



## A Defiant Community Returns a Flag to Sacred Ground

BY AUDREY HILL

Village community members and city leaders came together on a freezing February afternoon to re-raise the Pride flag at the Stonewall National Monument after a directive from the Trump administration caused it to be taken down a few days prior.

The directive, issued on Jan. 21, instructs against flying “non-agency” flags — those that aren’t an American or Department of the Interior flag. It’s one of many directives that the Trump administration has used in his first year in office to attack National Parks Service displays that educate visitors about or celebrate the cultural history of the United States.

A year earlier, in February 2025, the Trump administration issued a directive requiring the removal of all mentions of transgender people from the National Parks Service website, as part of a larger campaign aimed at removing any reference to “gender ideology” from federal websites.

The last-minute rally drew a crowd of hundreds and a “who’s who” of local politicians eager to show their defiance to the Trump administration and their solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community.

New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams said that although he is not a member of the LGBTQ+ community, that was exactly why it was important for him to attend. “I’m hoping people see the interconnectivity of everyone who is being attacked. People don’t hate neatly. They don’t hate in nice boxes,” Williams said, adding that as public advocate, he represents all New Yorkers and “it’s just extremely important that we’re all here protecting each other.”

Katie Holten, an artist and activist in the neighborhood, had been on a juggernaut of protesting that day already — including a protest outside 26 Federal Plaza where Im-

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**SPURNING A TRUMP ADMINISTRATION DIRECTIVE**, hundreds gathered at Stonewall National Monument to reinstate its Pride flag. Here it flaps alongside the American flag during a rally celebrating the Pride flag’s return. *Photo by Bob Cooley.*

## Somebody We Will Miss A Lot

Jesse Jackson’s powerful appearance on *Sesame Street* has resurfaced after his death at age 84. The long-time civil rights leader and two-time presidential candidate died on Tuesday, Feb. 17, surrounded by family. As news of his death spread, so did a resurfaced clip of Jackson leading children in his iconic “I Am Somebody” chant during a 1972 appearance on *Sesame Street*. In the clip, he led young audience members in repeating phrases such as, “I may be poor. But I am somebody.” The chant stemmed from a poem Jackson published in 1970.



I am Somebody!  
I am Somebody!  
I may be poor,  
But I am Somebody.  
I may be young,  
But I am Somebody.  
I may be on welfare,  
But I am Somebody.  
I may be small,  
But I am Somebody.  
I may have made mistakes,  
But I am Somebody.  
My clothes are different,  
My face is different,  
My hair is different,  
But I am Somebody.  
I am black,  
I am brown,  
I am white,  
I speak a different language  
But I must be respected,  
Protected,  
Never rejected.  
I am God’s child!

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# Another Open Position in the Village, Yet Another Primary!

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

There was a time, beginning around 1998, when Greenwich Village, Chelsea and parts north shared a state senator. The first one was Tom Duane, a gay pioneer in the electoral arena, who was first elected as a City Council member to the “gay seat” created in 1991. Tom retired in 2013 and he was replaced by Brad Hoylman-Sigal who had chaired Community Board 2.

After the 2020 census a major redistricting took place. Hoylman-Sigal’s district was moved north and basically all that was left of his district in the Village was west of Seventh Avenue and north of Perry Street. Most of the Village and Lower Manhattan was moved into a district served by Brian Kavanaugh, a career government person who barely advertised himself. Kavanaugh was a major force in Albany on housing and fair election issues.

On February 4, Kavanaugh, 59, announced that he was through with being a senator. The day before, Erik Bottcher, the Village City Council member, was elected to fill Hoylman-Sigal’s Senate seat after Hoylman-Sigal became borough president. And remember, Deborah Glick also announced her retirement from the Assembly. So, all of a sudden we have open seats – and primaries – for City Council (April 28 and June 23), for Assembly (June 23) and for Senate (also on June 23). Most or all of the Village will get to vote on a new generation of leaders. (West of Sixth Avenue, Villagers elected a new City Council Member, Harvey Epstein, last fall.)

## The Senate Race

The Senate race is already contentious. Yuh-Line Niou, a Taiwanese American who succeeded the corrupt Sheldon Silver as the Assembly Member for the Lower East Side, is running against her successor in the Assembly, Grace Lee, the first Korean American woman ever elected to the state Legislature.

## Who is Yuh-Line Niou?

Niou was born in Taipei, Taiwan, the eldest of three children, and emigrated to the U.S. with her parents when she was six months



**YUH-LINE NIOU.** Photo courtesy of the NY State Assembly.

old. She went to school in El Paso, Texas. Her mother was as a registered nurse and hospital administrator while her father worked as a materials science engineer. Niou also lived in Moscow, Idaho and El Paso before her parents settled in Vancouver, Washington. She earned her bachelor’s degree in social policy from Evergreen State College then worked as a legislative assistant to state Representative Eileen Cody and Senator Debbie Regala of the Washington Legislature. She was diagnosed with autism at 22. She moved to New York City in 2010 to obtain a Master of Public Administration from Baruch College and later served as chief of staff to Assembly Member Ron Kim.

After a corruption scandal involving longtime Democratic Boss Sheldon Silver forced his resignation, Niou ran and lost the special election to fill that vacancy in April 2016. But two months later she won the Democratic primary and then the general election in November with 76% of the vote. In 2020, Grace Lee ran against Niou in the Democratic primary, receiving 35.7% of the vote to Niou’s 64%. Niou was uncontested in the 2020 general election.

As an Assembly Member Niou had a “F” rating from the NRA and has voted to expand red flag laws, require a license for possession of a semi-automatic firearm, prohibit the sale of privately made firearms, and



**GRACE LEE.** Photo courtesy of the NY State Assembly.

authorize New York state to sue gun manufacturers for damage caused by their guns. She is in favor of banning assault rifles and assault weapons. She supports Medicare for All, a nationwide single-payer healthcare system, and has been a supporter of the New York Health Act which would establish a statewide single-payer health plan if passed. Niou supports allocating 100% of residential units in the proposed 5 World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan as affordable housing.

In 2022 Niou ran for a newly created Congressional seat which covers Lower Manhattan and downtown Brooklyn. She lost by 1%, in a 10-way race to Dan Goldman, who is still in Congress. A pro-Israel PAC ran a smear campaign against her at a cost of over \$1 million calling her “anti-tenant,” “anti-child,” “a NYMBY,” and “antisemitic.”

In the ensuing four years she ran the consulting firm Outlier Strategies and had a baby. Her campaign has been endorsed by Senator Elizabeth Warren, former Comptroller Brad Lander and a broad swath of progressive organizations.

## Who is Grace Lee?

Lee, 44, was the first Korean American woman elected to New York state government. She earned her bachelor’s degree in economics and philosophy from Columbia University

in 2002 and a Master of Business Administration in finance and entrepreneurship from the University of Chicago.

From 2002 to 2006, Lee worked as an equities research associate at JPMorgan Chase and, briefly, at UBS before joining FSI Group, LLC in 2007. She founded Nine Naturals, a skincare company, in 2008. Lee was elected to the state Assembly in November 2022.

She is a member of the Vote Blue Coalition, a progressive group and federal PAC created to support Democrats in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania through voter outreach and mobilization efforts.

Lee describes herself this way: “I am a community activist and organizer and an involved and concerned parent. I know firsthand how important it is that decisions be grounded in the everyday realities of the district, and I have a proven record of fighting for the most vulnerable in our community and against powerful interests. Before I was elected, I was an events coordinator for Swing Left, organizing thousands of volunteers and raising money for Democratic candidates across the country to successfully flip the House in 2018 after Trump was elected president. I co-founded Children First, a parent-led coalition, fighting against a corporate developer trying to build on a Brownfield clean-up site in the South Street Seaport across from two elementary schools. I was also a lead organizer for deaf tenants on the Lower East Side living in deplorable conditions. I partnered with a tenant advocacy group in Lower Manhattan and together we helped the tenants establish a tenant’s association, organize rallies and stand up to their building’s management company to demand housing justice.”

Lee has the support of the Downtown Independent Democrats and the Village Independent Democrats, as well as Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal and retiring Assembly Member Deborah Glick.

She lives in Lower Manhattan with her husband and three daughters.

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## A Short Note: Give Zohran a Chance for Goodness Sake!

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

When you read this Zohran Mamdani will have been mayor for two months or about 2% of his first four years. Yet the naysayers (who fill the local *Nextdoor* blogs with daily critiques) have already declared him a failure. We had one of the worst snowstorms/cold snaps in my life and he was criticized for not getting the snow to melt soon enough so that the garbage caught under the ice could be removed. He was damned for holding

remote school and then when he closed the schools after the February 22 storm he was also damned (not by the kids). He cleared the city much faster in the 32 degree snowstorm, but was criticized for closing the streets to cars. He told the governor that if he didn’t get an increase on City Income Tax for earners making over \$1 million he would have to raise property taxes. It was an inflammatory comment, but it was meant to nudge a

governor who has \$1.5 billion to spend on a Buffalo football stadium, but not the billion needed by the NYC Housing Authority, which houses 600,000 New Yorkers.

My neighbors, Zohran showed incredible talent running for office. He inspired people. He gave people hope. He knows he has to deliver and he has surrounded himself with smart folks. Some say “he’s an antisemite” but he has appointed Jews as Corporation

Counsel (Steve Banks), Police Commissioner (Jessica Tisch), Health Commissioner (Michael Katz) and Deputy Mayor for Operations (Julia Kerson). Let’s see how he does after a year. Don’t let his youth and national origin/religion sway you. John Kennedy was 43 when he was elected president. Lincoln was elected to Congress at 34.

My prediction – he will be one of the greatest mayors ever.

# Congressman Goldman Responds to Village View Article

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

In our February issue we published an article titled *Brad Lander Takes On Congressman Dan Goldman in Battle Over How to Best Fight for Sanity*. In that piece I described what I thought was despicable conduct by Congressman Goldman when he ran his first campaign in 2022 and beat former Assembly Member Yuh-Line Niou by 1,200 votes in a 10 candidate race. I wrote “In 2022 he spent \$7-8 million of his own money and was aided by another million or so from the Israeli PAC — AIPAC — which sent five mailings as NY Progressive PAC. Those mailings each contained ugly photos of then-Assembly Member Yuh-Line Niou, who was labeled “antisemite,” “anti-tenant,” “NIMBY,” and “child hater.”

On February 2 Goldman sent me a text. Our exchange follows:

**Goldman:** Arthur, someone sent me your article today. You certainly are free to write articles critical of me — as you have in the past — but this one was full of outright lies. If you are interested in correcting the record, I’m happy to have my staff send you over a list of the false statements with citations to the truth.

**Schwartz:** You moved up some notches in my consideration by sending your text. I am not an ideologue, but I have certain principles. One of them is that I detest negative demeaning campaigning (having been victimized by it myself when I first ran for district leader) — and the stuff attacking Yuh-Line back in 2022 was some of the worst I ever saw. Distorted photos, assertions that she hated children, was anti-tenant, and was antisemitic, all targeted by AIPAC-related folks who were supporting you. Had you denounced that stuff I wouldn’t have held it against you. I was bothered by how much money you spent; elections shouldn’t be bought. I have been annoyed by your generally unwavering support for Israel

I am totally available to talk. As I said, I have been surprised about having no contact with you for your first four years. I think as a 25-year district leader who gets very involved in local issues (including as a lawyer) and who publishes a monthly paper which now has a circulation of 30,000, you might have reached out if you were interested. Not to mention my role as TWU’s principal lawyer for 25 years, my role as GC for CIDNY, and my role as a founder and leader of NYPAN after doing Bernie’s election work in 2016.

I don’t want your staff to write. I welcome you to write for (and advertise in) *The Village View*. And you are welcome to be a guest on

my radio show which is on Wednesdays on WBAI. Brad was on recently. Wednesday I’ll have the editor of *The Nation* and Analilia Mejia who is running in a special election in Essex County. And I did a show last week for Holocaust Memorial Day. I have many values, some flowing from having four kids, the youngest is 20. I don’t abhor people with money. Feel free to call.

**Goldman:** Arthur, I had nothing to do with the negative ads against YLN and had no idea who was behind them until after the campaign. And I find it odd that you hold that against me, but apparently saw nothing wrong with Mondaire’s slanderous attack ad against me. (AS: *Mondaire Jones was another candidate who I supported in the race; he came in 3rd.*) But that is the past. As I said, you can certainly speak out against me — as you have done since the very beginning — but as a publisher/editor of a newspaper, you should do it truthfully. My support for the state of Israel as the only Jewish state in the world is unwavering, but I do not support this Israeli government (just like I support the United States but not Donald Trump). And I have spoken out against this Israeli government numerous times on all sorts of issues, including as a leader in Congress in opposing the settlements in the West Bank and their increasing expansion and escalating settler violence. This is just one of many instances where your accusations are patently false. Since I know you care about your paper’s credibility, I would assume you would want to correct those lies.

**Schwartz:** And what I would like is a piece from you. Not just now, but any time.

## A Brief Comment On The Exchange

Congressman Goldman says he had nothing to do with the ugly attacks on his leading opponent, who was an Assembly Member at the time. But he never spoke out against them or demanded that his supporters at AIPAC apologize to Yuh-Line, who was 39, and autistic, and was devastated by those attacks. When I urged her to run on the Working Families Line against Goldman in the general election (he won the primary with only 24%) she started crying. (She has recovered and is running for election this year — see article: *Another Primary*, on page 2). And he has never explained why he didn’t support the Democratic mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani against Andrew Cuomo — and never said a negative word about Cuomo.

He remains welcome to write, as frequently as he wants, in *The Village View*.

Defiant *continued from page 1*



ON CHRISTOPHER STREET, where a neighborhood uprising became a national movement, the message from supporters was that the history recognized here will not be quietly reduced. Photo by Bob Cooley.

migrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operates a field office. “That’s what life is now,” Holten said of her active political life. Protest is important when “everything we hold to be real is being mangled.”

Holten and I watched as activists navigated the complex task of hoisting the Pride flag while protesters chanted input about whether the American flag should remain flying beside it. Most, it seemed, wanted it taken down. Ultimately, though, the American flag was left flying alongside the Pride flag.

J, an activist involved with the New York City Dyke March who uses he/they pronouns, said they were left with mixed feelings about the American flag being left aloft. “It’s a little difficult to be proud of our flag sometimes,” J said. “With everything going on in the country, especially as a Black American, as a transgender American, it’s a little difficult. But I understand other people might see it as a call to unity to say that we are Americans too, and that America is also gay.”

J pointed out that the American flag is already flown in another part of the park and wasn’t raised on that particular pole until after the Pride flag was taken down. Still, they said they are at least glad to see the Pride flag flying again. “If these symbols didn’t matter, then they wouldn’t try to attack them in the first place,” J said. “I think it’s important to stand our ground and not let the little things go, before it slides into something bigger.”

Kelley Robinson, the president of the advocacy organization Human Rights Campaign (HRC) echoed the idea that symbolic victories like reinstating the flag are important. “Look, when they come for our flag, it’s not just about a flag,” Robinson said. “They are trying to erase our history, they are continuing an assault on our rights all across this country.”

The 1969 Stonewall Riots, during which queer and transgender patrons of the Stonewall Inn — then an underground gay bar — protested against a raid by local cops, are largely considered to be the birthplace of the modern LGBTQ+ movement.

Commemoration of the site, however, has been a long time coming. The Greenwich Village Society for Historical Preservation

and neighborhood residents were instrumental in getting landmark status for the bar and the park in front — first as a national historic landmark in 2000, then as a city landmark in 2015, and finally as a national monument in 2016, during the last months of the Obama administration.

It became the first national monument in the United States dedicated to the LGBTQ+ rights movement. The designation transferred control of the area to the National Parks Service and the federal government, which Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal explains was, at the time, an attempt to protect the area.

“We ceded the land to the federal government, and that was intentional because we thought that the feds were the best caretaker, but we all know now that you can’t trust Washington,” Hoylman-Sigal said. “And that’s a sad ending to what was an attempt by the Obama administration to make certain that Pride and Stonewall were preserved. But with Trump in the White House, all bets are off.”

Raising the flag has been a complicated process in itself, according to Steven Menendez, who helped get the Pride flag installed in the park and is affectionately known by community members as its unofficial caretaker.

A Pride flag was first raised in the park in October 2017, and was supposed to be the first raised at a national monument. However, a few days before its official installation, Menendez said the Trump administration announced that the flag was on a city-owned flagpole and not technically part of the Stonewall National Monument. Menendez then navigated the complex process of getting a flag permanently installed at the monument for years, at one point having to renew a permit for it monthly. Finally it was installed in 2022 thanks to the Biden administration.

Hoylman-Sigal expects the Trump administration to try to take the flag down again, but if that happens, “We’ll just raise it again. That is kind of the story of civil rights,” he said. “You keep marching forward, you have setbacks, you move forward.”

# Activists Decry Wall Street, Call for NYC Public Bank

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

The acoustics weren't great but the message was crystal clear. Big banks are systematically screwing ordinary New Yorkers by using taxpayer money to underwrite schemes that promote usury, risk destabilizing financial markets, support ICE, endanger tenants, and deprive regular New Yorkers of services and resources.

The "Worst Banks" mock awards ceremony held on February 12 on the sidewalk in front of the Citibank branch at 250 Broadway, was a quintessential New York experience — under scaffolding and interrupted by a steady stream of indifferent pedestrians.

Organized by the Public Bank NYC Coalition, it underscored how much New Yorkers are losing via current law that requires more than \$100 billion of taxpayer dollars annually collected by the city to be parked in commercial Wall Street banks — and how much might be gained if the city instead established a public bank that invested that money on the public's behalf.

Katy Lasell from the New Economy Project presented the Lifetime Aggrievement Award to Citibank, for its "decades-long record of abuse, discrimination, and public betrayal." She recalled that "Citibank helped fuel the 2008 financial crisis, crashed the global economy, and survived only because taxpayers stepped in to save it. Long before that — and long after — Citi built its profits through redlining, discriminatory lending, and systematic disinvestment in Black and brown communities."

She declared, "This is a bank that has repeatedly demonstrated that when profits conflict with public interest, the public loses," spotlighting last year's scandal when "the Trump administration illegally clawed \$80 million in NYC tax payer money out of a Citibank account, while Citibank looked the other way."

## CITIBANK AND RISKY PAYDAY LOAN SCHEME

Lasell then condemned Citibank's current investments in payday loan apps and the bundling of those likely illegal payday loans into securities — investment vehicles potentially as risky as the subprime mortgage-backed securities that triggered the banking collapse of 2008.

She explained that "Citibank is currently funding the proliferation of illegal payday loans.... Payday loan apps such as DailyPay, MoneyLion and EarnIn have flooded our state with deceptive marketing and illegal, predatory loan products that carry triple digit interest rates up to 850%." Violating state and federal consumer protections, these apps "are so predatory that AG James is currently suing DailyPay and MoneyLion."

Yet Citibank — along with Barclays and Morgan Stanley — "announced a securitiza-



JODIE LEIDECKER of Cooper Square Committee. Photo credit: New Economy Project.

tion deal with DailyPay last year....This \$200 million deal creates a new security — a new investment vehicle — out of the short-term debt of America's working class," a risky bet that counts on profiteering off predation.

Organizer David Kahn from Public Advocate Jumaane Williams' office echoed the need for a public bank describing Wall Street bank malfeasance as the "inevitable result of a system that allows private institutions to hold public wealth without public accountability."

The Village's own District 3 City Council Member Harvey Epstein noted the size of this year's city and state budgets — \$115 and \$260 billion respectively — and asked the crowd of activists to "imagine we had those resources on hand" to leverage for the public interest, perhaps to build more affordable housing.

## UNDERWRITING ICE DETENTIONS AND THE HARASSMENT OF RENT-STABILIZED TENANTS

Sadly announcing that "We have to do it," Vlad Tlali of the New York Immigration Coalition mournfully presented the Inhumanitarian Award to Citizens Bank, citing the institution's "\$120 million in loans to CoreCivic," among the largest private prison corporations in the country, operating "at least 65 prisons and ICE detention centers." The

former Corrections Corporation of America, CoreCivic "has a history of running these facilities with violence and neglect."

Worst Slumlord Backer Award was next. Dressed in a rat suit, Jodie Leidecker of the East Village-based Cooper Square Committee detailed how banks routinely provide mortgages to landlords that far exceed the rent-roll value of their properties were the tenants to remain rent-stabilized — in other words, the banks are deliberately banking on the removal of rent-stabilized tenants and the conversion of rent-stabilized units to market-rate. Leidecker noted that tenants living daily with roaches, mold, and "terrible, terrible conditions" are always shocked to learn about the bankers in suits in high-floor offices underwriting their misery.

She presented the award to Flagstar Bank, recently merged with New York Community Bank, citing their repeated underwriting of notorious slumlord Steve Croman. Flagstar also loans millions to multiple landlords on the Public Advocate's "Worst Landlords" list, including the Pinnacle Group, whose rent-stabilized properties were recently foreclosed upon.

## FOSSIL FUELS AND REDLINING

Damien Andrade of the New York Public Interest Group (NYPIRG) presented a Worst Fossil Fuel Funder Award to Chase Bank

which "poured over \$53 billion into the oil and gas companies" in 2025 alone. He declared, "Like so many young people across the city, climate change isn't an abstract issue for me — it's personal. We're already living with the consequences of the climate crisis that Wall Street helped create. In my neighborhood of Sunset Park, storms have overwhelmed our sewer systems and flooded our streets. Across New York City, Sandy and Ida have taken lives, destroyed homes, and displaced entire communities."

"Why," he asked, "is New York City still trusting our public money to banks that are actively making this crisis worse?"

Julio Herrera of the Black Institute presented the Worst Redliners Award, describing redlining as a killer of the American Dream for communities of color, not only depriving them of housing but also redirecting truck traffic and pollution their way. He described joint winners, Key Bank and Wells Fargo, as the "dons of displacement" and the "emirs of economic disenfranchisement." Herrera pointedly called them out for "underbanking" communities of color, observing that the single Wells Fargo office in the Bronx is in Riverdale.

Brooklyn City Council Member Alexa Aviles also spoke briefly in support of a public bank, noting that it could underwrite infrastructure and social housing.

# The Rise and Fall of the YIMBY Consensus

BY JUAN RIVERO

The lack of affordable housing is a complex problem. And every complex problem, as the saying goes, has an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong. In this instance, free-market fundamentalism has long provided one such answer — the notion that invisible economic forces will solve affordable housing crises if we only step aside, wait patiently, and let them work their magic. Things have never worked out that way. But free-market apologists have always found a way to blame the world for its failure to conform to their economic models. This has kept their totalizing theories roaming the earth like zombies, providing intellectual cover for their policy application, and forever eluding the grave where bad ideas go to rot. In recent years, these zombies have gotten a makeover and started to pop up in unexpected places.

The San Francisco Bay Area is a land hospitable to techno-utopianism and to the perennial search for technological fixes for life. Unsurprisingly, this is where the YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) movement emerged with force. Folks dismayed by the region's high housing costs looked around and rediscovered a simple technical solution: deregulation. In their account, land-use controls had inhibited housing construction and led to higher housing prices. This connection was made by reference to "single family home" districts and to a history of exclusionary zoning practices — a move that gave the movement's deregulatory platform the semblance of a progressive plea. Thus framed, YIMBYism gained traction and was promulgated across the country in the name of social equity by useful zealots and self-interested cynics, willfully or blissfully unencumbered by the weight of historical counter-evidence, the contingencies of context, or the findings of contemporary housing research. Before long, the Kool Aid of deregulation started showing up in YIMBY pitchers at the table of housing policy debate and, increasingly, it was the only drink on the menu.

The story of an intractable crisis caused by regressive regulation holds tremendous appeal for those in the business of selling simple, dramatic stories. Journalists and politicians have therefore been all too eager to inhabit the echo chamber of YIMBY orthodoxies. To judge from mainstream news-



MANHATTAN HUDSON YARDS construction sites next to skyscrapers. Photo courtesy of Village Preservation.

paper coverage, official statements across all levels of government, and the occasional half-baked pop-journalism best seller, you'd assume that the following postulations were universally accepted truths: 1) The lack of affordable housing stems from a lack of housing supply; 2) an increase in overall housing supply would make housing affordable to those in need; 3) land-use regulation has caused the housing shortage; and, given the foregoing 4) the relaxation of such regulation would stimulate new construction, expand the housing supply, and make housing affordable. And yet, among those who research housing policy, there has long been an abundance of disagreement about the accuracy of each of these assumptions.

The *Washington Post* covered the recent publication of research bucking the supposed YIMBY consensus. One paper, by urban and economic geographers Maximilian Bucholz, Tom Kemeny, Gregory Randolph, and Michael Storper, builds on numerous studies that have diverged from the mainstream YIMBY narrative. This scholarship challenges the assumptions, listed above, underlying the de-regulationist push to override local land-use controls and to undermine, in the name of housing affordability, the influence of communities in the development of their neighborhoods.

With regard to the assumption that relaxing land-use provides an effective means to stimulate housing construction, the co-authors point to cross-regional studies that

have concluded that housing supply and prices respond similarly to demand fluctuations, regardless of the degree of land-use regulation. The paper also references a 2023 survey by Urban Institute researcher Yonah Freemark of all peer-reviewed empirical English-language research on housing-related, land-use regulatory change that found conflicting or inconclusive evidence on the impacts of deregulation on housing production at both local and regional levels.

With regard to the assumption that increasing the overall housing supply will make housing affordable to those in need, the paper's authors cite research showing that new housing supply can cause an increase or a decrease in nearby housing prices, depending on neighborhood type and market tier and that, in any case, the impact is modest. The article then describes attempts to measure the speed at which the price effect of new housing construction filters down to segments of the market available to lower-income households. The rates tend to be small and occasionally negative. Moreover, when downward filtering does happen, it has been found to result in higher housing costs burdens. To illustrate these dynamics, the authors conduct a simulation exercise based on assumptions gleaned from the above findings to illustrate the impact of a construction boom on housing prices. They conclude that "no realistic [supply] shock could be large or quick enough to provide significant relief to today's cost-

burdened households in major U.S. cities."

Finally, with regard to the assumption that the lack of affordable housing stems from an overall lack of housing supply, the article challenges this purported causal relationship in two steps. First, it points to recent research by urban planning scholars Kirk McClure and Alex Schwarz disputing the presence of a housing shortage and arguing that findings to the contrary fail to account for the large surplus of housing produced during previous decades. Second, the paper presents as an alternative explanation for the affordable housing crisis: the national increase in income and wealth inequality. It contributes a geographic dimension to this well-established argument, demonstrating that, because housing prices track average income growth, the affordability crisis closely reflects the national distribution of high-earning college graduates. This tendency, the article explains, accounts for the acuity of the crisis in several U.S. metropolitan areas: "Non-college educated workers must compete for housing against residents whose incomes have benefited from globalization and technological change, amplified by agglomeration economies. Housing prices track average income growth, but that average obscures increasingly unequal income growth, with decades of stagnant wages for many workers. This gap between prices and stagnant incomes is the central driver of the affordability crisis." We welcome the deserved attention that this paper has received. Despite the mindless media saturation of YIMBY talking points, there has never been a shortage of research suggesting that the deregulation of housing markets will not only fail to solve affordability problems; it will likely make them worse. The political appeal of peddling a straightforward policy solution that just happens to redound to the benefit of the real estate sector has been plain to see. We hope that the new administration will part ways with its predecessor and take the less expedient path of tackling the affordability crisis as it exists in the real world and not as development interests and its YIMBY mouthpieces would like it to.

*Juan Rivero is the special projects director for Village Preservation. This article, about Yes In My Back Yard, was reprinted with permission of Village Preservation.*

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## OPINION

# Enemy of the People

BY TOM LAMIA

In his first term as president, Donald Trump established a reputation for being difficult and inconsistent. He then had a White House staff and agency heads who kept him from acting on his worst impulses. He regularly replaced those who counseled against his intentions, only to find their replacements to be similarly cautious. After an electoral defeat in 2020 and a second impeachment in which he narrowly escaped conviction, he was indicted for his role in seeking to prevent his successor from taking office and for absconding with classified documents. Later he was convicted in New York on multiple felonies for fraud connected with his 2016 election. This is only a partial record of his public service transgressions.

The phrase “enemy of the people” has hovered over politics at least since the Roman Senate applied it to Julius Caesar. In Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* the title refers to an expert, a biologist, called in by a spa town to analyze their healing waters. When the analysis revealed poison in the waters the expert became an enemy of the people because his findings were disastrous for the town’s economy.

In George Orwell’s *1984*, Big Brother insulates himself from blame by directing the leader of his Brotherhood to conduct daily “Two Minutes Hate” toward a scapegoat “enemy of the people.” Lenin, Stalin, Hitler and other tyrants used it against oppositionists. Trump doubles down, he calls the press “the enemy of the people” that reports “fake news.” “Enemy of the people” is dictatorial shorthand for scapegoat.

When I had trouble sleeping on a recent night, I resorted to a time-tested remedy: counting sheep. Unfortunately, my attempt at losing consciousness was continuously interrupted by thoughts of Trump outrages. The list seemed endless, but not sleep inducing. I struggled to find a common element for each succeeding outrage. I believe there is one — narcissism. Even a superficial review of these many outrages suggests narcissistic behavior. Is Trump’s narcissism our enemy of the people, a scapegoat, or is his narcissism in control of our national destiny and a cause for his removal from office?

What is narcissism? How can it be recognized? What may be the consequences for people led by a narcissist?

According to the *DSM-5, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* published by the American Psychiatric Association, someone with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) must exhibit at least five of the following eight behaviors:

- Grandiosity
- Entitlement
- Lack of Empathy
- Preoccupation With Fantasies of Success
- Excessive Need for Admiration
- Arrogant Behaviors
- Sense of Superiority
- Exploitation of Others

My scorecard on Trump checks off each of these behaviors.

According to AI: “Malignant narcissism is a severe, unofficial subtype of NPD when combined with antisocial behavior, paranoia, and sadism. It is characterized by extreme

grandiosity, a lack of empathy, and a sadistic desire to manipulate, dominate, or humiliate others. Unlike standard narcissism, this form includes vindictive, harm-seeking behavior and is considered a severe, destructive personality disorder.”

Trump seems to check these boxes as well.

What is the effect of a leader with NPD on organizations and societies at large? An AI summary: “The blending of narcissism with power often leads to a disregard for institutional norms and democratic processes, amplifying the risk to those governed by such individuals. It is crucial to recognize these warning signs and remain vigilant against their normalization in positions of authority.”

Trump’s NPD seems to be generally known to those exposed to him in governance, business and politics as evidenced by their treatment of him. Both subordinates and equals use flattery to win his attention and favor. Foreign leaders, elected officials, CEOs, university presidents and law firms all have used flattery, obeisance and other forms of bootlicking and servility to avoid the possible effects of confrontation even when that flattery takes on comic opera dimensions.

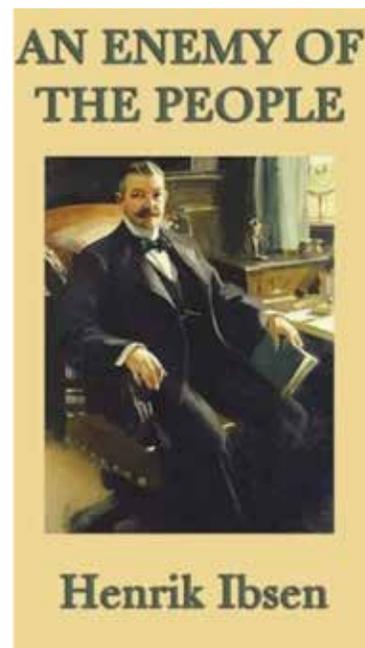
I am reminded of the behavior of Jack Lemmon as Ensign Pulver in *Mister Roberts*. Pulver fears and avoids his ship’s martinet captain (James Cagney) by hiding out in the ship’s laundry. When by inadvertence the two meet, Pulver grovels, seeking protection in the inconsequential

nature of his duty as the ship’s laundry officer. Pulver later boasts to his cabin mates about standing up to the captain, to reclaim some vestige of personal dignity. The narcissistic captain is accommodated by the servility and life goes on for tyrant and target alike.

Confrontations with Trump lead to exile. Ask Rosie O’Donnell, Mike Pence, Liz Cheney or Barack Obama. Exile can end with an apology, a signal to the narcissist that the confrontation never happened. As president, Donald Trump’s pique threatens more than personal exile. His powers of exile include use of the wealth and power of the United States. It is chilling to contemplate how little it would take to trigger his vindictiveness and how little control he may have over his impulse to attack the source of the hurt.

In a recent *New York Times* op-ed Jamelle Bouie reviewed Trump’s language since entering politics, noting that it suggests that for Trump some Americans are “a little more American than others . . .” The distinction is “a function of race, nationality and, above all, allegiance to Trump.” The message sent by this view of who is an American is manifold, with none of its forms being acceptable in a president.

In this second term the Constitution’s checks and balances format has not worked according to design, but there is still time. Donald Trump is incapable of putting the national interest ahead of his personal interest. He has become an enemy of the people he swore an oath to protect. He is unqualified by temperament, personality and character to be president. He should be removed from office. Impeachment and the 25th Amendment are constitutional means for doing it.



## LETTERS

## Glue Traps

Glue traps are as cruel as they are ineffective. New York City can choose smarter, more humane policy by banning them.

These devices cause slow deaths. Mice, rats, birds, and other small animals become stuck and die from exhaustion, dehydration, or injuries sustained while struggling to escape. Glue traps are indiscriminate—and they fail to address what draws animals indoors in the first place.

Rodent sightings have already declined as the city has improved trash containment—proof that prevention works. Secured waste and sealed buildings are effective and humane.

How we solve problems says something about who we are. New Yorkers should urge their councilmembers to support the proposed glue trap ban and prioritize compassion and common sense.

Scott Miller, *The PETA Foundation*

## Bissinger

I recently caught up on reading the entire three-part series about Karl Bissinger written by Phyllis Eckhaus, and published last year by *The Village View*. I no longer live in NYC but knew Karl when I was there in the late '60s and '70s, working in the peace movement. I was visiting NYC this past November when I happened to see a copy of *The Village View* and read Phyllis' last piece in her series on Karl. I just re-found that paper, and looked online to read the prior articles in the series.

Both as a whole and in each of its parts, the series was a wonderful distillation of information about Karl and the heartache of making and then losing him as an older friend. I appreciated very much Phyllis' insight and skill in communicating her experience of Karl, and their friendship in his last years. Thanks both to her and to the *Village View*.

Maggie Geddes, *Oakland, CA*

# The Court Case That May Destroy U.S. Democracy

BY ALEC PRUCHNICKI

Anyone who has been paying attention knows that Trump has wanted to cheat on election results. This goes from asking for the Georgia Secretary of State to “find” about 11,000 more votes to asking if the military could seize ballot boxes. I was worried about him putting masked, armed, ICE agents around voting sites to intimidate voters, even though that would spark widespread public opposition. His administration recently found another way of interfering with elections that uses the court system rather than ICE agents.

They obtained a court order issued by a Trump-friendly judge in Missouri to seize the original ballots in Fulton County Georgia, which includes heavily Democratic Atlanta. Kurt Olsen, a long-time election denier, was appointed by Trump to be the director of election security and integrity. Using this status, he obtained the sealed (meaning secret) court order despite no substantial evidence of election fraud in Atlanta but probably with re-hashed accusations that had been litigated and rejected years ago. FBI agents went to Atlanta and obtained the paper ballots whose present location is not known. Trump added a few comments about how Republicans and the federal government should run all elections despite the Constitution giving this authority to the states. As extreme and frightening as this action is, it could be much worse.

If a court order from the other side of the country based on non-existing evidence could be used to seize actual ballots five years after the election is over, why can't one be used to seize ballots five minutes after the election is over? An experienced and well-trained FBI agent appears by surprise at city, county, or state election headquarters and presents what appears to be a valid court order seizing ballots immediately after the polls close. If this occurs before the local officials have a chance to count or copy ballot results then those results would be counted by the federal government — this federal government, loaded with election deniers and Trump-supporting sycophants. Could anyone be sure of an honest count, or even a proclamation without any count at all? Would all ballots be counted or would some, like mailed in ballots, be labeled as questionable and not included in the final count before results are certified?

To steal an election, you might not need to undermine every voting site in every state. Although projections are that Democrats will win big in House elections, making multiple seizures at multiple sites difficult, Senate races are much closer. Republicans have an excellent chance of retaining control of the Senate because of the large number of Republican states undergoing those elections, but the few toss up elections might be very vulnerable to interference. If votes are seized, suppressed, or just stolen in heavily Democratic Atlanta and Detroit then Republican

victories in those states are almost guaranteed. If a few House votes here or there are similarly effected then that just adds to the federal ability to undermine, if not steal, the whole election. And if you think this is just paranoia, think how many times since 2016 have we told ourselves “it can't be happening here” to only be proven wrong.

What can be done to prevent this? One method used in the past was to have lawyers defending voting sites available on election day so that any malfeasance can be identified and immediately combated with a countervailing court order. This would give election officials the legal justification for ignoring or at least delaying the implementation of the seizure orders. Although it might put them in legal jeopardy, elections officials themselves would refuse to accept seizure orders and simply state that the order must be verified by the election lawyers. That would delay seizures and delay might be all that is needed. Elections officials who are Democrats, independents, or even honest Republicans like Brad Raffensperger in Georgia in 2020, would have to be willing to face down FBI agents.

The mechanics of the elections might be altered. Instead of a single source of ballots, whether paper or computer, there might be a way of making copies of ballots so that every computer ballot has an immediate paper copy made, or vice versa. If this is done quickly then even if one set of ballots is seized there is the possibility of the duplicates serving as a limit on federal miscounts. Local election officials might be able to quickly certify the results and so federal results and certification might be moot, or at least more difficult to justify.

The media might also play a role. Very often news outlets call elections immediately after polls close based on exit interviews. These are always unofficial but if the result is clear enough and that gets publicity, miscounts later might be hard to justify or at least open to challenge.

But the biggest deterrent to election fraud may have to come from the voters themselves. The more massive the turnout, the less likely the election will be stolen or undermined. In 2016, poor Democratic turnout in the swing states gave Trump an electoral college victory but not a popular vote victory. By 2020, the abuses of Trump's first term were fresh in people's minds and they were angry. Anger sometimes brings out voters more than the actual issues themselves. In 2024, what happened? Were Trump's previous actions forgotten, were immigration and inflation the real issues, was a Black woman with a foreign first name unelectable, or were people just apathetic and thought, once again, “it can't be happening?” Whatever the reason, fewer voters turned out and Trump narrowly won. We cannot keep saying “it can't be happening.” Unless we stop it, it's happening.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH US —  
EDITOR@VILLAGEVIEW.NYC





**NEITHER SNOW NOR RAIN:** A lone postal worker makes their way up the middle of 7th Ave. near Sheridan Square during the blizzard that hit NYC on February 23rd, with some parts of the city getting up to 20 inches of snow, making it the heaviest snowfall in the city in almost a decade. Photo by Bob Cooley.

## “I’m Not Mad At You”

BY SIGGY RAIBLE

That’s what a smiling Minneapolis mom, Renee Good, told ICE agents as they approached her while she was sitting in her car with her arm resting on the driver-side window on January 7. Moments later she was shot — dead. Those words were probably the last words she spoke in this world. The agent who shot her, Jonathan Ross, moments later was caught on camera calling her a “f\*\*king bitch.” Well, I don’t know about you, but I can tell you that I’m beyond mad, I’m effing pissed.

I am outraged because Good, shot three times, is dead at the hands of a government employee. I am mad because 18 days later another Minnesotan, Alex Pretti, was shot 10 times and lay dead in the icy cold streets of Minneapolis. Both Americans were killed by their fellow Americans, employees of the federal government. My tax dollars paid for these murders and I have a right to know what is being done in my name. After growing unrest across the nation an investigation into the killing of Alex Pretti has begun. It is unclear to me whether an investigation into Renee Good’s death is/has/will begin. Why? I have no idea. Is one life worth more than another? I don’t have an answer to that question either.

These two 37-year-olds were demon-

strating and bearing witness to the actions being taken by a militarized federal police force carrying out the orders of an American administration bent on depopulating the country of “illegal aliens.” These events remind me of an event which occurred on the grounds of Kent State University in 1970. Back then demonstrators were protesting against the Vietnam War. The National Guard was called in and four students were shot. Neil Young wrote a song commemorating the event entitled *Ohio*. With a few changes, we have a ready-made protest song for 2026.

On November 5, 2025, I clipped an article in the *New York Times* entitled *Making Sense of the Federal Forces on the Streets* thinking I would read it at a later date. I came across it the other day while cleaning up my stack of clippings. How frighteningly sad it is to see illustrations of 10 men and women — some in military-style “uniforms,” some with masks, others with weapons. More frightening now is knowing that some Americans, dressed like the individuals in the article, shot two of their fellow Americans on a residential street in Minneapolis. WTF?!

The *Times* article goes on to explain that the various agents deployed can be from

one or all of the following: Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection (ICE, Homeland Security and/or ICE Special Response Teams) and federal agencies (FBI and DEA). Depending on the agency, the officers can be masked. They may or may not be wearing vests which will identify the part of ICE or law enforcement agency they work for and some may operate in plain clothes with no or minimal identification. “Technical teams can carry additional equipment such as a less-lethal ammunition launcher... National Guard troops can carry shields, batons and rifles.” I can tell you that should I attend a demonstration I would be hard-pressed to tell one from the other especially if they’re wearing masks.

The various agencies have deployed agents to the following states: California, Florida, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Washington, D.C. and counting. They have been deployed for varying reasons ranging from crime control to “illegal immigration” enforcement actions. In Minneapolis, where Good and Pretti were killed, 3,000 agents were deployed to a city with 600 police officers. Were there so many criminals and “illegal aliens” roaming the

Minneapolis streets that the federal government felt a need to send a force five times the size of the city’s police force? Neither the mayor of Minneapolis nor the governor of Minnesota thought so and objected to their presence.

A human life is precious and when one life is lost to violence a reckoning has to follow. How can the federal government morally defend its actions without an accounting of its military-style police actions?

I was surprised to learn that 16 Americans have been shot or shot at during these ICE surges (see *NY Times* article dated February 11, 2026, entitled *D.H.S. Claims In 4 Shootings Fizzle in Court*). Three have died as a result of these actions; one woman was shot five times and lived to talk about it. In other instances demonstrators/witnesses were accosted by Darth Vader-like agents dispensing chemical agents, shoving observers and/or aggressively approaching individuals on the streets or while sitting in their cars, breaking the windows and dragging the drivers from their cars. Will we accept the continued violation of individual rights by government enforcers attacking unarmed American civilians? I pray not.

I know I will not. I will be voting in November.

# Goodwill to Condos on 8th Street

BY BRIAN J PAPE, AIA



**44 WEST 8TH STREET RENDERING** of street view. Credit: Inworkshop Architecture.

A new luxury condo project is currently under construction at 44 West 8th Street that will be nearly as tall as the new seven-story neighbor at 181 MacDougal Street, by Morris Adjmi Architects.

Historically, this stretch of 8th Street, between Sixth Avenue and Fifth Avenue, has seen its conditions ebb and flow. The *Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report* of 1969 describes the history.

“In 1633, Wouter Van Twiller, Director General of the Province of New Netherland, built his country home on this site (near the present MacDougal Street), by the old Indian Road. It was still standing as late as 1795. West Eighth Street was known as Clinton Place, named for DeWitt Clinton in 1842, when largely residential, then received its present name in 1898. This is a street (in 1969) of startling contrasts; it is full of small shops and restaurants. The lack of any controlling design or height accounts for the ragged appearance of the street today. Each building is occupied by several small stores.”

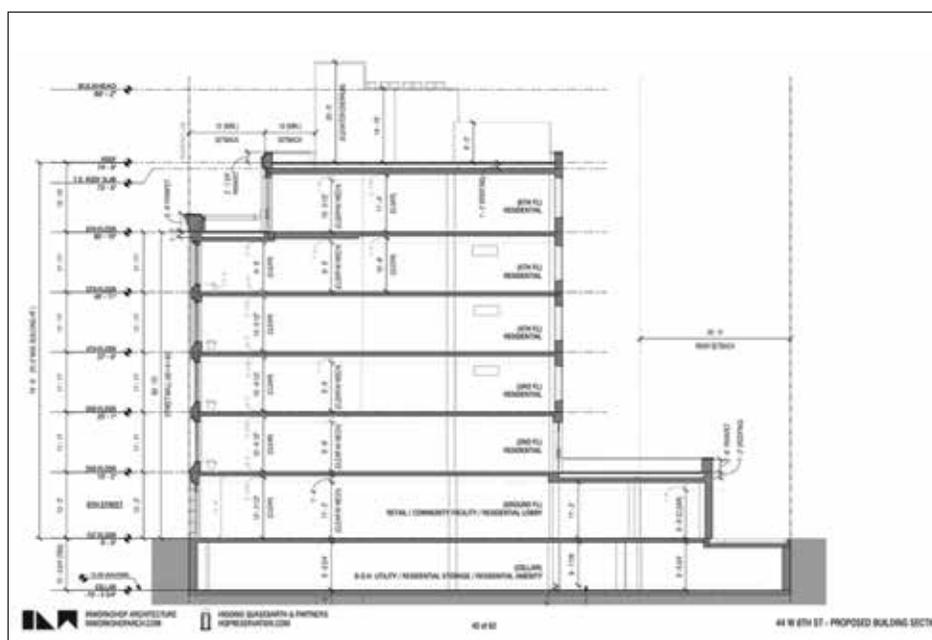
A pair of handsome Greek Revival houses facing MacDougal Street were built in 1846, the site of Nos. 179 & 181, later replaced with ‘taxpayers’ (one-story utility buildings, big enough to at least pay the taxes).

Nearby at 52 and 54 8th Street, between the stores a passageway led back to Clinton Court in the interior of the block, (now closed) which held many small dwellings for workers. The double lot for 44 & 46 W. 8th Street had one half built with a five-story flat in 1851 for a grocer and a coachman, while the other half was occupied by stables lit by skylights. Then a 1-story taxpayer was built on both lots in 1956, most recently occupied by a Goodwill second-hand resale shop. On the west at 48-50 W. 8th Street, a pair of five-story, brownstone flat houses (the early name for apartment houses) has cornices in the Queen Anne style, a new fashion when it was built in 1876.

As presented to the Community Board 2



**44 WEST 8TH STREET CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS VIEW.** Credit: Brian J. Pape.



**44 WEST 8TH STREET RENDERING OF BUILDING CROSS-SECTION VIEW.** Credit: Inworkshop Architecture.



**44 WEST 8TH STREET RENDERING** of an aerial view. Credit: Inworkshop Architecture.

Landmarks Committee in May of 2024, this 44 West 8th Street project features several noteworthy design aspects. The developer, T30 Capital, hired Idan Naor of Inworkshop Architecture for the 74-foot-tall structure, complimenting the motif and height of 181 MacDougal Street to the east, by Morris Adjmi. The new building cornice also nearly matches the 1876 building height on the west side, creating a very harmonious street wall.

What may be most noticeable will be the depth of the red brick façade of the new six-story residential building, with individual windows set back about 16” from the face of wall, creating deep shadow patterns. The Landmarks Committee recommended the Petersen Tegl Kolumba Handmade face brick, 20.8” (L) x 4.3” (W) x 1.5” (H) be replaced with more modular sized brick. As a ‘bonus,’ the architect chose a window configuration in the upper right quadrant that hints at the original “void” there of the old pre-1956 buildings. The ground floor and penthouse facades are differentiated by terra-cotta facings in a pink granite tone, also featuring deep setbacks to the glazing. There seems to be no attempt to provide safety height guardrails at the roof areas in the early documents; hopefully that will be addressed in final plans.

We don’t usually describe the floor plans of new construction, but we do want to note some highlights here. On the ground floor are 3,237 square feet of retail space and 432 square feet of ‘community’ space next to the residential lobby; stairs lead down to basement storage and meeting rooms, filling the entire site. At 50’ wide, the building will encompass 28,846 square feet and yield five condominium units with an average scope of 3,733 square feet each.

Though obviously the developer could have maximized the number of units with small apartments, say four to a floor or 22 total, the choice here is for the fewer, five large units.

The second floor is a four-bedroom unit with 3.5 bathrooms, and private terrace at back; the kitchen is in a separate room. The 3rd and 4th floors are also one unit each, four bedrooms and 3.5 baths, no terrace. The 5th floor introduces a very different plan, divided into a two-bedroom, two bath in front (street side), and a duplex at the back, with three bedrooms and three baths on this floor. The duplex is joined to the 6th floor with a large, almost 10’ diameter circular stair in the hallway, arriving on the 6th floor between a large living room in front and dining room/kitchen/pantry at back. The 6th floor penthouse also has a bedroom and bath, and a full-width terrace at the street side. Many rooms feature pocket doors, not the usual swing door type.

We wonder if the developer has tapped into a study that showed a high demand for four-bedroom apartments near the NYU campus?

West 8th Street has positively come a long way, ready to meet the next century of Village life.

# Fulton & Elliott-Chelsea NYCHA Houses Progress

BY BRIAN J PAPE, AIA



**MAJOR REBUILDING WILL SOON START** at the Fulton & Elliott-Chelsea Houses. The development will offer the first ever combination of new NYCHA buildings with new mixed-income buildings on NYCHA land. This rendering shows generous courtyards, new senior and community centers, amenities and shops for community life. *Credit: PACT.*

It has been years since the city first proposed major rebuilding at the Fulton & Elliott-Chelsea Houses (FEC) by New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). In 2019, the city dropped an effort to build two new buildings there due to tenant opposition to demolition.

The idea that demolition is viable now reflects the severity of the conditions in the developments — where residents regularly encounter leaks, mold, broken elevators and heating problems. NYCHA estimates it needs over \$40 billion for repairs across the system and those repairs, even if actually done, would not provide the quality of life amenities that new construction can provide. Funding provided by the federal government does not adequately support the cost of maintenance and repairs and has long abandoned building public housing (an early Trump budget zeroed out all capital for public housing while working to increase tax breaks and subsidies for rich investors).

Change can be very hard, so NYCHA

teamed with Essence Development and the giant Related Companies under a program called PACT (Permanent Affordable Commitment Together) to offer the first-ever combination of NYCHA buildings with new mixed-income buildings on NYCHA land. Under this PACT program, NYCHA is allowed to unlock funding to complete comprehensive repairs and provide enhanced property management, public safety, and social services. Through PACT, developments transition to a more stable, federally-funded program called Project-Based Section 8 with a 20-year contract.

From 2021, when a new master plan for FEC was unveiled, public backlash has cried “foul” and insisted that the process for implementation was invalid, asking, “Will Manhattan be an island for the rich only, or will it be a place that maintains New York City’s working-class roots, ethnic, racial and economic diversity?” Jonathan Gouveia, NYCHA executive vice president for real estate development, immediately answered

the critics’ questions and notified all residents that they will retain all their rights as public housing residents and continue to pay rent limited to 30% of their income. No resident will lose their rights or neighborhood in the move. Ninety four percent will remain in their buildings until new apartments are complete, while 6% will be temporarily relocated to refurbished apartments on the campus.

When *Village View* interviewed Jamar Adams, the managing principal at Essence, he said he spent part of his childhood in public housing and he believes in the importance of this type of project. Almost immediately, there has been a “Meanwhile Plan” a.k.a. “Bridge Plan.” Adams noted, “Even while the plans are being developed, Essence is already adding to the residents’ quality of life by providing private security guards on campus, hiring pest control firms, making entry door fixes, and completing numerous in-unit repairs.”

After the 18-month long required environ-

mental review process, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published by NYCHA on June 27, 2025. The FEIS analyzes many important topics, like water and sewer infrastructure, traffic, greenhouse gas emissions, potential construction impacts and necessary controls. In July 2025, with the conclusion of that process, residents of 436 West 27th Street and the Fulton buildings at 401 and 419 West 19th Street received 90-day notices to complete their temporary moves to other FEC apartments. Some households had already begun their voluntary move. Moving supplies and assistance is provided by the PACT team, through the Housing Opportunities Unlimited office at 420 West 19th Street. While Related Affordable Management (RAM) is now the managing agent moving forward, there will be continued oversight from NYCHA as the landowner and partner in PACT.

According to the official website, [fultonelliottchelsea.com/nycha-pact](https://fultonelliottchelsea.com/nycha-pact), this proposed \$1.5 billion project is designed to meet the needs of future generations of residents and works to dispel the false narratives being spread by opponents, including:

- 100% replacement of 2,056 NYCHA apartments within brand-new modern buildings (the “Replacement Buildings”).
- New apartments for all existing authorized NYCHA residents, with a right to return for any temporarily relocated households, permanent affordability, and the preservation of all tenant rights as required by the PACT program.
- Brand new community facilities and state-of-the-art amenities.
- A phased construction plan to minimize disruption to current residents.
- A comprehensive “Bridge Plan” for immediate repairs, improving safety, and enhancing living conditions starting in 2024.
- Upon completion of the new NYCHA buildings, additional residential buildings will be constructed, creating thousands of new affordable and market-rate apartments.

As an additional resource for FEC tenants, PACT has hired Convergent Law, a women and minority-owned law firm, to provide a free hotline that residents can call for questions about rights and protections, lease agreements, relocation processes, and right-to-return.

Many of the existing housing projects were built in the 1940s-1960s as experiments with the “tower in the park” urban plan — buildings disconnected from the surrounding city — meaning they stand out as class and racial segregation. We know mixed-use buildings and mixed-income neighborhoods produce better health, education, and economic outcomes for residents. That is the goal of this Chelsea redevelopment.

Nevertheless, it will take a successful completion to convince many that our government is capable of providing caring communities of social housing.

# Gansevoort Square Affordability is Built on a Shaky Foundation

BY JACK LOURIE

It can be confusing trying to understand whether a new development will serve the best interests of its community. After all, there are fundamental differences in strategy amongst New York City politicians to deal with the affordability crisis. One side takes market-based approaches, and the other sees the market as the very force that will lead to future displacement. Both groups have Democrat marked next to their name at the ballot box.

Being honest, I am hard-pressed to find examples in our history where making deals with the ultra-wealthy has led to better outcomes for everyone else. That brings us to Gansevoort Square and its developers.

The Gansevoort Square development was a request for proposal (RFP) put together by the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) after the Gansevoort Market Cop left their site prior to a lease expiration (EDC). During the first hearing on potentially developing the site, City Official Gigi Li noted that our area came last in Manhattan in permitting and developing affordable units (EDC).

The winners of the RFP were Douglaston Development and Kinwood Partners. Douglaston Development is part of a privately held three-pronged business known as The

Douglaston Companies. Douglaston Development develops sites, Levine Builders does the construction, and Clinton Management are the landlords.

A new luxury building can be a cocktail of financial and psychological stress for its residents — not only eventually leading to higher rent, but also a symbol that the previous era of the neighborhood is being left behind. Douglaston Development builds structures that often do not honor the historical culture of a neighborhood. And the idea that a private real estate investment company revitalizes areas such as Central Harlem or Williamsburg — a claim they make throughout their website — indicates a preference towards the people moving into their buildings rather than the long-time residents who are being priced out.

One building in their portfolio, Atlantic BK, is a 17-story apartment complex that extends for over half a block in the historically residential Bed-Stuy — which is currently experiencing rapid gentrification. Their website has a video showcasing their offered amenities and ends with the slogan, “at home, at work, at play,” perhaps a nod to the managerial class they hope to attract. This is similar to how they are marketing Gansevoort. But unlike Atlantic BK, Gan-

sevoort Square is meant to be inexpensive for at least half of its tenants.

The developers have promised up to 55% of housing to be affordable (EDC). Proportions of affordable housing depend on how much housing is allocated between those who are at 40%, 60%, and 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). A family of three making \$83,880 a year would fall into the 60th percentile, and they would spend \$2,097 on rent for a two-bedroom (EDC). What this does not account for is an area’s cost of living.

In a neighborhood such as the Meatpacking District where everyday purchases are more expensive, parents will not have financial wiggle room for their children if they live in Gansevoort Square. If you were raising a kid in this area on \$83,880 spending \$2,097 a month on rent, could you do it? The pre-defined bounds of what is deemed to be affordable favors developers over tenants. The city must account for these costs with their AMI proposals if they want to attract people of all incomes.

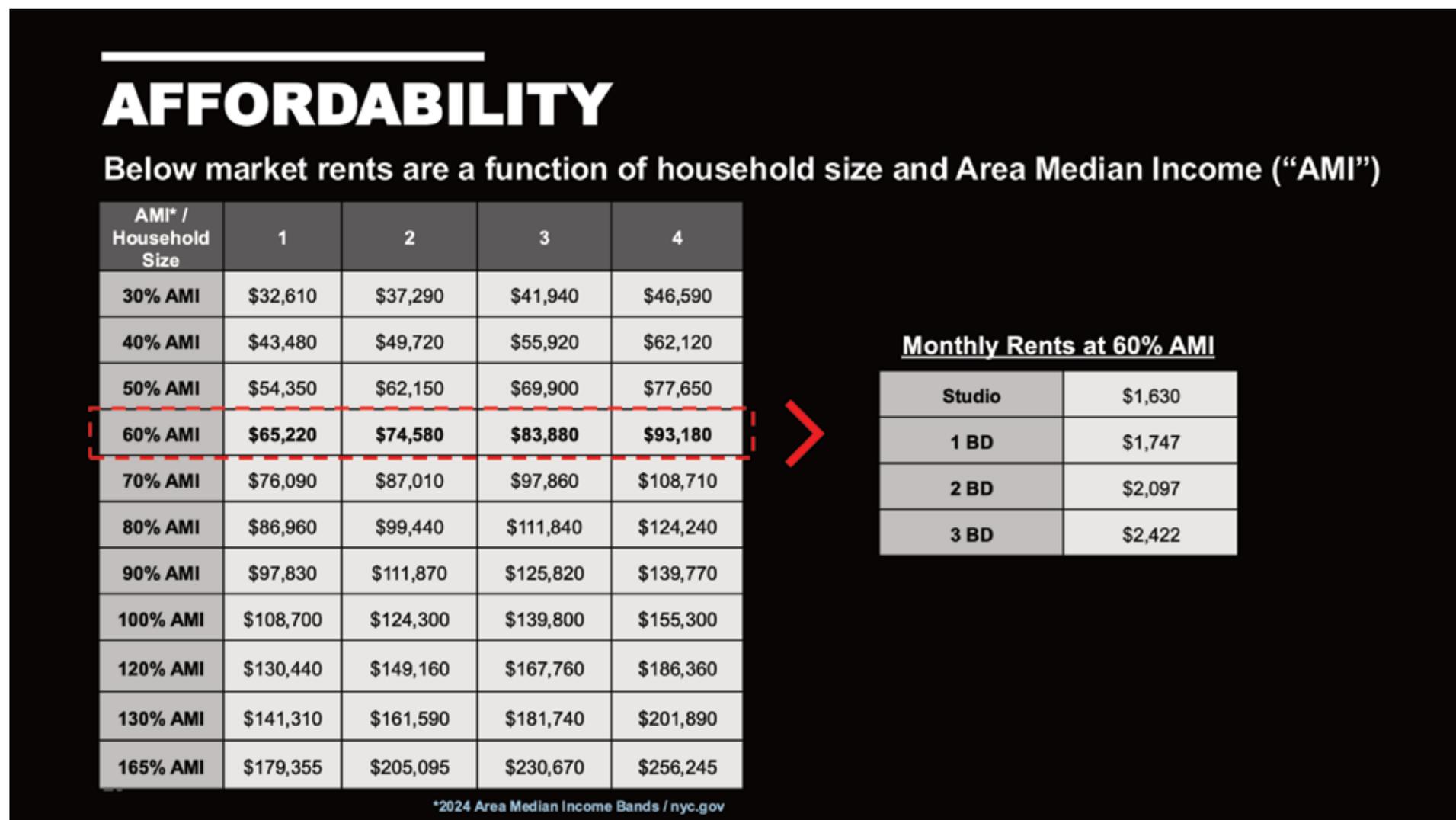
Gansevoort is using a cross-subsidy model to fund the housing for the people who would pay below market rate. Cross-subsidy models “use income from market-rate units to help finance affordable housing” (Hous-

ing Policy). This begs the question, if a developer can afford to charge over 50% of its residents below-average rent, how much profit are they making off those who are paying market rate? Are we sure they are not profiting off those who are in affordable housing?

Let’s go further.

How many homes across the city are developers and landlords making revenues off of that far exceed their inputs? This complex is not only promising affordable housing, but also to donate to further develop the High Line and Whitney. If they have this much money, they are making far more than they should. Are New Yorkers comfortable with a city that prioritizes real estate profits over quality of life? We all want affordable housing, but this proposition is defined within such narrow terms that squeezes as much cash as it can out of people from all income levels.

The project is aiming to certify Uniform Land Use Review Procedure by early 2027, with construction starting by the end of that year (EDC). A public campaign has been launched by Village Preservation to pressure Mayor Mamdani, City Council, and Erik Bottcher to change the plan. You can find the petition linked on their website.



# Frozenscapes

BY KEITH MICHAEL



**BALD EAGLE**, Wednesday, February 4, 10:24 a.m.

Good for you for not looking at the photos first to ruin your surprise!

First, there was the January teaser snow storm. Next came the January big snow storm. Then, the February Hudson River ice moved in. I couldn't get enough of the ice. Whenever I could, I layered on my thermals, leaned into the wind, and walked over to the river to watch the changing tide. Sloshing pancakes. Jagged sheets. Undulating puzzle pieces. I wanted to see the ice at sunrise and see the lights of downtown ricochet off the ice packs after dark. I rode the Staten Island Ferry twice to clock the accumulation of harbor ice, walked along Brooklyn Bridge Park to see the clog in the East River went to the top of One World Trade Center for the panoramic view of the white necklace around Manhattan, and traipsed from Hoboken to Port Imperial for even more icy vistas. It's fair to say that I was obsessed. Yes, I even took the train up along the Hudson River to see epic ice around Croton Point, Oscawana, George's Island, Montrose, and Verplanck.

I've championed this before: the Hudson River around Croton Point and further north is prime winter Bald Eagle viewing territory—particularly when there's ice on the river. And, wow, this year there's been ice on the river and eagles have been on the ice! Dozens of eagles. Darker, young eagles. Shaggy, dappled-with-white juvenile eagles. Nearly adult eagles with their new grown-up white head feathers still muddied with brown. Full glistening, white-headed, white-tailed adults. The ice flows on the open water are prime fishing real estate. If you're an eagle conserving winter energy, you fly upriver, alight on an ice flow, then take the lazy boat to eye the water as you float downstream. Spot a fish? Lunch is only a few feet away rather than having to dive from hundreds of feet above the water. I tip my knitted cap to them.

However, catching a fish does not en-

gender generosity amongst your eagle colleagues. The battle is on. Here, the plundering of a sushi luncheon on the ice. There, a scrappy aerial dogfight. Across the way, an eviction from a choice observation perch. It's not only eagles in the fray. I watched a dexterous winter duck, the Common Merganser, catch a humongous fish. The moment it surfaced to swallow its prize, other mergansers rushed him. Seeing the tussle, a nearby Great Blue Heron dove into the icy water. I'd never seen a heron dive like that! Having sideswiped the merganser underwater, both came up empty-billed. The heron dove again, this time snagging the fish. Score.

But. A young eagle saw THAT commotion and mustered a feint and parry counter-attack on the heron. Somehow the Great Blue Heron reigned victorious and made off with the trophy. For that eagle, it was back to the ice flow waiting game. Having grown up when Bald Eagles were destined for extinction, and now, jostling for front row seats for this spectacle — I'm thrilled.

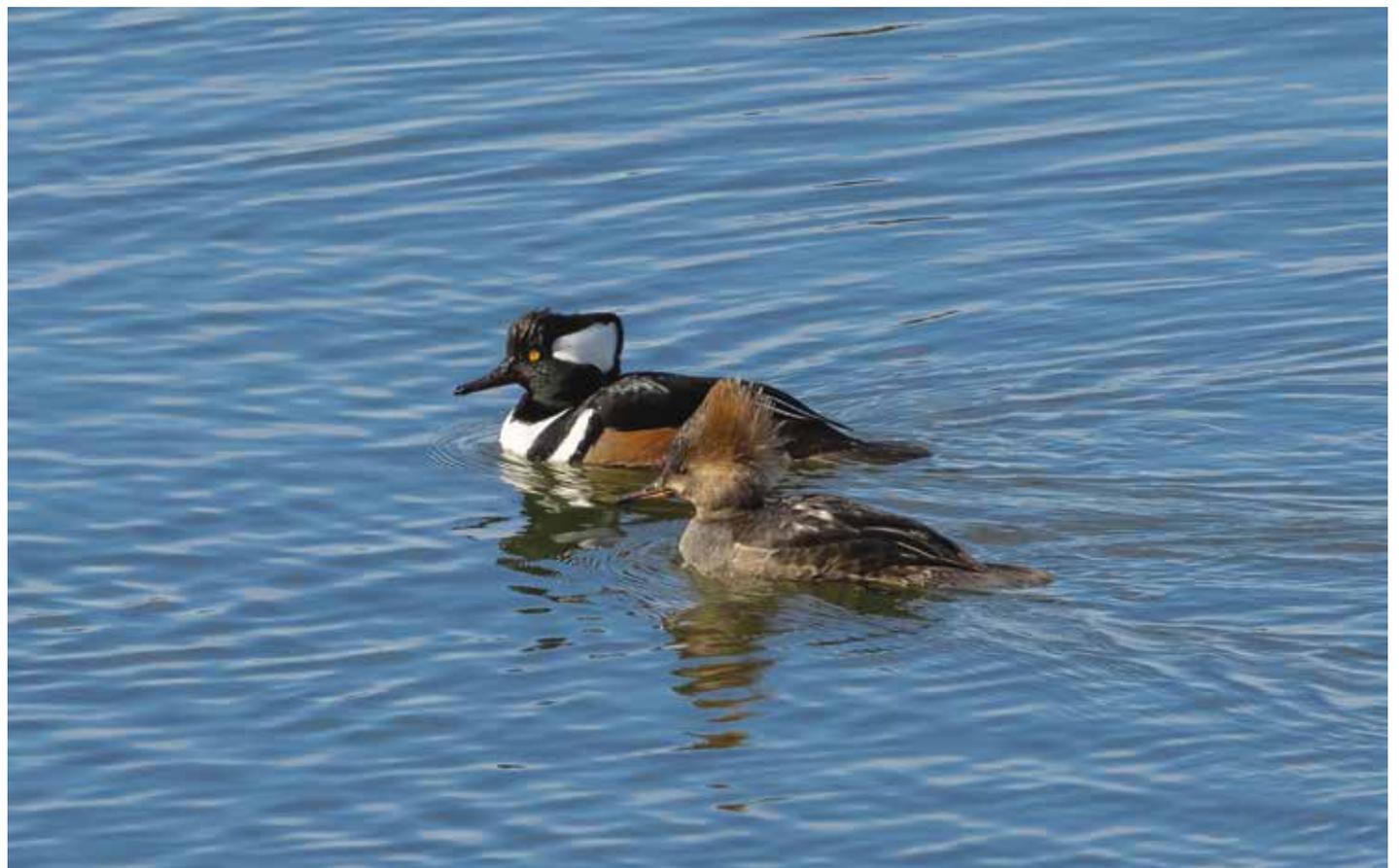
But, zooming back to the West Village. All of those walks to the river yielded a steady, though harried, parade of blizzard birds. The snow, the ice, the wind, and the fiercely low temperature was slamming them. Desperate to find food, the Canada Geese struggled with all of the lawns frozen over. Perching on lampposts, American Kestrels scoped out likely meals. Gulls scavenged the jostling ice flows. Black Ducks, Mallards, and Gadwalls were all gleaning what they could from the rocks and pier pilings. Conversely, like the eagles further north, groups of punky-coifed Red-breasted Mergansers were doing just fine plying the open water. Mergansers are diving ducks and the edges of their bills are serrated to grasp slippery fish. Watching them repeatedly dive into the frigid water does make me shiver, as well as wonder, "How do they do that and what does it look like under the ice to them?" Ah, there's a stylish Hooded Merganser pair slaloming through the Pier 49 pile field. Their flamboyant wedge-shaped feather-dos—his in formal black and white, hers in plush velvet brown—are always eye-catching. The wind is ripping through me now. Even I need to get back inside.

Wait. Hooded Mergansers? Yes, I've seen

them all around NYC in winter, in every borough, but have I ever seen one in Hudson River Park in the West Village? I warmed up just dashing home to check My West Village List. Checked it. Checked it twice. Checked it thrice. Nope. Hooded Merganser is NOT on it. Verdict. New West Village Bird #120: Hooded Merganser! Woo woo.

Four days, and acres of ice later, entering the park at West 11th Street, I ran into a friend walking her dog. Seeing me decked out in my binoculars and camera, she asked, "What are you hoping to see today?" That was easy, "A Bald Eagle." I'd been hearing of multiple eagle sightings in Inwood, at Dyckman Street, at 125th Street, and at the 79th Street Boat Basin. Surely, an eagle could just sally forth down here, right? "Well, good luck," she bid as we parted. Less than 30 seconds later, I looked up, and there was a soaring, mottled brown, young eagle, right over Perry Street! My friend was already out of shouting distance. Once that eagle drifted out of sight, upon quickly scanning the river ice — there was a second one! I knew that a Bald Eagle wasn't previously on My List because I'd been hoping to see one for years, and I even knew what number it would be. My New West Village Bird #121: Bald Eagle. Oh, yeah.

While the ice lasted, astonishingly, I had a total of SEVENTEEN West Village eagle sightings. And. Five days later, a THIRD New West Village Bird showed up—in just over a week! But you're going to have to wait until next month to find out about that one. Surprise.



**HOODED MERGANSERS**, Saturday, January 31, 10:42 a.m. All Photos by Keith Michael.

## CHARACTERS OF THE VILLAGE

# Susan Soler Nascimento

## Inspirational Educator and Author

BY JOY AND BRIAN PAPE

*Keith Michael, our popular contributor who writes about birds in The Village View, recommended his friend, Susan Soler Nascimento, to be a Character of the Village.*

According to the website for her new book, *Flowers for Nana*, “With over 40 years of experience in early childhood education, Susan Soler Nascimento is a veteran and pillar of NYC public schools. Her classroom in the Village was a leading space for hands-on, child-centered education that fostered creativity and a love of learning. She is a people person, problem solver, calendar and quote collector, guide, wife, mother, Nana and friend.”

The book is about how “beauty and connection bloom when children share their interests and loves across generations. *Flowers for Nana* is a heartwarming story about a grandchild who wants to connect with a grandparent.”

Here’s what Soler Nascimento had to say during our recent interview.

### What brought you to the Village?

My whole life has been in Manhattan. I love the Village and consider myself a lucky native New Yorker. I grew up with my parents on East 10th Street in the East Village. I had a great view of the East River where I saw interesting people like Astronaut John Glenn, JFK, Khrushchev and Castro because my teachers took us out to see all those people going to the U.N.

I moved to the West Village Houses in 1976 as an original tenant. My dear friend had just come to New York and we were looking for an apartment together — actually, she was looking because I was working — when she said, “You gotta see this apartment.” One of my best memories was standing there with the keys to my first place, hardly believing I was living in the Village. There was affordable housing in the West Village then. I was 24.

I started working in education and then we had a baby. I decided to stay home for five years, poor, but it was important to be home. I came to P.S. 3 in 1992 where I had an amazing experience teaching for over 24 years. My students explored all that the Village had to offer. I taught pre-KK, then K and 1st and then just K.

I had the opportunity to test the waters of the Hudson River for 15 years with my class. Every month we tested and recorded the temperature, salinity, and oxygen level. We saw how the river changes each month using equipment that the scientists use.

**Now that you are retired, what is your engagement with the Village?**



SUSAN SOLER NASCIMENTO just published her first children’s book, *Flowers for Nana*, after working 40 years in the education field. Credit: Tobias Nascimento.

I’m a tour guide and I belong to the Guide Association in New York City. I developed a stroller tour on Downing Street and tour of River to River on 10th Street. I’m also a docent at the Bronx Zoo and a published author. When I became a grandmother/nana seven years ago, I was inspired to write my first children’s book, *Flowers for Nana*. I just read it to six classes at my beloved P.S. 3. Between book appearances, I like being around, learning and exploring the Village, volunteering at the Bronx Zoo, and visiting with my grandchildren in Tacoma, WA.

Building on my career, I am hopeful this book will be another way to encourage children to pursue their dreams, while also fostering connections between generations. My husband, Tobias, teaches Portuguese at FIT, the New School, and the Borough of Manhattan Community College. My current goals include learning to swim, visiting a zoo in every state, and seeing my grandchildren graduate college.

### Tell us about your passion.

My passion is to interact with people, giving them smiles, flowers and “good mornings” as I walk around the neighborhood. I love children, flowers, books and the Hudson River. I love to read to the kids and we make flowers together. I listen to books so I can walk by the river. I love listening to books because I love hearing the voices. And I just finished listening to *Theo of Golden*, written by Allen Levi, and *The Correspondent*, written by Virginia Evans.

### What are your favorite restaurants?

Oscar’s Place, 466 Hudson St., Emmet’s on Grove, 39 Grove St. — which used to be Lederhosen German Wurst & Bierhaus, and before that it was a theater where our daughter had two birthday parties. For pizza, John’s Pizza, 278 Bleecker St. and Joe’s Pizza, 7 Carmine St. There have been so many changes in the Village, it’s hard to keep up.

### What is your favorite place in the Village?

St. Luke’s Garden is my happy place. I take books out of the library and I sit and I read there. It’s the intergenerational connections of meeting people. I talk to anybody who is in my area and to the people who stop to talk to me.

### Parting words?

I want to encourage my neighbors of the West Village to stop, look around and practice a moment of kindness each day. This will bring them joy.

Learn more — [flowersfornana.com](http://flowersfornana.com)

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# Grove Street - Then And Now (Part 2)

BY RICHARD ERIC WEIGLE AND MICHAEL ANASTASIO

How is it possible that one tiny street in Greenwich Village could have such an impact on history, pop culture, film, literature and lifestyle? In February we wrote about “Hollywood On Grove” and “Literary Greats On Grove.” Here’s more about this special street and its impact on New York City’s culture and history.

## History On Grove

In 1799 when Grove Street was little more than a dirt road traversing an apple and cherry orchard, it was called Columbia Street. For some reason it was quickly changed to Cozine Street, named for a well-known family living nearby. It then became Burrows Street named for William Burrows, a naval war hero. Perhaps, not to have it confused with nearby Barrow Street, it was changed

NYC can boast of a National Monument?

Heading west across Seventh Avenue, you’ll find the block which is home to Marie’s Crisis. This is where Thomas Paine who wrote *Common Sense*, *The Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*, once lived. He is considered by many to be the Father of the American Revolution. Paine died on this site on June 8, 1809. Tourists from around the world come here to pay homage where a plaque commemorates him.

The farther west one proceeds, the more residential the street becomes. On the right, soon after crossing Bleecker Street, is 45 Grove St., an impressive Federal-style manor house built in 1830. Once a freestanding mansion, it has since been divided into apartments, hence the fire escapes on the front of the building. On his way to Wash-

ing the police raids of the Prohibition era.

## Lifestyle On Grove

Time and again we hear non-New Yorkers say, “I love New York but I could never live there.” These people have never been to Grove Street! It’s where neighbors come together in the spring to plant flowers up and down its blocks. We hang bird houses, walk our dogs and pick up after them, kick the occasional piece of litter to the curb, congregate on stoops sharing stories of our days, sometimes sipping wine and waxing poetic

about how much we love living here. We know our postal carrier by his first name and actually talk to our neighbors. We are proud and happy residents of Grove Street, “Villagers” in our aptly named “Greenwich Village.”

While Grove Street is a little oasis of relative calm and beauty, it is still in close proximity to shopping on Bleecker Street, Off-Broadway theaters with such venerable names as Lucille Lortel, Cherry Lane and Minetta Lane, The IFC and The Quad Cinemas, and The Whitney Museum. Nearby are the promenades along the Hudson River, The Little Island and The Highline. We also have some of the finest dining in the city including The Little Owl, Buvette, Emmett’s On Grove, I Sodi, and Via Carota, and some of the most popular bars — Grove Social and Bar Pisselino. We are even close to the subway.

While the nature of the neighborhood has changed over the years the essence of what has always made Grove Street special has remained. With its restaurants and bars, Grove Street isn’t as quiet as it once was, but it has never looked better. And it’s never been safer. At police precinct meetings we now talk about delivery bikes on the sidewalks and dining sheds instead of murders and rapes. New York is a city of change and Grove Street has changed along with it. This lovely little street gives a lesson about the futility of trying to hang on to the past. As the city changes, so must we. With every loss something is gained. Who knows what the future may hold for Grove Street? Whatever happens, it is sure to remain one of the most charming and live-able blocks in all of New York City.

*This concludes our two-part series on Grove Street.*

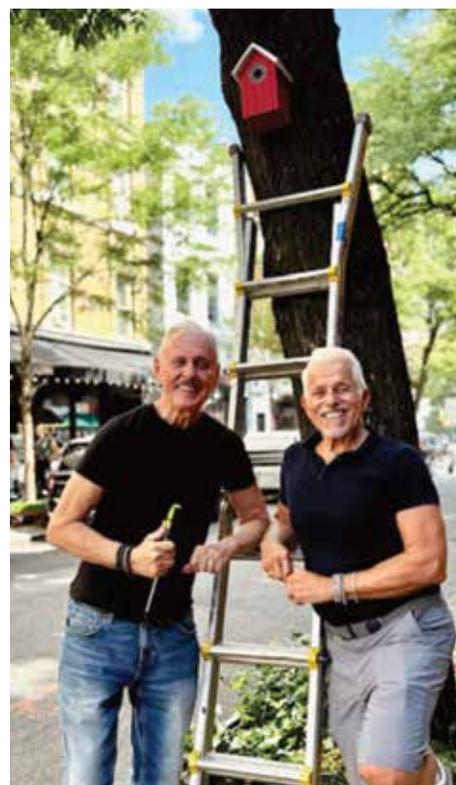


GROVE COURT. Photo Credit: Michael Anastasio

one last time to Grove Street reflecting the nearby orchard and groves of trees in the area. To this day Grove Street is one of the greenest streets in all of New York City.

Arriving at Grove Street from the east, where it splits off from Christopher Street at Waverly Place, one notices an interesting row of single family houses on the left with their various architecture styles leading up to a towering brick apartment building. To the right, across Christopher Park, through the trees, one can glimpse the historic Stonewall Inn where a police raid in 1969 led to three days of riots that began the Gay Civil Rights Movement. In 1970, The Christopher Street Liberation Day March commemorated those riots and eventually became the annual Gay Pride Parade. The Stonewall Inn and Christopher Park, with Grove Street as its southern boundary, have become The Stonewall National Monument. How many streets in

ington D.C. in 1865, John Wilkes Booth stopped at number 45 to enlist the aid of his friend and fellow actor, Samuel K. Chester who lived there. Booth had a plot to take over the government, kidnap President Lincoln and take him to Virginia. When Chester showed no interest in his friend’s scheme, Booth modified his plan to assassinate Lincoln, a task he could accomplish alone. One short visit to Grove Street and the course of history was changed! In addition, 17 and 45 Grove were reportedly stops on the Underground Railroad. There are tunnels under the sidewalks to this day that led up from the Hudson River where slaves arriving by boat could be smuggled through the streets of Greenwich Village to relative safety. There’s even rumored to be a tunnel, long ago boarded up, that connects the former Chumley’s Speakeasy on Bedford Street to 17 Grove, apparently for quick escapes dur-



PRESIDENT OF THE GROVE STREET BLOCK ASSOCIATION, Richard Eric Weigle, and his husband Michael Anastasio hanging a birdhouse on Grove Street. Photo credit: Frank Naumann.



BIRDHOUSES ON GROVE STREET donated by visitors from Amsterdam. Photo credit: Michael Anastasio.

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

# Three Girls Walk Into a Bar

BY CHURCHILL STONE

**BAR TIZIO**

**107 Horatio Street**

My mother and I wanted to go to a new small place three blocks from my house. But there was a problem. This place is actually a bar, a wine bar with cocktails too. We thought it might have good food because it is the little sister of Barbuto which is next door. Would this bar let in a kid? And now Charlemagne wanted to come too. Would Barbuto's little sister let in my little sister?

I looked up the rules of New York City on ChatGPT. I figured that if you serve food then you're probably required to serve children. Wrong! I learned that any bar or restaurant in New York City can say "No children!" whether they serve liquor or not. Kids are the only group that have no rights at all. Zero. (Maybe Mayor Mamdani can fix this.)

My mother, my sister, and I all got dressed in barrel jeans. We would try to have a girls' night out and so we walked over on a wet Tuesday evening.

When we arrived at 7:30 p.m. there was only one group of people seated at a table. Two parents and . . . a tween? Whew, I thought, kids are definitely allowed here. By the way, there are only about 12 tables and a bar. The lighting is a little dim but warm — and in Italian, "tizio" means "dude" or "what's-his-name." Whatever his name, we were happy to be out of the cold.

Alexander was our super nice waiter. In fact, everyone was very nice to us the whole time we were there — to my surprise, this bar seemed to like kids. Alexander told us that Tuesday nights are calmer, but Wednesday to Saturday get very busy, especially since it's so small. Luckily we picked the right night to come.

The menu is very small which makes it much easier to order. We got the Tajarin Pasta which is from northern Italy. You can have it with caviar, but my sister and I definitely did not want that. My sister wanted it with a side of tomato sauce so we got that.



**IS THIS THE BEST BUTTER PASTA ON PLANET EARTH?** Why, yes it is. Photo credit: Katrina Robinson.

We also got Meatballs in Tomato Ragu (a fancy name for sauce) and the JW Milanese

Chicken. So, the Tamarin is a butter parmesan

pasta. It's amazing — creamy, thick, and delicious. It was also very rich, so maybe a bit too much for one kid to eat herself. It was the best butter pasta I have ever had and I always order butter pasta in Italy and New York. My mother loved it too.

Then the meatballs arrived in a tomato sauce with tiny pieces of cooked tomatoes throughout. There were lots of meatballs, maybe eight, and they were the perfect size — they had a bit of green in them, giving them a specific taste that some kids may not like, but still that did not ruin them completely for me. Surprisingly, my sister, who hates green stuff, liked them too — in fact, she ate two the next day because there were so many we took the rest to go

The JW Milanese Chicken was crispy, tasty and quite big, so definitely something to share among two or three people. The sauce that came with it was also very good. It was an aioli with eggs and Dijon mustard. That may not sound good, but trust me it is. The plate came with purple lettuce under the chicken.

Now came our favorite part of the meal. For dessert, Bar Tizio has chocolate sponge cake, toffee pudding, and an ice cream sandwich. We ordered the ice cream sandwich, of course. But instead of bringing one ice cream sandwich as we ordered, Alexander brought two! We were thrilled, especially my mother because there would be no fighting. The sandwich was a chocolate cookie shaped in a rectangle with pink peppermint ice cream inside. It had a very wintry vibe and a taste which I really liked. Alexander also gave us some of their special spicy tomato sauce to take home which was so thoughtful of him (my sister was very happy and excited).

Bars are not for kids and never will be, but Bar Tizio is surprisingly kid friendly. I hope this article inspires parents to take their kids because I think they will love it as much as I do.

**\*\*\*\* (Four stars)**



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## VILLAGE PET PAGES

BY JOY PAPE AND BRIAN PAPE

### Giving and Receiving

BY SHARON STEINHOFF

*Hoping to write about a pet other than a dog or cat, we reached out to Village View bird writer, Keith Michael, who gave us a recommendation. Here's the story of Bert and Ernie. — Joy Pape and Brian Pape*

In December 2001, when my husband, John, and I brought a pair of black-headed caiques into our lives, we had no experience as bird owners. We were inspired by a colleague of John's, who shared stories about his caique — how clever and intelligent she was, and how beloved by all members his family. Our children, fraternal twins, were then applying for college, and we thought there was room for a new pet in our home.

Caiques are highly social small parrots; they love to perform and generally behave like perpetual two-year-olds while bonding strongly with their human owners. The store where we purchased ours had a pair of six-month olds from the same hatchery who were clearly attached to one another. We were (easily) persuaded to keep them together by buying both.

Though inexperienced with birds, we were well trained in human twins. Like our children, we could see distinct personalities in our bird duo right from the start, and named them for their *Sesame Street* counterparts. Bert was gentle and deferential to Ernie, but also curious and quietly bold. Ernie was blustery and loud, a diva; she was first to the food trough and put on a front of toughness, but she counted on Bert to be the #1 explorer. Naming did not change when testing revealed they were both girls.

Owning a caique is not for the faint of heart. As highly social birds, they require attention and stimulation, which includes out-of-cage time to play. They express themselves loudly and they have opinions about what they want to do, how they want to do it, and when. They may convey their displeasure with you by biting. They can live long lives. Ernie celebrates her 25th birthday in May. She may live another five years — or more.

I am a conflicted bird owner — worrying continually about whether the life I am providing is “better than” the life they would have had in the wild. Seeking to understand the world from their point-of-view has given me a fresh perspective of my place in a wide universe of living creatures.

Bert and Ernie's deep intelligence was on continual display. They knew the ring of the doorbell might lead to someone at the front door. They knew the footprint of our apartment, and looked for our children in their bedrooms after they'd gone back to school. They recognized return visitors, and held grudges against some of them.

Their behavior during Hurricane Sandy in 2012 was particularly memorable. With no electricity for more than a week, we lived by



ERNIE CELEBRATES HER 25TH BIRTHDAY in May. Photo credit: Sharon Steinhoff.

candlelight and the warmth of the fireplace. The neighborhood was eerily quiet. Bert and Ernie, too, were quiet, even docile, and did not complain about being caged throughout the blackout. Did they sense the abnormal? Had the serious storm alarmed them? I'll never know.

Sandy honed my awareness to their sense of safety. I noted their sensitivity to shadows in the windows adjacent to their cage; how they cowered on the far side of their cage in heavy rain or snow, lacking understanding of the window's protection; how bold they felt when perched at the top of their ladder, above my head, than when I towered over them. I saw how strangers in the house made them go quiet until they were confident in what was going on.

Birds can lay unfertilized eggs. Bert was a serial egg layer and laid at least one egg most springs. Over time, this put a strain on her body, and in the spring of 2021, we learned she had a serious heart condition.

During this painful time, Bert gave me confidence at long last that we had, in fact, given her a beautiful life. Despite her terrible sickness, she wanted her routines to be the same: to sleep on her favorite perch, to eat from her trough, to play outside the cage with Ernie. She did not want any of my pampering. When she was exhausted, she only wanted to rest on her familiar spots in or out of her cage. So we provided props to grant these wishes, with short stints being hand fed when she was too weak to stand. Ernie did not understand; she was frustrated with

fathers and John's mother; job changes; the renovation of our apartment; our son's marriage; and many memorable journeys in the U.S. and abroad. In all these events, caring for our birds remained a responsibility, too.

In August 2024, my husband, John, died unexpectedly. John towed Ernie for the night, and in the morning, he was gone. Ernie quickly understood it was just me now. She knew when I put on my sunglasses (or hat), she would be at home alone. She developed a habit of checking my whereabouts when at play outside of the cage — sometimes calling out to make sure I was still there. She does not like me to work in my office where I am out of her sight, and quiets down if I sit at the counter near her. When I come home late at night, she calls from under the towel, and is reassured to hear my response.

Now in my family home, it feels like Ernie and I are united in some symbiotic way. Beings that we knew are gone, and we just have each other. Perhaps she has memories; I know I do.

I've doubled down in trying to give her a full life. The front closet has become her play area. She climbs over the shoe rack and around the vacuum cleaner. She hopes I'm not looking when she scales the coat rack and tries to get behind the suitcases. She's learned to go quiet when I say, “Where are you?” and she knows she's somewhere she shouldn't be. I feel a sense of mischievous surprise when I find her.

In this circle of life, we humans often discover surprises at many turns. In that December 2001 train ride home with Bert and Ernie in tow, I could never have imagined how this companionship would play out or how life enriching it would be.

Bert's inability to keep up — she wanted Bert to be her old self.

Bert died that September. At first, Ernie seemed confused about the empty adjacent cage, as if she expected Bert to show up. After two weeks, we removed the divider between the cages and Ernie occupied the whole space and with remarkable ease.

Bert's death underscored the longevity of our bird companionship. Bert and Ernie were present for our children's college graduations and leaving home; the deaths of our



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# My View Around the Village

BY ROGER PARADISO

## Polymarket Pop Up

Polymarket, a prediction market, opened “New York’s First Free Grocery Store” at 7th Avenue and Charles Street. According to FOX 5, each shopper was given a tote bag to fill with free groceries. The pop-up store had scheduled a four day run and it was a big success. The company also donated \$1 million to the Food Bank for NYC “to help fight food insecurity across all five boroughs.”

Polymarket is a company that allows users to wager cryptocurrency on events ranging from elections to sports championships. State Assemblymember Clyde Vanel (D-Queens) introduced a bill last year that would categorize prediction market contracts as “unlicensed gambling” subject to stiff civil fines. Shoppers at Polymarket’s free pop up, however, did not seem bothered by the controversy, and told the *NY Post* they hoped the market’s offerings were here to stay.

## Li-Lac Chocolate’s Chris Taylor on NYSE Live!

Chris Taylor, owner of Li-Lac Chocolates at 75 Greenwich Ave., appeared on NY Stock Exchange Live! the day before Valentine’s Day. Taylor explained how it happened, “I was told either the chairman or somebody high up likes Li-Lac. I like that! You make friends in high places when you’re in the chocolate business. So, there was some sort of personal connection — I’m not sure exactly what it was — but our PR agent talked to the right person and it just happened. It was fun.”

## Record Store Day is April 18

John Pita, owner of Record Runner at 5 Jones St., said his most asked about LPs are *Alive in America* by Steely Dan, *Live from Asbury Park 2024* by Bruce Springs-



**POLYMARKET**, a prediction market, opened “New York’s First Free Grocery Store” at 7th Avenue and Charles Street.

teen, *The Live Album* by Neil Young & The Chrome Hearts and *The Youthquake Tour* by Dead or Alive. And, he had this to say about Record Store Day, “It’s always fun. It’s always a lot of work and, this year, they sent us the list early. Hopefully we have some pretty good weather and it turns out good.”

## Stonewall Resistance

Trump and his team of recidivist fools took down the Stonewall Pride Flag. They say it was against National Park ground rules. We all know this is a smoke screen to harass Villagers and the gay community. I hope Congress can cut the funding for ICE drastically because I fear these are provocations to generate protests. They want to create a false insurrection so Trump can bring the military into his hated states. Protest peacefully at all times. These ICE gangs are playing with real bullets.

Jim Drougas, of the Unoppressive Non-Imperialist Bargain Books store said, “He

is pandering to his people once again and trying to erase all remnants of inclusion on every level.”

## Former Tisch Dean’s Council Member Pictured With Epstein In Latest File Release

The following excerpts are from an article by Jason Alpert-Wisnia in the *Washington Square News*, February 12, 2026:

“Newly released files show Tisch alum and former Deans’ Council member Brett Ratner side-by-side with Jeffrey Epstein — with emails indicating that Ratner said he “loves” him in 2012, four years after the sex offender pled guilty to soliciting prostitution for minors.

A series of photos from an unknown date depict Ratner sitting on a couch with Epstein, both men embracing women whose faces have been redacted. In a May 2012 email, Epstein’s publicist Peggy Siegal, who was at a documentary screening with Ratner

at the time, told the financier “Brett says hi and he loves you!” Earlier this month, Ratner denied knowing Epstein and said he had no “personal relationship” with him.

Before Ratner’s sexual assault allegations led to Warner Bros. severing its \$450 million co-financing deal with his production company, Ratner directed box office successes including the *Rush Hour* series, *X-Men: The Last Stand*, *Red Dragon* and *The Family Man*.”

## Melania

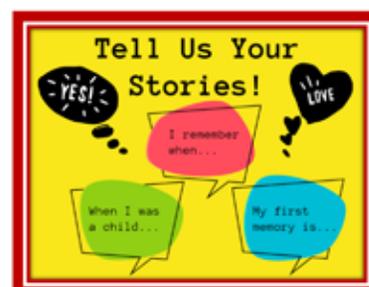
I will review the *Melania* documentary for *The Village View*, but my wife refuses to let me pay \$30 plus popcorn in the theatrical run. We will see it on Amazon when it streams shortly. I’ll provide my complete review as well as full update on how it is doing at the box office. Directed by Brett Ratner, (noted in the *Washington Square Park* article above) the film focuses on the first lady 20 days before Donald Trump’s second inauguration.

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# Birdie, Bernie and Me

BY DONNA BRODIE

Last June, I found a baby bird on the Bowery — with no nest in sight, I brought it home.

“What’s your plan for this bird? Don’t rope me in!” That was my boyfriend talking.

I posted on Facebook, looking for anyone who could raise a bird and eventually free it. I had called the Wild Bird Fund but they were overrun and underfunded.

A lifelong Stuyvesant Town resident who I went to high school with on the Upper West Side — when it was serious Needle Park territory — responded, “I’ve asked the StuyTown group for contact info for Bernie Goetz. He’s a local wildlife rescuer.”

Before I called the number, I searched Google for more information. Nothing about a local wildlife rescuer with that name or spelling. But Bernie Goetz, the man who shot four teenagers on the subway in 1984, kept eerily showing up. I was sure my schoolmate would have told me if this was the person whose name was once among the most infamous in the city.

“Google,” I repeated, “I want Bernie G-e-o-t-z, not Goetz!”

Shortly after I left a message for wildlife rescuer Goetz, I got a call. “Meet me tomorrow at the 14th Street and First Avenue crosstown bus stop,” Goetz said.

The next day, I arrived on time and approached a trim man with white hair and a tote bag. A button pinned to his cloth belt read “Don’t Eat Animals.” We talked, or rather, he talked about the squirrels of

StuyTown. “They’re the best squirrels in the city,” he said.

I showed him the box in the bottom of my bag with the bird inside. “That box is filthy,” he said. I’d lined it with paper towels. There was some poop on the paper. “Don’t worry about that,” I said. “It was clean when I left the house.”

As I handed him the bag and a sack of cat food I said, “I’ve been feeding it mashed up kitty kibble. That’s what the internet said to do. She’ll take small amounts when she’s hungry and opens her mouth wide. That’s about once an hour.”

“I’m not feeding it cat food,” he said. “That’s made with meat. Cats stink. I’ll give it egg mashed with yogurt. Cats won’t stink if they don’t eat meat!” And they don’t live, I thought.

“I looked up that it needs protein,” I said. “And you’ll have to give it live grubs in a couple of weeks.” He said, “That’s disgusting” and left with the bird.

Back home, I said to my boyfriend, “I don’t know about this guy.” He replied, “Why? How’d it go?”

“He was raising two feral possums on his terrace,” I said, “but they got inside and burrowed a hole in his box spring. He slept on the mattress and let them live there until it was time to take them to the woods.” My boyfriend said, “That’s a good sign. It shows commitment.”

Later I called my friend Leslie. In the

1980s, we’d gone to The City College of New York together at a time when the public phones on Convent Avenue were in cages so you couldn’t steal the coin box.

I filled her in on the bird story. “The thing is this wildlife rescuer has the unlikely name Bernie Goetz,” I said, “But it’s G-e-o-t-z.”

“Fourteenth Street?” she asked. “Didn’t Bernie Goetz live on 14th Street?”

“This guy feeds the squirrels in Stuytown,” I said. “I think he lives there.”

“Wait. The internet says Bernie Goetz lives at the same West 14th Street address as he did in the 1980s. Didn’t you meet him at the crosstown bus stop?” I fell silent then inexplicably whispered, “Keep this under your hat. Bye.”

“What is it?” my boyfriend asked. “I gave the bird to Bernie Goetz, vigilante subway shooter! We have to get it back. He’s not going to feed it right. Let’s get this bird back before he kills it. Tomorrow!”

“Oh, no,” he said. “I have all day meetings.”

“Can you call him, please?” I asked. “Of course,” he said.

But it was 10 p.m., too late to call an “alter kaker” (old fogey) possibly with a gun. The next morning the phone rang. “Hello. I have to go to Philadelphia. I can’t keep this bird.”

I called my friend David. “I accidentally gave a baby bird to Bernie Goetz.” David grew up in The Ansonia when prostitutes walked a beat in front of the building and

Plato’s Retreat was in its basement. No need to explain who Goetz was. “Will you come with me to get it back?”

“I don’t think I can say no.”

Twenty minutes later, Bernie Goetz met us in the lobby of his doorman building. “This bird stank when she gave it to me. Smell it now.” Goetz held the bird up to David’s face. “Very nice,” David said.

“I’m going to feed it,” Goetz said. “Please don’t,” I said. “It’ll open wide when it’s hungry.” In the past 24 hours I’d read everything I could about keeping a baby bird alive.

Goetz wedged its beak open with a medicinal plunger he pulled out of his pocket and force fed her. “Stop,” I yelled. “I asked you not to!”

David patted my shoulder. “Time to go.”

I brought “Margo,” the female sparrow, back home. For the next eight weeks my boyfriend and I fed her live grubs, berries, and millet.

Every morning, Margo trilled at the prospect of a new day. We placed her cage near a window, where she studied other sparrows pecking at a seed bell. Instinct kicked in. She started bathing in her water tub. She chirped when she wanted more worms with a side of raw broccoli.

Mid-August, we drove to the Hudson Valley and removed the top of her cage. I had expected to be sad but when she flew high into the tree tops I felt only joy.

# Have a Heart

BY JAN CRAWFORD

I am a nasty old bitch — particularly to the mechanical “people” on frustrating automated answering systems. And sometimes I notice I am being caught up in social ambitions. I can be jealous, insensitive and a less than generous friend. I also do too much unconscious knee-jerk stereotyping. I occasionally still find myself catapulted into frozen fear or rage. And as much as I work with it, my ego can continue to get stuck in blind loyalties and inner identities, especially the flattering ones.

And, like you, I can be love. Not simply romantic or friendship love, but more the state of being that excludes nothing and no one. The kind of love that you can sometimes experience looking into an infant’s eyes or when your separate self just dissolves into beauty as you enjoy a vast vista. For us Villagers, that might be quietly sitting along the Hudson River.

In fact, a friend’s Tibetan teacher urged her to take in a wide vista daily. And I notice that does cause my chest and breath to open more and my eyes to shift their focus from being habitually forward to being more relaxed and encompassing.

This more uncontained love is what I felt recently when I was surprised by a sensation and emotion during a deep meditation. For reasons too complex to describe here, the

childhood message to me was that I didn’t have a heart. So perhaps that is why I was so shocked when I noticed the sweetest feeling arising. I laughed with joy and relief when I realized that, at last, I was falling in love with my own heart. It was an unequivocal enjoyment of what was here in this moment and a complete ease in the depth of my being.

I’m so grateful to have survived three experiences of being very close to death. They have allowed me to have a few glimpses of that which is impossible and reductive to name because it is not an object and has no boundaries. Despite the painful distortions and contortions we go through in attempting to become what we already are, this deeper reality appears to be what all creation is made of. It is the ultimate ground of being.

Perhaps you too have experienced or want to experience these moments of freedom from the demands of what some consider to be the fantasy separate self — ideally without several near-death experiences to facilitate it. Of course, no two paths toward freedom from unnecessary suffering are the same. What supports, inspires and companions you is not identical to anyone else’s. While acknowledging that, the following meditation has recently been rewarding for me and you may want

to explore your personalized version of it.

A metta meditation is a wish you repeat to yourself that advances your own peacefulness and leads you to further empathy and joy. It is said to yourself for yourself, for your community, for people you love, for those you consider “difficult,” and for all sentient beings. In a recent group Zoom meditation led by Buddhist teacher Heidi Bourne, this metta phrase brought balm to a wounded place in me and to several others with whom I shared it:

*May I rest in the beauty and goodness of my awakening heart.*

*And may all beings rest in the beauty and goodness of our awakening hearts.*

Fortunately, to experiment with metta meditations, no formal practice is necessary. When you are resting or feeling a little more relaxed, you may want to explore this practice. It appears our true nature — the Absolute, God, Allah, whatever you choose to call it — wants us to enjoy deepening and opening. So whatever words that are right for you may arise spontaneously.

The meditation may occur, for example, while you’re having your morning coffee, watching the seasons change in St. Luke’s Sanctuary Garden or before you go to sleep.

You can close your eyes and allow curiosity about what may be there as your “monkey mind” begins to lessen its grip a bit. Without judgment and with exquisite gentleness, you can then experiment with saying to yourself your own version of words that resonate for you and help open your heart.

As you rest back for a moment, it might feel right to welcome with kindness whatever you discover — even if what you feel is daily anxiety or an automatic rejection of the whole idea. If that happens, I love what author and teacher Sylvia Boorstein suggests. Just sincerely say to that part of your worried, perhaps cynical or angry mind, “It’s OK, Sweetheart.”

The poet and mystic Rumi speaks to why it helps to be gentle on this circuitous inner journey. He wrote, “Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.” In this culture, one of the frequent barriers is the doubts so many of us have about our own beauty and goodness. And if we are fortunate enough to be able to experience our basic goodness, the next barrier may be whether we take the step of opening to see that “my awakening heart” is not only the personal heart, it’s the essential nature of all hearts. And I find this is very good news indeed.

# DGA, SAG and WGA Contracts Set to Expire

BY ROGER PARADISO

Negotiations are already heating up for the DGA, SAG and the AMPTP, due to run out June 30. WGA expires May 1. These promise to be vigorous negotiations that could lead to another industry-wide strike in June.

What's at stake? Many of the same issues that were on the table three years ago — health plans, streaming, and Artificial Intelligence.

The health plans are all in trouble due to the current economic models of Trump and the Republicans. Health care costs have gone through the roof. So, the first volley has been made by the producers who leaked information to the press and public last October. One of the attorneys for the streamers said, “Insiders know one of the three guilds has only a six month reserve.” (deadline.com)

## Deadline

The plans are “running huge deficits on a month-by-month basis,” a well-versed studio and streamer source tells us. The WGA plan has lost over \$120 million since its strike ended two years ago. “It's not sustainable, it has to be addressed,” the source adds. The producers will ask the guilds to consider trimming their health plans in terms of services and even eligibility.

## Health and Pension Plan

The guilds have suffered with the economy, inflation, tariffs, and a lack of sufficient revenue due to tax cuts for the wealthy. With streaming raging in full force, we have seen movie theaters blow up and jobs lost — while large Marvel films make money as independent films die on the vine and filmmakers live in poverty.

What will happen with draconian cuts to health and pensions? This is a crucial life



MEMBERS OF SAG-AFTRA STRIKE IN 2023 outside of the Warner Bros. building in Chelsea. Photo by Bob Cooley.

and death question given that the majority of members can't even work enough to afford their health care and have woefully low pensions.

To fund these plans the streamers want draconian cuts and a five-year deal. To be fair, the pre-negotiating has just started, but we know from past discussions you gotta give to get — or do you?

## Streaming Residuals

Streaming residuals have flipped the script on rank-and-file actors and stagehands. In the not-so-distant past, producers made movies and put them in theaters. Earnings were followed by *Variety* and producers' forensic bean counters. You got paid by audiences who bought tickets and sat in a theater. The money flowed back to the studios, then to the guilds. Members got compensated not only for salaries but also in residuals. The produc-

ers and theaters made money from the audiences who saw the films and paid with cash. The cash flowed and could be traced.

Years ago, the producers adapted to television and cable and the system worked because it was all paid for with cash. Now the streamers make money from the subscribers who pay them with money. But the producers and the trades get paid by clicks and streams — bypassing forensic accounting of real money. How do you account for subscribers who bypass the old systems to join the streamers clubhouse? The producers joined the streamers yet still play the theaters who pay in cash. Yep, the producers have an alliance with streamers like Netflix. These new producers live in a cash and click streaming world with no real interest in theaters.

A few months ago, Pope Leo 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.

In the beginning of the streaming war, the producers and artists hated the streamers. Now the producers are the streamers, and Netflix has joined the “movie business.”

## Artificial Intelligence

The guilds thought they had roped this issue in the last deal. Not a chance. They got clicked and we got a synthetic actor. Meet “Tilly Norwood” the first significant synthetic actress who starred in Marvel movies and God knows what else. The guilds got clicked!

And then there was the Bartz v. Anthropic AI and the first seven million copyrights infringed in the AI era that we know about. The case was settled for \$1.5 billion.

Expect copyright infringement to be a major battle in the negotiations. And welcome to the streamer vocabulary 101. Terms like “copyright infringement” and “informed consent and compensation” really mean “how to turn clicks into dollars.” Then there's the “Tilly Tax” — which asks how much should we pay a real actor to compensate for the lost wages when Tilly takes over the role? And what do the trades do for compensation when they lose work to a synthetic workforce?

In the old days of Hollywood, the good guys always won. In the new days of a Lost Hollywood, the good unreal things may win.

The good news is that cinema will be underground. And like theater from the Greeks, it will survive — because we have learned from the masters in theater and films. Cinema will live on thanks to the independent filmmakers who survive.

## Through Thick and Thin: How Li-Lac Chocolates Keeps Improving its Craft

BY ANTHONY PARADISO

### 75 GREENWICH AVENUE

Valentine's Day has come and gone, and Li-Lac Chocolates owner Chris Taylor is still standing.

A few days after the chocolate industry's ‘Super Bowl,’ I called Taylor who gave me the scoop on how it went for the 103-year-old chocolate house. “It was good but not great. I still see a bit of a tourist recession... it's not as bad now as it was say three, four months ago but tourism is definitely not back to where it was and during non-holidays that's a big driver for us, at Chelsea Market, Grand Central, and Hudson Yards, but then the gifting business seems to be doing just fine and that's what's important to us around Valentine's and Easter.”

Taylor also said that Li-Lac's chocolate is “on par with Swiss and Belgian chocolatiers,” but Li-Lac “seriously need to upgrade” their packaging and branding to Swiss and Belgian standards.

Some of the things Li-Lac's employees are doing to move the company towards that up-

per echelon include working long hours during holidays. Taylor said, “Valentine's is all about truffles and strawberries” and the crew stayed “until midnight the two nights before Valentine's to make those strawberries.”

Li-Lac makes its chocolate-covered strawberries the night before the day they hit the shelves at 8 a.m. The planning for major holidays like Valentine's Day, Chanukah or Christmas, however, starts six-to-eight months before. That's when Li-Lac orders the raw materials.

There's also the caveat that the strawberries Li-Lac uses must have thick skin — literally. “You can't have strawberries with any weakness in the skin because the chocolate immediately penetrates that. You have to seriously pay up for high-quality strawberries,” said Taylor.

This is a big cost because the wholesale market price for strawberries went up significantly two weeks before Valentine's Day. Still, Li-Lac didn't cut any corners and bought the best quality strawberries — and that's how Li-

Lac has gotten to where it is today — a locally-owned New York business with seven locations throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Retail prices for chocolate have gone up over 75% over the last five years according to CBS News. To make matters worse, President Trump's new 15% tariff on all foreign goods will also drive up the costs. For Li-Lac, that mainly includes packaging, as chocolate will likely be exempt from the tariffs.

Taylor described what Valentine's and Easter/Passover look like from the business point of view. “Passover and Easter are very big for us. Our molds, our Easter bunnies sell like crazy... We make our product fresh, so it's not like we can make it months ahead of time. I love to complain because the chocolate business is 90% logistics. It's 10% fun on Valentine's Day and a few days before Easter when you see the customers buying. But it's all about ordering the raw materials six months ahead of time and making sure you get it in. These tariffs have caused delays in shipments so we need to be ordering earlier than we used to.”

Despite the market's volatility, Li-Lac has kept its pricing flat for the past two years, ensuring that the sticker shock doesn't hit customers as hard as it does at other chocolate shops.

For Easter and Passover, which are both in April, Li-Lac factory employees will soon be making hearty chocolate matzoh and beautiful molds of chocolate Easter bunnies and eggs.

Taylor described why Easter is his favorite holiday. “Valentine's is fun because it's like two days nonstop of people buying truffles, strawberries, all that stuff, but Easter for me is just the most rewarding holiday. It's not as crazy as Christmas, it's not like several weeks nonstop and something about our bunnies, customers just love them... it's something about Li-Lac and Easter just works for me, I really enjoy it.”

Stop by and support your locally-owned Li-Lac Chocolates this Easter and Passover where employees will greet you with a friendly smile.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Preventing the Next Pandemic, by Peter J. Hotez*

ALEC PRUCHNICKI, MD

The last time I reviewed a book by Peter Hotez it was for a publication done in 2023 just after the Covid pandemic abated (*The Rise of Deadly Anti-Science, Village View, Sept. 2025*). This present review is for one released in 2021 when we were still in the middle of the pandemic. But the predictions he made were prescient and are still relevant today.

Dr. Hotez's main expertise is in tropical diseases and vaccination treatments for them but this book includes a wider range of options for disease control and prevention. He starts by describing himself as engaging in vaccine diplomacy. This involves going to numerous countries, most of them economically undeveloped, and building alliances with local governments, health agencies, institutions, and individual leaders in public health policies. Before his own work there was cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union during the 1950s to develop a polio vaccine, even though it was during the height of the Cold War between those countries.

This example of cooperation didn't start the international approach to disease prevention and control. He describes the history of smallpox prevention starting with Edward Jenner in the 1700s that spread around the world (including the Continental Army under George Washington), the international cooperation under the guidance of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, and the official eradication of smallpox from the face of the earth by 1980. He describes international cooperation of this type as essential in dealing with diseases that are international and jump border lines easily.

He enumerates many of the common and rare diseases that medicine combats. Some of these are spread by person to person contact

like measles, tuberculosis, and Covid. Others are spread by insect vectors like malaria from mosquito bites. Many parasitic diseases, especially in warm climates, are spread by unclean water and food. Some of these diseases can be combatted with vaccines, and some with public health measures like water treatments and food inspection standards. Results are variable but in almost all cases these approaches improve health, if not completely eliminate the underlying illness.

But along with the range of diseases that nature produces, there are complications in both the prevalence and treatment of disease brought about by human activity. This had been described as Anthropocene complications and some historians of science believe the present times should be described as the Anthropocene epoch. He focuses on five of these trends; war, global warming, poverty, urbanization, and nationalism.

Outright wars, or political instability resulting in widespread violence and destruction, have several effects above the killing of populations. Medical institutions and health care distribution systems are often damaged or destroyed both intentionally and inadvertently. Food production can be harmed with resulting public health deterioration. Refugees from fighting or occupation can easily cause local outbreaks of infectious diseases to be spread more widely, sometimes to combatants, sometimes to civilians. He gives detailed accounts of wars in Africa and the Middle East, along with political instability in South America, and how they destabilized the provision of health care and the prevention of disease.

Global warming, sometimes euphemistically described as climate change, can make disease caused by vectors to increase. Some

of these are insect born diseases and some are water born diseases if water treatment is inadequate. He predicted that warming would increase insect distribution even to developed countries that were free from tropical illnesses and these insects would bring their diseases, such as malaria and dengue fever, to larger areas of the United States, among other nations.

Throughout history, plagues have often been worse in cities where populations are dense and person to person spread is easy. Over the last century urbanization has increased steadily and this trend is continuing. This problem is worsened when the economy of the country is poor and normal health care systems, including sanitation and water purification, cannot expand as rapidly as the urban population does.

Poverty and disease are closely linked for many reasons. Besides lack of access to health care services, there are additional problems with lack of proper nutrition, water contamination, housing, and just overall population density. These problems aren't just for underdeveloped nations but also for developed countries which have pockets of poverty within them.

Sometimes international cooperation to fight disease is complicated by nationalism. The belief that your own nation is somehow exceptional can lead to the belief that it needs no help when dealing with a health care problem, even if the health care problem can easily jump over national boundaries. He cites the first Trump administration's withdraw from the World Health Organization (temporarily blocked by Biden but recently repeated) and the Brexit withdraw of Great Britain from the European Union. The lack of cooperation in policies

and planning is worsened by the fact that health care professionals are often foreign born and not easily replaced by the home-grown supply.

One topic he touches on briefly in this book, and in more detail in the other book cited above, is the anti-vax and sometimes anti-science beliefs of some segments of the population in developed countries where resources for health care are available but rejected for political, philosophical, or religious reasons. He predicted that the outbreak of measles in a religious community in Brooklyn could be repeated in other insular areas, and that is what happened in the measles outbreak in West Texas last year.

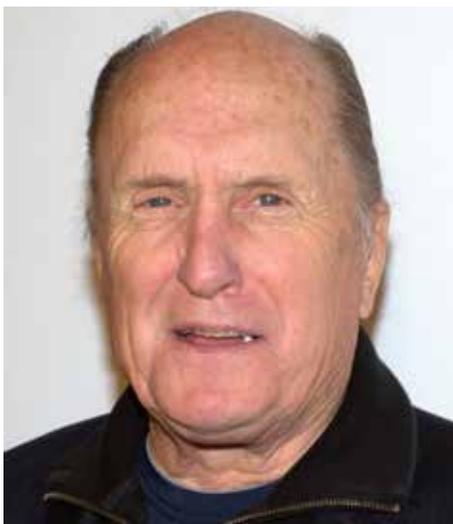
To address all these problems, he has a variety of solutions. One goal is to increase international cooperation like what he described in a variety of examples throughout the world in which he was personally involved. He gives examples of new international consortiums that have developed recently and can expand in the future. He advocates for more education of the public in health literacy but also more advocacy by normally apolitical scientists and health care providers. He uses his own experience in public speaking, media involvement, and book writing, like this one, directed to the general population.

Will this work? One thing he doesn't do much of is to predict the severity of the "next pandemic." It is reasonable to predict that more local epidemics and global pandemics will occur at some undefined time in the future, but it is more difficult to predict their severity.

Throughout history there have been pandemics much worse than Covid and there is no reason they can't recur. That is the topic for another article. A very scary article.

## RIP Robert Duvall

BY ROGER PARADISO



ROBERT DUVAL. Photo by David Shankbone, flickr, CC BY 2.0.

*"Bob Duvall - mentor, friend, terrific actor, director & producer. Wonderful knowing you, man. Thanks for all you've given us."*  
Jeff Bridges on Facebook

Let's talk about the man that maybe you didn't know. He hung around these Village and Manhattan streets. His actor-friend pack included Dustin Hoffman, Gene Hackman, and James Caan. Their generation came of age in a Manhattan that was affordable to everyone — including actors and others in the show biz trades. Somehow they made it work like so many actors do today. But the costs were far less — and New York was still the place to go if you wanted to be somebody. That's why Robert Duvall came here.

He studied at the Neighborhood Playhouse which started as a turn of the century theater in the Lower East Side. By the time Duvall came to Manhattan, the Playhouse had moved to E. 54th Street. The young man, who grew up in Maryland and whose father was an admiral in the United States Navy, went to acting school. His father ex-

pected him to study at Annapolis, but young Bob had another dream.

His talents brought him to the Sheridan Street Playhouse where he won an Obie in a play by Arthur Miller called *A View From the Bridge* in 1965. He did several shows at the Sheridan which was located at 99 Seventh Avenue in the Village.

*"What a blow to learn of the loss of Robert Duvall. Such a great actor and such an essential part of American Zoetrope from its beginning: The Rain People, The Conversation, The Godfather, The Godfather Part II, Apocalypse Now, THX 1138, Assassination Tango."*

Francis Ford Coppola on Instagram

In those days, the town was smaller and there was work was all over Manhattan. New York was the capital of television dramas

and comedies. Madison Avenue ruled the commercial world and there were roles for Duvall and his friends. The movie business was known for some great dramas like *On the Waterfront*, Broadway was flourishing as was Off-Broadway and Off-Off Broadway so an actor could dream of making it here.

Duvall's big break came when he starred in *American Buffalo* on Broadway. He won a Drama Desk nomination in David Mamet's award-winning play in 1977. His first major critical success came portraying Tom Hagen in *The Godfather* and *The Godfather Part II*. He won an Academy Award for *Tender Mercies* in 1983. He is most remembered for Oscar-nominated roles which included *The Godfather* (1972), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *The Great Santini* (1979), *The Apostle* (1997), *A Civil Action* (1998) and *The Judge* (2014).

Rest in peace Robert Duvall.

# NYC Celebrates the Year of the Horse with Peking Opera Star Li Jun

J. TAYLOR BASKER



LI JUN AND J. TAYLOR BASKER. Credit: Isaac Basker.



LI JUN AS EMPEROR. Credit: Li Jun Collection.

New York City is home to over 700,000 Chinese Americans. There are parts of the city, such as Flushing, Queens and Canal Street in Manhattan, where you would think you were in China. Chinese culture, especially its food, has a large influence in the lives of New Yorkers! New York was the first state to declare the Lunar New Year as a holiday for public school children in 2023.

This New Year's celebration in New York was historic. The internationally acclaimed Chinese Peking Opera performer Li Jun, one of the most respected artists of his generation, presented a rare Peking Opera performance on February 7, offering audiences an intimate experience of one of China's most treasured classical art forms. He also con-

ducted his first video interview in English with me with for ArtsPR International which will be distributed to the Chinese media.

Li Jun said his favorite role was that of the Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty in the opera *The Royal Consort of Tang*. The emperor must make the difficult decision to execute his favorite consort for political reasons. After she dances on a huge jade platform, he sorrowfully plays the drum while she is killed. Known for his powerful vocal technique, emotional depth, and masterful interpretation of traditional repertoire, Li Jun has captivated audiences across China and internationally. He is renowned for these laosheng (older male) roles.

He traveled from China to Flushing to

perform in the celebration of the Year of the Horse in the enormous Promise Theater. This event featured many aspects of Chinese culture: instrumental music, dances with umbrellas and scarfs as well as ballet, both traditional and pop singing, stand-up-comics and hosts of popular Chinese talk shows. On the large stage, Elpis Productions created riveting videos and lighting on colossal multiple screens. Beautiful traditional Chinese iconography floated behind and above the performers such as clouds, flowers, temples and of course most prominently this year, horses.

Li Jun's performance featured a solo segment of Peking Opera, with traditional musical accompaniment, that highlighted

the raw beauty of the human voice and the expressive storytelling that defines this centuries-old theatrical tradition. Using face, voice and body Li Jun mesmerized the audience, revealing his training under many masters at the China National Academy of Traditional Opera.

This special appearance marked an important cultural moment, introducing American audiences to the purity and dramatic strength of classical Peking Opera performance — a format that emphasizes vocal mastery, breath control, and artistic precision.

“Peking Opera is a living art form that carries history, emotion, and spirit through voice alone,” said Li Jun. “This performance allows listeners to connect directly with its essence.”

Li Jun has received widespread recognition for his contributions to preserving and modernizing traditional Chinese opera while maintaining its authentic roots. His work has been featured at major cultural festivals, theaters, and academic institutions. NYC was privileged to have him perform here. His performance for the Year of the Horse resonated with the qualities of the year — energy and passion. Li Jun's performance embodied these traits through his remarkable intensity and emotional depth.

This performance offered a unique opportunity for audiences, cultural leaders, and media to experience one of China's most celebrated performers in a powerful presentation. One does not have to be Chinese to appreciate the great art form of Peking Opera. Li Jun's theatrical skills reach into the universal emotions experienced by all of humanity. In the interview, he affirmed the importance of cultural exchange between nations. He emphasized the role of artists as unique ambassadors of harmony in this world of divisions and stress. We look forward to his return to New York City.

## VILLAGE VERSES

### SNOWFLAKES

The hunger for your love  
Is satisfied by snowflakes  
Of feeling you serve:  
Minimal, minute, delectable  
On the tongue  
As they make their maddened way  
In the disordered storm of us.  
Cold as Jupiter, the delicacies,  
Frozen Earth-stars you deign to offer  
That dissolve with ghostly speed.  
And yet somehow the singular taste  
Of the ephemeral six-fingered fancies  
Only deepens desire.

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### FOR DADDY

Do not fear :  
Long, yawning years later,  
The broad eternal icicle  
That formed in my heart,  
Assuming your dedicated place  
When you fled this field for the ether  
One snow-smothered February afternoon,  
Has not melted.  
I doubt it ever will.

© 2026, Susan M. Silver

THE POPULAR CHILDREN'S KEY  
PARK AT WASHINGTON SQUARE  
VILLAGE, SERENELY SNOWBOUND.  
Photo by Susan M. Silver.



# Antoine Boyer and Yeore Kim: A Love Story in Taipei Told Through Music

BY KAJU ROBERTO

When musicians speak about rare talent, they do so carefully. But when the conversation turns to French guitarist Antoine Boyer, admiration flows easily. He is regarded as one of the few guitarists to master two radically different traditions — gypsy jazz and classical guitar. To understand how difficult and unusual that is, one might look to a baseball analogy. In the past century, only two — legends Babe Ruth and modern star Shohei Ohtani — have excelled both as elite pitchers and power hitters. In the guitar world, Boyer occupies a similarly rare position.

Gypsy jazz requires a pick and relies on powerful downstrokes and precise alternate picking. Classical guitar, by contrast, is played fingerstyle, demanding intricate coordination of four fingers and refined nail technique. The muscle memory required for each style is distinct and most musicians devote their lives to mastering just one.

Boyer began playing at age six, immersing himself first in gypsy jazz. As a teenager, he entered the conservatory to study classical guitar. His interpretations of the demanding works of Domenico Scarlatti have drawn praise. Scarlatti's complex counterpoint, originally written for keyboard, is formidable on guitar. Yet Boyer moves through it with clarity and ease before pivoting back to improvisation with leading gypsy jazz players.

Boyer explained his musical development to me during our recent interview. Musicianship is only part of his story. It also led to something deeply personal — a cross-cultural love story between virtuosic musicians that began in Taiwan.

## Meeting At A Taiwan Festival

In 2018, Boyer met Korean harmonica

player Yeore Kim at a gypsy jazz festival in Taipei. He had traveled from France to give masterclasses and perform concerts. She attended at a friend's suggestion, despite knowing little about gypsy jazz. The festival unfolded over several days, filled with concerts, lessons and late-night jam sessions where they first played together.

There was an immediate complication — they did not share a spoken language. Boyer did not speak Korean. Kim spoke limited English and French was not an option. "So we played," Boyer recalls. "The more music we played, the more we talked." Music became their shared vocabulary.

Both describe that first collaboration as a moment of recognition. Boyer says he often senses a musician's personality through tone — the way they hold an instrument, shape a phrase or connect with an audience. When he heard Kim's harmonica, he was struck by her "powerful, honest, vibrant sound."

Kim remembers feeling that Boyer possessed something she did not — and at the same time, that they shared something essential. That feeling deepened as they continued playing together. Taipei left a lasting impression — especially the relaxed atmosphere, the friendly people and the food. The city now holds a special significance: it is where their relationship began.

Today they are a happily married couple.

## Growing Up With Music

Kim grew up in a musical household; her mother was a piano teacher. As a child, she studied piano, cello, trumpet and drums before gravitating toward harmonica. She describes the instrument as uniquely close to the human voice — intimate, expressive

and capable of subtle shading. Her first paid work came at 20, playing trumpet at weddings in Korea — a vibrant industry there.

Boyer's father, an amateur pianist, encouraged him to take up guitar so they could play together. They began lessons at the same time, studying with the same teacher when Boyer was six. By 11 or 12, he was already performing concerts and earning money. His father managed logistics while they toured as a duet.

Neither Boyer nor Kim recalls a single turning point when they chose music as a profession. Music chose them.

Their influences span genres. For Boyer, gypsy jazz traces back to Django Reinhardt, the genre's pioneering figure. Classical studies opened doors to a broader repertoire. Kim cites harmonica legend Toots Thielemans and jazz trumpeters Chet Baker and Miles Davis as formative inspirations.

## Love and Collaboration

Today, Boyer and Kim share both a life and a stage. However, that dual partnership required adjustment. "In the beginning, it was difficult to find the balance," Kim says. The roles of life partner and musical partner are not identical. Over seven years together, they have learned each other's rhythms — emotional patterns, stress responses and working styles. Structure helps. So does space.

"When you spend so much time together, you also need time alone," Boyer explains. Recognizing when the other is stressed — and understanding that it is temporary — has been crucial. Not taking professional tension personally allows both the relationship and the music to flourish.

Artistically, they describe each other in

poetic terms. Kim compares Boyer's playing to a Monet impressionist painting — layered and nuanced. Boyer admires Kim's ability to make a single note resonate deeply, creating an emotional impact that lingers.

## The Album: *You and I*

After years of performing in various group settings, the couple released their duet album, *You and I*. Though they had long intended to record as a duo, other collaborations delayed the project. Last year, they decided the time was right.

Recorded in Korea and released last May, the album features interpretations of existing compositions spanning jazz standards and classically inspired works. Rather than follow a rigid theme, they selected pieces based on a simple principle: the music had to suit their combined sound.

Some songs they loved individually did not translate effectively as a duet. Others flourished after careful arrangement. The pair recorded and mixed the album themselves, maintaining creative control, with outside assistance only for mastering.

Looking ahead, they plan to continue touring as a duo with performances scheduled across Europe and the United States.

From a chance jam session in Taipei to concert stages around the world, their journey underscores a simple truth: sometimes music speaks first — and says everything words cannot.

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

# PLEASE DONATE

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# Was Greenwich House Founder Mary K. Simkhovitch a “Wonder Woman”? New Bio Says Yes

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

Greenwich House founder Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch unsettled me. For years, her portrait was the fusty focal point of the lobby of the settlement house’s main building at 27 Barrow Street — and as that large, looming, oh-so-respectable matron looked down on me from on high, I felt judged! And then relieved when the portrait disappeared (I’m told it’s in a conference room somewhere).

Knowing nothing of Simkhovitch but that



MARY SIMKHOVITCH.

Photo credit: Greenwich House, photographer unknown.

portrait, when I learned that a young Crystal Eastman — Greenwich Villager extraordinaire and future co-founder of the ACLU — had an affair with Simkhovitch’s husband Vladimir, my reaction was kneejerk sympathy for the lovers.

So I felt compelled to read Betty Boyd Caroli’s just-published biography of Simkhovitch, perhaps to confront and transcend my prejudices.

*A Slumless America: Mary K. Simkhovitch and the Dream of Affordable Housing* is, overall, a model biography: eminently engaging, sympathetic and savvy in its well-researched judgments, felicitous in its phrasing. And fascinating: a window on the early to mid-20th century Village focused on the working people and immigrants who lived here, a salutary reminder that the Village was so much more various in its denizens than the “bohemians” who gained fame.

Plus the book is an antidote to reductive, romantic thinking. People are complicated. Social change is hard. It’s near-impossible to judge yesterday’s success stories by today’s standards.

All this to say that Caroli’s book made me admire the deft author — her subject not so much. Still, I can appreciate that Simkhovitch, a woman born in 1867 to middle-class parents in small-town Newton, Massachusetts managed to make a big, juicy life for

herself and accomplish considerable good in the process.

## Early Ambitions

Young Mary Kingsbury, recently graduated from Boston University, was so bored by substitute teaching, she would toss her students’ papers rather than grade them. Seeking more, she boarded with the family of an activist “social gospel” minister, enrolled in the Harvard Annex, and became deeply involved in Boston’s Dennison House, a settlement house that rocked her world, introducing her to the poor and the possibility of work on their behalf, a career that could fully deploy her smarts and devout sense of purpose.

But Kingsbury also had intellectual and cosmopolitan ambitions. When she got a few-strings-attached \$600 grant in 1895, she — and her equally starved-for-stimulation mother — took off for Berlin, where Simkhovitch enrolled at university. In a class on socialism, she met Vladimir Simkhovitch, seven years her junior, a poor, Jewish, witty, self-aggrandizing aesthete and scholar. Attempting to explain Simkhovitch’s attraction to Vladimir, Caroli recalled young Mary’s childhood request that an uncle bring her a monkey and an accordion from his travels. Despite Simkhovitch’s apparent respectability, she yearned for unconventional entertainment.

Fast forward to 1897, when Simkhovitch enrolled in a nondegree program at Columbia, moved into the College Settlement on the Lower East Side, and rapidly became head worker. Marriage to Vladimir, soon followed with a child, compelled her to leave first the College Settlement, then the Friendly Aid Society on East 34th Street, where in 1902 she was fired for being too ambitious and installing husband and baby in the director’s suite.

## Launching Greenwich House

Simkhovitch had already been plotting to start a settlement of her own. Two weeks after termination, she’d incorporated Greenwich House, with tenement reformer Jacob Riis and Ethical Culture founder Felix Adler on her board. Within months, she and her team had rented and overhauled “filthy” 26 Jones Street, which opened on Thanksgiving Day.

Greenwich House immediately thrived under her leadership. Set in a dense, diverse, increasingly Italian neighborhood, the settlement offered kindergarten, boys clubs, a bank, a small circulating library, lunch for factory workers, classes in English, carpentry, sewing and upholstery, basket-making, and cooking. Offerings rapidly expanded, as did the settlement’s footprint as it took over nearby buildings. When the street got streetlights, Greenwich House sponsored outdoor dancing. The settlement’s cold storage space and regular milk deliveries protected babies from spoiled

milk, rapidly reducing their death rate.

Greenwich House was also distinguished by its close ties to Columbia and commitment to research. Famed educator John Dewey headed the Greenwich House Committee on Social Education, which supported landmark work and publications, among them an early guide to tenants’ rights and future NAACP co-founder Mary White Ovington’s pioneering research into Black families.

Never one to let the perfect be the enemy of the good, Simkhovitch excelled in pragmatic accommodation. When tensions between neighborhood Blacks and Irish arose, she moved Blacks out of the settlement house, offering them only home visits.

She was equally pragmatic about her own two children, parking them on the family farm in New Jersey. Substantially unparented by ever-changing caregivers, the children became difficult. The 1915 census placed the kids in the care of the couple hired to run the creamery.

Philandering Vladimir became close to a number of the young women who staffed Greenwich House, Amelia Earhart among them. Heiress Anna Woerishoffer was another. When Woerishoffer, on a social research mission, crashed her motorcar in the rain and died from her injuries, her grief-stricken mom honored her by underwriting a grand new Greenwich House home on Barrow Street.

## Spurring Affordable Housing

Caroli contends that what made Simkhovitch truly great — worthy of being celebrated as

a real-life Wonder Woman in the comic of that name — was her early and continuing advocacy for government-supported affordable housing, a concept widely derided as socialism. She not only believed housing was a human right, she helped create the movement to make public housing happen, founding and heading the National Public Housing Conference. When Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia established the New York City Housing Authority, Simkhovitch — who became vice-chair — forcefully pushed to construct the first public housing in the nation, First Houses on Avenue A and 3rd Street. Other public housing projects followed.

But here’s the thing. Simkhovitch didn’t just want to build; she was a fervent fan of “slum clearance,” meaning displacement. To raze neighborhoods, often of Black and brown families, with no regard for where they might move was supposedly progress. This reform zeal run amuck is like the prohibition impulse of temperance campaigners disgusted by drunkenness or the eugenics ideology of those who combined pro-birth control sentiment with fear that the poor are genetically debased. It takes power away from poor people. It’s the worst kind of patronizing obliviousness, and it’s what I imagined I saw in Simkhovitch’s portrait.

My big beef with Caroli is that she doesn’t delve into this issue of displacement, preferring to look away. I still like and highly recommend her book. But I don’t like Mary K. Simkhovitch and hope Greenwich House keeps her portrait off their walls.



SCULPTURE OF MARY SIMKHOVITCH, by her daughter Helena, a noted artist, is currently on the garden wall at Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow Street. Credit: Betty Boyd Caroli.

# POTLUCK—How Asian American Groups Helped Warm the February Freeze

BY LIONELLE HAMANAKA

If you were born in The Year of the Fire Horse, which according to the Chinese zodiac falls in 2026, you may possess qualities of vitality, freedom, speed, and perseverance. The combined celebration of the Lunar New Year and Valentine's Day was promoted by Potluck (an Asian American network) in Chelsea on February 10.

Julie Azuma, an organizer of the Potluck email newsletter, shared Potluck's evolution. "The original inspiration was *Chopsticks Magazine* which was once free on street corners and in restaurants. I wanted to put together information of all things Japanese since *Chopsticks* was no longer available... and also expand it. A few months later, I met with John Eng and Sue Lee. In the 90s, they had put together an amazing newsletter called *Asian New Yorker* that covered all community news. Eng was on the verge of retiring, and it occurred to us that we ought to have a multi-Asian resource of events and news relating to the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in NYC."

Potluck covers everything from book signings, film openings, food festivals, seminars, and forums that are sponsored by many of the dozens of New York's Asian American ethnic groups.

Azuma continued, "In NYC there are about 1.5 million Asian Americans, so we felt it was important to let all of AAPI know what is happening around the city so they could pick and choose... with each Potluck event...where our community wants to con-



JOANNA LEE speaking about The Year of the Fire Horse on February 10 in Chelsea. Photo by Bob Cooley.

nect. Potluck helps give them the sense of community and belonging."

Melinda Chu, a social media expert with amazing information, combs the internet to find events both in person and virtual. Emails go out once or twice a week depending on how many events she finds.

Potluck is interested in reaching out to West Asian countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait,

Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE, Yemen, and Bahrain.

"We haven't made as many inroads as we have with the communities that are familiar to us. We are open to all of them. We want to bring our community together. We want everyone AAPI or not to know what is happening in the AAPI community in NYC. We want to expand and embrace our commu-

nity. Everyone wants and needs a sense of belonging and we want to begin to provide it," said Chu.

On February 16 Potluck sponsored the annual Day of Remembrance (DOR) for the Japanese American concentration camps established during World War II. This year marks the 80th anniversary of FDR's Executive Order 9066. This order set up the camps using The Alien Enemies Act of 1798, which dislocated Japanese Americans and detained them in concentration camps. In a relevant parallel, this year the administration also used The Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to deport and detain current immigrants, a move relevant to NYC today because 3.2 million residents, or 44% of our workforce, were born outside the U.S.

After a 44-year campaign for restitution for concentration camp prisoners, President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-383), providing a formal apology and \$20,000 in reparations to each surviving Japanese American who was interned during WWII. The law acknowledged that the incarceration was based on "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership."

The DOR Committee also held a Day of Remembrance meeting on February 19. It took place at the Japanese American Christian Church at 255 Seventh Avenue. Descendants of concentration camp internees lit candles in church and recalled their ancestors' experiences.

## IT'S ALL MY FAULT

# Interview With the Antichrist

BY DUANE SCOTT CERNY

Our meeting is scheduled at a famously obscure East Village restaurant where patrons arrive via the exit door of One Touch of Glamour — an equally hidden sweatshop known for its manufacture of irregular drag wigs. Sitting at the bar is the Antichrist or "AC" as I am instructed to call His Evilness.

"Not great to finally meet you," I nervously mumble.

AC smugly grins and says, "Then let the pleasure be someone else's!"

Now, after months of convoluted emails, texts, and an uneven evening with a warped Ouija board, all these communications have materialized into the smart-suited figure at my side.

The bartender places a single napkin before me. "Screwdriver," I say, and he turns to prepare my drink, oblivious to my new friend. Then it hits me: the bartender can't see him, so I slowly turn to speak. Here's our interview.

**Does this happen to you often, not being served?**

Oh, all the time. That's the real reason it's

called "the Last Supper." The service was terrible. Empty goblets everywhere. Dividing a check 13 ways. And I never got my cappuccino.

**You were at the Last Supper?**

I had my regular red booth. You don't see it in DaVinci's painting as he was cheap with the coin. Sure, he could paint a ceiling, but could he touch up scuffed crown molding? Such a diva!

**Let's start with your origin story. Seriously, you're the best of the worst. I can't imagine the underworld accolades you've received. The lifetime achievement award from FIFA, plus all those free FIFA products: FIFA body spray, FIFA under spritz, and FIFA loafers, which are easier to use than pronounce. With all that FIFA swag, you should have gotten a poodle named FIFA Forward Fifi.**

Well, an unnamed nobody got his damp diapers in a twist over that one. And I've seen some tantrums in my time: Napoleon at Waterloo, Hitler in the bunker, Will Smith at the Oscars. But this guy? Embarrassing.

Did you see me lose my shit when my spoken word recording of *Rosemary's Baby* didn't get a Grammy nod? No. Did I force people to listen to me drool into a verbal cup of lost, stupid gibberish for endless hours? No. Say what you want about me, but I know when to leave the stage.

**It's good to know that even a horribly evil person such as yourself has standards. So how did you get your start? Was it your fall from grace?**

Ugh, that question exhausts me. I thought the Jerry Springer musical killed the topic. Listen, I'd no more fallen from grace than from shoddy balcony railing construction at better Russian hotels. But I get it. Someone must be the ultimate bad guy, the embodiment of all evil, and I got the demotion. It's hilarious, really. I mean, somehow, I'm the greatest villain of all time, yet even I can't make people's love of comic books less creepy.

**We've all heard God banished you from heaven but how do you describe your Genesis story?**

That's what you want to hear? The underworld backstory from the *Real Housewives of Hell*? That "banished from heaven" nonsense was just loose Lucifer talk. It's ironic I was even in that celestial burn book. But truth be told, God was downsizing, cutting left and far right. AI was coming in, and angelic consonants like me were as useless as stuck typewriter keys

**But how did you go from God's favorite to opening the great dark ride of purgatory? You almost fell harder than Prince Andrew.**

You know what I received in my exit package? A half-empty tin of horn polish and a free pass to the *Melania* documentary. Now, this was thousands of years before the birth of Melania, so I had no idea how truly worthless this ticket would become. God has one wicked sense of humor.

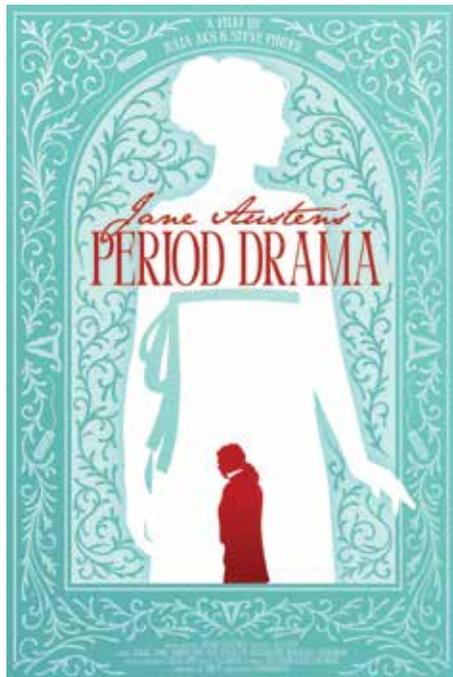
**I don't mean to be so Hellzapoppin', but I've so many questions, like how you acquired your great wealth.**

Easy. Sex, drugs, rock and roll. Some Bitcoin.

*continued on page 26*

# The Agony and the Ecstasy of the Academy Awards

BY MICHAEL JACOBSON



JANE AUSTEN'S PERIOD DRAMA film poster.



JANE AUSTEN'S PERIOD DRAMA still photo.

As March arrives, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences rolls out the crimson carpet for nominees competing for the golden statuette. This winter, I viewed several films that survived the gauntlet to reach the final round. It is a season where artistic merit meets the brutal reality of campaigning.

In the documentary feature category, nominated filmmakers surely feel conflicted about battling for a singular victory. Each documentary I viewed tackled urgent social justice issues. In a just world, all would win the Oscar and the recognition that leads to wider audiences. While the competition is fierce, three films that I viewed deserve your support.

## GLOBAL STRUGGLES FOR JUSTICE

*Mr. Nobody Against Putin* examines dissent in modern Russia. The film follows Pavel



THE ALABAMA SOLUTION film poster.

“Pasha” Talankin, a primary school teacher who secretly chronicles the militarization and propaganda infiltrating his classrooms following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Pasha’s journey is a testament to the resolve of a single person risking their life for truth. For me, it was reminiscent of the anti-Vietnam War movement in our country.

Another standout, *Cutting Through Rocks*, directed by Sara Khaki and Mohammadreza Eyn, offers an intimate look at resistance within Iran. It follows Sara Shahverdi, a motorcycle-riding midwife who becomes the first woman elected to her local council in a remote, patriarchal village. Over eight years, the film captures her radical efforts to empower women by teaching them to ride motorcycles and advocating against child marriage.

## A DEEP DIVE INTO SYSTEMIC FAILURE

The third documentary, *The Alabama Solution*, directed by Andrew Jarecki and Charlotte Kaufman, hits closer to home. Drawing from a six-year investigation, the film uses clandestine footage from contraband cell-phones to document inhumane conditions, forced labor, and the suspicious killing of inmate Steven Davis.

I had a chance to learn more from Alex Duran and Beth Shelburne, co-producers of *The Alabama Solution*. Shelburne, an independent journalist, emphasized the film’s rejection of “sanctioned” access, describing official tours as curated “dog and pony shows.” Instead, filmmakers relied on incarcerated whistleblowers. This unfiltered access allowed them to bypass censorship and document a “corrupt, failed system” defined by lawlessness and a high mortality rate. The team tracked 1,377 deaths during production, creating a database to honor those lives.

Duran, who served 12 years in New York prisons, highlighted the use of humanizing language, replacing terms like “inmate” with “incarcerated worker.” He noted society often operates on unexamined assumptions: referencing a scene where a neighbor blames a murder victim’s “alcohol or dope” use rather than the system.

A major focus was the “prison industrial complex.” Shelburne detailed how the state extracts \$450 million annually in labor and goods from prisoners. The system monetizes mass incarceration through wages as low as \$2 a day. Refusal to work results in punishment. Furthermore, they exposed the “prison building scam,” where new mega-prisons are sold as fixes for overcrowding, while costs balloon to \$1.3 billion, expanding a lucrative prison empire.

Ultimately, the filmmakers view their Oscar nomination as a vital shield. Duran and Shelburne stated recognition helps “keep the men safe” by increasing visibility. Their “impact campaign” aims to move the needle toward oversight and accountability. The film is now available for viewing on HBO Max.

## SATIRE AND PERIOD PIECES

I also attended the Tribeca Festival screening of Academy Award-nominated short films. Shifting gears from heavy documentaries, *Jane Austen’s Period Drama* offered a satirical respite.

Co-written and directed by Julia Aks and Steve Pinder, this comedic short is set in 1813 England. It follows Miss Estrogenia Talbot, whose marriage proposal is interrupted by her period. Her suitor, Mr. Dickley, mistakes the blood for a mortal injury, sparking chaotic events satirizing ignorance of female anatomy.

I spoke with Aks and Pinder, whose banter reminded me of Mike Nichols and Elaine

May. Aks, an opera singer, and Pinder, a director with an English literature background, described their collaboration as a “match made in heaven,” marrying classical aesthetics with modern humor.

Despite a limited budget, they prioritized authentic period aesthetics. Using production design and costumes, they mimicked the look of classic 35mm Austen adaptations. They cast dramatic theater actors rather than comedians to play the high-stakes situation “earnestly,” grounding the absurdity.

The duo emphasized the communal movie-going experience. They focused their campaign on theatrical screenings, noting that laughter is infectious. For Aks and Pinder, the nomination validates their unique voice and ensures independent shorts are viewed as standalone art. The film is now available for viewing on YouTube.

Whether exposing the penal system or satirizing Regency England, these filmmakers share a singular drive — the courage to tell stories that matter. As the Oscars approach, they remind us of cinema’s power to witness, warn, and entertain.

To find out more about the films

*Mr. Nobody Against Putin*:

kinolorber.com

*Cutting Through Rocks*:

roxie.com/film/cutting-through-rocks/

*The Alabama Solution*: Available on HBO Max

*Jane Austen’s Period Drama*: Available for viewing on YouTube

Michael Jacobson is an independent New York City filmmaker. Last year he completed *The Cornelia Street Café in Exile*, a full-length documentary. He curates and hosts a bi-monthly screening of short films at New Plaza Cinema. On Friday, March 27 at 7 p.m., the series celebrates its third year.

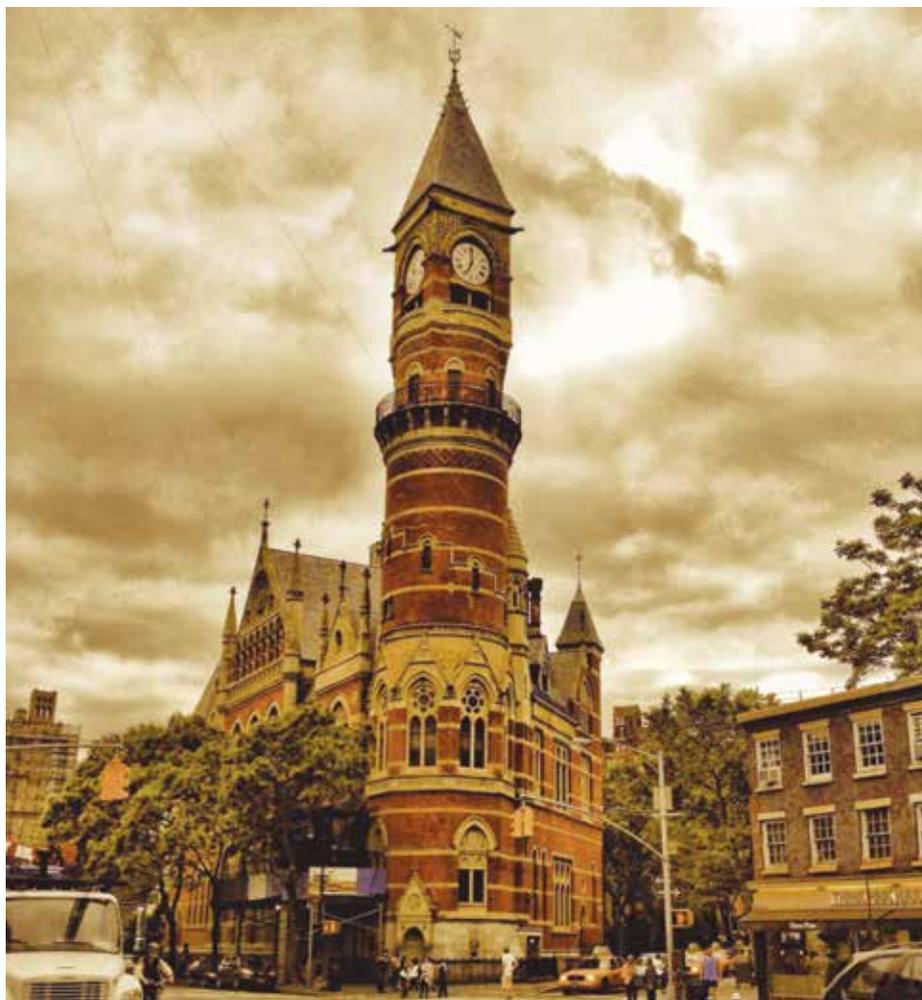
# Happenings at Jefferson Market Library

BY CORINNE NEARY.

As our local library users may know, the Hudson Park Library on Leroy Street will be closed this month for updates, so we're happy to welcome some of their regulars who we may not have seen for a while. We've scheduled a wealth of programs to keep everyone busy this month, including book discussions, film screenings, author readings, and theatrical performances. Additionally, if you're a regular attendee of Hudson Park's writers' workshops or book discussions, many of these programs will be happening here at Jefferson Market during the closure.

First, let's get to our literary events. For our poetry discussion happening Wednesday, March 11 at 4:30 p.m., we'll be reading W.B. Yeats' poem, *Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*. It was originally published in Irish journals in 1921 as *Thoughts Upon the Present State of the World*, and later included with its current title in his 1928 volume, *The Tower*. The title of this poem is the year in which the Anglo-Irish War began, and the work deals with the themes of war and turmoil.

For our novella discussion, which will be held Wednesday, March 18 at 4:30 p.m., we are reading Mexican writer Juan Rulfo's 1955 book, *Pedro Páramo*, recently translated from Spanish by Douglas J Weatherford. It tells the story of Juan Preciado, a man who promises his mother on her deathbed to meet Preciado's father for the first time in the town of Comala. It turns out to be a literal ghost town that is populated by spectral characters. Gabriel García Márquez wrote the foreword for this edition, where he de-



JEFFERSON MARKET LIBRARY. Photo by Annie Starrs Freedman.

scribes that the discovery of the book was profoundly impactful on his life and work as a writer, and that he could recite the entire

text from memory.

If you're feeling the need to sink your teeth into something a bit longer, our book

discussion group, meeting Thursday, March 26 at 4:30 p.m., will be tackling Laurie Colwin's 2021 novel, *Family Happiness*. From the publisher: "To the rest of the world, Polly Solo-Miller Demarest lives a charmed life. She has a beautiful home, a dashing lawyer husband, and two delightful children. But beneath this idyllic surface, the pressure of being the "perfect flower" of an illustrious family is getting to her..."

All of our book discussion titles are available to borrow at our second floor desk, while supplies last!

I wrote recently that we want to bring more theater to you in 2026. Hopefully you caught Keats' one-act-play *The Cat and the Moon*, directed by Alison Armstrong, here last month. She'll have another performance coming up in May. This month, we're happy to be showing something very different, *After Up: a Neo-Absurdist Dream Play* created by Brian P. Glover. It will be performed in our first floor Willa Cather room on Sunday, March 8 at 2 p.m. Then, on Sunday, March 22 at 2 p.m., join us to celebrate downtown writers at the Reunion Reading of the *Silver Tongued Devil Anthology*. Hosted by Rimes curator Phillip Giambri and Pink Trees Press editor Linda Kleinbub, this event will feature a variety of writers, including poets, storytellers, fiction and memoir writers, spoken-word artists, humorists, and essayists.

For other events, like our Monday and Thursday night film screenings, our craft and chess programs, and much more, please check out our website for the latest information.

## Happenings at Greenwich House

First up is a live jazz performance in the heart of The West Village for only \$20. Let's continue to support working musicians in NYC!

### Paul Austerlitz & The Vodou Horn

Saturday, March 21 at 8:00 p.m.

Greenwich House Music School  
46 Barrow Street

\$20 (At the door)

[greenwichhouse.org/music-school](http://greenwichhouse.org/music-school)

Ethnomusicologist and reed virtuoso Dr. Paul Austerlitz presents an evening of "original jazz music inspired by ritual sounds from Haiti

and the Dominican Republic." Celebrating the release of three new videos, the performance features the rare contrabass clarinet and a world-class ensemble including bassist Santi Debriano (Pharoah Sanders) and Haitian master drummer Jean "Sky" Menesky. Experience a unique fusion of Afro-Caribbean mysticism and contemporary improvisation.

### Greenwich House Wellness Tour

We are hosting a Wellness Event at Greenwich House's Older Adult Centers in March that is open to anyone who is a member. Be-

coming a member is easy and free. Fill out the form at [greenwichhouse.org/network-of-older-adult-centers/joinus/](http://greenwichhouse.org/network-of-older-adult-centers/joinus/)

Greenwich House is bringing vital health and support services to our older adult centers! Take a proactive step toward achieving your health goals with free, confidential support.

FREE On-Site Resources Include:

- GH Mental Health Therapists: Confidential counseling and support
- Case Managers & Outreach: Help accessing benefits and essential services
- Medicare Navigators: Expert advice on

coverage and recent changes

- Home Health Aides: Information on in-home care options

Plus stay for the delicious snacks and raffles!

March 3, 2pm-4pm

Our Lady of Pompeii, 25 Carmine Street

March 4, 2pm-4pm

Westbeth, 55 Bethune St

March 5, 2pm-4pm

Independence Plaza, 310 Greenwich Street

March 6, 2pm-4pm

Center on the Square

20 Washington Square North

## Antichrist *continued from page 24*

**You're making yourself sound, well, cool.**

I am cool. It's the pictures of me that got hot.

**Nearly every image of you seems to have flames enveloping your very presence. You've made spontaneous combustion flashy again.**

Hey, I was heavy metal before there were scales or incendiary devices. Often, I could light up a stage just by passing wind. Walking on water, water into wine? Nearly anyone can part the Red Sea with a small earthquake

and a passable Charlton Heston impression. I once parted the red carpet with trumpeting flatulence — and at Grauman's Chinese!

**What do you think about the current affairs of the world? How much of it is your fault?**

I'll take the blame for almost anything, but I cannot stay silent about those who take credit for my good misdeeds. Honestly, it's annoying. What you have in these end times are false deceivers. They appear good at being bad, but they aren't. It's a global amateur

hour. It's like you have game show hosts running things.

**Do you have any financial advice you can afford our readers?**

Invest in lawyers — law firms that have shown consistent profitability. Today's chaos will trigger an unprecedented legal boom. People suing the government, and vice versa. Civil suits in voluminous uncivility.

Seriously now, if I had represented Adam and Eve it would have been an equitable division with the apple being split in half,

and Eve getting a lien on the tree. Maybe a snakeskin purse. In the end, it's always about real estate — and fashion.

*Follow on Substack! Duane Scott Cerny takes the blame for most everything in his monthly satirical column, It's All My Fault. Best-selling author of "Selling Dead People's Things" and "Vintage Confidential," he is the co-owner of Chicago's Broadway Antique Market. Send podcast invites, interview requests to Thankless-Greetings@yahoo.com*

**March 2026**

# EVENTS

**in and  
around the  
West  
Village**

## LECTURE

**A CONVERSATION ON THE  
SETTLEMENT HOUSE IMPACT**  
Thursday, March 5  
6:00 – 7:30 PM (Panel & Q&A)  
7:30 – 8:00 PM (Refreshments)  
Greenwich House Music School  
46 Barrow Street  
greenwichhouse.org

Settlement houses have long been more than providers of social services – they were, and are, incubators of progressive ideas, civic action, and policy change. Join Greenwich House for a conversation inspired by Betty Caroli's book *A Slumless America: Mary K. Simkhovitch and the Dream of Affordable Housing* on how the settlement house movement advanced public housing reform, strengthened community supports, and continues to drive civic action today.

## DANCE

**WESTFEST DANCE FESTIVAL  
TOP FLOOR ON BANK**  
March 19 – 22  
Westbeth  
163B Bank Street, 4th Floor  
westbeth.org

WestFest is a cutting edge, curated festival presenting emerging and established movement artists in the historic Westbeth Artists Residence in the West Village, NYC.

## MUSIC



**March 22**  
**The Bitter End**  
147 Bleecker St  
bitterend.com

Originally launched in 2018 as a popular, free-wheeling salon series at the Washington Square Hotel's intimate North Square Lounge, Village Preservation will present the continuation and expansion of VILLAGE NIGHTS at an equally historic Village location, The Bitter End. Opened in 1961, the Bitter End is the oldest rock venue in NYC and has served as the launching pad for many performers who made music history, including Peter, Paul, and Mary, James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, and Lady Gaga. 2026 marks the Bitter End's 65th Anniversary. This performance will feature The 1950s, with musical guest Carolyn Hester.

## THEATER

**ANTIGONE IN ANALYSIS**  
March 20 - April 5  
Opening night is March 23  
La MaMa ETC's Downstairs Theatre  
66 East 4th St.  
lamama.com

OBIE and NYIT Award-winning Peculiar Works Project returns to La MaMa for the world premiere of *Antigone in Analysis*. The legendary theater commemorates this spring's Women's History Month with Sophocles' classic... reimagined as a feminist fever dream of Greek storytelling caught in a philosophical nightmare!

**LOST IN DEL VALLE**  
Through May 3  
SoHo Playhouse  
15 Vandam St.  
sohoplayhouse.com/see-a-show/  
lost-in-del-valle

One-man theatrical hurricane Ned Van Zandt tells his tale of the drug-induced chaos of the Chelsea Hotel in the 1970s – rubbing shoulders (and more) with Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen, the wild parties in the LA music scene with his friend Chaka Khan, and the fluorescent glare of a Texas correctional facility. "A masterpiece that pulls no punches... Ned Van Zandt has mastered the delivery of a solo performance." — *The Edinburgh Reporter*

**THE MUSIC OF THE BUENA VISTA  
SOCIAL CLUB – A TRIBUTE TO  
THE GOLDEN AGE OF CUBA**  
Saturday, March 28, 1:00 PM  
Blue Note Jazz Club  
131 W. 3rd St



The rich repertoire of the Buena Vista Social Club, brimming with poetry, humor, and rhythm, provides an ideal canvas for spontaneous improvisation and genuine expression of emotions. Featuring Francois Wiss, Damian Quiñones, and Danny Valdez, alongside several guest performers.

## Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition



**OFFICIAL COMMEMORATION OF THE TRIANGLE FACTORY FIRE**  
Wednesday March 25

11:30 am - 1 pm

NYU Brown Building

Corner Washington Place at Greene Street

rememberthetrianglefire.org

Remembering the 115th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist fire when 146 workers, mostly young, immigrant women were killed in a horrific fire. The public is invited to attend and participate in the commemoration hosted by the NYC Central Labor Council, Workers United, SEIU and the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition. Place a flower — a white carnation — while the Fire Department rings a bell after each victim's name is read aloud. In addition, red carnations are placed at the memorial site to represent workers who died this year due to unsafe working conditions. And listen and watch as FDNY Bagpipes play as a ladder is raised to the 6th floor — the highest that could be reached in 1911.



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

COMPASS

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



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

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



Compass is a licensed real estate broker, licensed to do business as Compass RE in Delaware, Idaho, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Tennessee, Compass Realty Group in Kansas and Missouri, Compass Carolinas, LLC in South Carolina, and Compass Real Estate in New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, Washington, DC., Idaho and Wyoming and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws.



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