to become a grouchy old white man who complains about everything and talks about how great Greenwich Village used to be--and most importantly--having a great life partner who I am lucky enough to have in my wonderful husband, Michael Anastasio.

So what happened? It was a moment that can happen to anyone, a moment that can change your whole life in an instant with a broken hip or worse. While in the beautiful city of Amsterdam this past August, I tripped on a loose brick and fell hard on my face hitting the cement sidewalk. I remember thinking as I was falling, "What have I done?" Concerned Dutch bystanders quickly came to my aid, and slowly I realized that my hips and knees felt OK. Michael very carefully helped me up. My face hurt and was badly bruised, but we cautiously made our way to our friend's nearby apartment. I was able to go out to dinner after the blood was wiped off and sun glasses were put on. As the dinner progressed, my nose began to swell, both eyes turned black and I looked like a prize fighter who had lost his match very badly. My dear husband stated it best when he said that I would have been a cliché if I had broken my hip or knee, but it was a testament to the good shape I was in that I did not.

Now I want to share what a few local leg-



**NEWLY MINTED OCTOGENARIAN** Richard Eric Weigle, above. Photo by Michael Anastasio.

ends and mentors have relayed to me about aging. Eccentric and wonderful Barbara Steinberg who lived at 55 Morton Street for over 60 years and who passed away in 2023 at the age of 91, told me, "Never use age as an excuse not to do something." For the most part I agree with her. But sometimes it is fun and convenient to use age when you are invited to something you really don't want to go to--or in the case of a recent return flight from Mexico--ask if we might board the plane a little before our assigned group because of my age and a bad knee. It truly is amazing how accommodating people can be when you are nice.

Former Greenwich Village resident and Academy Award winning actress, Eva Marie Saint, who turned 101 last July, continually voices her motto "Just keep moving" and she still walks in the park near her LA home.

Local celebrity, writer, and Grove Street resident, Calvin Trillin, when asked about his secret to longevity, quipped, "Good handrails!" And when you live in a brownstone in NY, those are especially relevant.

A friend gave me a wonderful book for my birthday titled *80 Things To Do When You Are 80* and I wanted to share some memorable quotes that I hope that you will relate to.

Preventative medicine doctor, Roger Landry wrote, "I want to age like a leaf, getting more colorful as I age. And when my time comes, I want to just fall off the tree, no long chronic disease, no expensive long decline and no loss of independence or dignity."

Cicero said, "Gratitude is the highest human virtue. Be grateful for friends, family, freedom, opportunities and all the beauty in the world."

Betty Finney wrote, "Be the architect of your own life...Bring your experience and wisdom to the forefront."

Dr. Ruth Heinrich said, "Turning 80 is.... something to be grateful for as you have made it past the average life expectancy for people in this country."

Gilbert Leclerc, Ph.D., wrote, "...living with meaning brings vitality, creativity and joy. So find a hobby, help someone else, make something, write a poem, paint picture, plant a tree or even a flower, add beauty to the world in any way that you can."

Lois Ernst said, "I no longer allow my past to rule my present....Accept the now!"

Virginia Kauer wrote, "Change is the essence of life. If we do not change with the times, we are sure to lose out on so much that life has to offer."

And I will end with my favorite quotes from a very controversial octogenarian, actress and activist, Jane Fonda. You can love her or hate her but most people agree that she is one intelligent and interesting lady.

"Stay curious. It is much more important to be interested than interesting."

"One of the most important things about getting older is forgiveness and letting go of hate."

"Aging is not...where you peak at middle age. It's ascending a staircase into growth, well-being, wisdom and happiness."

I used to tell friends that if you age the right way, each decade will be better than the one before, but so far the jury is still out on my 80s. The good news is that I spent six weeks in Europe, 10 days in Mexico, helped run a film festival, produced and directed a new documentary, and still live a creative and productive life. The not so good news is that I injured my knee working out, but instead of whining about that, I have decided to be the architect of my own destiny and do everything in my power to make sure that the 80s are my best decade yet.

## VILLAGE VERSES

### NEW YORK CITY

SUSAN M. SILVER

I feel the light embrace  
of the fog-fingered city night  
that cares not if age or illness  
has capriciously  
savaged the body  
and scarred the spirit.  
Beside me  
I hear the unconquerable heartbeat  
of the neon-star city night  
as I luxuriate  
in solitude amid the urban fury.  
Flirt with me forever, dear one,  
whisper secret longings,  
take me, toy with me,  
derive your particular pleasures,  
New York, my own, my truest lover.

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## Greenwich House Classes - January 2026

### KIDS AFTERSCHOOL WHEEL - AGES 10-13

**Mondays, starting January 5 through March 23, 2026 — 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm**

#### 16 Jones St., West Village

A weekly pottery class for students ages 10-13 that builds both creative skill and focus through hands-on work at the potter's wheel. Through guided instruction, students learn the fundamentals of wheel throwing and glazing while developing patience, concentration, and confidence. To register: [hisawyer.com/greenwich-house-pottery/schedules/activity-set/1701902](http://hisawyer.com/greenwich-house-pottery/schedules/activity-set/1701902)

### HAPPY HOUR POTTERY WORKSHOP

**Saturdays, starting January 10 through March 28, 2026 — 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

#### 80 Eighth Ave., Suite 601, Chelsea

A relaxed, hands-on ceramics workshop designed for adults looking to unwind and get creative. Perfect for beginners, this two-hour class offers an approachable introduction to clay. Participants explore pottery wheel throwing and handbuilding on alternating weeks, guided step-by-step. No prior experience required. To purchase: [hisawyer.com/greenwich-house-pottery/schedules/activity-set/1703959](http://hisawyer.com/greenwich-house-pottery/schedules/activity-set/1703959)

### CLAY WORKSHOP FOR FAMILIES

**Sundays, starting January 11 through March 22, 2026 — 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm**

#### 16 Jones St., West Village

Clay for Families is a hands-on pottery workshop designed for children ages 6 and up and the adults who care for them. This shared studio experience invites families to slow down, get creative, and work side-by-side exploring clay through simple handbuilding techniques. No prior experience required. To purchase workshop tickets: [hisawyer.com/greenwich-house-pottery/schedules/activity-set/1705220?source=campst](http://hisawyer.com/greenwich-house-pottery/schedules/activity-set/1705220?source=campst)

### GREENWICH HOUSE MUSIC SCHOOL BALLET CLASSES FOR CHILDREN

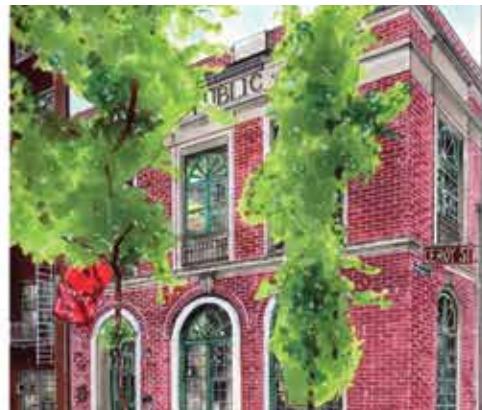
**Days and times vary based on age group, classes for children ages 3.5 and up  
Starting in January and going through June**

#### 46 Barrow Street, West Village

Our ballet classes for kids in the heart of Greenwich Village are welcoming, non-competitive, and designed to support every child's development—socially, emotionally, and physically. To register: [greenwichhouse.org/music-school/classes/childrens-programs/ballet](http://greenwichhouse.org/music-school/classes/childrens-programs/ballet)

# Hudson Park Library Celebrates 120 Years with Jazz, Poetry, Printing, and Community Art on January 29

BY EMIL ALLAKHVERDOV



LEFT TO RIGHT: Rocco J. Iacovone of Rocco John Group, Author Esther K. Smith and Dikko Faust of Purgatory Pie Press, Hudson Park Library illustration and illustrator Lily Annabelle, author and poet Mya Matteo Alexice. Photos courtesy of Emil Allakhverdov.

Hudson Park Library, a Greenwich Village landmark that first opened its doors on January 24, 1906, will celebrate its 120th anniversary with a special Community Night on Thursday, January 29, 2026, from 6 to 8 p.m. The event marks more than a milestone, offering a lively, drop-in evening that reflects the library's long-standing role as a cultural and creative gathering place.

The anniversary celebration invites neighbors to experience the library through music, poetry, visual art, and hands-on bookmaking. Light refreshments will be served, and a looping archival photo presentation will highlight Hudson Park Library's 120-year history.

Live jazz will anchor the evening, performed by the Rocco John Group. Led by Greenwich Village-born composer and improviser Rocco J. Iacovone, the group brings a sound rooted in melodic structure and exploratory improvisation. Iacovone, who studied with jazz legends Lee Konitz and Sam Rivers, holds bachelor's and master's degrees in composition from Hunter College and is a longtime teaching artist. He will be joined by Jack DeSalvo on guitar and Philip Sirois on bass.

Poetry will be created live through bespoke typewriter poems by Mya Matteo Alexice, who will craft custom poems

on the spot based on words or ideas shared by attendees. Alexice is a Cave Canem fellow and doctoral student studying Black romantic life, and the author of *A Shape We've Yet to Name* (2024) and *The Limerence Object* (2025). Their work has appeared in *Pleiades*, *swamp pink*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Copper Nickel*, and other literary journals.

Visual art will take a distinctly local turn with illustrator Lily Annabelle, who will provide original drawings of Hudson Park Library and nearby Village landmarks for participants to color. Annabelle is known for her detailed illustrations of historically and architecturally significant New York facades, with work displayed in more than 100 city establishments and over 30 Broadway productions. She has recently expanded her exhibitions to London's West End.

The library's printing heritage will be brought to life through historic letterpress printing led by Dikko Faust, who will help visitors print keepsakes using 1800s wood type on a Kelsey press the same age as the library itself. Faust teaches letterpress printing at the School of Visual Arts and founded Purgatory Pie Press, whose artist books and limited editions have been exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and London's Victoria & Albert Museum.

Hands-on bookmaking workshops will be led by artist and author Esther K. Smith, who invites participants to fold, stitch, draw, and write their own books. Smith is the author of *How to Make Books* and *Making Books with Kids*, and a longtime educator at Cooper Union and other institutions. Her work bridges historical printing traditions with contemporary book arts, emphasizing accessibility and creative play.

Attendees may combine their poems, prints, and drawings into handmade books or enjoy individual activities, the music, and the celebratory atmosphere at their own pace. Designed as a flexible, drop-in event, the evening reflects Hudson Park Library's enduring mission as an open, welcoming space for creativity and community.

As Hudson Park Library marks 120 years since its opening in January 1906, the anniversary celebration looks both backward and forward—honoring a rich past while actively shaping the library's next chapter in the cultural life of Greenwich Village.

Emil Allakhverdov is Senior Librarian at the Hudson Park Library.

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## Jefferson Market Library

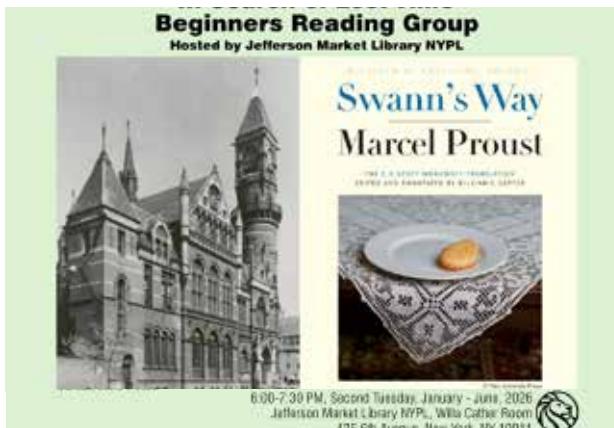
BY CORINNE NEARY

Now that we've had our annual year-end showing of *The Poseidon Adventure*, we're excited to begin 2026 here at Jefferson Market Library. Many people take the new year as a chance to start fresh and make some positive changes, so we came up with a few ideas for ways that we can help. Something we've noticed about the annual reset is that many people bring in books to donate as part of their post-holidays cleaning ritual. With that in mind, we have our first Book Swap event of the year on Saturday and Sunday, January 10-11. That's right—it's a two day, weekend long, book swap super spectacular! We'll be setting up in our lobby, with plenty of space and tables of books. So come by, bring your books, take some books, bring a friend, or maybe make a few while you're here!

As always, our calendar will be full of book discussion groups, film screenings, and author talks, and we have a couple of new offerings in the works as well. First, we'll be having a weekly chess group for adults on Fridays at 3 p.m. beginning January 2, led by Dylan. Come to sharpen your mind, meet new people, and enjoy this timeless game with friendly competition in a relaxed setting. Chess sets and timers will be provided. There's no need to register; just drop

in and pick up a game. Beginners are welcome, just keep in mind that this is not a class as much as a place to play. Dylan will be happy to show you some basics and get you going!

Also on Fridays, we are starting a Craft Circle program, led by Jenny. Come see us at 11 a.m. on January 16, February 20 and March 20. This is perfect for anyone looking for a social and friendly space to work on their knitting, needlepoint, felting, or whatever else you're working on. At least to start, this



is a BYOC (Bring Your Own Craft) kind of program. If certain crafts turn out to be highly popular, and a core group develops, we may start providing some supplies down the road.

On the note of crafts, we have a new exhibit in our Little Underground Gallery, full of paintings, post cards, holiday cards, and magazine illustrations of our building. We're lucky to have been given so many of these over the years, and thankful to the librarians who preserved them through the decades. Drop by to see a few artistic renderings of Jefferson Market which you won't have seen before, even if you're a local architecture buff.

And one fun performance to wrap up the month on January 25—a production by Equity Library Theater of New York: *Even More Tales from The Times - Selections from the Metropolitan Diary*. Broadway and television actors will present short vignettes based on the popular and often hilarious *New York Times* Saturday Metropolitan Diary section. Also being presented are a few short monologues by area actors. Theatrical performances are something we are interested in hosting more of this year, so stay tuned!

As always, check our website for the most up to date program listings.

January 2026

# EVENTS

in and  
around the  
West  
Village



## FILM

### THE CHRONOLOGY OF WATER (Early Access Q&A With Kristen Stewart & Imogen Poots)

**Tuesday, January 6**  
**Angelika New York**

**18 W. Houston Street**  
[angelikafilmcenter.com](http://angelikafilmcenter.com)

Based on the beloved memoir by Lidia Yuknavitch and marking the directorial debut of Kristen Stewart, **THE CHRONOLOGY OF WATER** is a raw and unflinching portrait of survival, sexuality, and self-invention. The film traces Lidia's life from her earliest memories in the Pacific Northwest, as a promising swimmer, through fractured relationships, near-motherhood, addiction, and encounters with artistic heroes.



### NATCHEZ Opens Friday, January 30 Film Forum 209 West Houston St., west of 6th Ave. [filmforum.org/film/natchez](http://filmforum.org/film/natchez)

Winner, Best Documentary, 2025 Tribeca Film Festival  
Directed by Suzannah Herbert—a Memphis-born documentary filmmaker whose work focuses on the American South—**NATCHEZ** follows owners of historic plantations, local activists and politicians, and both white and African American tour guides as they tell their ever-more conflicting versions of the town's past, and of American history.

## Join The Patient & Family Partnership Council



For all inquiries,  
call the Patient &  
Family Experience  
Department at  
(646) 665-6286

We believe that patients and families are essential partners in improving the healthcare in our community. We invite individuals who have been patients, caregivers, or family members receiving care at Northwell Greenwich Village Hospital within the last 2-3 years to help us:

- Share perspectives and provide feedback.
- Help shape policies, programs, and services.
- Improve communication between patients, families and healthcare providers.
- Ensure that patient-centered care remains our top priority.

## ART

### SIXTIES SURREAL ART & ARTISTS

**Through Jan 19**  
**Whitney Museum of American Art**  
**99 Gansevoort Street**  
[whitney.org](http://whitney.org)

Sixties Surreal is an ambitious, scholarly reappraisal of American art from 1958 to 1972, encompassing the work of more than 100 artists. This revisionist survey looks beyond now canonical movements to focus instead on the era's most fundamental, if underrecognized, aesthetic current—an efflorescence of psychosexual, fantastical, and revolutionary tendencies.

#### Events

**Contemporaries Curator-Led Tour of Sixties Surreal**

Thursday, January 8, 6:30–7:30 pm

#### Member Morning

Sunday, January 11, 9:30–10:30 am

**Aesthetics of Double Consciousness: Identity Through the Lens of Black Artists**

Monday, January 12, 6 pm

#### Member Night

Wednesday, January 14, 7:30–10 pm

## PRIMEVAL GROUND

### [DEEP, UNFATHOMABLE]

**January 7-25**

**Westbeth Gallery**

**55 Bethune Street**

Group Exhibition curated by New York-based artist Susan Rowe Harrison features diverse media spanning Photography, Weaving, Installation, Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, and Performance.



**Saturday, January 17, 8pm**  
**The Peoples' Voice Cafe, 239 Thompson Street**  
[peoplesvoicecafe.org](http://peoplesvoicecafe.org)

### ATIBA KWABENA WILSON and KIYOKO YAMAOKA-LAYNE

Atiba Kwabena Wilson is a musician, published poet, storyteller, and the founder/artistic director of both the Songhai Djeli Folkloric Ensemble and the Befo' Quotet Rhythm 'n' Dues Band.

Kiyoko Yamaoka-Layne is a classically trained pianist from Kyoto, Japan. She was a member of the well-known Japanese Gospel Choir the Naniwa Black Peppers.

### THELMA RUFFIN THOMAS

Thelma Ruffin Thomas is the artistic director of *Pearls of Wisdom*, a touring ensemble of elder storytellers. She has brought her lively, spirited, authentic presentations to Tanzania, Brazil, Ghana, Costa Rica, The Gambia, South Africa, Russia, Australia, Kenya, and Cameroon, continuing the tradition of elder folk art stories.

**FREEDOM IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE, FEATURING: Spoken word: Elijah Dixon Owens, Reading: Bracha Lieberman, Song: Judy Gorman**

**FREEDOM SONG SING-ALONG, LED BY: Gary David Allard, Lindsey Wilson**

## Winter Jazzfest

**January 8-13, 2026**

### Multiple Downtown Venues

[winterjazzfest.com](http://winterjazzfest.com)

Winter Jazzfest turns downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn into a global jazz capital for one electric week. With performances spilling into Greenwich Village and Chelsea clubs, the festival showcases both legends and boundary-pushers—often in intimate rooms where tomorrow's jazz history is made.

#### **THE MAIN EVENT: MANHATTAN MARATHON** **Friday, January 9, 5PM - 3AM**

#### **LPR, 158 Bleecker Street**

5:30 PM—Doors; 6:00 PM—Nels Cline: Songs from LOVERS conducted by Michael Leonhart; 7:15 PM—Patricia Brennan Tentet; 8:30 PM—Takuya Kuroda; 9:45 PM—Lakecia Benjamin; 11:00 PM—Braxton Cook; 12:15 AM—Obed Calvaire; 150 Million Gold Francs; 1:30 AM—Fonville x Fri-bush ft Morgan Burrs w/ Toribio

#### **City Winery, 25 11th Avenue**

6:00 PM—Doors; 6:30 PM—James Carter Quintet - Trane: A Centennial Supreme; 7:45 PM—Endea Owens & The Cookout; 9:00 PM—Tyreek McDole; 10:15 PM—Lady Blackbird; 11:30 PM—Louis Cato

#### **City Winery Loft, Pier 57, 25 11th Avenue**

6:00 PM—Doors; 6:15 PM—Civil Disobedience; 7:30 PM—Sarah Elizabeth Charles; 8:45 PM—Tia Fuller & Shamie Fuller-Royston; 10:00 PM—Veronica Swift; 11:15 PM—Brandon Woody's Upendo

#### **DROM, 85 Avenue A**

5:30 PM—Doors; 6:00 PM—Arun Ramamurthy Trio; 7:15 PM—Amir ElSaffar New Quartet; 8:30 PM—New Jazz Underground; 9:45 PM—Ekep Nkwelle; 11:00 PM—David Murray Quartet; 12:15 AM—James Brandon Lewis Trio

#### **Zinc Bar, 82 W 3rd Street**

6:00 PM—Doors; 6:45 PM—Mingus Dynasty; 8:00 PM—Gabrielle Cavassa; 9:15 PM—The Hemphill Stringtet; 10:30 PM—Laura Anglade; 11:45 PM—Lex Korten & Canopy; 1:00 AM—William Hill Trio

#### **NUBLU, 151 Avenue C**

6:30 PM—Doors; 7:00 PM—Alfredo Colon Sextet; 8:15 PM—Sam Gendel & Nate Mercereau; 9:30 PM—Merope with Shahzad Ismaily; 10:45 PM—Tomas Fujiwara: Dream Up; 12:00 AM—Shahzad Ismaily, Maria Chavez and Greg Saunier; 1:15 AM—Hanging Hearts

#### **The Bitter End, 147 Bleecker Street**

Paris Jazz Stage Showcase  
6:00 PM—Doors; 6:30 PM—AMG; 7:30 PM—Mario Canonge Trio; 8:30 PM—Celia Kameni; 9:30 PM—GILDA; 10:30 PM—The Getdown; 11:30 PM—Daoud

#### **CLOSE UP, 154 Orchard Street**

6:00PM—Doors; 6:30PM—John Hébert; 8:00PM—John Hébert; 10:00PM—David Virelles; 11:30PM—David Virelles

*For full schedule, [winterjazzfest.com](http://winterjazzfest.com)*



Lower Manhattan is home to three major festivals that anchor January's cultural life downtown, with a heavy footprint in Greenwich Village, SoHo, Chelsea, and Hudson Yards. If you want one month that captures New York's creative soul—this is it.



## Under the Radar Festival

**January 2026**

#### **The Public Theater, NYU Skirball**

#### **& partner venues**

[utrfest.org/venues](http://utrfest.org/venues)

Under the Radar is where global experimental theater lands first—often at The Public Theater and NYU Skirball. Bold, political, funny, unsettling, and unforgettable, this festival defines what downtown performance means right now.

#### **NYU Skirball, 566 LaGuardia Place**

MAMI, January 7-10  
Voyage Into Infinity, January 16-18

#### **Dixon Place, 161A Chrystie Street**

TESTO, January 13-17

#### **HERE Arts Center, 145 6th Avenue**

Dream Feed, Friday, January 9-25

#### **Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette Street**

Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me, January 12 & 13  
A Tribute to Big Mama Thornton, January 11, 16, 17

#### **La MaMa E.T.C., 66 E 4th Street**

The Rest of Our Lives, January 7-17  
12 Last Songs, January 17  
The Ford/Hill Project, January 7-11

#### **Mabou Mines, 150 1st Avenue, Second Floor**

All That Fall, January 8-18

#### **New York Live Arts, 219 W 19th Street**

Friday Night Rat Catchers, January 14-17

#### **New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E 4th Street**

In Honor Of Jean-Michel Basquiat, January 7-18

#### **Performance Space New York, 150 1st Avenue 4th floor**

DARKMATTER, January 13-18

#### **Performing Garage, 33 Wooster Street**

Data Room, January 10-12

#### **The Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Street**

Ulysses, January 14-24

*For further info and  
ticket purchase visit [utrfest.org](http://utrfest.org)*

## The International Fringe Encore Series

#### **SoHo Playhouse**

#### **15 Vandam Street**

[sohoplayhouse.com/theatre](http://sohoplayhouse.com/theatre)

SoHo Playhouse and stars from global Fringe Festivals of the season present a roundup of the best Fringe comics and plays this season has to offer! Annually, The International Fringe Encore Series provides opportunities to emerging artists who show exceptional talent at each season's Fringe Festivals both artistically and commercially. In recognition of their excellence, SoHo Playhouse offers these special shows an extended run Off-Broadway in New York City. This extended run gives these worthy shows a platform for future productions and success. Many of the previous productions featured in the series have gone on to extensive Off-Broadway runs and international success.

#### **BOB MARLEY: HOW REGGAE CHANGED THE WORLD**

**January 3 - February 1 at**

Duane Forrest performs acoustic renditions of legendary reggae songs from Bob Marley to Toots and the Maytals that reshaped countless lives including his own.

#### **DIANA: THE UNTOLD AND UNTRUE STORY**

**January 6 - 10 at SoHo Playhouse**

Join Diana in heaven as she shares the untold and untrue tale of her extraordinary life.

#### **DREAMSCAPE**

**January 7 - 25 at 59E59 Theaters**

Inspired by the true story of Tyisha Miller, a 19 year-old African American girl who was shot by police while she lay unconscious in a car. Told through beatboxin', spoken word, and hip-hop dance, Dreamscape reimagines the innocent pleasures of her life and hopes for the future with the sweetness and humor of a teenager's insight.

#### **AND HER CHILDREN**

**January 14 - February 13 at SoHo Playhouse**

An adaptation of Mother Courage and her Children, and her Children follows a spokeswoman for the NRA who has been called to defend the organization after a mass shooting that her own son has perpetrated.

#### **PUTTANA**

**January 15 - 25 at SoHo Playhouse**

A girl needs money. A man needs sex. The beginning is obvious. The rest? It's in the eyes of those who judge.

#### **WHERE IS YOUR HUSBAND?**

**January 21 - February 1 at SoHo Playhouse**

A heart-breaking, mind-bending & booty-shaking true tale of love, loss & polite fiction.

#### **TOM CASHMAN: 2 TRUTHS, 1 LIE, & 17 SLIGHT EXAGGERATIONS**

**January 22 - 31 at SoHo Playhouse**

Tom Cashman is flying to New York as we speak, with a new hour of stand up that may or may not include the secret to happiness.



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

**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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