



LEFT TO RIGHT: Leslie Boghosian Murphy, Lindsey Boylan, Layla Law-Gisko and Carl Wilson.

West of 6th Avenue — Special Election April 28! District 3 City Council Candidates Discuss Preservation Issues

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

Villagers west of 6th Avenue have had Erik Bottcher as their City Council Members since 2022. (East of 6th, Harvey Epstein is the new City Council Member). In February Bottcher was elected to replace Brad Hoylman-Sigal in the State Senate (a district which includes the northwest Village). A nonpartisan election to fill the vacancy is set for April 28. Early voting starts April 18.

District 3 — the City Council district encompassing all of the Village west of Sixth Ave. and extending south to Canal Street and north to 55th Street — is a hotbed of land use and preservation issues. On March 10, Village Preservation hosted an online candidates forum.

Among the four candidates — Leslie Boghosian Murphy, Lindsey Boylan, Layla Law-Gisko, and Carl Wilson — Wilson was the only one who did not to support fully rehabilitating the shuttered West Village Dapolito Recreation Center and was the most pro-development, including support for market-rate housing. Law-Gisko was the only candidate to oppose demolition at the Fulton and Elliot-Chelsea Houses public housing complex.

Here are some highlights of the forum discussion:

How would candidates counter the dramatic drop in landmark designations

and Village Preservation's characterization of "false claims" that landmarking obstructs needed housing construction?

Law-Gisko condemned the pro-development lobby's "entirely false" narrative countering that preservation has "an immense role" in preserving and creating affordable housing. She would work with Chris Marte, the new chair of the Council's landmarks subcommittee, "making sure we continue to designate our historic landmarks and that we fight any attempt to demolish landmark properties.

Boylan agreed, "We need to support an increase in landmark status, particularly reaching out to underrepresented communities." She vowed to work closely with Village Preservation and "fight the notion that there is any connection between landmark status and less affordable housing."

Boghosian Murphy said the trend is "troubling" and spotlighted a Village Preservation finding that recent landmark designations have extended protections to properties that are safe, not threatened. Neighborhoods "facing demolition pressures," she observed, include "older housing stock that provides naturally occurring affordability."

Wilson also rejected "the false choice be-

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A Stoop for a Neighborhood in Transition

THE EDITORS

In Greenwich Village and across Lower Manhattan, politics has always been personal. It happens on corners and in cafés, in community board meetings and on park benches, in conversations that begin with a single thought and expand into something larger — a vision for what the Village should be.

With the transitions of figures like Erik Bottcher, Jerry Nadler, and Deborah Glick, the Village is entering the next phase. These leaders helped define not just policy, but the style of representation — pragmatic, deeply rooted, and closely tied to the rhythms of neighborhood life. Their exits open space — and with that comes uncertainty, debate, and opportunity.

The Village View also opens its space to a wide range of contributors: residents, advocates, candidates, skeptics, new comers, and longtime Villagers alike. Our content does not follow a unified editorial line. Our goal is to provide a collection of perspectives shaped by different experi-

ences, priorities, and hopes for the future of our neighborhoods.

Think of *The Village View* as the modern version of the Village stoop. On a stoop, no one speaks for everyone — but everyone has the chance to speak. That's why we encourage our readers to speak up and to submit their thoughts about candidates, policies, politics and other Village-related topics.

In that spirit, the pieces that follow may challenge one another. Taken together, they reflect something essential about Greenwich Village and Lower Manhattan: a belief that civic life is not something handed down, but something argued over, shaped and shared.

If there is a common thread, it is this: the future of the Village will not be decided solely in City Hall, Albany, or Washington. It will be shaped here — in the conversations we have with one another, and in the ideas we are willing to put forward in public.

Welcome to the neighborhood stoop.

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In District 3, Progressive Lindsey Boylan is Betting on Grassroots

Mamdani enthusiasm shifts downballot

BY AUDREY HILL

On a chilly night in February, more than 70 volunteers gathered for the inaugural volunteer event for progressive Lindsey Boylan's campaign for City Council – an unusual crowd for such a local race. A number of them were former canvassers and field leads for Zohran Mamdani's mayoral campaign who met Boylan while she was knocking on doors to help get him elected.

For many of those volunteers, involvement with the Mamdani campaign had galvanized their engagement with local politics in a new way. Now, after successfully propelling him to office, their enthusiasm hasn't dissipated – it's moved downballot to Boylan's campaign.

"I don't think I've ever been galvanized by a local race in the way that I have been by the Zohran campaign, and I think so many other people here also experienced that," Macy Stacher, Boylan's deputy campaign manager, said of the campaign's volunteers.

Boylan, an avowed progressive, former urban planner and one-time state government official, is running to represent City Council District 3, which includes the West Village, Chelsea, and Hell's Kitchen. The seat was vacated by Erik Bottcher after his recent ascension to the state Senate. The special election to fill that vacancy will take place on April 28.

Boylan has secured the endorsements of the New York Working Families Party, New York Progressive Action Network, and a multitude of progressive local leaders, but failed to obtain the support of other groups like the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club (which favored one of its district leaders, Layla Law-Gisiko) or the Village Independent Democrats, which has thrown its support behind Carl Wilson, Bottcher's former chief of staff.

But for Boylan's campaign manager, Paloma Naderi (founder of Moms for Zohran), connecting directly with people in the district is their main focus. Volunteer shifts for the



LINDSEY BOYLAN, above, is an avowed progressive, former urban planner and one-time state government official running to represent City Council District 3.

campaign are frequent and well-attended, and the campaign has outraised every other candidate in the race thus far – some by a hefty margin. Both Boylan and Naderi attribute the engagement to their grassroots organizing and excitement driven by Mamdani's affordability agenda – an agenda Boylan hopes to carry forward as a council member.

"Voters just gave the mayor a huge mandate to tackle the affordability crisis," Boylan said. "I would be the 25th member of the progressive caucus, and that would enable a lot of what New Yorkers are demanding to happen." At 24 members in a 51 member council, the progressive caucus needs just two more members to secure a majority, and Boylan's election would be a significant step towards that.

"In my district, people are severely rent burdened," Boylan said. "Many believe they can't stay here, certainly can't build a family here, and can't make a good quality of life here." Boylan and those involved with her campaign articulate a shared vision for the district and the city that is in the same

vein as Mamdani's. Stances like increasing affordable housing, universal childcare, investing in public spaces, and standing up to Trump are central to her campaign.

Boylan is not new to public service and has previously tackled many of those issues in different capacities. During her time as an urban planner she helped to manage public spaces, including Herald and Greeley squares.

Per her LinkedIn profile, she was New York State's deputy secretary for economic development and "oversaw all of Economic Development and Housing" under former Gov. Andrew Cuomo. She later skyrocketed into the national spotlight in 2021 when she became the first woman to come forward with allegations of sexual harassment against Cuomo, which he denies. However, the combined testimony of Boylan and the 11 women who came out after her played a significant role in the former governor's eventual departure from public office and likely stymied his efforts towards the mayoralship in 2025.

Jay, a volunteer for the Boylan campaign, said it is not lost on him how much Boylan gave up when she came forward against Cuomo. "My former spouse was also victim of sexual harassment in a government role that resulted in her outing," Jay said, "Unfortunately, in government...those whistleblowers are typically giving up their career." When talking to prospective voters, Jay said he likes to tell them that "they're helping right a wrong that they had nothing to do with."

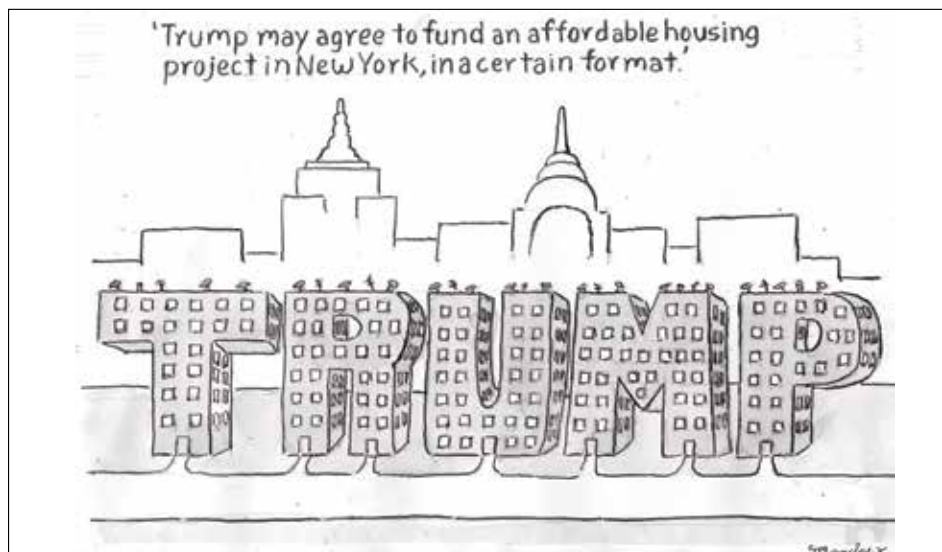
In light of how often survivors are shamed for coming forward, Boylan is aware of what her election to City Council could mean for other survivors. "It's not why I'm running, but the symbolism of it is not lost on me," She said. "It would mean the world to me to be able to be some small part of the story of survivors reclaiming our place in the world."

That story has been a long time coming. Like many involved with the campaign, Naderi met Boylan while they were canvassing for Mamdani. At the time, Boylan was a surrogate for his campaign and the subject of renewed attention because of Cuomo's involvement in the race. She was also quietly trekking all over the city day after day climbing up walk-ups and doing the hard and often unglamorous work of getting Mamdani elected – and making sure Cuomo wasn't.

"She just showed up like any other volunteer, she didn't draw attention to herself, and she just knocked doors with the rest of us," Naderi said.

The Mamdani campaign ignited in many of Boylan's volunteers (or reignited in some cases) an enthusiasm for local politics and the affordability agenda. But for many, it is Boylan herself, not just her platform, that has them toting green petition sheets collecting signatures for hours in the cold and into the night.

"She really shows up when it matters most," Naderi said. "We're excited to do it for her in return."



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Law-Gisiko Survives Effort to Throw Her Off the City Council Ballot

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

“Half Trumpian and half Tammany Hall.” That’s how Layla Law-Gisiko described the nearly successful effort to throw her off the ballot for the April 28 special election to fill the District 3 City Council seat vacated by Erik Bottcher. “It’s the worst of electoral politics,” she declared at a March 11 rally celebrating the survival of her campaign. “[Opponents] may disagree with me, but let the people decide at the ballot box.”

A Plan from Day One

On March 9, when the general counsel to the New York City Board of Elections sided with her challenger, Law-Gisiko feared her campaign was over. District 1 City Council Member Chris Marte described to the rally crowd at the Elliott-Chelsea public housing complex how Law-Gisiko had called him that day, in tears. Marte said he had sought to console her by reminding her there would be another election for the same seat soon, a primary in June. “We’re gonna get them in June,” he told her. “Don’t worry about it.”

“No,” she had responded. “It’s not about me. It’s about the residents of public housing,” telling Marte she needed to be seated in May in order to defend New York City Housing Authority tenants in the Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea complex, whose homes are threatened with demolition.

Law-Gisiko confirmed Marte’s account, declaring, “Public housing is on the brink of disaster. And I have a plan on Day One. But Day One needs to be in May.”

Nitpicking to a Terrible Degree

The challenge that almost ended Law-



LAYLA LAW-GISIKO, above, at a March 11, 2026 rally celebrating the survival of her campaign. Photo courtesy of Layla for NY.

Gisiko’s run asserted that her ballot line, “Affordable NYC,” violated election law by including the term “NYC.” The general counsel to the Board of Elections, agreeing with the challenger, cited an obscure case — upheld on appeal — which extended the law’s explicit prohibition on references to New York State to that acronym.

Paul Newell, a supporter of City Council candidate Lindsey Boylan and an election law attorney, told the elections board that

Law-Gisiko’s use of “NYC” not only violated the law but was potentially “deceiving voters” by suggesting she had the official imprimatur of government.

Law-Gisiko’s attorney, Howard Graubard, characterized the challenge as “nitpicking to a terrible degree” and the case precedent against his client as “wrongly decided” and “unconscionable.”

The board — after observing that municipal names such as “Albany” were clearly al-

lowed in ballot lines — rejected the recommendation of its general counsel.

The challenge was brought by a Boylan supporter. The supporter also sought to knock Law-Gisiko off the ballot by claiming her campaign had jumped the gun and gained “unfair advantage” by collecting all its initial qualifying signatures early on the first day of the campaign. Her campaign had started petitioning at 8 a.m. and Mayor Mamdani had not signed the proclamation for the special election until that afternoon. The general counsel had rejected that challenge, contending that regardless of the time of the mayor’s signature, for the purposes of petitioning, the day had started at midnight.

The elections board found that Boylan’s ballot line, “Affordable City,” was too similar to Law-Gisiko’s. Because Law-Gisiko remains on the ballot and was the first to qualify, the board required Boylan to change her ballot line.

Tom Duane, the former District 3 City Council member who has sued to stop the NYCHA demolition plan, expressed outrage at how politics has changed. “In the old days,” he told the crowd, “the whole thing about trying to knock someone off the ballot was because you could show that they did not have widespread support in the community. The idea that Layla does not have widespread support in the community is completely and utterly and totally absurd.”

Speaking to the *Village View*, Duane decried Law-Gisiko’s opponents for failing to defend ballot access. “No one spoke up about it,” he protested, “They should have said, ‘this is a disgrace.’”

Harvey Epstein on Our Climate Crisis

BY JACK LOURIE

I had an interview with City Council Member Harvey Epstein this past month to talk about climate change. This conversation covered his background within the environmental movement, his philosophies, and the hurdles he believes we all must overcome.

Epstein — the legislator — shared two foundational perspectives that inform his work. One: environmental justice is a cornerstone of the job. Two: we need to start holding corporations accountable.

Epstein — the activist — imagines what building a larger climate movement would take. If we can all connect more to our local environments. If we can inspire people to change habits, join a protest, or write a fiery article.

Epstein’s first environmental role model was President Jimmy Carter. Carter had given a speech about putting solar panels on the roof of the White House, which made Epstein consider what it meant to be a good steward in the world that we live in. That perspective grew both through experiences in college and as a social worker, where he



HARVEY EPSTEIN inside of City Hall. Photo credit: City Council Photography.

saw how status-quo attitudes on the environment disproportionately affected people of color. The council member was learning from the likes of local environmental justice advocates such as Eddie Bautista, Elizabeth Yeampierre, and Peggy Shepherd.

But he had a plan. First, Epstein became vegan. Then, he started composting. He went to law school. Our council member was ready to fight the man.

As a young lawyer, Epstein worked alongside the environmental justice non-profit We

Act to remove bus depots from East Harlem. Buses generally run on diesel gas, which emits particulate matter: microscopic particles that float in the air. Breathing in high densities of particulate matter contributes to the development of respiratory diseases. A study in 2010 found that inhalation of black carbon by New York City teens led to higher rates of respiratory death (Patel et. al, 2010). Another study linked particulate matter density to Latino and low-income neighborhoods (Marokog).

As a state assemblyman, Epstein used his position to hold corporations responsible. He joined the Center for Climate Integrity’s Leaders Network, a coalition of political representatives looking to showcase deceptive practices of oil and gas companies. He sponsored 57 bills that contained the word “environmental,” which ranged from conservation, to recycling, to local pollution.

Now as a council member, Epstein’s previous work has given him ideas and influence regarding a bolder climate agenda. He is part of the Committee on Environmental Protec-

tion and Waterfronts. He sponsored a bill to improve our recycling processes (NYC Council), and mentioned transitioning more city-owned trucks to clean diesel. A short-term win like this can lead to a 95% reduction in particulate matter emissions (Herner et al).

Epstein is also the prime sponsor of a bill that looks to “recognize the contributions of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) to the natural environment of New York City,” (NYC Council). The federal government — especially the guy who lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue — does not make any of Epstein’s work or climate goals easy.

“To truly meet the moment, we need to have a real federal government who cares about humanity, unlike the government we have right now,” Epstein said. “What his Environmental Protection Agency has done is gut any environmental regulations at all; they have abolished any real oversight and have allowed polluters to continue to pollute with very little ramifications and recourse.” He

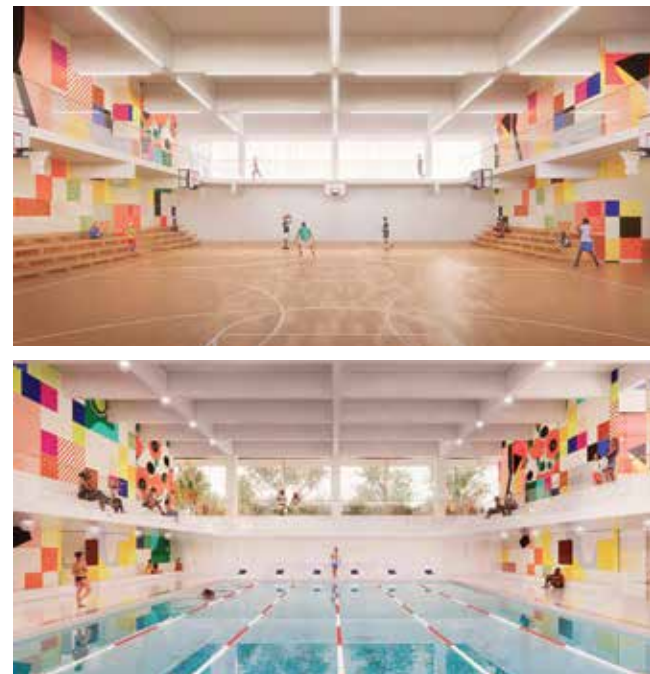
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Just Imagine -A Wide Open Park Space From Varick to Hudson

BY TOBI BERGMAN



THE NEW RECREATION CENTER at the base of the Hudson Mosaic, corner of Clarkson and Hudson. Renderings courtesy of Curtis + Ginsberg Architects.



For many years, Village Preservation has energetically and successfully advocated to protect our treasured neighborhoods and structures. Now they hope to save the crumbling Dapolito Recreation Center at the corner of Seventh Avenue South and Clarkston Street. They also hope to stop the creation of a new recreation center at 388 Hudson Street.

I hope they don't succeed.

The worst thing about the Dapolito building is that it occupies 1/4-acre of JJ Walker Park and its location disconnects the park from the streets and neighborhoods to the east.

Please go stand at the northwest corner of Carmine and Seventh Avenue South and look west. I think you'll agree it's not a special New York place.

Keep looking west, but now imagine the building gone. A renovated park has been extended to a wide welcoming new entrance at the corner. Now you are looking across lawns and gardens and sitting areas. Even above the noise of traffic, you are hearing the delight of the swimmers in the renovated outdoor pool. The magical Keith Herring mural is revealed to be enjoyed by thousands of people every day. You're seeing the trees in the park, the sky above buildings on Hudson Street, and the historic row of houses on St. Lukes Place.

JJ Walker Park, once hidden behind a building, once accessible only from side streets, is now in full view, open and accessible, and one of the largest and most special public open spaces in Greenwich Village. You cross the street and you're in.

Many of us remember the loss of St. Vincents Hospital. It was sad and bad. But the creation of AIDS Memorial Park on the blighted site of the hospital logistics facility was a bless-

ing. A change for the better!

Too often we walk with our heads down or facing our phones. Opening Seventh Avenue South at Carmine Street to an extended and rejuvenated JJ Walker Park will create another special place where we look up and see trees and open sky; a place where a welcoming park beckons us: Come in!

The loss of the existing Dapolito building may be sad for some. Many good times were had there. For many years my sons spent more waking hours there than they did at home, so I know. But it won't be bad. It will be a blessing without a loss.

While Dapolito is a "contributing building" in a preservation district, it does not have innate architectural or other value that would make it worthy of designation for historic preservation on its own — and clearly adding new parkland won't harm the district.

Built for other purposes, Dapolito was never suitable for recreational facilities. The gyms are too small, as is the indoor pool located in a dank and dark basement. The grand circular stairway is the one special feature of the building, but unless it is demolished it will always divide the floorplates and preserve the small unwelcoming hallways and lobbies. New requirements for access/egress, ventilation, and life safety will add still more use constraints. And if the city demolishes the building, a bright new recreation center will be opened a block away at 388 Hudson Street, with a full-sized gym and pool, affordable physical training facilities, and a variety of multi-use spaces.

The Parks Department did not handle this well. They announced the Dapolito demolition without first talking about

what they envisioned for the site, thereby allowing conspiracy theories about luxury housing which was never a possible outcome given the laws protecting parkland. When they finally clarified that the public recreation uses would continue, they announced the future use would be an "aquatics center" (what's that?) and entertained a silly idea of keeping some of the old brick facades, thereby killing the chance to open the east side of the park to the neighborhood. What still has not happened is an open discussion of how the site can best serve the open space and recreation needs of the neighborhood, thereby creating the impression that the agency thinks it knows.

Renovation of the Dapolito Recreation Center is a bad idea that would extend forever the loss of the parkland it occupies and deprive all of us of the opportunity for a new state-of-the-art recreation center as part of the Hudson Mosaic at 388 Hudson Street, a center truly worthy of honoring Tony Dapolito's legacy. Hudson Mosaic represents the city's first co-location of affordable housing with an NYC Parks recreation center. At least 15% of units will be reserved for formerly homeless New Yorkers, who will have access to on-site clinical and supportive services.

Note from Arthur Schwartz: Tobi Bergman served as chief of operations at Central Park. He was a key player in converting Pier 40 at West Houston Street into a ball-field and sports center — and later into Hudson River Park. He served on Community Board 2 for more than 20 years, chaired its Parks Committee for many years and was elected board chair in 2014.

Harvey *continued from page 3*

was referring to the Trump administration recently removing its authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions via a repeal of the Endangerment Finding (Harvard). Likewise, the Endangered Species Act faces similar pressure (Earthjustice), and Epstein's bill could serve as a tool to protect local ecosystems if the ESA were reversed.

And with stronger government, big business could start to be held accountable. But Epstein recognizes that we aren't there yet. "The government has to make a decision that they want to hold corporations responsible for what they are doing to our planet," Epstein stated. "I have no idea how we entered a world

where, like, Amazon can put 10 billion boxes on the streets of New York, and it's our responsibility as (the) government to collect them and do something with them. Why? Why are we shifting corporate responsibility onto the government? And why is the government not pushing back? Corporations just put stuff into our universe, and we just accept it and say, 'Oh, that's just what they do.' We need to just really shift the mindset and hold them accountable for their impact on the world."

Making corporations responsible for the lifecycle of their products could be one way to improve our environment. Epstein also sees antitrust as an additional tool, albeit one that is stronger at the federal level. Both levers would shift responsibil-

ity toward and power away from companies such as Amazon.

There is a lot to learn from Epstein's journey: it is rooted in empathy and has led him to City Council. In an alternate reality, perhaps Epstein could solely tend to East Village gardens. In this one, he's also fighting corporatocracy and the environmental degradation it brings. We need to have his back as he fights the behemoths polluting our air and poisoning our waterways, because some of the fights he is taking on aren't just political — they are structural.

Harvey Epstein is the City Council member for District 2, which begins at 6th Avenue and runs to the East River.

Forty Stories of Problems at Planned 388 Hudson Tower Project

BY ANDREW BERMAN

The Mamdani administration appears poised to move ahead with a 400-foot tall tower on public land at 388 Hudson Street (at Clarkson Street) originally planned by the Adams administration. The proposed project is riddled with serious problems — including design, demolition, and choice of developer. If not changed now, it will become a permanent reality in our neighborhood.

The huge structure (the current tallest building in Greenwich Village is 327-foot tall), likened to a giant cheese grater, would loom over J.J. Walker Park and face the iconic row of houses on St. Luke's Place that form the southern boundary of the Greenwich Village Historic District. It's very clear this site will be built upon and there are many good uses that could go here. But some fundamental changes must be made to this plan.

The design. For whatever reason, the city selected Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron to design the structure, whose pockmarked facade looks like 31 stories of measles sores. Whatever one might think of the firm's other work, which includes the "birdcage" stadium for the Beijing 2008 Olympics, it's hard to imagine their aesthetic blending in with these surroundings, which is one of the primary requests generated during the city's "public engagement" process. At a recent public meeting, the architects defended their choice, saying it's hard to build new buildings in old districts that relate well to their surroundings. I would direct them to look just a few blocks away to the new "Village West" apartment building rising at the southwest corner of Sixth Ave. and 14th St. for a clear example of how this can, in fact, be done.

The height and massing. 388 Hudson



THE "BIRD'S NEST" STADIUM at the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. Designed by Herzog & de Meuron.



THE NEW "VILLAGE WEST" APARTMENTS at 14th Street and Sixth Avenue, southwest corner. Designed by BSK Architects.



388 HUDSON STREET. Designed by Herzog & de Meuron and Curtis + Ginsberg Architects.

takes the form of a tall extruded tower seemingly to maximize height and views. A major source of feedback from the public was to keep the building as low and squat as possible, and to stagger it back as it rose from the park and the landmarked houses across the street. This would make for a much more contextual and much less visually intrusive design — so far they have refused to do so.

The new public recreation center in the base of the new building that lifts the entire tower 80 ft. into the air. This plan is premised on demolishing the landmarked Tony Dapolito Recreation Center across the street which the city has closed and refused to repair for six years. Money had been allocated for reopening and the city's own inspections showed it could be

repaired. But they've refused to do so, planning instead to move all its facilities into the new building, thus greatly inflating its size. While some new public recreation facilities can and should be included here, many fewer are needed than under the current plan if Dapolito is repaired and reopened.

The "affordable" housing. The plan calls for 31 stories of apartments which the city calls "affordable." There will be income restrictions (at least when you move in; if your income goes up later, you're still entitled to the apartment for life), and the rents will be pegged to those initial income levels. However, the city says some units will require as much as 60% higher income than the median for NYC — and about double the median income for NYC renters. So "afford-

able" here is a flexible term at best. And the city has adamantly refused to provide any details about the nature of the agreement with the developer and how it will ensure permanent affordability, and at what levels. Time and again we've seen developments in our city that were intended to be permanently affordable, eventually sidestepping those restrictions and going market rate. We can't simply take the city's word for it and the terms of any agreement must be made public for careful scrutiny. So far, they've also refused to consider a deed restriction that would run with the land to guarantee permanent affordability.

The developer. Camber Property Group was chosen by Mayor Adams and his Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development (HPD) for this project. Ironically, Camber was also named one of the 100 Worst Landlords in NYC by the Public Advocate for, among other things, racking up over 1,000 HPD violations and evicting dozens of low income tenants from its properties. Perhaps even more surprisingly, the Mamdani administration appears to be moving ahead with this developer. Clearly a very compelling explanation is needed for the choice of Camber or their appearance on this list of notorious landlords. Otherwise this decision, like so much else about this project, must be reconsidered.

Throughout the process, the city and some proponents of this plan have sought to marginalize and demonize critics, demanding you either blindly agree with all they're proposing — or you're accused of being anti-affordable housing or an obstructionist. Sadly, this is indicative of how things have evolved in our public discourse today, where not accepting unquestioned whatever the powers-that-be say can get you labeled heretical or treasonous — or worse.

Whether you fully embrace the plan for housing and a new public recreation center on this site, or wish to go back to the city's original commitment to build a park there, one thing is 100% clear — housing is going to get built on the site. Village Preservation has supported this from the earliest announcement of a plan that would have been about a quarter the size of the new planned development. But details matter, especially big details like these. We can fight for a development that's contextual for its surroundings, respectful of the nearby park and historic district, truly guarantees the permanence of its affordability, preserves and reopens the beloved Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, and is driven by a developer with a good track record. Or we can accept this plan as is. Go to villagepreservation.org/388hudson to learn more or to help.

Andrew Berman is executive director of Village Preservation.

The Village View

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OPINION

Ask Not

BY TOM LAMIA



POSTHUMOUS OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL PORTRAIT of
U.S. President John F. Kennedy.

In these troubled times there is much confusion and concern among us. Dramatic policy differences exist within both Republican and Democrat constituent blocs. There is a cult-like fidelity to Trump among a sizable number of Republicans and a similarly large number of Democrats have lost faith in their party's leadership.

The current frustration, anxiety and deadlock are barriers to realizing a common goal: preservation of the Constitution and the rule of law. Our national conversation is now loud, hostile and aimless. I have a suggestion. It is made in good faith, with hope for its success and fear for its failure.

In his inaugural address on January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy, after touching all the bases of national goals and challenges, made a simple request: "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country."

That plea was made in the concluding lines of a fulsome statement of presidential challenges, which he summarized as "a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself."

Those challenges continue, with varying emphasis, in this new era of Project 2025 and DEI. My suggestion is that all Americans adopt Kennedy's challenge, asking what they can do for their country to meet this new presidential challenge.

It means working with the tools and materials we have and accepting that without compromise no solution is possible. It means finding a way through Trump's intransigence and lies. It means abandoning legal, philosophical and constitutional beginnings to find grounds for discussion. It means sitting down with the devil. It means a new beginning but not a new ending. It means compromise to fight another day.

Kennedy described a new era of projecting American power and culture onto a world stage through diplomacy, treaties and the United Nations. Trump seeks a world in which he has the power to make deals in America's interests, which include profit for private interests and geographic expansion and spheres of influence for America. Kennedy-era allies were those with whom we fought in World War II. Trump allies must be loyal to him and able to pay their own way, financially or ideologically. These differences are not insuperable so long as our national interest is uppermost.

Where do we start? Let me offer this update of the Kennedy challenge: Ask not what government can do for you, ask what you can do for government.

There's plenty to do. In five critical groups that have a disproportionately large influence on government, this is a moment for assessing and using power to stop the slide to one person rule.

Business leaders: Stop patronizing Trump out of fear for his wrath. You have his respect for your accomplishments. He wants your support. It will be more valuable to him if you give it than if he takes it. It means discussion,

flattery, cajoling and courage on your part. You have the power that comes from his respect for your success and the bully pulpit you have with your customers, clients, bankers, stockholders and lobbyists. If you fail to use this power you will lose it. He has a supersensory power for spotting and exploiting weakness. Do not concede in advance. He will ask for more next time. Employ the best lawyers (not the loudest, the best), expect litigation and budget for it. Your primary skill is hedging risk; do that now while you can.

Cultural leaders: Use your unique public audiences to find opportunities for empathy with Trump. Show him that you want to protect him from the slings and arrows and provide him with audiences he can charm with his unquestioned talent for camaraderie. It does

not have to be genuine. He won't insist that it be so and you should see it as show business that will always stop before the line to disingenuous, irreversible fluff or treason is crossed. You and your president friend can invite and reach audiences that help you both to communicate with humor and common concern for your shared patriotism.

Intimates and insiders: Protect him from himself so that he is able survive when confronted with a situation that even his legendary abilities to deflect responsibility onto others fails him. His malignant narcissism often serves him well in adversity because he cannot accept blame, so lies to escape it. Each lie opens a channel through which criticism and public obloquy can penetrate and become wedged into his permanent, inescapable lore. You can use flattery, of course, in all cases. In the rare case of access for inconvenient truths, you can gently open the door to treatment for the narcissism. That would be a great service to him and to your country.

World leaders, allies and enemies: Working with him has proved both pointless and demeaning of your place. The right approach, however difficult, is to ignore him. In the short term you would be rightly criticized for not having an effective response to the bullying and posturing, but you are important to him. He needs you as a foil for his taunts and demands and will go quiet if he is ignored. He craves attention from you. Be pleasant but do not concede any aspect of your independence or sovereignty. This will leave him in the role of the cat that has wounded the mouse but quietly crouches over his victim, hoping for more. He wants you wounded, not dead.

Lawyers and judges: Your fingers are in the dike of overwhelming lawlessness. This is your chance to prove James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay correct in their construction of the Constitution. Think of your place in that venerable scheme and understand that unlike Plessy v. Ferguson, there will be no next time if there is another United States v. Trump and the Court finds the theft of our constitutional republic was an "official act" for which a president is immune from prosecution.

Council *continued from page 1*

tween housing and preservation.” He said the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) needs full funding so it can be “calendarizing these things faster, and with greater transparency.”

How would candidates hold developers and property owners accountable for the destruction they have inflicted on Village landmarks?

Calling incidents of destruction “so unacceptable,” Boghosian Murphy would “push for stronger penalties, automatic stop work orders in serious cases, and better coordination between city agencies” as well as protections for displaced tenants.

Citing the Council’s oversight role, Wilson said, “We need to be doing everything we can to make sure that LPC and the Department of Buildings are meeting their obligations” to enforce the law. He called for “real fines” to penalize demolition by neglect.

Law-Gisiko promised to use the office to stop demolition by neglect before property owners cause irreversible damage to landmarks. She emphasized providing support to owners of landmarked properties — such as the historic tax credit to promote building rehab.

Boylan proposed working with Mayor Mamdani’s multiple initiatives to hold bad landlords accountable, saying, “We need to make sure that landmarks and preservation are at the table.”

Should the Dapolito Recreation Center be preserved or demolished?

Boylan said that the “entire building, not just the mural” needs to be preserved “to the extent possible” and that she would push the Mamdani administration to do so.

Boghosian Murphy would “fight to see the building repaired, restored, modernized, and reopened in a manner consistent with its landmark status....I would be the first one swimming in the pool.”

Wilson, who supports the plan to build a replacement recreation center at 388 Hudson, called for retaining “the visible facade” at Dapolito and promised to fight for capital funding so that what results “can serve the community in ways that are modern.”

Law-Gisiko said Dapolito needs to be preserved as a recreation center “inside and out” and stressed that more than \$100 mil-

lion in capital funding that could be used for rehabilitation has been in the city budget for years. Although Adams planned to use the money for demolition, she noted it is “not earmarked for a specific plan.”

Where do the candidates stand on the proposed tower at 388 Hudson? The plan includes a replacement recreation center and some affordable housing, albeit not clearly “permanently affordable.”

Wilson decried the tower design as looking “like Star Trek” and promised to negotiate design changes while advocating for all the housing units to be made permanently affordable.

Boylan emphasized permanent affordability, attention to the shadows a tower may cast, preserving Dapolito, and “listening to the community.”

In addition to asserting that she would rework the “massing of the building,” Law-Gisiko targeted tax break programs that encourage developers to build “woefully out-of-scale” towers with “too much market rate housing” in exchange for developing relatively few units of expensive “affordable housing.” She would seek to introduce better policy to spur affordable housing.

Boghosian Murphy would seek to reduce the height and bulk of the building and to obtain “enforceable guarantees that the housing remains permanently and deeply affordable.” She also underscored the significance of shadows and light.

Where do the candidates stand on the city’s Gansevoort Square proposal? It calls for a 600-foot tower, with an unspecified amount of super-luxury housing, to be built on public land.

Law-Gisiko believes in “public land for public good” and opposes for-profit ventures on public land. She proclaimed, “It is about time that we stop believing that the only way to support affordable housing is through this [public-private] cross-subsidization,” contending this tactic backfires by inflating housing prices.

Wilson called the Gansevoort Square tower “too tall” and suggested that with a new mayoral administration there’s a new opportunity to advocate for “100% affordable” housing on site.

Boylan agreed with Wilson on the opportunity to negotiate with City Hall and said she would seek 100% “deeply affordable” housing on site.

Boghosian Murphy described the proposal as rushed, without adequate community input, and with insufficient public benefit. She said she would start by asking the city for a master plan of the full Gansevoort Square site.

Where do the candidates stand on upzoning? The city contends this promotes affordable housing, allowing the city potentially to add affordability requirements to new construction, and by increasing supply. The city alleges that any increase in supply, even luxury housing, will make housing more affordable.

Boylan noted her past opposition to “City of Yes” and the SoHo-NoHo rezoning plan, noting by contrast, she had supported mayoral ballot initiatives 2-4, believing that they “should give us more opportunities to free up affordable housing projects.”

Wilson described upzonings as a “tool to help combat our affordability and housing crisis” suggesting that they could especially provide leverage for change outside Manhattan, with districts “operating with suburban-style housing.”

Boghosian Murphy described upzonings without affordable housing mandates as a “giant missed opportunity,” perhaps “well-meaning” but now “susceptible to greedy developers.”

Law-Gisiko condemned the “neo-liberal view that housing trickles down and that supply is going to solve the affordability crisis” as a trap. “It doesn’t work,” she said, pointing to Hudson Yards as dense and exorbitantly expensive, even with units designated “affordable housing.” She decried “trickle down” policy as having a “perverse effect” by increasing the value of underlying land, thus undermining affordability.

What past Village council member might they compare themselves to, with regard to preservation and development issues?

Boylan, instead, pointed to Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal “because of his deep experience in both planning issues and preservation.” As to past council members, she said, “No disrespect, but I’m charting a new way.”

Boghosian Murphy also hesitated to compare her perspective to a past council member, saying she thinks she would do a better job negotiating on the community’s behalf by, for example, securing mandatory com-

munity benefit agreements from developers.

Law-Gisiko cited former Council Member Tom Duane as her role model, someone with “a strong commitment to residents having a seat at the table” who helped secure the “community-driven” community-board-sponsored plan for Chelsea in 1996, striking a “balance between affordable housing, historic preservation, and the creation and protection of parks.”

Wilson said he would more proactively promote preservation than his predecessors, especially with regard to landmarking Hell’s Kitchen sites, such as the Paddy’s Market proposal.

What are the candidates’ positions over plans to demolish and redevelop, with private developers, the NYCHA projects at the Fulton and Elliot-Chelsea sites?

Boghosian Murphy asserted that the controversy is wrongly framed as “demo or no demo” (demolition) and that the issues are more nuanced. She characterized the potential control of public housing by a for-profit developer as a “very slippery slope.”

Law-Gisiko would “entirely embrace the ‘no demolition’ narrative because it is the right narrative,” that tenants wanted and advocated for. “Demolition [and] the concentration of public housing tenants into six buildings, creating ‘poor buildings’ as opposed to ‘poor doors,’ an entirely segregated development, is a very bad idea. I strongly support Section 9 (federally funded public) housing...it has to be front and center in these conversations.”

Wilson argued that “Section 9 is not a stable funding source at the federal level. That’s part of why we’re in this problem...this multi-billion dollar deficit at NYCHA.” He looked forward to being able to advocate improvements via the upcoming land use negotiation, including an upgrade to PS 33, using brick and stone so that it “looks like Chelsea.”

Boylan condemned the widespread “mistrust” and “fear” generated by the redevelopment plan and suggested the only way forward was a “re-vote” by NYCHA tenants, overseen by an independent entity. She characterized reliance on Section 9 funding as a “disingenuous” position that would prevent repairs because the funding is not forthcoming.

The video recording of the forum and detailed candidate questionnaires are accessible via Village Preservation’s website and its YouTube channel.

The election is ranked-choice voting. This means you can potentially vote “for” all four candidates, ranking them by preference. It also means you can, in effect, vote “against” a candidate or candidates by leaving them off your ballot.



The Looming AI Crisis

BY DAVID SIFFERT

As a candidate for Assembly, I've been doing a lot of door-knocking in the Village, and I've noticed a trend: Building entrance systems are increasingly using facial recognition to identify everyone who comes to the door and anyone who enters with them. Obviously, this is creepy, but it's also harmful. What happens with the data these systems collect? Is it stored securely? If the systems are hacked, can our identities be stolen? Even if the systems are secure, how accurate are they? What about our privacy? Many of us know that our iPhones can be unlocked by close family members, because facial recognition can't tell us apart. That can pose a major security problem.

But these facial recognition systems are just the tip of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) iceberg. AI is already impacting our lives in myriad ways.

AI is already decimating the labor force, with an almost complete absence of entry-level jobs sending even top-graduates from top-colleges into un- or under-employment. Based on reports from 2025, Artificial Intelligence was explicitly cited as a factor in nearly 55,000 U.S. layoffs. However, analysts and researchers suggest the actual number of jobs displaced by AI is higher — potentially between 200,000 and 300,000 in the U.S. alone — as many companies label AI-driven cuts as general “restructuring.” Job growth in 2025 in the private sector was zero — or possibly less.

Meanwhile, generative AI systems have stolen the intellectual property of countless artists and authors and used it to try to make them obsolete.

But AI isn't only taking jobs: it's controlling who gets the ones that are left. If you apply for a job online, an AI system likely screens your resume before any human does, and there is a reason to believe these systems are biased on the basis of race and gender. A 2024 University of Washington study found that resumes processed by ChatGPT frequently penalize applicants who disclose disabilities or include disability-related credentials, reinforcing hiring biases and in some cases violating legal protections.

Our energy rates are going up and NYS is failing to meet its climate goals — in large part because of the massive influx of data centers that get bulk purchase rates for energy, effectively subsidized by the rest of us. In 2025, U.S. data centers are estimated to consume approximately 4% to 5% of the country's total electricity, a 22% increase in one year. This consumption is projected to rise rapidly, potentially reaching 8% to 12% of total U.S. electricity demand by 2030.

Our privacy has been torn to shreds, as our data is harvested, bought, and sold without our consent, massive camera networks are deployed with facial recognition systems, and all of this is used to power platforms like Palantir's ImmigrationOS for ICE or NYPD's Domain Awareness System.

Our sources of news and connection online are causing one of the greatest mental health crises in human history. In order to

go online to obtain just about any information, we face a barrage of addictive products, misinformation, and fraud.

And we are beginning to face catastrophic risks, with AI systems powering massive hacks, and risking even bigger harms, like helping users develop biological weapons. Meanwhile, the federal government's policy is to maximize tech companies' profits at our expense.

AI isn't without its potential benefits. It is being used in medical sciences for early disease detection and by data scientists to rapidly correlate messy data sets. But without government regulation, these benefits will be overwhelmed by the harms.

The good news is this — these problems are not inevitable. There is legislation in Albany that would deal with most of these problems and make New Yorkers much safer as AI evolves. Not only do we know how to solve these problems, but there are solutions that can be implemented by our state legislature tomorrow. However, our state government currently has neither the expertise nor the will to take on the tech industry and make these changes. And the AI industry is targeting politicians who are taking a stand.

The crisis is already here, but it's going to get worse. We have seen policymakers allow other crises to spiral out of control: the climate crisis, the housing crisis, the health care crisis. For each of these crises, Albany has shown a level of complacency that New Yorkers should and do find unacceptable.

The housing crisis has already forced countless New Yorkers out of the city or into homelessness, and made about half of the remaining housed New Yorkers rent-burdened. Hospitals are closing and the cost of insurance is skyrocketing. And New Yorkers are dying every year from storms, floods, and excessive heat. If AI continues unregulated, our privacy rights, civil rights, labor rights, environmental rights, and more, are unlikely ever to recover.

And while candidates and elected officials across the city talk every day about the urgency of the housing crisis, the climate crisis, and the health care crisis, we hear next to nothing about the looming AI crisis, making it more dire.

As an academic, I have written bills that would address this looming AI crisis. For years I have asked nicely, and not-so-nicely, for the legislature to take action on them. And I've lost my patience. I am running for New York State Assembly in the 66th Assembly District to try to shake Albany from its complacency. We can no longer wait to act on the crises we face, whether it comes from high housing costs, the fossil fuel industry, Donald Trump's anti-democratic actions, or big tech.

David Siffert is an adjunct professor at NYU Law School, and is a candidate for the NY State Assembly in the 66th Assembly District, which is, essentially, Greenwich Village to First Avenue.

Do Business with ICE, Get Iced Out

BY MAR FITZGERALD AND PAOLO MUSTO



ASSEMBLYMEMBER GRACE LEE.

Assemblymember Grace Lee represents the East Village and Lower East Side and is running for the State Senate in a district which encompasses most of Greenwich Village and SoHo. She recently introduced legislation that requires companies doing business with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to disclose their contracts to the state. Failure to disclose the relationship with ICE can result in disqualification from state contracts and a civil penalty of up to \$5,000.

“In the communities I represent, ICE is a four-letter word,” said Lee. “If any company is doing business with ICE, especially those in any way helping support Trump's mass deportation and degradation agenda against immigrants, New Yorkers deserve to know. If those companies fail to come clean, they should be disqualified from benefiting from any contract that involves taxpayer funding.”

The ICE Contract Transparency Act would increase transparency into the infrastructure supporting ICE's operations. ICE conducts enforcement activities through an extensive system of private contracts, which includes detention centers, office rentals, transportation, and logistics services. To enhance transparency and ensure that information about federal contracts is publicly available, the legislation mandates that contracts with ICE must be filed with the Department of State.

Lee was inspired to propose the ICE Contract Transparency Act after learning that ICE was leasing parking spaces at Pier 40 on Hudson River Park in Lower Manhattan.

This lease sparked outrage among local residents, leading to protests and renewed questions about how much of ICE's footprint in New York remains hidden from public view. (Hudson River Park has responded that they are not renewing a contract with ICE when it expires on June 30 of this year.)

Similar concerns have emerged beyond the city. In the Hudson Valley town of Chester, ICE entered into a contract with a private warehouse to develop a detention facility capable of holding up to 1,500 people. The potential detention center has angered local residents, triggered protests, and spurred action to block the facility.

Over the past year, ICE agents have spread across the country to conduct what many describe as the largest deportation campaign in U.S. history. As they engage in sweeps across neighborhoods, raiding workplaces, schools, and health centers, ICE has detained and deported hundreds of thousands of immigrants regardless of their criminal record. Los Angeles, Chicago, and Minneapolis have experienced surges in ICE activity that have caused unrest, disruption, and violence. This culminated in the killings of Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, which placed a spotlight on ICE's tactics and increased pressure on New York state lawmakers to respond to the agency's actions.

ICE has expanded its operations in New York and its methods are under heightened scrutiny. In March ICE agents used deceptive tactics to gain entry into a dorm at Columbia University to detain a student. In another case, ICE agents left a nearly blind refugee in Buffalo on the side of the road, where he later died. They have raided vendors on Canal Street. Foreign born residents, even those with proper papers, have felt terrorized. These and other incidents have spurred Albany legislators to introduce measures to increase oversight and accountability.

Legislators are eager to pass sweeping measures to restrict the state's ability to collaborate with ICE. As the state legislature negotiates a broader package of immigration-related measures with Governor Kathy Hochul, Assemblymember Lee has been working to ensure that the ICE Contract Transparency Act is included in ongoing discussions.

“This is about drawing a clear line,” said Lee. “New York will not stand by while ICE's machinery of mass deportation terrorizes our communities. If companies choose to do business with ICE, they should expect to do it in full view of the public.”

Mar Fitzgerald is the female district leader for Greenwich Village. Paolo Musto is legislative director for Assemblywoman Grace Lee.

My View of the Village

BY ROGER PARADISO



UNOPPRESSIVE NON-IMPERIALIST BARGAIN BOOKS BOOKMOBILE: With spring's arrival, Jim is back selling his classic books and bargain books from a mobile store. Photo courtesy of Jim Drougas.

The Unoppressive Non-Imperialist Bargain Books Bookmobile

What do you do when you are thrown out of your shop because of high rents? If you are Jim Drougas of Unoppressive Non-Imperialist Bargain Books you buy and stock a bookmobile. After a few years of thinking how he could operate as a book seller in the Village, Jim came up with this mobile version of his former brick and mortar bookstore on Carmine Street in the West Village. With spring's arrival Jim is back selling his classic books and bargain books from a mobile store. He plans to travel around the Village and other parts unknown. Stay tuned for his mobile store's hours and locations.

Record Store Day is April 18

Celebrate this special day as labels release new LPs. I asked Jamal, owner of Village Revival Records on Bleecker Street, to keep an eye out for the Cream Farewell Concert coming out on DVD/CD. There was a pause. He replied, "You mean the Clapton, Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce band?" "Yes," I said. "I guess it was over 50 years ago. Am I aging myself?" He said he would hold it for me when it comes in.

The store also sells surprise boxes of LPs for 30 bucks. You get ten LPs. The sealed box is full of mark-downs of their curated vault of records from the classics to today's artists. Jamal even brought in a gold couch so that his customers will feel relaxed and comfy on this day and throughout the year.

NYU Professors Win Big Raises as Part of Tentative Deal to End Strike

Here in New York, unionized professors at NYU have ended a strike after reaching a tentative contract with their university. Nearly 1,000 full-time faculty members launched the two-day work stoppage demanding higher wages, job stability and

relief from heavy workloads. If they ratify the five-year deal, they'll receive an average raise of 20% this year. The contract also includes new guardrails for academic freedom and the use of artificial intelligence.

—as reported in *Democracy Now*



Photo: Alex Woodworth for WSN.

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Diseases of Despair

BY ALEC PRUCHNICKI, MD

I was born in 1947, among the first wave of baby boomers. Growing up in the 50s, I had my whole life in front of me and everything looked rosy. The middle class was growing and there seemed to be no limit to what was possible. During the 60s, coming into adulthood, the future was still bright and incredibly exciting. The chaos of the Vietnam War and the resulting anti-war movement was everywhere, but the future was still bright. The movements that were starting and rapidly expanding all had a common goal — to make the future even better than the past. Minorities, women, gays, even some parts of the labor movement like the farm workers' movement were going to make the future better.

Then, something happened — the American defeat in Vietnam. Nixon's resignation, a few oil embargoes, and a relatively slow economy during the 70s started to cast a shadow on Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, despite gains such as Medicare, Medicaid, the moon landing, the War on Poverty, and other reforms. Some people complained that we weren't as omnipotent as we thought.

This culminated in the election of Ronald Reagan and his "Morning in America" reaction (dubbed "Mourning in America" by cynics) which would make things right again. The civil rights movement slowed down, subsidies for affordable housing and student loans were cut, and unions were attacked — but the military was still strong and lots of people and corporations were getting richer. Well, maybe not lots of people, but some people and their success was touted as proof of America's continued excellence.

Even an unsuccessful impeachment couldn't undermine the economic success of the Clinton administration. But there was an undercurrent of malaise starting around 2000 with slow increases in several social problems. Deaths from suicide, drug abuse, and alcoholism were persisting and occasionally increasing. These social problems were tied together in the medical literature by an article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* authored by Anne Case and Angus Deaton in 2015. This prestigious journal is widely read by people

in the medical, scientific, and social science fields. The authors' analysis caught on immediately — these social and medical problems weren't isolated but were linked under the heading of "Diseases of Despair." As the name indicates, the rosy future we expected was being replaced by despair for the future in the minds of many Americans. It was harder to be successful in the middle class or to rise into it from lower social/economic status. No longer was the stereotypical family of a single bread winner, a house in the suburbs, a new car every few years, and higher education so easily available. More analysis and 20/20 retrospection made people realize that the upward mobility of previous decades hadn't been as easy as we thought. Groups were left out of the overall prosperity even though everyone thought the future would be better and now it was starting to get worse.

Who was most shocked by this revelation? White males. These problems aren't limited to white males, but health care statistics showed that these three conditions

were usually accelerating fastest among white males. Perhaps racial minorities, native Americans, and women knew about these problems already, but to many white men these problems seemed to come out of nowhere. But this wasn't equally distributed throughout the white male population. Suicide among males is about four times that of women but especially among those of lower income, lower education, living in rural areas, and with easy access to guns. Suicide rates in rural areas are about twice that of urban areas. *Andy Griffith's Mayberry* had a higher suicide rate than *The Naked City* (both on YouTube, look them up). Rural areas generally have less access to health care, especially mental health services, more inequality, and greater gun access so this isn't surprising.

But there is another overall condition that has occurred in parallel with the increase in Diseases of Despair. Economic inequality has always been present in Western societies but in the U.S. it really took off during

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Diseases *continued from page 10*

the 80s and the Reagan administration. This resulted from massive changes in the tax structure for wealthy individuals and corporations and the cutting back of benefits for everyone else.

To think that intentional policy decisions led to this situation might be hard to bear so explanations, especially scapegoats, are needed. Demanding racial minorities, pushy feminists (dubbed “Feminazis” by Rush Limbaugh), immigrants, drug-exporting countries, coastal elites (aka Jews), trans individuals, and numerous others are usually blamed, except for one — rich white males.

Looking at the demographics of Fortune 500 CEOs and many other sources, it is clear that rich white men rule the world, at least economically. Economic leaders from Asia and the Middle East are trying to catch up, and there is a small increase in CEO diversity, but these groups have a long way to go to achieve equality. Meanwhile, other groups are often demonized by mass media — a sector dominated by rich white men and becoming even more dominated with each merger and corporate acquisition.

So, is this our future? Will the shining city on the hill that was supposedly the U.S. be replaced by a bleak future with widespread deadly despair? Our history can provide an alternative future. The present support of conservatism is often described as “populism.” But at the end of the 1800s and early 20th century there was a left-wing populism

also. The elites opposed by “the people” — the original meaning of populism — were not the scapegoats listed above. The large railroad empires, Wall Street, bankers, large trusts/monopolies, were identified as the enemy of the common people.

What is more, they were frequently defeated! The so-called Gilded Era, when the rich ran the country even more blatantly than they do now, was eventually reined in. The Sherman Antitrust Act was used by Teddy Roosevelt to break apart many large monopolies, previously thought of as invulnerable. The 16th Amendment, which authorized a federal tax on income, was adopted after the Supreme Court struck down an earlier income tax.

Imagine that — an unpopular Supreme Court decision overridden by a constitutional amendment. This period became known as the Progressive Era when many reforms, once thought impossible, were enacted. It wasn't omnipotent with defeats in areas including labor rights and civil rights, but it brought about change against daunting odds before it moved into right wing policies.

If there is one area where leftists, liberals, and progressives can agree with MAGA Republicans (or some of them), it is to tax the rich. Whether this will happen and whether these reforms spread to other aspects of society, as it did during the Progressive Era, is unclear. But it is possible, and maybe Diseases of Despair will be a phrase tossed on the dustbin of history. We can hope.

Joy in the Moment

BY JOY PAPE, FNP-C

During Difficult Times

If you are going through a difficult time, you, like many may find the part of what is called The Serenity Prayer helpful:

Grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; and the Wisdom to know the difference.

Accepting the things I cannot change doesn't mean to cave and give into what you think you have no power over, such as in the current political situation going on now, but at least do try to do something. It takes courage to speak up or attend a protest, with the understanding that things may not change right away but at least you've done something.

This goes with something personal in

your life too. Don't just give up and think you can't do anything to change your situation. An example is knowing you can't control everyone and everything outside of you. You may need to speak up for your self, and you can change you and what is going on within your mind. It is important to know there are times when acceptance of a situation is what you need to do.

You may need help, even professional help in certain situations, and that's okay. This too takes acceptance, courage and wisdom.

It does take acceptance, courage and wisdom to change what you do and often your way of thinking so you can have serenity, a state of being calm peaceful and untroubled, and even some joy in the present moment.

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92 Eighth Avenue Ravaged By Superstorm Sandy — What's Next?

BY BRIAN J PAPE, AIA

A *Village View* reader asked us to report on 92 Eighth Avenue just north of 14th Street, which has been a trash-strewn empty lot since 2015.

We knew that 92 Eighth Avenue had been a victim of Hurricane Sandy which made landfall near Atlantic City, New Jersey on Oct. 29, 2012, with the expectation of wind gusts over 58 mph. Later on Long Island Sound, sustained winds reached 75 mph, according to Wikipedia records. The timing of the storm surge coincided with the normal high tide, as well as a full moon, which add-

ed to the increase in water. A storm surge of 9.40 ft. was recorded. Eighth Avenue is far from any flooding — nevertheless, the four-story walk-up, dating to about 1910, experienced the collapse of its 3rd- and 4th-floor front façades onto the sidewalk during the stormy night. High winds can create a suction on the face of a building and any aging weakness can rupture the connections of the façade. This may have been the cause of the damage.

As reported Dec. 29, 2014, in *6sqft NYC*, “With all of its similarly furnished rooms



PRIOR TO HURRICANE SANDY, 92 Eighth Avenue, center, had been a four-story, mixed-use walk-up built around 1910. *Credit: Apartments.com.*



92 EIGHTH AVENUE, center, was a victim of Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Its front façade, above the second floor windows, collapsed in the night exposing the illegal interiors. *Credit: 6sqft NYC.*



THE 92 EIGHTH AVENUE REBUILDING, center, as proposed by the owner and architect in the 2015 DOB filing. It was never built. *Credit: C3D Architecture.*

exposed to onlookers, it was soon discovered the building operated as an illegal hotel catering to European travelers. Its interiors looked like “an open doll house.” It went on to say, “Demolition permits filed earlier this month are a sure sign workers will soon begin dismantling the building. The construction permit notes that the new building will be approximately 12,000 square feet “with commercial on first floor and residential units above.” C3D Architecture was listed as the architects of record and Big Apple Properties as the owner.

Then on April 17, 2015, Nikolai Fedak wrote in *YIMBY NY*, “*YIMBY* now has the reveal for the new building designed by C3D Architecture. Permits list the developer (since 2013) as Maxine Gilbert of GO 8th Ave. LLC.” Per C3D’s website, “The 6-story building occupies a roughly 26 feet wide and 93 feet deep lot, and provides 10,000 sq. ft. gross area above ground. The ground floor provides commercial retail space which extends into the cellar. The upper floors accommodate 9 rental units of approximately 500 sq. ft to 1,000 sq. ft each. Most of the units have their own private terrace or bal-

cony. The rooftop features a generous terrace shared by the tenants. At the front façade, a fully glazed curtain wall spans over the entire height of the building, extending into the sky. A patterned print on the glass at each floor level provides privacy for the apartment and lends the façade lightness and rhythm. The side walls are clad in metal panels, setting the building apart from its neighbors and giving the all-glass façade a strong framing.”

The *YIMBY* report continued, “Permits for 92 Eighth Avenue were submitted for examination in March (2015) per the DOB, and pending their approval, construction should begin shortly.” It was not to be.

Village View contacted C3D Architecture who told us that there has been no activity since the DOB filing, perhaps because of the death of a Gilbert family member around that time. Since that occurred prior to any COYNY code changes, the architects do not feel that recent conditions will affect the site. GO 8th Ave. LLC is still listed as owner of the site on city records. Perhaps only a change of ownership will restart the project.

Long Lost Secret Revealed at Merchant's House Museum

BY BRIAN J PAPE, AIA

On Feb. 11, the Merchant's House Museum issued a press release announcing that a previously unknown, fully intact Underground Railroad stop has been discovered at the landmark 1832 museum. The secret passage, a shaft in the wall between the two first-floor parlors, leads up to a bureau between the second-story bedrooms. Located along the western side of the house, the shaft measures 2 by 2 feet and has a ladder.

Let's go back and imagine New York City in 1831: only a couple generations since the Revolutionary War with Britain ended in 1783, the city was growing by leaps and bounds with the increasing trade with Europe and the emerging west territories.

According to Britannica records, the intensification of slavery as a system, which followed Portuguese trafficking of enslaved Africans beginning in the 15th century, was driven by the European colonies in North America, South America, and the West Indies, where the plantation economy generated an immense demand for low-cost labor. Between the 16th and 19th centuries an estimated 12 million enslaved Africans were forcibly transported to the Americas. The brutality of slavery, made increasingly visible by the scale of its practice, sparked a reaction that demanded its complete abolition. The abolition movement began with criticism by Enlightenment rationalist thinkers who said slavery was a violation of the "rights of man." Quaker and other evangelical religious groups condemned it for its un-Christian qualities.

The Underground Railroad was a pre-Civil War network where escaped slaves from the South were secretly helped by sympathetic Northerners, in defiance of the Fugitive Slave Acts to reach places of safety in the free states or Canada. Though neither underground nor a railroad, it was thus named because its activities had to be carried out in secret, using darkness or disguise, and because railway terms were used in reference to the system. Various routes were lines, stopping places were called stations, those who aided along the way were conductors, and their charges were known as packages or freight.

The network of routes extended in all directions across 14 Northern states and into Canada, "the promised land" beyond the reach of fugitive-slave hunters. Those who most actively assisted slaves to escape by way of the "railroad" were members of the free Black community — including former slaves such as Harriet Tubman after 1849 — as well as Northern abolitionists, philanthropists, and church leaders. Estimates of the number of Black people who reached freedom vary greatly, from 40,000 to 100,000.

Although only a small minority of Northerners participated in the Underground Railroad, its existence did much to arouse their sympathy for the plight of slaves in



THE MERCHANT'S HOUSE MUSEUM'S remarkable new discovery tells a critically important and long-overlooked story: New York City's early abolitionist movement and the beginnings of the Underground Railroad when Joseph Brewster built the house in 1832. The museum staff member demonstrates how a person could enter the secret passage in a set of drawers. *Photo credit: Merchant's House Museum.*

In October 1965, the new Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Merchant's House Museum as one of the first-ever official city landmarks. The LPC designated the Seabury Tredwell House's basement, first floor, and second floor as an interior landmark in 1981. The museum is the only 19th-century residence in Manhattan with its original exterior and interior intact. Its collection has over 4,500 items owned by the Tredwell family, including pieces of furniture, clothing, household items, and personal items. The only other existing intact shelter point of the Underground Railroad left in Manhattan is the Hopper-Gibbons House in Chelsea. It was built in 1840s and is not open to the public.

the antebellum period. At the same time, it convinced many Southerners that the North would never peaceably allow the institution of slavery to remain unchallenged.

In 1831 Joseph Brewster, a New York City hatter, built six townhouses on two lots he acquired for a combined \$6,550 (equivalent to \$198,000 in 2025). In 1832 Brewster finished building 29 East 4th Street, a four-story Federal-style brick facade with a Greek Revival interior, where he lived for three years.

While slavery had been largely abolished in New York by 1831, pro-slavery New Yorkers were still working to kidnap escaped enslaved laborers (as well as free Black people) and return or sell them to Southern slaveowners.

According to the merchantshouse.org website, the building was sold in 1835 to Seabury Tredwell and it remained in his family for nearly a century. George Chapman, a distant Tredwell relative, purchased the building and transformed it into a historic house

museum in 1936. It has been called the Old Merchants' House by the Historic Landmark Society, the Merchant's House Museum (MHM), and the Seabury Tredwell House. Over the next three decades, the museum's operators struggled to obtain funds to restore the deteriorating house. The architect Joseph Roberto completely renovated the building from 1970 to 1980, donating about \$500,000 worth of services. The museum underwent further restoration in the early 1990s after it was damaged during the demolition of nearby buildings. Now, abutting the eastern side, is Manuel Plaza, a public park built atop a construction shaft for New York City Water Tunnel No. 3. It was named in honor of five African-born slaves who received land in the neighborhood from the Dutch West India Company.

Ann Haddad, the museum's historian, wrote in a Feb. 27, 2023 *MHM Newsletter* about learning that Brewster had been an abolitionist. The discovery triggered a research project focused on Brewster's activities in New York City. At a church located a few blocks from the Merchant's House, records show, he'd ordered workers to build a false floor. The fact that Brewster left evidence of his mission in architectural records struck Haddad as especially notable: "In my mind, that indicates a dedicated and ardent abolitionist" if "you're going to put your signature onto something that could blow you right out of the water in terms of your business, your safety, your security."

A Feb. 27, 2023, MHM press release noted that historians concluded that there was nothing humane or "benign" about the treatment of the enslaved who toiled in New York City. They were subjected to as much abuse and mistreatment as those in the Southern plantations. They were prohibited from trade, forbidden to gather, and were segregated within houses of worship. Many endured terrible punishment and death — as a result, slave laws were tightened. On July 5, 1827, slavery was finally outlawed in New York State, but the struggle for equality for Black Americans continued.

To quote architectural historian Patrick Ciccone, "Given how very, very few physical traces of the Underground Railroad survive anywhere in the U.S., the existence and physical integrity of this space give the 1832 landmark Merchant's House additional magnitudes of incalculable historic significance." Since 1936, the Merchant's House Museum has told the story of the domestic life of a wealthy merchant-class family and their Irish servants in the mid-19th century. This remarkable new discovery now allows the museum to tell a critically important and long-overlooked story: New York City's early abolitionist movement and the beginnings of the Underground Railroad.

The One That I Want

BY KEITH MICHAEL

I'm greedy. Even while doing a happy dance for the arrival of spring birds, I don't want the winter birds to leave. And even though, in three short weeks between January 31 and February 20, I added four new birds to my West Village Bird List—I still want more.

Back in March, I promised to tell you about my third new West Village Bird from February. Surprise! I also added a FOURTH new bird. Frankly, with that first new bird of 2026, an unexpected Hooded Merganser pair (WVB #120) and then, spotting a Bald Eagle (WVB #121) after many years of anticipation, I was jazzed to expect that any bird might be a new bird. During those frozen weeks with ice jostling on the Hudson River, Bald Eagles had become, practically, "common." A soaring black bird? Bald Eagle. A dark spot on an ice flow? Bald Eagle. A scuffle with a seagull? Bald Eagle. Every bobbing dark patch became a heart-racing contender for a new bird.

Winter water birds mostly come in variations of black, white, and gray which serve as camouflage against steely water reflecting overcast skies. The ocean birds from the Arctic north that visit us are all designed for catching aquatic critters. If you're a fish or crustacean looking up, these birds' white breasts disappear in the glow of the water above them. From the sky, the breakup patterns on their backs blur against the waves, protecting them from hungry eagles looking down. These adaptations give the birds the survival advantage—both from above and from below.

This clever black-and-white scheme nearly tricked me into overlooking my WVB #122 diving in the open water around Hudson River Park's Pier 49 pilings: a Long-tailed Duck. I love seeing Long-tailed Ducks in the winter. Satisfyingly, their name is spot on. It is a duck with a long tail. One can see their two fancifully long tail feathers easily when they're in flight, or diving, leaving a poetic water arc behind them. If that's not enough of a distinctive allure, their feather patterns are eccentric for a duck. Their patchy whites and blacks, though not random, seem like a line drawing in a coloring book that's been smudged. What's more, unlike most ducks that annually cycle through a breeding (fan-



LONG-TAILED DUCK. Tuesday, February 10, 5:31 pm. All Photos by Keith Michael.



A DUO OF COMMON GOLDENEYE DRAKES. Saturday, February 20, 11:01 am.



THE NEXT MOST WANTED BIRD: American Woodcock.

cy) and non-breeding (dull) plumage, this arctic visitor conjures up three distinct looks during the year. The molting transitions between those seasonal looks, the male and female fashionista subtleties, as well as differences between juvenile and adult birds, all add up to a confusing array of variations.

My go-to destination to see Long-tailed Ducks is Fort Tilden along the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens. Small groups congregate around the crashing waves at the breakwaters. They seem to seek out the roughest water. They can stay underwater for an impossibly long time, popping up again far from where they disappeared with that long-tail-flipping dive. Their dare-deviltry is

transporting.

The calm of a West Village pile field with bobbing chunks of ice is not where I'd think to look for a Long-tailed Duck. Furthermore, the relatively brief time this duck spends at the surface of the water, their penchant for popping up again where you'd least expect it, and the pinball machine obstacles of the ice-capped pilings, all made for lucky spotting. The mottled plumage only added to the overall needle-in-a-haystack effect. Nevertheless, there one was.

I was more primed for my fourth new bird sighting. The Common Goldeneye (WVB #123) is yet another black and white winter duck. I'd heard that several had been seen

on the icy river both north and south of the West Village. It wasn't so far-fetched to think that one or a couple might drift by on the changing tide. Is that it? Nope. That one's a male Bufflehead. It has the prerequisite color palette but with a white wedge at the back of its head. How about that one? In this light it looks dark with a white spot on its face like a Goldeneye. Oh, it just went down. Back up again. Once more, nope. Too small. That's a female Bufflehead this time. How about over there in the pile field north of Pier 40? Greater Scaup? That would be another new West Village bird! There's a trio of them. Maybe I can get closer on the Pier 40 walkway. They've got the white-on-the-bottom/black-on-the-top look going on like a Scaup, but they don't have a dark front and, yes, there's a white spot in front of that one's eye. Bingo! It IS a Common Goldeneye! For the next several days, I continued to see up to five of these classy visitors on the river.

But I've gotten off the topic of the next bird that I really want to see. Having now added a Bald Eagle to my West Village list, my Next Most Wanted Bird slot opened up for an American Woodcock. Right now, in April, you could likely go up to Bryant Park at 42nd Street, stroll the perimeter paths, look for a clutch of photographers with long camera lens, follow their gaze, and there would be your Woodcock! Been there. Done that. Often. But I want to see one gracing MY West Village neighborhood. Why? Just because. That's the logic of watching birds.

An American Woodcock is a charismatic bird with the unlikely silhouette of a caramel apple on a stick. They have a rotund body (the apple) and an improbably long bill (the stick.) Their eyes pop prominently from the sides of their heads, giving them nearly 360-degree vision. They do a beguiling bobbing walk while probing for earthworms with that long bill, and in the right locations, they perform an acrobatic, aerial mating dance at dusk and dawn. What's not to be charmed by?

So far, a Woodcock has not shown up on my doorstep. If you do see one, please let me know.

Retiring From Teaching

BY NANCY DAVIDOFF KELTON

I stopped teaching in 2024. I began in 1971 when I graduated from college. My first job was at a public school on New York's Lower Eastside as an "Above Quota Teacher" (in-house substitute). I covered for absent teachers before outside subs were called. Many of the students acted out. Getting outside subs at our school was difficult. Few came back a second time.

As the AQT, I brought *Yertle The Turtle*, other Dr. Seuss books, Shel Silverstein books, and other favorites which I read aloud or had the kids read. I had them draw

pictures, write stories, play games and sing songs, or I would do what their teacher assigned. If there was a record player in the classroom, we would listen to Ben and other Michael Jackson songs.

After six months, there were openings for classroom teachers. I taught first then second grades. The music teacher took a medical leave and I was the only staff member who could play the piano, march the kids into assemblies and play the national anthem, so I became the music teacher. The district music teacher came once a week and

taught a string class — violas, violins and cellos — to grades five and six. I helped. I also taught third and fourth graders how to play song flutes. With the younger grades, I taught 60s and 70s songs to sing, accompanying them on the piano.

I connected well with the children — better than I did with the teachers, many of whom were petty and racist. Some spoke their minds in degrading ways. One teacher isolated a group of students in a horizontal row at the back of her classroom and called them "The Do-Nothing Row." She explained

that they came to school to make trouble and use the toilet.

Among the first essays I wrote and had published was one called *The Children in the Do-Nothing Row*. I wrote and sold more personal essays on teaching, the teachers, and the students. I was acquiring plenty to say.

I could not find biographies of famous people for very young children in the school library or anywhere else. I came up with an idea for stories about Harriet Tubman, Hel-

continued on page 15

Miss Garrison & God's Work

BY MICHAEL ANASTASIO

I was not always a fan of gardening. My mother grew rose bushes by the hundreds, all of them requiring constant care. As kids, we all had our “jobs” and mine was weeding the Bermuda grass out of the roses in the backyard of my Not-So-Old Kentucky Home. If Kentucky blue grass was part of God’s plan, Bermuda grass was most assuredly an addition from satan. It grew horizontally, snug to the ground, in all directions deep-rooting itself every inch or so, ensuring its absolute resistance to pulling of any kind. It was a thoroughly invasive, nightmare species hell-bent on breaking the back and spirit of any adolescent boy given the task of its removal.

Since yard work meant hard work, it was with some skepticism that I listened as my mother told me of a job opportunity. Church friends had an unmarried neighbor lady needing help with her yard. I could always use spending money but there it was, that back-breaking two word euphemism “yard work.” Still, seduced by the almighty dollar, I said, “Yes.”

As I bicycled my way around to the front of Miss Garrison’s home I saw trees, bushes, shrubs, high grass and...weeds. Somewhere in the middle, barely visible, was a stone house. Assessing the amount of work to be done and resisting the urge for a hasty retreat, I forced myself up the curved stone walkway, dropped my bike and rang the bell. An ancient old lady (probably my age now) in a flowered dress appeared, her gray hair pinned up Gibson-style. After wiping her hands on a dish towel, she opened the screen door and asked me in. As I took in her heavy Victorian living room, I was reminded of a room in an old Shirley Temple movie and a wisecracking big city gal proclaiming, “I wouldn’t like it if I was a moth.” Suppressing a giggle, I sat down and answered Miss Garrison’s questions.

Agreeing to start right away, I was put to work raking leaves and felt instantly overwhelmed. At lunchtime, we ate tuna on toast and apple salad along with freshly made lemonade. We also talked. Miss Garrison was kind. That much was clear and, she wasn’t scary, unlike most old people. My great-grand father and both my grandmothers, German and Italian, were, for in-



MICHAEL ANASTASIO has been gardening in one way or another for most of his 75 years. He is currently the Gardener, Caretaker of Grove Court on Grove Street in the West Village. Photo credit: Eli Razavi.

stance, terrifying. Miss Garrison was not. She seemed genuinely interested in me and asked so many questions that I’m sure my little emerging ego was fed in a way it hadn’t been before. Her questions weren’t of the “where are you going?” or “what are you doing?” variety I was used to. Hers were more personal. She’d ask what I thought about things, what I loved, what made me happy. I’m sure I overshared but I’m just as certain she enjoyed it because she would say so time and again. “Oh Michael, I could listen to you all day,” she’d say as I’d happily prattle on with story after story of my not-very-eventful 13-year-old life. “You are such a fine storyteller,” she’d say, “when you describe something, I see it, plain as day.”

After lunch, we returned outdoors but this time through her back door. It was then I first saw her backyard which, at a glance,

was a big weedy mess. My fear of being cruelly overworked reared its ugly head but gave way quickly to something else. As Miss Garrison pointed out this flower and that, it became clear that this wasn’t a backyard at all, but a garden. A real garden if ever I’d seen one. Gone to seed and thoroughly overgrown with weeds, it still held the latent beauty of a well-planned, thoroughly loved garden — until the gardener had grown old and could no longer kneel or stoop or bend or do the things such a place requires. Trailing my new friend and listening to her describe her neglected garden’s former glory, I began to feel its magic and hear it quietly crying out to me. Miss Garrison’s garden wanted me. It was as if the milkweed vines that had overtaken everything else had taken the opportunity to wrap themselves around me as well, determined to pull me in and keep me

there. My budding inner-gardener saw the potential and I knew why I was there. I’d be Miss Garrison’s new back and knees.

We’d spend hours, Miss Garrison and I, growing our garden right along with our blossoming intergenerational friendship. She was winter and I was spring as we’d work all the seasons, side by side, raking autumn leaves, winterizing with the first frost, planting bulbs for spring and in the summer, tending and transplanting. As we’d lovingly move a flourishing flower to its new home, she’d whisper to me with a conspiratorial wink, “There, it’ll never know it’s been moved.” Because of Miss Garrison, I began to think of plants and flowers as sentient beings able to respond to us and our love. I liked that. We’d work together discussing plant life and life; love of flowers and love itself. Some of it I got and some of it would wait decades for the seeds my gardening friend had planted to take hold, grow and blossom as my own spiritual awareness eventually caught up. It was Miss Garrison who first sowed in me the seed of an idea that there is divinity in all things. “Where there is life, there is beauty and where there is beauty there is God. Just look around you,” she’d say, proving her point with those four words and a sweep of her hand. Gardening became something truly meaningful with Miss Garrison; more than just pulling weeds, gardening became “God’s work.”

As with any teenage boy, my interests began to change and my visits to the aging Chalia Garrison became less frequent. I went away to school and wasn’t particularly good at keeping in touch. I can’t remember the last time I saw her. I wish I could. Her kindness, her friendship, her love and the things she taught me are always with me. Miss Garrison is especially present whenever I’m in a garden doing “God’s work.” To this day, as I carefully transplant a flower, sure of her presence just over my shoulder, I whisper a conspiratorial, “There. It’ll never know it’s been moved.”

The article is a chapter from Michael’s Book “Gay Boy’s Life” which is available on Amazon.com

Teaching *continued from page 14*

en Keller, the Wright Brothers, and Harry Truman that were not linear but captured their personalities. Then I wrote the articles and pitched them to several publishers. One said yes.

I left the public school system and found my niche as a writing instructor at the New School, New York University, Hunter College, the Strand Bookstore, at libraries, and privately. I taught both undergraduates and professional people. My classes were called *Writing From Personal Experience* and *Writing For Children*.

Many students stayed with me for years

and had the essays and books they wrote in my class published. They were good writers, persistent, open, and willing to revise and revise some more. Others were not as motivated and did not really want to revise or work hard. They did not want to write as much as already have written. They thought writing would be easy. Or easier than they had assumed. Ha!

I liked teaching. In the beginning it intimidated me. Then it excited me. I liked my students. They learned so much from me as I did from them. I was good at figuring out what they needed and individualizing instruction. I continued to get article and book

assignments and acceptances from editors, including one to write a memoir.

It became difficult to focus on my own work and theirs, especially with writing weekly comment on their manuscripts. Wanting to concentrate more on my own writing, I eliminated two classes. During the pandemic, I eliminated all but one class. Then all.

Now that I am not teaching anymore, I still run into former students at the library, at the gym, in the neighborhood and at events. They ask if they can show me their work. I remind them that I am retired. One former student, who happens to be a retired social worker, asked if she could read me the open-

ing paragraph of her memoir. I said yes. I told her that was it. She emailed a month later asking if she could send more or if we could have lunch to discuss her work. I reminded her again, that like her, I was retired.

I am in my late 70s and eager to stay focused on my work. When I think about my elementary students in my first classes, I wonder if they still live on the Lower East Side and if they have families and what kind of work they do. I know the whereabouts of some of my writing students, mainly the ones who still want my feedback.

What I know for sure about all my students is that we had no “Do-Nothing Rows.”

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True Confessions of a ROMEO

BY ALEC PRUCHNICKI

I hope you're not too disappointed when you learn that this article is about retirement, and not about real or imagined romantic exploits, despite the title. When I was forced to retire in March of '25 I was pretty angry and worried about how I would adjust to all this unstructured time. After a year of retirement, I have realized that it's not so bad. Enjoyable actually.

One of the aspects I enjoy is the time I have to eat out. When I was tired after working, I would usually go straight home to eat a simple dinner I made or maybe got as a take out. Once or twice a week I would eat at a restaurant — every one of which cooked better than I could. Now, sitting around the house most of the day gives me cabin fever by dinner time and I manage to eat out three or four times a week. My pensions are pretty good and cover the costs, even in the West Village — and I usually don't eat extravagantly expensive meals.

I'm not the only one enjoying my retirement this way. Some observant person on the internet coined the phrase Retired Old Men Eating Out (ROMEO) to describe this new demographic category. There is even a web site (romeoclub.com) for older men in the same situation, along with merch you can purchase and a system for networking and arranging get togethers. Since I barely have an opportunity to keep up with my friends and relatives, despite my abundant free time, I don't need this level of social engagement.

Over the years, I've developed tricks for eating out alone. When you're in a restaurant filled with groups of people and couples, being a single person sitting at a table for two can sometimes be a little socially uncomfortable. I usually eat out early — five or six o'clock when possible. The restaurant is usually emptier and this helps a little. I go to places that are not that fancy or trendy since they



A LOCAL ROMEO ENJOYS DINNER at The Left Bank restaurant on Perry Street. Photo taken by Danielle, maitre d' at The Left Bank.

can sometimes fill up early. I also like low-key neighborhood places where I can walk in early without a reservation and almost always get a seat. Of my favorite half dozen places, all but one have a bar. I always choose the bar. Not only does a single person sitting at the bar draw less attention to his being alone, but sometimes this gives you a chance to strike up a conversation with the bartender, which is difficult when you are at a table talking to a server who is quickly moving from table to table. I used to sometimes take reading material to appear occupied while waiting for my food. Now, I usually don't take anything but prefer to look around and people watch. People watching in a restaurant or at a sidewalk table can often be more entertaining than time-killing reading material, especially in a city filled with beautiful or interesting looking people. Finally, when I go into a bar or restaurant, I always go to have a meal, never to just sit and drink alone. My father, and my father's father, were drinkers — and that was their habit — but that is a family tradition I'm determined to end.

Many years ago, I heard a comedian do a routine about what it's like to go into a neighborhood restaurant or bar for the first time. Often, there is some local old guy sitting in the corner who goes by the nick-name "pops," "doc," or "old-timer." The punch line was that if you go into a place and don't see someone like that, it could be you. When I was young, this seemed pretty funny. Then, for a while, it wasn't so funny when I realized it was me pretty often. Now, I really don't care anymore. If I'm the old guy in a corner, if I'm at a table alone, or if I come across as some anti-social loner, I don't let it prevent me from going into a place and being very comfortable as I enjoy my meal and drinks. My professional career is over, but my career as a ROMEO has just begun.



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

BY CHURCHILL STONE

Little Owl

90 Bedford Street

Little Owl is in the heart of the vintage West Village. It's next to the Friends apartment, half a block from Grove Court, and a block away from the narrowest (9.5 feet) townhouse in New York where someone famous lived.

On a very rainy Sunday, we walked in for brunch as a group of five: two adults, two kids, and a toddler. Even though it was very busy, they found us a table and seated us quickly.

The restaurant is small, most of the 12 tables are for two people with more at the bar. We got a nice table in the middle of the room. They even had a highchair for us, though my brother actually would not sit in it most of the time because he was too excited for the food.

Most of the restaurant's lighting is natural and very warm, with huge corner windows and amber lights. Little Owl has very high ceilings, about 15 feet. The original tin ceiling is painted gold. At the bar, there are four seats with cute Edison lights hanging from above. In the high back corner there is a tiny disco ball above the cups and wine glasses — my sister and I love disco balls. I knew most of the music they played — very California 1970s (*Hotel California*, *Dreams*, *Blue Bayou*) which happens to be one of my specialties.

On the other side of the restaurant, there is a platform with leather cushions where you can actually eat, but it's only for one or two people. My sister and I had to try it, so we used the mini wooden ladder to get up there. You can sit up there and look down on everyone like you're the queen. It's really fun!

Back at our table, we ordered the beignets, the poached eggs, and a side of their signature fries. Everyone was super friendly, and our food was brought out surprisingly fast. My parents told me that this place is one of the last places where you can still call to get a reservation on the phone — now, that's vintage.

The beignets were served with raspberry sauce and Nutella on the side — both were delicious. The raspberry sauce was a bit sour which I actually really liked. The beignets were very warm and really good even



LITTLE OWLS on our perch. Photo courtesy of Webster Stone.

alone. My sister loved them so much we had to order them again. My 2-year-old brother definitely liked the beignets the most and got them all over his face — an excellent kid-friendly dish for all ages!

Next up were the fries which were crispy and excellent too. They had little greens on them (parsley?) but it just made them taste better. The sauce (aioli) was tasty and a bit spicy. The best part was that it my favorite color, pink. We asked our waitress what made it that color and she said it was chile. This chile aioli was much better than ketchup, for me at least.

The poached eggs were amazing because they were basically Eggs Benedict. When I cut open the yolks it was orange, which I think means they were made from high-quality eggs, or high-quality chickens, I'm not really sure which. There were some greens under the egg which I did not like, so I took that out. So, now I had an egg, sitting on a circle-shaped pork sausage, on a southern cheesy biscuit, with hollandaise all over it. It also came with Brussels sprout home fries which I did not try because, well, Brussels sprouts, but my parents seemed to like them.

Even though Little Owl is little, they have a whole other room a few steps down the block where you can also eat. Also, last year, after the Easter egg hunt at St. Luke's, we had a big brunch outside at Little Owl. My father says that dinner outside in summer is so fun, "Joey's Bucatini all'Amatriciana is like Rome."

My whole family loved the food so that was definitely a win. And I love how you can see the kitchen from practically everywhere in the restaurant. The place is very cozy, and they let us take our time — that surprised me on a busy Sunday morning.

Little Owl has great food and is the definition of a vintage West Village restaurant; in fact, they told me they are 20 years old this year — so, they must be doing something right!

It's just what people want when they come to this part of town, especially kids. But hopefully not too many people will come, or I will never be able to get a table!



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The West Village Squeeze: Influencers, Ghosts, and the Call for Connection

BY EDWARD ROCHE

Walking out of Sevilla, a Spanish restaurant on Charles Street, I notice an ocean of influencers using the steps of townhomes as their pretty backdrop for social media content. Along Perry and West 11th are rows of recently combined townhomes with darkened windows, seemingly vacant. This is a regular occurrence. I turn around to see the landscaped window inside Sevilla and feel enchanted by a neighborhood that changes while remaining uniquely cozy and a home to many New Yorkers.

I moved to the West Village five years ago and that's the longest I've lived anywhere since I was 14. Like many New Yorkers, I've joined a co-op and planted roots because I finally felt I'd found home. I arrived in NYC over 10 years ago on the GI Bill. I came from the Middle East after serving in the U.S. Army, followed by a two-year stint in Kabul with the State Department. I finally discovered the most precious feelings of belonging in the West Village despite being the furthest thing from a typical West Village candidate. As an Army Ranger veteran and former Blackwater contractor, I'm not the most obvious addition to the West Village, but that's part of what makes our city special.

After traveling all over the world for the majority of my 20s, I finally landed in a place that gives me that homey feeling I never really had in my youth. For the past five years this feeling has fed my spirit in ways where I want to give back and honor my neighborhood while still welcoming (some of) the change. Having lived without a community, the West Village is integral to my vitality as a New Yorker.

Since moving here I've felt increasingly squeezed between this influx of tourists turning quiet blocks into backdrops (like a mini Times Square), ultra-wealthy consolidating historic townhomes into sprawling megamansions, absorbing inventory, and an overchurn of tasteless brick-and-mortar stores that almost make me want to join the Taliban.

The crowds drawn from TikTok fame is a double-edged blade: I am here for the promotion of small businesses but the long lines for coffee, pizza, and ice cream make me wonder if it's only because other establishments are just so egregiously expensive. Tripods blocking the sidewalks and kitschiness of the stores/energy make everyday life feel performative — am I living in a production set for influencers and TikTokers?

Creating pied-à-terres rather than participating in neighborhood life diminishes our vibrant community — rather than neighbors, we often end up with ghosts.

This matters because it isolates locals. Overwhelming public spaces and ultra-wealthy shrinking housing stock reduces space for a mix of residents that generate eclectic energy. I recognize two things here: first this is largely out of our control, and second I am grateful for how TikTokers can rejuvenate small businesses and neighborhood staples. My concern lies in lost connection and neighborly fabric.

While change is inevitable and to say otherwise is a trait of cynicism, I advocate for the pockets that really contribute to the magic that keep my spirit alive and my imagination engaged, like Sevilla. Since

1941 Sevilla has been a West Village landmark on Charles and West 4th — with cozy, wood panels, leather booths, tuxedoed staff, and classic dishes like paella where the hefty portion size exceeds its price point.

Later into the evening it shifts from a cozy family-serving restaurant for both younger and aging locals to a mosaic of a NYC cultural melting pot — adjacent to the enchantment from the movie *Midnight in Paris*.

Sevilla easily has one of the prettiest facades of any restaurant in the neighborhood. The panoramic, rectangular shaped windows capture any given moment likened to a modern day Norman Rockwell painting. Sevilla's a timeless snapshot of diverse patrons, ranging from musicians and artists to everyday New Yorkers mingling genuinely.

Sevilla is my asylum where I feel part of something authentic, not performative or exclusive: no membership required. These serendipitous collisions have evolved into hellos, holiday/Halloween invitations (merci Massey), birthday parties, and other small acts of connection.

This is very much the essence of living in the West Village. By design this is an outdoorsy neighborhood, in juxtaposition to NYC's private clubs built on false barriers, where the Bohemian-corporate-dogwalker-finance bro can cross pollinate and hopefully help each other fight the isolation, the facade of classicism, and the nerves keeping us from knowing our neighbors.

My proposal is to urge us toward more dinner parties both at home and out. To look up and say hello to each other. Meet



EDWARD ROCHE. Photo by Patricia Ries.

your neighbors on the sidewalk, or in line for coffee, so we remain a neighborhood. A place which creates grassroots connections and hosts events like block parties, cooking gatherings, and informal meetups. Hopefully this leads to deeper neighbor knowledge and participation to adjust and renegotiate change. And please, say hello to me.

Despite the squeeze, West Village still feels like home. Its heart persists in establishments like Sevilla and in everyday kindnesses. I encourage you (and myself) to build more connections and to protect the inclusive, Bohemian essence before it is fully squeezed out. The neighborhood can evolve without losing its soul if we show up for each other.

Why I Choose New York

A Love Letter Written in Contrast to Denmark

BY CHRISTINA WINHOLT RACCUIA

There are two places that live inside me, not in opposition, but in dialogue. Denmark, where the light is soft and the days stretch gently into one another. And New York City, where everything is immediate, electric, and unapologetically alive. I belong to both. But I have chosen New York. This is not a rejection of Denmark. It is, in many ways, because of Denmark that I understand why.

Denmark: The Beauty of Enough

Denmark teaches you something profound: that life does not need to be loud to be meaningful. There is an elegance in its restraint. A cultural agreement that enough is not only sufficient — it is ideal. Homes are curated but not excessive. Success is respected but not flaunted. Time is protected, especially time with family.

There is a deep exhale in Denmark. You walk along the coast in Tisvilde and the wind carries a kind of emotional clarity. Life feels

held. Contained. Safe.

And yet, for me, there is also a quiet boundary in that containment. Ambition is softened. Individualism is tempered. There is a subtle social rhythm that asks you not to stand too far outside the collective. It is beautiful. But it is not where I expand the most.

New York City: The Permission to Become

New York is not interested in containing you. It asks something else entirely: Who are you willing to become? In New York, ambition is not something to hide — it is a language everyone speaks. Reinvention is not suspicious — it is expected.

There is no single way to live here. That, in itself, is freedom. You can be a psychotherapist, a writer, a business owner, a student of philosophy, and still feel like you are only beginning. In fact, that multiplicity is not only accepted — it is admired.



GOFUNDME PAGE FOR AUTHOR CHRISTINA WINHOLT RACQUIA'S doorman, who lost everything in a Bronx fire. Her building came together in the most touching manner. Image courtesy of Christina Winholt Racquia.

New York meets you where you are, but it does not let you stay there. It pulls you forward.

Community: An Unexpected Kind of Care

There is a misconception about New York — that it is cold, transactional, even indifferent. My experience has been the opposite. The community here is not always quiet or assumed. It is active. Immediate. It shows up.

When our doorman lost everything in a fire, my daughter created a GoFundMe page. Within one hour, \$25,000 had been raised. This was not a homogeneous building. It was a mix of stabilized rent apartments and market-rate residents — people from different financial realities, different lives, different stories.

And yet, there was no hesitation. People gave. People shared. People acted. What moved me was not just the generosity, but

continued on page 19

NYU Women's Basketball's Historic Winning Streak Ends — But Legacy Will Live On

BY ANTHONY PARADISO

The New York University Violets women's basketball team's season (29-1) ended on March 19 in Salem, Virginia at the NCAA Division III Final Four.

The two-time defending National Champion Violets lost 60-52 to the University of Scranton (32-0), who, like them, came into this semi-final sporting an undefeated record. However, the big difference between the two programs was that NYU women's basketball had not lost a game in over three years; March 11, 2023, to be exact, when they fell in the Elite Eight.

During the postgame press conference, NYU Head Coach Meg Barber summed up her team's historic season, which included winning a fifth straight University Athletic Association (UAA) championship.

"Heck of a ride," she said. "Incredible journey...the people in that locker room are just incredible and we have a lot to be proud of. I don't think a lot of people had us here [the Final Four], but we really fought and clawed to get here...Good luck to Scranton moving on and we're going to look back on this season with a lot of pride."

NYU women's basketball won 91 consecutive games before losing in the Final Four. On the way, they broke the Division III record for consecutive wins (82) that was held by Washington University of St. Louis on February 8. The Violets then passed a 90-game streak set by the UConn women's basketball team from 2008-2011, making their streak the second longest in college basketball history. Only one streak remains longer and that is the 111-game streak that the UConn Huskies achieved from 2014-2017.

Barber has posted an incredible 150-22 record over eight seasons at NYU. She has also helped guide some great players to great heights of both the individual and team variety.

Last season, graduate student Natalie Bruns led the team in scoring (17.2 points per game) and was named a First Team All-American, Region IV Most Outstanding



NYU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL Head Coach Meg Barber gives her team a pep talk and draws up a play. Photo credit: NYU Athletic Communications.

Player and D3hoops.com Player of the Year, among other accolades. This season, Violets' senior forward/guard Caroline Peper filled her former teammate's shoes.

Peper, from South Easton, Massachusetts, racked up three Player of the Year awards in 2025-26: Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA), Region IV, and UAA. In terms of stats, she led the UAA in scoring this season with 18.6 points per game and scored 108 three-pointers which set an NYU single-season record. Peper was also named to the All-UAA First Team for the second consecutive season and finished her career ninth all-time in scoring in NYU history with 1,451 points.

However, NYU's 2025-26 women's basketball team was not a 'one-woman show.'

They had other outstanding student athletes like Brooke Batchelor, a junior guard, who finished second on the team in points per game (13.5) while playing in every game this season. For this, Batchelor joined Peper on the Region IV First Team and was an All-American Honorable Mention.

Sophomore guard from New Jersey, Zahra Alexander, was another iron woman for the Violets this season, playing in every game of the regular season and playoffs. Alexander received Region IV second team honors for finishing with 12.3 points per game. Batchelor and Alexander finished ninth and 10th respectively in points per game in the UAA conference this season.

Freshman guard, Aila Kaibara came to the Big Apple from Arizona and made a big

splash. Kaibara was named the Region IV Rookie of the Year for having a season during which she started 28 out of 30 games and finished second on her team in three pointers (55) and 16th among UAA players in points per game (10.1).

Last but not least, the head coach who guided these players to such heights, Barber, was named both WBCA NCAA Division III Coach of the Year for the second straight year and Region IV Coach of the Year.

Barber spoke glowingly of her team's accomplishments this year. "I thought tonight was a win for this team in terms of what they showed the NYU community, the NYU fans what they were made of. It's going to be a really big hole for this program to fill the shoes of Caroline Peper. She is a real one of one."

Peper then described what this team meant to her. "This team really means the world to me. I'm the only senior — they're everything. I said to them at the end, I couldn't have picked a better team to go out with. There're no other girls that I wanted to be my teammates this year...just it's such a fun group of girls and I'd do anything for them, and I'd do anything for another game with them."

Lastly, Peper explained what she'll remember about the past four years during which she was part of two National Championship winning teams. "Every moment with them and everyday kind of goes by in like a blink, but every single practice is ingrained in my brain and the ones that stick out the most are the hardest ones. So, preseason for us, is something that we really lock into, and preseason has gotten us this far and we worked that hard together — that's what really pushes us here is working for each other and so the relationship with my teammates is really what I'm going to remember."

March's Final Four may have marked the end of an era for NYU women's basketball, but the future will remain bright for the program as long as it can hold on to the nine underclassmen and seven juniors it had during the 2025-26 season.

Why I Choose *continued from page 18*
the speed and the collective instinct. A kind of urban empathy that does not wait to be organized — it mobilizes.

And I think part of that comes from something deeper about New York. Most people here have struggled at some point. There is a shared, often unspoken understanding of how close the edge can be. How close the street can be. There is no overarching safety net in the way there is in Denmark. No assumption that someone or something will catch you. And because of that, people become that net for each other.

I know this not just as an observation, but as something I have lived. I went through a significant financial loss and had to start over — this time with more responsibility, not less.

It was a humbling and defining period.

One evening, after a long workday, I went to my favorite neighborhood restaurant and sat at the bar, ordering half a glass of wine — just enough to mark the end of the day. When I left, they handed me a bag. Inside was food. A bottle of wine. No announcement. No performance. Just a quiet gesture that said: we see you.

And when that same restaurant struggled during COVID, I sent money. Not out of obligation, but out of recognition.

That is the rhythm here. A kind of unspoken reciprocity. People paying attention. People remembering. People looking out for one another in ways that are not institutional, but deeply personal.

In Denmark, care is often embedded in

systems. It is reliable, structured, and deeply humane. In New York, care is lived between people. It is spontaneous, relational, and often born from having known difficulty. There is something profoundly moving about that.

The Inner Life: Containment vs. Expansion

As a psychotherapist, I have come to understand these places not just geographically, but psychologically. Denmark feels like a well-regulated nervous system — grounded, predictable, safe. New York feels like activation — alive, stimulating, sometimes overwhelming, but also generative.

Neither is better. Both are necessary. But I have realized that I do not come to life in

stillness alone. I come to life in movement.

Why I Choose New York

I choose New York because it mirrors something essential in me. A willingness to evolve. A tolerance for intensity. A desire to build, to create, to engage. And also — because of the way people show up. Not in theory, but in action. Not through structure, but through instinct.

In Denmark, I am deeply at peace. In New York, I am fully awake — and unexpectedly, deeply supported. Supported not by systems, but by people who know what it is to fall — and to be close enough to the ground to catch someone else.

And at this stage of my life, I choose wakefulness.

The Silent Architect: Emily Roebling's Bridge to Modernity

BY EMILY ANDERSON



EMILY ROEBLING (1843–1903): A pioneering force who defied 19th-century gender norms to lead the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge. Often cited as the project's surrogate chief engineer, she successfully managed the monumental task when few believed a woman could. Credit: brooklynmuseum.org/objects/4960

Long before she was a legal scholar at NYU or a voice for women's rights, Emily Roebling was busy teaching herself how to be an engineer in a world that didn't even want her at the drawing table.

For over a century, the Brooklyn Bridge has stood as the quintessential silhouette of the New York City skyline. Its Gothic arches and intricate webs of steel are celebrated as a triumph of 19th-century industrialism. Usually, the history books offer us two names: John A. Roebling, the visionary who died before the first stone was laid, and Washington Roebling, his son, who served as chief engineer. But there is a third name — one that for decades remained a footnote, yet was arguably the most vital to the bridge's completion.

The Industrial Marvel of the East River

To understand Emily's feat, one must understand the sheer physical and political gravity of the task she inherited. When construction began in 1869, the Brooklyn Bridge was the longest suspension bridge in the world, spanning nearly 1,600 feet across the turbulent East River. It was a project of "firsts:" the first to use explosive-blasted caissons for underwater foundations and the first to use steel wire for its suspension cables rather than iron.

The bridge was designed to be a "highway in the air," a feat of physics held together by four massive main cables, each containing over 5,000 parallel steel wires. These cables were anchored into colossal granite towers that rose 278 feet above the water — then the tallest structures in the Western Hemisphere. It was a project so massive and technically volatile that many contemporary engineers predicted it would collapse into the river long before completion. This was the high-stakes world Emily was thrust into when the men in charge were sidelined by tragedy.

A Partnership of Equals

Emily Warren was never intended to be an engineer. Born in 1843 in Cold Spring, New York, her early education was typical for a woman of her status, focusing on history and French. However, her life took a radical turn when she met Washington Roebling at a Union Army ball during the Civil War.

Their marriage was an intellectual partnership from the start. When they traveled to Europe in 1867, it wasn't for a typical honeymoon; they went so Washington could study the use of pneumatic caissons — massive, pressurized underwater chambers — for his father's upcoming project in New York. Emily was by his side, absorbing the technical complexities of underwater foundations and bridge mechanics long before she would ever need to use them.

The Crisis at the Caissons

The construction of the Brooklyn Bridge was a brutal, pioneering undertaking. In

1872, Washington Roebling became a victim of "the bends," or caisson disease. The illness left him partially paralyzed, blinded, and confined to his bedroom in Brooklyn Heights.

At this moment, the "Eighth Wonder of the World" faced collapse. Skeptical trustees and hungry politicians began calling for Washington's removal. It was here that Emily Roebling realized that for her husband to keep his title, she would have to become his eyes, his ears, and his hands.

Mastering the Bridge

For the next 11 years, Emily served as the bridge's surrogate chief engineer. While she initially acted as a secretary, she quickly realized that merely relaying messages wasn't enough. To protect her husband's reputation and ensure the project's success, she had to master the science herself.

She taught herself higher mathematics, the physics of cable tension, and the complex calculations of catenary curves. She became so adept that she began negotiating with contractors, attending board meetings, and supervising the onsite engineering staff. When steel mills struggled to manufacture the revolutionary wire shapes required for the bridge, Emily sat down with their representatives and used her knowledge of material science to help them troubleshoot the designs.

She was a woman in a mud-caked, male-dominated field, yet she commanded respect through sheer competence. As E.F. Farrington, the bridge's master mechanic, famously noted, he took his orders from Emily's notes because they were the most

precise instructions on the site.

The First Crossing

By the time the bridge was nearing completion in 1883, the public "secret" of Emily's involvement was becoming a point of local pride. On May 24, 1883, she became the first person to cross the completed bridge by carriage. In her lap, she carried a rooster, which was a symbol of victory and progress.

While the official opening speeches by President Chester A. Arthur and others focused on the "triumph of man," Congressman Abram Hewitt broke protocol to acknowledge the woman standing quietly in the wings. He declared the bridge an "everlasting monument to the self-sacrificing devotion of a woman and of her capacity for that higher education from which she has been too long disbarred."

From Engineering to the Law

If Emily Roebling had disappeared from public life after 1883, her legacy would still be secure. But her journey didn't end at completing the Brooklyn Bridge. Having proven her intellectual equality in the field of science, she turned her sights toward the legal "disabilities" that still shackled the women of New York.

In the late 1890s, at the age of 56, Emily enrolled in the Woman's Law Class at NYU. As a married woman in the Victorian period, her legal identity was subsumed by her husband's, despite her having built what was at the time one of the world's greatest structures. She graduated with honors in 1899, winning a \$50 prize for her groundbreaking essay, *A Wife's Disabilities*. In it, she criticized the laws that stripped married women of their property rights and financial independence. Her words stunned the audience — including her husband, who reportedly told journalists he "did not agree with one word she said," highlighting just how far ahead of her time she truly was.

Emily's Legacy

Emily Roebling passed away in 1903, but her footprint is all over our city. From the bridge that links our boroughs to the halls of NYU where she fought for legal recognition, she represents a uniquely New York brand of defiance.

Today, as we walk across the Brooklyn Bridge, we see a plaque that honors all three Roeblings. But for me, the bridge stands as a reminder of the intellectual courage of a woman who refused to be silenced by the conventions of her time. Emily Roebling didn't just build a bridge; she built a precedent.



BROOKLYN BRIDGE NEW YORK CITY 1898 Pedestrian Crossing via Wikimedia Commons.

Emily Anderson is a Village resident. Reach her at IG Handle: [@emilyinthevillage](https://www.instagram.com/emilyinthevillage) or Substack: <https://emilyinthevillage.substack.com/>

VILLAGE PET PAGE

BY JOY PAPE AND BRIAN PAPE

The Story Of Thackery Binx

BY GARANCE E. H. ARDITTI

Thanks to Greenwich Village Animal Hospital practice manager Eric Shepherd for the tip on this interesting rescue story about a cat in the Village.

It was the last Tuesday of July, this past summer 2025. I was coming back from work around 8:30 p.m., getting off at Christopher Street and taking Grove Street towards Bedford Street, which is where I live. I had my



GARANCE IN THE LIGHT BLOUSE, holding Binx alongside the woman who planned to foster her, just moments after pulling her from beneath the hood of the second car she'd hidden in.

Airpods on with music playing and just after passing Emmett's on Grove, the music was changing which allowed me to hear the word 'cat' – I paused the music, looked up and saw a little group of people around a vintage-looking Subaru SUV parked on the street. I approached the vehicle and was told that a cat had been heard meowing from somewhere in that car for the past three days.

Before I knew it, I was under the Subaru using my phone flashlight trying to take a glance at that mysterious cat that no one had seen but only heard. Quite the exploit for me. Being the OCD clean freak that I am, I thought of my whole body laying down on the disgusting street warmed by that hot summer evening. That thought immediately disappeared when, after using cat food as bait and playing cat sounds on my phone, I saw a tiny grey kitten head with big green eyes stare at me for an instant from some hole under the car and then vanish.

The police were there but it took almost a couple hours before the fire department could come. At the same time, a VERY motivated lady had gone to the building address the police had found corresponding to the registered owner of the car. She rang the bell of every single apartment on her way up the stairs and came back gloriously with the owners, a nice couple. They were shocked and quite scared that the kitten may have been badly injured. So, the owner opened the hood because it is the most common place to find hiding cats and one of the firemen was standing ready to grab whatever he would find.

Then, everything went crazy. That brave fireman was clearly not used to cats, and grabbed a tiny dirty very frail kitten and as we were all extending arms for him to hand it to one of us, he slowly placed it on the ground.



ZIGGY (LEFT) AND BINX are now like sisters, cuddling as much as Ziggy will allow it.

BIG mistake... but he did not know better. The kitten ran as fast as lightning to the other side of the street and vanished. The group of outraged ladies started screaming at the poor fireman, everyone got very angry, all the firemen got back in their truck fuming with frustration and beeping at us. The police men and women looked at us – kind of shrugging their shoulders, sorry for everybody involved and left.

So there I was, still with a group of kind and concerned people, now in the complete dark around 10:30 p.m. and no cat. It took us 30 minutes or more to agree on the one car on the other side of the street where we thought the kitten might be. This time it was a Lexus. We called back the police, gave them the plate number, and they were able to contact the owner, who ended up showing up not so long after.

Everything went very fast after that, the owner opened the hood of his car – and me and another lady, with an old raggedy towel someone had handed us, quickly grabbed the little kitten which was indeed in that car between the engine and some hoses.

The kitten scratched us badly, it was absolutely terrified, but none of us let it go. That very kind lady had been saying she would be happy to foster it, and she lived right across the street, yes in front of the parked Subaru. So we walked sideways like crabs to her building, together holding the kitten. When we arrived to her apartment, I called my boyfriend to bring a litter box, some sand and some food. I had all these supplies at home, because my little Siamese Ziggy was waiting for me. Well yes, I am a huuuuuge cat lady. And when I was doing my last year of college in Toronto and Covid happened, I was completely alone. My father convinced me to stay – rather than going back to Paris – by getting me a kitten. Ziggy Stardust is my girl. I take her absolutely everywhere I go.

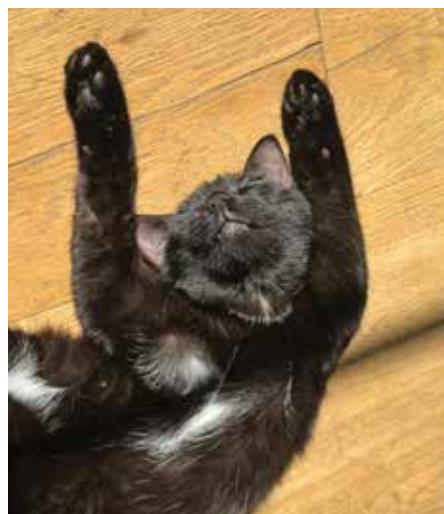
Anyway, my boyfriend arrived at the lady's

apartment, I was holding the little kitten who was in fact quite black, just greyed out by the dirt and dust. The lady looked at us and with the highest honesty, explained how this situation was not ideal for her, asking if we would keep the kitten instead. I looked at my boyfriend since he had not chosen the cat life but it was imposed on him when I showed up with Ziggy (whom he loves more than anything in the world), and he said 'ok'. So there we were, going back to our home with the supplies he had brought AND the kitten.

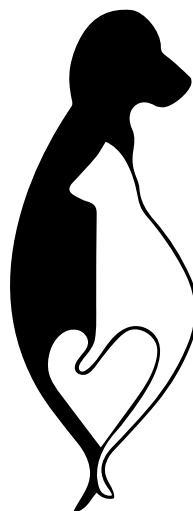
We put her in my bathtub and 20 minutes later my boyfriend was in the tub with her on his chest, giving her food which she was happily eating. It took a good long visit at Greenwich Village Animal Hospital to have her rid of parasites and fleas. Thankfully, she did not have any viruses or diseases. She must have been born on the street, a stray cat – maybe from a bodega – and ended up completely alone in a car engine at 2 months old.

When the time came to introduce her to Ziggy, Ziggy was so distraught that she started a hunger strike for three days and ended up at the vet with anti-anxiety meds. A month later, the four of us (yes, the two cats in their respective bags) were at my family home in South of France, then Spain, Italy, etc.

My boyfriend, being a big fan of the 1993 *Hocus Pocus* film, named her Thackery Binx. Well...she did bear the name Suba for the first couple weeks as she was first found in a Subaru, but why keep the trauma all her life? Now, Ziggy and Binx are like sisters, Ziggy almost constantly exasperated by Binx, and Binx obsessed with Ziggy, always trotting behind her, jumping over her, and cuddling with her as much as Ziggy will allow. We never gave Binx away, she became part of the family (after very short consideration!).



BINX SLOWLY GETTING COMFORTABLE at Garance's home in the days following her rescue. All photos courtesy of Garance E. H. Arditti.



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Image courtesy of Village Preservation.

Village Preservation's Spring House Tour: A Glimpse Beyond the Doors

BY LANNYL STEPHENS

Ever paused on a Village block and wondered, "What lies behind those doors?" In neighborhoods like ours, where historic homes line every street, it is only natural to imagine the spaces just beyond view, with interiors shaped by history, ingenuity, and imagination.

Each spring on the first Sunday of May, Village Preservation offers a rare opportunity to step beyond that threshold through its Spring House Tour Benefit. Now in its 25th year, this year's tour will open doors on May 3.

Originally created by artist and former board member Jan Hashey, the tour opens a carefully selected group of private homes to benefit ticket holders, granting access to spaces that are usually hidden from view. This year's tour is also presented in tribute to the memory of Judith Stonehill, longtime board member, former president of Village Preservation, former Benefit Committee Chair, and decades-long dedicated Villager, whose devotion and years of service helped shape and sustain this beloved tradition.

Guests embark on a self-guided journey through a range of residences, each distinct in style and spirit, from early Federal and Greek Revival homes to later Italianate façades. Beyond these exteriors, the interiors reveal both preservation and reinvention, with carefully maintained architectural details alongside thoughtful contemporary interpretations. Moments of surprise and delight appear throughout, from a secluded

garden tucked behind a townhouse to a striking collection of art or a shaft of light transforming an unexpected corner. Together, these homes offer a vivid portrait of the Village's enduring character and adaptability.

The tour is also a reminder of why preservation matters. Village Preservation's work extends beyond safeguarding individual buildings. It is about protecting the scale, texture, and cultural vitality that define our neighborhoods. Proceeds from the benefit support advocacy, research, and educational programs that help ensure the Village remains a place where history is not only remembered, but lived.

For longtime supporters, the Spring House Tour is a beloved tradition. For newcomers, it offers a fresh way of seeing streets they may have passed countless times. And for anyone who has ever paused on a Village block and wondered what lies behind those doors, it is a rare and rewarding invitation to find out.

This year's tour promises a thoughtful and inspiring selection of residences, each chosen for its character, creativity, and connection to the neighborhood. It is an opportunity not only to admire beautiful spaces, but to reflect on the stories they hold and the ongoing effort required to keep those stories part of New York's living fabric.

You can purchase tickets to the tour or become a corporate supporter by going to villagepreservation.org/events/spring-house-tour-benefit/

A Walk, a Talk, Second Thoughts: Beth Soll & Co.

BY J. TAYLOR BASKER

Despite the Graham studio's imminent closing at Westbeth, Beth Soll & Company brilliantly performed in its space on March 22, leaving a strong aura of explosive creative movement as formidable ghosts for its future inhabitants. This performance had a chemistry that used physical chain reactions propelling the viewer through space, time and complacency.

Beginning with *We Take A Walk*, Soll, in her 80s, strolled metaphorically through time. Joined by a youthful Caroline Frank, the dance startled viewers with unanticipated twists and turns, symbols for unexpected life events. This duet expanded on her 2025 solo *She Takes A Walk* with new possibilities and complexities. Soll used unexpected gestures that include neck and elbow movements as well as hands and legs. Expression was important, and eyes became instruments of dance. This shaped the walk as a spiritual journey as well as a tangible exercise in discovery.

In *Education* three dancers present an inside view of dance training. Professional dancers take technique classes during their entire career and often dance with younger, inexperienced students. This uneven situation can produce both difficulties and creativity, under the watchful eyes of the teachers. This piece was fun, both for the dancers and viewers. It was filled with humor, energy and the unexpected including a dance student's role looking out the window. The jazz music reinforced the creative use of traditional movement with free and inventive emotional responses.

Improvisation was a genuine improv between the dancers on the spot — with the

three dancers at times mirroring or challenging each other in playful encounters. They conjured up leaps and twirls in the air and gyrating gestures on the floor. Neither they nor the audience knew what was coming next, which added to the excitement of this piece.

In *On Second Thought*, Soll's premier solo, her choreography is a satirical, somewhat uppity reaction to her dance *She Takes A Walk*. Looking back to her career, she makes irreverent references to ballet and Asian styles, with acknowledging the ongoing often painful physical challenges of being a dancer. She migrated from solemn to satirical movement, with subtle gestures where even her fingers became meaningful instruments of dance.

Soll concluded the performance with a tribute to the challenges dancers face as they leave the security of the studio to begin their careers. Fear and anxiety turned to joyful movement. Many of the gestures Soll derived from the paintings of her fellow Westbeth resident, Clare Rosenthal.

In the enthusiastic question and answer period that followed the performance, when Soll was asked if there was a message in certain dance movements, she wisely replied, "If you get one, then there is one!"

Beth Soll is a challenge to our society's dismissal of seniors to the sidelines. Her work continues to be brilliant, inventive and pivotal for contemporary dance. As Westbeth photographer Arnold Hinton declared in the senior center when people were discussing retirement, "Artists never retire."



BETH SOLL AND CAROLINE FRANK in "We Take A Walk." March 23, 2026. Photo by J. Taylor Basker.



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CHARACTERS OF THE VILLAGE

Marcia Rock, Award-Winning Documentary Filmmaker

BY JOY AND BRIAN PAPE

We would like to thank our readers who often suggest people who would be good subjects for *Characters of the Village*.

Let's learn about Marcia Rock.

Tell us about yourself, Marcia. What is important for our community to know about you?

I was born in Cleveland, Ohio. I visited Bleecker Street at age 13 and knew I wanted to live in the Village. I went to the University of Wisconsin-Madison for a major in English Literature - Shakespeare. I then studied Shakespeare in England and worked at a community theater project in Liverpool before I came to NY. For two years, I worked at an alternative media center called Global Village on Broome Street and Mercer. I lived in the East Village in 1972, then in SoHo for four years. Next, I got my master's at Brooklyn College and my Ph.D. at NYU in Media Ecology, now called Media, Culture and Communication. I lived at Washington Square Village and Silver Towers until I coupled with Peter Williams and now I'm at Washington Street, between Perry and Charles. We met on Match and married on Zoom after 15 years. Peter converted our building in 1977 and built the two townhouses next door.

Tell us about your work.

I'm an independent documentary filmmaker. I've been at NYU for 42 years and started the News and Documentary graduate journalism program in 1999. I found a sweet spot merging the rigor of journalism with the aesthetics of film. It was a dream come true, as I was passionate about long-form storytelling. The students shoot and edit themselves, a key to the program's success and to their independence as filmmakers. One of my first NewsDoc classes covered 9/11 after just one class on shooting with the camera. They were out on the streets on 9/12 before the police closed all the streets down. We did a special about it for the NYU community.

In addition to 14 feature documentaries, I've done two shorts on NYC, one on the draw of tango dancing in NYC called *Sur-*



MARCIA ROCK AND PETER WILLIAMS celebrating their anniversary every year at Cornelia Street Cafe, even after it closed. Photo courtesy of Marcia Rock.

render *Tango* and one on the history of the Irish immigrants through McSorley's Ale House called *McSorley's New York*. I won an Emmy for that piece and I got my photo on McSorley's wall—a real accomplishment!

What is your favorite thing about the work you do?

My graduate students are amazing. They are my legacy to a field I love. Students come from all over the country and the world. This past year they did moving documentaries about a mother/daughter relationship in China, indigenous women protecting the rain forest in Ecuador, wolves in the Netherlands, a woman coping with Parkinson's, and a horse trainer in Colorado. Students

have won 12 Student Academy Awards over the years. /newsdocfilmfest.com

What is your least favorite thing about your work?

Young students losing their passion so they don't go the extra mile.

Tell us about your passion. What is your favorite accomplishment?

I love making documentaries and dancing the tango. The best part of documentary filmmaking is meeting people ranging from women veterans to women in Belfast and salt harvesters in Ghana. I'm proud of my awards and those of my students. I'm proud of my alumni like Nanfu Wang, a McArthur

Genius Grant recipient, who has produced many documentaries and now teaches at NYU with me. I'm also proud of my Airedale dog, Tango.

What is your best memory?

I loved acting in an off-off-Broadway experimental drama in environmental theatre. The project was called *Taxi Dance Hall*, in SoHo in 1973. I'm still friends with three of the actresses. The Italian neighborhood in SoHo was still intact. There was Joe's Dairy, Margaret the vegetable lady and Lucy, an old Italian woman who would sit outside on Sullivan St. and watch everything going on. I loved *The Grand Ticino* on Thompson run by Mike and Zoya Bitici. I miss the smell of bread wafting down the street from Zito's on Bleecker St. My first date with Peter was at Cornelia Street Café, and even after it closed, we would go there on our anniversary and set up a little table and chairs and toast our longevity together; it was so much fun sitting on the sidewalk and talking to everyone who passed by.

What are your favorite things about the Village?

I love local restaurants where the bartender and owner know you, for example, Perry Street or La Ripaille. I love talking to store owners like the Ottomaneli Brothers. We always chat about Perry Street where they grew up in a tenement between Hudson and Greenwich. I'm so glad Dantes opened on Perry Street after the pandemic. I love dancing tango on the Christopher Street Pier and my vet at West Village Veterinary Hospital.

Parting words?

I wish someone would move into the \$200 million dollar home built across the street by Steve Cohen.

More about Marcia—marciarock.com
NYC films

- surrendertango.com—vimeo.com/ondemand/surrendertango/405962
- McSorley's NY—vimeo.com/ondemand/mcsorleysnewyork/621673794
- Covid & Me—vimeo.com/439361921

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Mae Curry Makes Union Square Subway Flower

BY SUZAN MAZUR

“And instantly, an intolerable desire would awaken in me to go out in the streets. I would feel, without a feeling of wild longing, pain, and joy, that I was missing something rare and glorious, that I was allowing some superb happiness and good fortune to escape from me by staying in my room. It seemed to me that some enormous joy, some glorious and joyous event — some fulfillment of glory, wealth, or love — was waiting for me everywhere through the city. I did not know where I must go to find it, on which of the city’s thousand corners it would come to me, and yet I knew that it was there, and had no doubt at all that I would find and capture it.” — Excerpt from *The Train and the City* (1933), Thomas Clayton Wolfe (1900-1938).

Not since Keith Haring’s provocative stick-figure art first adorned West 4th Street subway walls has the NYC underground looked so interesting. Not to mention lovely! And it’s because of Mae Curry’s flowers.

The Brooklyn-based artist, a former ballerina who eventually outgrew her pink slippers (Curry is now six-feet tall), moved to New York from Nashville several years ago believing that inspiration for her paintings—i.e., “some enormous joy,” “some superb happiness” — awaited her everywhere in the city. Her quest for surprise is what drives her.

I first met Curry a couple of years ago on one of “the city’s thousand corners” selling her sublime flower art to pay the rent.



MAE CURRY'S FLOWERS, ABOVE: Not since Keith Haring’s provocative stick-figure art first adorned West 4th Street subway walls has the NYC underground looked so interesting. Not to mention lovely! Photo courtesy of Suzan Mazur.

All the best, Mae and thank you for turning a snowy February in Manhattan into June!

Suzan Mazur is the author of five books

and has contributed to publications including *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *Forbes*, *Newsday*, *Archaeology*, *Astrobiology*, *Huffington Post* and *Harvard Law*

School’s Art Law Syllabus 2008. She has also been featured on PBS, CBC, MBC and Fox News. Read more about Suzan Mazur at oscillations.net



Mae Curry.



Mae Curry *Untitled*.



Mae Curry *The Balancing Act*.



Mae Curry *The Ballerina and the Jester*.

Women Make Movies: A Legacy of Empowerment

BY MICHAEL JACOBSON



ORIGINAL MEMBERS of Women Make Movies, 1974. Photo credit Alfonso Barrios.

In the late 1960s, as a teenager, I participated in the Henry Street Settlement's Movie Club, one of two Lower East Side workshops championing 16mm filmmaking. These storefront clubs primarily served local Puerto Rican boys. However, visionary film instructors Ariel Dougherty and Sheila Page observed that young women were being overlooked by these programs. In response, they launched Women Make Movies (WMM) in 1972. Operating out of a small garret on 19th Street in Chelsea, their mission was to introduce filmmaking to local women, a daring goal at a time when women were largely excluded from the media profession.

Remarkably, WMM will celebrate its 55th anniversary next year. Today, it stands as one of the nation's premier documentary organizations, serving as a powerful force that enables women to produce socially conscious films and distribute them to a global audience. Only a few weeks ago, they celebrated a historic night at the 98th Academy Awards with community members winning Oscars in both the Documentary Feature and Documentary Short categories. This year's ceremony marked a milestone for feminist filmmaking, as every nominee for Best Documentary Feature was directed or produced by a woman. Additionally, the season saw a groundbreaking achievement for the industry with Autumn Durald Arkapaw becoming the first woman in history to win the Oscar for Best Cinematography.

The Leadership Shaping WMM's Success

Three key members continue to drive the organization's impact. Inspired by a 1970s film conference, Debra Zimmerman joined WMM as an intern before eventually becoming executive director. Today, she leads the Production Assistance Program and scouts international talent at global festivals to connect filmmakers with U.S. fundraising. Under her



WOMEN MAKE MOVIES 2026, Sundance participation.

leadership, WMM has secured 23 consecutive years of Academy Award recognition. Zimmerman remains concerned by industry "backsliding," noting that the percentage of women directing top-grossing films recently dropped from 15% to 8%. She highlights that technical roles and criticism remain male-dominated, and even female-directed films often lack female-centered subjects. Viewing the current political climate as a "tremendous backlash" against women's and immigrants' rights, she believes WMM's mission to amplify diverse perspectives is more urgent than ever.

As manager of the Production Assistance Program, Kyra Brands oversees nearly 400 active film projects. Over the last five years, the initiative has helped filmmakers raise more than \$40 million through grants and individual donations. Beyond fiscal sponsorship, Brands manages diverse professional development services. She coordinates seasonal webinars on industry essentials, like taxes and website development, alongside "Meet the Funders" sessions featuring organizations like Sundance. Her role includes providing expert feedback via consultation services for proposals and rough cuts. Additionally, she organizes virtual and in-office work-in-progress screenings followed by moderated discussions. Under her leadership, the program has expanded its global reach, with over 20% of projects now based outside the United States.

Managing Director Kendra Hodgson describes the WMM distribution program as a "very boutique," filmmaker-focused operation. Curating documentaries by or about female-identified individuals, WMM represents filmmakers from 65 countries. A core mission is establishing sustainable careers by returning royalties to creators. While the primary focus remains the educational market, Hodgson notes this sector increasingly requires collaborative, event-based strategies to integrate new films into curricula.

Spotlight: *The Inquisitor*

A prime example of WMM's impact is Angela Tucker's documentary *The Inquisitor*, which follows Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan. Early this year, I viewed the film at downtown's DCTV Firehouse Cinema. The film utilizes extensive archival material to examine Jordan's legacy as the first Black woman from the South elected to Congress.

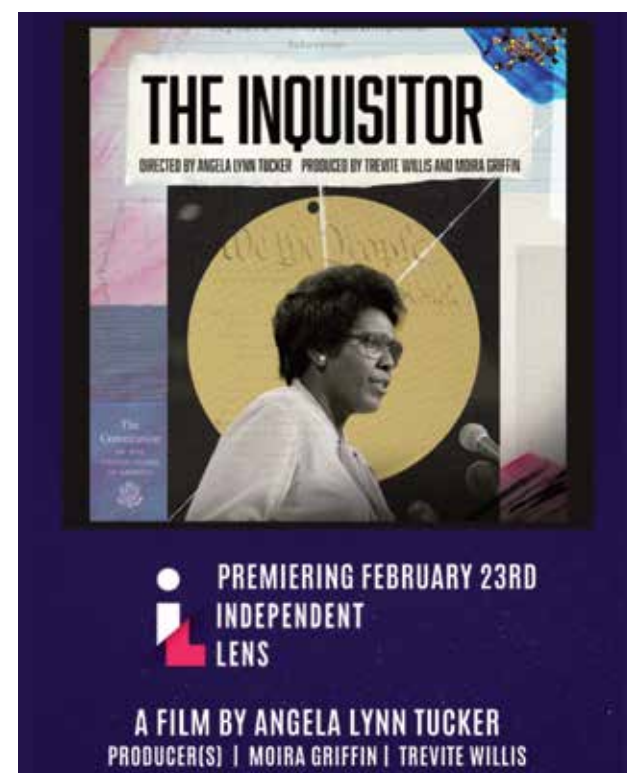
I responded strongly to Jordan's story. It is a reminder of an important historical figure whose legacy remains vital to our current discourse. The title, *The Inquisitor*, highlights her role during the Nixon impeachment hearings. While

many viewed the hearings through a partisan lens, Jordan framed her position as a defense of the U.S. Constitution. She famously noted that while the Constitution did not originally include Black people like herself, through the amendment process and the "inquisitor" role of Congress, she had finally become a part of "We the People."

At a time when our country's leadership often represses the critical gains for which African Americans have fought, it is essential to support the WMM distribution arm, which works tirelessly to champion films like *The Inquisitor*.

Decades later, Women Make Movies co-founder Ariel Dougherty remains active in the independent film movement. She travels the world attending filmmaking conferences to share memories of those formative early days and participates in screenings where restored 16mm films from the original workshop are greatly admired. She recalls her early battles with distributors who claimed "women do not make for reliable audiences." After all these years and the vast advancements made, she still hears exhibitors grumble about the "box office reliability" of female-led projects. Sadly, she observes, as I have, that the New York City exhibition scene can be surprisingly provincial regarding independent films.

While few national organizations offer a comprehensive suite of funding, mentoring, and distribution, Women Make Movies remains steadfast in providing these vital resources. Their commitment has resulted in a continuous stream of



THE INQUISITOR film poster.

award-winning, impactful documentaries. They continue their mandate of ensuring gender equity and amplifying diverse female perspectives in the global cinematic landscape.

Learn more about Women Make Movies: www.wmm.com
Learn more about *The Inquisitor*: www.inquisitorfilm.com

About the Author: Michael Jacobson is an independent New York City filmmaker. Last year he completed "The Cornelia Street Café in Exile," a full-length documentary on the legendary Cornelia Street Café. He curates and hosts a bi-monthly screening of short films, by New York Metropolitan filmmakers, at New Plaza Cinema, which recently celebrated its third anniversary.

Mable Dwight's Lithography at the Whitney Museum: Magic and Reality

BY J. TAYLOR BASKER

Lithography is a magical art medium. Carefully drawing on a stone or a metal plate, with oil, crayon or liquid, the artist creates a REVERSE image of their composition. The artist can paint uniform dark areas or use repeated lines or cross-hatching to create delicate shading. After hours or days of drawing the perfect image, the artist then covers it with a water glue. The glue penetrates everything except the oil pigments drawn on the stone, since oil and water do not mix. Next, the artist takes a leap of faith and uses a solvent to erase their perfect drawing! It is a quiet moment of terror but the artist believes in the technology and next reapplies oil ink with a roller to restore the drawing. The magic then happens, and the drawing, with its all strengths and delicate details, reappears and is ready to be rolled into a press and onto paper.

Mable Dwight fell in love with this magic and was one of the most important American woman printmakers. She was fascinated with human reality. Dwight was an active member of the Whitney Studio Club, a precursor to the Whitney Museum, participating in their life drawing class that permitted women artists. After traveling to the Middle East, Asia and the U.K. with friends, she moved to live with her parents in Greenwich Village near Washington Square Park. She created art from what she observed in real life.

After gaining attention for her work as an illustrator and after her divorce in her 50s, she went to Paris and discovered lithography in the Atelier Duchatel printshop. She fell under its spell and went on to produce a series of lithographs that stunned the art world and the public during the Great Depression as world democracies struggled with the rise of fascism. Using the George Miller Printshop on E. 14th Street, she printed her work derived from her travels around NYC with a hidden sketchbook, drawing faces and scenes of people on subways, buses, beaches, ferries and the streets.

She used her talents to create both compassionate and satirical images of humanity, most with either overt or subtle political messages. A socialist since WWI, Dwight held strong negative views of capitalism and the rich. Her art demonstrated sympathy for the struggling proletariat and the underdog. Her sympathy and sense of humor over the foibles of humanity enabled her to avoid propaganda and create imagery in the spirit of Goya and Daumier whom she said were able to resolve aesthetic demands with the satiric wish to show "the inevitable defects inherent in life." She rejected the social realist art of her time as too vehement and lacking sympathy for flawed humans, as well as artists who just enjoyed transgressive, banal subjects for their own sake. Her approach reminds one of Diane Arbus, who photographed the fringes of society with compassion. Dwight's prints *Derelicts*, 1931, shows dark figures huddled in front of restaurants. Two men look through garbage in *Buried Treasure*, 1935. Both were printed during the depression and demonstrated her solidarity with the poor and out. She also experienced poverty during much of her career, despite her recognition as an artist. She worked for the WPA to survive.

Her exhibit at the Whitney is the result of the insight of Dan Nadel, curator of drawings and prints. While looking through the collection, he became fascinated with her work and realized she never had an exhibit at the Whitney and he believed that her time had come. Dwight's socialist vision of the dignity of people despite the socio-economic divides during the Depression resonates with today's struggle to preserve a democracy of disparate and often conflicting citizens. Her modest sized images speak to the many viewers who spend much time examining the details in the prints; some had people waiting on a line to view them. It was ex-



MABLE DWIGHT. "BURIED TREASURE." Lithograph, 1935.



MABLE DWIGHT. "THE FERRY." Lithograph, 1930.



MABLE DWIGHT. "MERCHANTS OF DEATH." Lithograph, 1935.

traordinary to see how a woman printmaker of the 30s could fascinate mostly young viewers nearly 100 years later!

The exhibit's title comes from her advice about how to make art that would be a "living influence on the world." It was to keep "a cool head and a warm heart." Her art was published widely, from mainstream newspapers and magazines such as *Fortune* and *Vanity Fair* to leftist journals such as *The New Masses*.

One of her most famous prints *The Ferry* shows two ample middle-aged matrons suspiciously regarding a serene young nun, praying, as she sat next to them. Dwight was a master of satirical expression, that went beyond caricature due to her use of subtle shading and line with suburb portrait skills. Her *Self Portrait* is a tour de force of lithographical precision.

Most of the prints reveal her radical socialist mindset, if only in the details. This is what makes viewing her work so fascinating – decoding the imagery and finding the strange things that appear in seemingly innocuous subjects. A dense audience at the circus depicts faces of all types of people, all ages, captivated by the show – and by vendors selling macabre dolls (which seem to threaten the viewer) and flying ropes (one seems ready to strangle a spectator). This audience seems actually to be held captive by the commercial circus event.

Another interesting detail that is ambiguous is found in *In the Crowd*. It may suggest a Civil Rights statement by Dwight in 1931. The main figure is a Caucasian woman in a large cloche hat, shading half of her face. There are other faces, tightly packed, male and female, looking on somberly, perhaps standing on a line. But right behind her head, is a tilted head, with dark skin, wearing a bandana, suggesting an African American woman. She seems to be waiting her turn.

Looking closely at the 1928 print *Stick 'em Up* produced just before the Great Depression of 1929, we can see its irony. Dwight portrays a fascinated movie audience, willingly hypnotized by the screen, and enjoying a huge image of a cowboy who is shooting directly at them, perhaps a statement about capitalism's destructive hold on the public.

Overtly political statements are also found. Her awareness of the dangers of fascism produced the powerful *Dance Macabre*, 1933. In a theatrical theme, we have an audience of one in a gas mask and helmet carrying bayonet. It is watching puppets who caricature the rise of fascism in the U.K., Mussolini, Hitler, France, China and Japan with Uncle Sam passively trying to distance himself.

There even is a print that evokes the Epstein scandal. In *Hudson Street Burlesque*, 1929, a curvaceous dancer performs for a leering male audience, salaciously salivating over her with a multitude of facial expressions.

In *Merchants of Death*, Dwight presents clearly her view of capitalism. A line of top hatted well-dressed men are led in a march by a baton-wielding skeleton. Each unique face and body is dramatically evil. And the last figures morph into vultures.

Yet there is a sympathy for most people, just caught up in life, trying to survive. In *Abstract Thinking*, 1932, Dwight turns three men of different ages and conditions, into philosophers, as they sit on a subway, lost in their thoughts, evoking a sense of 'everyman' facing their lives and uncertain futures.

Dwight's work was passionate; her technique was clinically flawless. Thus, she is the epitome of her advice to make art "with a cool head and a warm heart." Kudos to Dan Nadel for curating this fascinating exhibit that is open through the end of August.



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Whiplash Guitarist Tony Portaro

BY KAJU ROBERTO

After more than four decades in thrash metal, Tony Portaro, founding guitarist, singer and composer of Whiplash, remains as passionate and restless as ever. From iconic guitars to painting, online teaching, and an upcoming album, Portaro shared a candid look at his life, creative process, and the future of the band.

Portaro and I crossed paths by an extraordinary twist of fate at a late-night restaurant during my recent trip to London, and we instantly hit it off. He graciously invited us to join him as his guests for the band's performance the very next evening.

On February 24, we experienced Whiplash live at the legendary Electric Ballroom in Camden, sharing the stage with Napalm Death during the iconic Campaign for Musical Destruction Tour. The show was absolutely electrifying — the energy was off the charts, the riffs were relentless, and Portaro's vocals tore through the venue with ferocity. What excitement! It was some of the tightest, most savage and exhilarating thrash metal I've ever witnessed.

After arriving back in NYC, I caught up with Portaro in the West Village.

Portaro's gear has always been as legendary as his riffs. Long before he endorsed Jackson guitars, he was devoted to BC Rich, particularly his Red Rich Bitch — fondly nicknamed The Bitch. "Only the red one.



TONY PORTARO, founding guitarist, singer and composer of Whiplash, remains as passionate and restless as ever. Here he performs with Whiplash at the legendary Electric Ballroom in London for the Campaign for Musical Destruction Tour. *Photo by Kaju Roberto.*

That was it," he recalled. After years away from it, he recently reclaimed the guitar from a collector, restoring its original electronics. "It's like reuniting with an old girlfriend," he joked, noting that longtime fans will recognize the guitar's return on stage.

Though he once endorsed Jackson, Portaro stopped pursuing sponsorship after Fender acquired the brand, deciding instead to invest in the guitars he wanted. "I

spent \$4,500 on the Kelly before all of that. I already had one, so I wanted my Red Bitch back," he said. He also revealed an eye-catching Blue Mockingbird that has tempted him, highlighting his ongoing love for rare and unique instruments.

A move from the Tri-State area to North Carolina during the pandemic has had a profound impact. "It's so peaceful here," he said, describing friendly neighbors, relaxed traf-

fic, and a lifestyle that allows him to focus on family and music. "In New Jersey, if you see a cop behind you, you get tense. Down here, it's a different pace, and it's been amazing for us."

This calmer environment has provided a fertile ground for creativity and reflection, reinforcing the connection between personal well-being and artistic output.

Despite thrash metal being considered a niche genre, Portaro is optimistic about its future. "I think it's going to break through as soon as I release this new album," he said. With fans ranging from those who have followed Whiplash since the '80s to younger listeners discovering the band for the first time, he sees an opportunity for a renaissance.

Portaro hinted at an ambitious plan for the rest of 2026, including new music and tours, with major festival appearances expected in 2027. "The younger fans are on Instagram, but we still have a loyal base on Facebook," he noted, emphasizing the band's ability to engage multiple generations.

Beyond music, Portaro has developed a passion for painting. He started during a financial rough patch, learning through YouTube tutorials, and quickly discovered a talent for large-scale canvases. "I never painted before. I just watched tutorials and started," he said. Painting, he explained, is both stress

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A LOVE STORY ABOUT HUNGER

Inside Kristina Wong's *Food Bank Influencer*

BY KAJU ROBERTO

Kristina Wong's one-woman show *Food Bank Influencer* unfolds as a deliberately chaotic, funny, and ultimately incisive narrative about hunger, dignity, and the limits of charity in America. The show recently completed a four-day run at the New York Theater Workshop in Greenwich Village. Built from autobiographical storytelling, parody songs, and direct audience engagement, the piece reframes a deeply structural issue — food insecurity — through the unlikely lens of a romantic comedy. The result is a performance that begins in satire and ends in a radical rethinking of what it means to care for one another.

The play opens with Wong recounting a real moment: her July 2022 interview with a Broadway producer to write the musical adaptation of *Crazy Rich Asians*, just two months after being named a Pulitzer Prize finalist for her seventh solo show *Kristina Wong: Sweatshop Overlord*. In retelling the experience, she pitches an exaggerated, Cinderella-style story about wealth, romance, and upward mobility.

The framing is intentionally absurd. Wong, a self-described activist artist with a history of working with marginalized communities, is painfully aware that she does not fit the mold of a mainstream Broadway storyteller. Her comedic desperation — “I can give you crazy and Asian” — sets up one of the central tensions of the piece: the pull between artistic integrity and the desire for financial security and recognition.

When she fails to land the job, Wong pivots. If she cannot write a glossy musical about wealth and aspiration, she will write her own musical — one that reflects her real life. In a clever structural move, she adopts the conventions of a romantic comedy (meet-cute, complications, resolution) and casts an unexpected love interest: her local food bank. This conceit becomes the organizing metaphor of the show. The “relationship” allows Wong to explore not only her personal history with food insecurity, but also the broader systems that shape access to food in the United States.

Hunger, Shame and a Struggle to Survive
Wong's early adulthood as a struggling artist



KRISTINA WONG'S one woman show *Food Bank Influencer* at the New York Theater Workshop is a chaotic, funny, and ultimately incisive narrative about hunger, dignity, and the limits of charity in America. Photo by Kaju Roberto.

provides emotional grounding. In her twenties, she juggles low-paying jobs and inconsistent income, often relying on work that provided meals or improvising ways to get by.

Shame plays a central role. Cultural expectations and personal pride made it difficult for her to seek help. Even when assistance programs existed, they felt inaccessible and stigmatized. Through humor, Wong illustrates how people hide food insecurity, masking it with resourcefulness and silence.

Her story highlights a broader truth: hunger in America is often invisible, shaped as much by social stigma as by economic hardship.

The Meet-Cute: Discovering World Harvest Food Bank

The narrative shifts when Wong discovers the World Harvest Food Bank, a non-traditional food bank that operates like a grocery store. Unlike more institutional models, it offers flexibility and dignity — people pay what they can, volunteer, or simply receive food.

Wong describes this as a romantic “meet-cute.” For the first time, she experiences abundance without shame. The space redefines what food aid can look like, offering not just sustenance but autonomy.

Her affection for World Harvest extends to its founder, Glenn Curado, whom she por-

trays as an unconventional, almost mythic figure. Unlike leaders of large nonprofit food banks, he refuses restrictive funding, avoids bureaucratic oversight, and prioritizes accessibility for undocumented people and others who might be excluded from formal systems. Wong contrasts this model with the larger Feeding America network, highlighting tensions between scale, regulation, and flexibility. Through humor — comparing food banks to the Kardashian sisters — she critiques the hierarchies and branding within the nonprofit world.

Yet the play does not romanticize food banks uncritically. As the “relationship” deepens, Wong introduces complications. She examines the language of “hunger” versus “food insecurity,” noting how emotional appeals are often used in fundraising while obscuring systemic causes.

Dating the System: When Aid Programs Become Characters

Expanding beyond her own experience, Wong connects food insecurity to larger structural issues. She traces the history of U.S. food assistance, emphasizing that the country does not guarantee food as a basic right.

Stories from communities like the Navajo Nation illustrate “food apartheid,” where ge-

ography, race, and policy limit access to nutritious food. These examples reinforce that hunger is not accidental but systemic.

Wong critiques how food banks function politically. They offer powerful imagery for politicians while allowing deeper issues — low wages, housing costs, healthcare — to remain unaddressed. She suggests food banks act as a “Band-Aid,” providing relief without solving root causes. This dual role makes them both essential and problematic.

At the emotional peak, Wong realizes the food bank cannot be her “forever love.” While necessary, it cannot end hunger. This realization is framed as a romantic breakup. Food banks address immediate need but not systemic inequality. By dramatizing this, Wong captures the tension between gratitude and frustration.

The play ends with a vision of a world where food banks are no longer needed because basic needs are guaranteed. Wong imagines a society where food, housing, and healthcare are accessible to all.

This vision is aspirational but grounded in critique. It challenges audiences to think beyond temporary solutions and toward systemic change.

Comedy as a Call to Action

What makes *Food Bank Influencer* so compelling is its ability to hold multiple truths at once. It celebrates the lifesaving work of food banks while critiquing their limitations. It uses humor to make difficult topics accessible without diminishing their seriousness. And it transforms a deeply personal story into a broader call for systemic change.

In the end, Wong's “love story” is less about a single institution than about a shift in perspective. By moving from charity to community, from scarcity to dignity, she challenges audiences to rethink not only how we feed people, but how we value them.

For more information, visit kristinawong.com

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

Whiplash *continued from page 27*

relief and a creative driver: “It really influenced my songwriting. I let the paint tell me where to go, then the music takes over.”

Some of his tutorials are online, blending painting techniques with audio narration. The intersection of visual and musical art exemplifies Portaro's holistic approach to creativity.

Portaro is equally devoted to teaching. His YouTube series, *Tony Pat's Bloody Licks with Midnight*, “focuses on his thrash metal guitar leads, with close-ups, tabs, and notation. He emphasizes teaching his own work

rather than generic lessons, cultivating a personal connection with students and fans.

While he is cautious about monetizing content, Portaro considers premium material as a possible future step. “I only want to teach my own leads. I feel weird taking money from my followers for that,” he explained, reflecting a sincere dedication to his audience.

The interview highlights Portaro's playful, candid personality. From joking about guitars as old girlfriends to recounting serendipitous McDonald's encounters, he balances intensity with humor. Even technical discussions about gear are punctuated with anecdotes about naming guitars, sharing

band memories, and interacting with fans.

The future for Whiplash is bright. With a new album nearly complete, Portaro anticipates an energizing period of touring and engagement. He hinted at a special project scheduled for July 2026, though details remain under wraps. “2027 will be even better than 2026,” he said confidently.

Portaro's message to fans is simple: enjoy the music, explore creativity, and stay connected.

With two generations of fans, a commitment to teaching, and a renewed creative drive, Tony Portaro is positioning Whiplash for a resurgence. He remains deeply commit-

ted to his craft, his instruments, and the thrash metal community. “I hope everyone likes the new album,” he said. “We're going to be out there pushing it and playing shows again.”

For fans and newcomers alike, Tony Portaro embodies the essence of thrash metal: relentless energy, creative exploration, and an unwavering connection to both music and audience.

Here are Whiplash's social media accounts, including the band's Instagram handle and website to stay updated with new Whiplash releases and performances.

@whiplash_thrash, <https://officialwhiplash.com>

MOVIE REVIEW

EPiC (Elvis Presley in Concert)

BY ROGER PARADISO



EPiC film poster.

There's something very interesting going on with *EPiC*, the new Elvis Presley Concert/Documentary. The movie as a concert film is terrific. Director Baz Luhrmann has cut and mixed this series of rehearsals and concerts, mostly in Vegas, to make you feel you are at a concert. The sound is fantastic. In fact, the sound is better than a concert and definitely better than any home sound surround. The visuals are designed to make you feel you are at a concert. I paid \$10 to see this film with about ten other folks in the theater, on a rainy weekday afternoon. What I am here to tell you is that the way to get people back to the theaters is to do more out-

standing films like this. Why rush to the arena shows and pay hundreds of dollars? This spectacle of music, 75 songs and dramatic scenes created by Luhrmann, is the way to go. If I were the studios I would line up today's big artists and create a series of concert films with this quality. It is one way to bring folks back to the theaters.

So what makes this film so great besides the sound? We see Elvis at his best musically. It is the real Elvis playing his hits, but more importantly, playing the music that made him what he was. Yeah, he does *Hound Dog*, *Suspicious Minds* and *In The Ghetto* but adds in the Beatles' *Get Back* and Simon and Garfunkel's *Bridge Over Troubled Waters*. And to show his roots he mixes in *Oh Happy Days*, *What'd I Say* and songs I never heard him sing before — *Tiger Man* and *Polk Salad Annie*. Elvis and the band are terrific in bringing these songs to life. The remixing and editing made it so alive.

You are also watching documentary as if you are there because of all the behind-the-scenes work in these performances. Elvis was never given credit for leading the band. You see the humor and substance at the rehearsals. You see him on stage conducting his band with his eye contact, his choreography movements and improvisation. In the film Elvis says that the music changes at every performance. Yet the artists are on stage playing like a band that rocks in total harmony. The improvs in rehearsal also happen in the concerts and are fun to watch.

The other part of this spectacle is the 15 minutes of interviews where Elvis deals with all the misconceptions. These moments reveal a different man than the one who was presented to the public in the scandal magazines. Elvis comes across as a sincere artist who was just trying to find himself while he flew around the stage entertaining an audience. I can't give his inner monologues away but one of his regrets was that he never played in concert outside of North America. He was a good actor and wanted to do more films but not in the way he was portrayed in his Hollywood career. It never happened and that is the tragedy.

Thank the gods of music. Luhrmann said that the film is built entirely from restored, previously unreleased footage of

Elvis. Thank Warner Bros. archives and the Graceland collection for saving this material — some of which was preserved in a salt mine to keep the film from degrading or being destroyed.

Luhrmann further emphasized that "there's not a frame of AI in it" and that the only "visual effect" is the effect Elvis has on audience. The archival footage was restored to their original form without any artificial intelligence.

As for those who think Elvis was an out of shape has-been who forgot his lyrics and who couldn't handle his shows anymore, I would say one thing. You try wearing that jumpsuit and do two to three shows a night. I doubt you can do it. Not in the humorous and gracious way Elvis did his shows. And that's why most rock fans called him "The King."

EPiC is a must-see event. And there is a surprise ending you would not have imagined.

Playing on Broadway in IMAX
AMC 25 234 West 42nd Street

Baz Luhrmann's Take on AI

"AI is a tool. The thing about AI is you can take a black-and-white picture of Elvis and give it movement, and go, "Wow, that's cool," but it's not actually Elvis. It has no soul.

What makes human beings human is what AI isn't. AI is perfect. AI does a perfect copy of something. What it doesn't do is be purely and absolutely original, and human beings are flawed. And it's the flaws that make them original. It's a bit like when photography was invented, the people who did portraits were like, "Well, my job's over." Until a guy comes along and says, "What if I paint you a psychology?" And the last time I checked, Picasso's paintings were still worth a few bucks.

So I think human beings have an innate ability to pivot. What AI can't do is have an original idea."

Between Life and Death at Jefferson Market Library

BY CORINNE NEARY

For our novella discussion last month, we read Juan Rulfo's 1955 Mexican classic, *Pedro Páramo*, which had undergone a new translation by Douglas Weatherford in recent years. Hugely influential in Latin American literature, the book has only recently become more widely known in the United States, garnering a Netflix adaptation in 2024.

As a discussion piece, it is challenging: surreal and hallucinogenic, and populated almost entirely by the dead. As a book built around a literal ghost town where nothing is easy to distinguish, it is both beautiful and inscrutable. And while it may be tempting to give up at times, when there's really no way of knowing who's speaking, it can offer great rewards.

Since we have been doing our weekly discussions of Dante's epic Italian narrative poem *The Divine Comedy* since last fall, and are currently halfway through *Purgatorio*, I'm definitely feeling more attuned to narratives straddling life and death. One of the reasons that reading through Dante's work with our group has been so fulfilling is that many of the concepts are subtle, and there is a tenuousness to understanding them. Through the discussion, we come to a deeper understanding, although we may not always have the same perspective.



DANTE'S INFERNO: Paolo and Francesca Reading. Painting by Anselm Feuerbach.

Each week in our discussions of *The Divine Comedy*, though it was written in the 14th century, and chronicles a purely fictional journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, we are wrangling with modern and contemporary psychology and philosophy. Both Dante and Rulfo use the afterlife to, in part, show us who we are in life. And of course, since nothing could be more complex than who we are, why should we ex-

pect anything written on the subject to be simple?

As Frank Collierus, the library director, and I were starting to put together our list of film screenings for April and May, this idea of "between life and death" was on both of our minds. One idea we had is a 1944 picture, *Between Two Worlds*, starring Eleanor Parker and John Garfield, which is showing on Thursday, April 9 at 6 p.m. "Nazi bombs rain fire into an English port town. The smoke clears and a disparate group of human beings caught in the blast finds itself aboard a luxury liner headed who knows where. They soon learn their one-way tickets are stamped Heaven... And Hell..."

And for those whose interest is piqued by anything Italian, we are very excited to announce that we will be offering an Italian for Beginners course on Thursdays starting April 23. As we expect this to be in high demand, participants will be chosen by lottery. Stop by the second floor desk at any time between Monday, April 6 and Sunday, April 12 to enter your name. Those whose names are drawn will be contacted by April 15.

As always, check our website for all of our events, including children's story times, crafts, and book discussions, as well as our usual adult fare of discussions, author readings, and film screenings.

Pape Joins Art by Architects Exhibit

BY BRIAN J PAPE, AIA

For the second year, Brian Pape of *The Village View* will exhibit his paintings as part of the Art by Architects NYC exhibit and fund-raiser, after a successful showing last year. Art by Architects has shown work from over 100 architects, professors and students of architecture, and interior designers from all over the New York metro area.

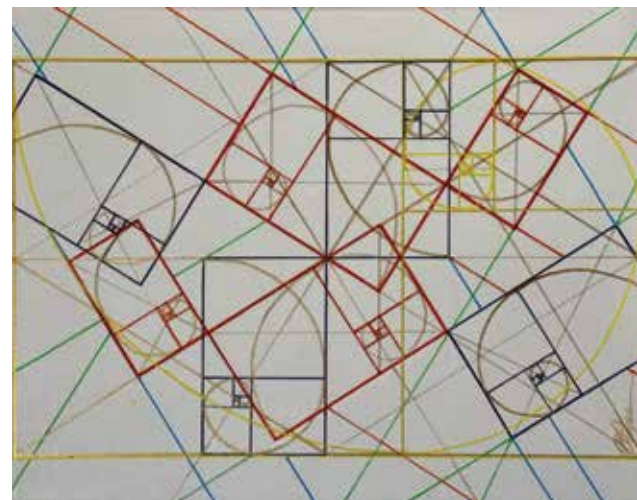
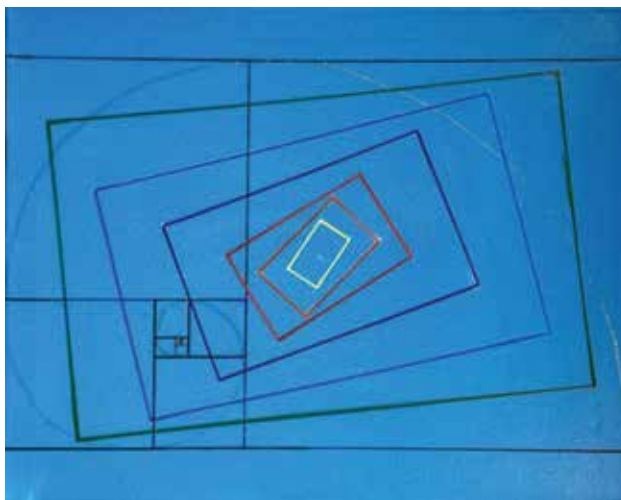
This year income from the sale of select artworks and reception tickets will benefit the Center for Architecture's Annual Education Fund which makes possible the programming which nurtures an understanding and appreciation for architecture and inspires the next generation of design leaders. The fund supports K-12 program staff, subsidizes fees to partner schools, and provides scholarships.

The works submitted to the sixth-annual Art by Architects showcase will be shown at the Center for Architecture beginning with an evening celebratory reception welcoming guests and artists for a time of sharing and networking on

Thursday, April 2 at 6 pm (ticket required).

The Showcase is on view during opening hours from Fri-

day, April 3, 9 am – 8 pm (free) to Saturday, April 4, 11 am – 3 pm (free).



BRIAN PAPE has submitted these abstract paintings, utilizing Fibonacci Spirals and Golden Ratio forms. Credit: Brian J. Pape.

Greenwich Village for Freedom

BY J. TAYLOR BASKER

In February 2025, while sitting in Westbeth Artist Housing, a month after the re-inauguration of Trump's regime with endless executive orders, threats, unhinged rants and the reality of the demise of our democracy, I was both in a rage and a panic. Who is doing something about this? Our politicians seemed paralyzed. The Supreme Court was full of Trump flunkies. The media enjoyed seeing their ratings go up as they gleefully reported on this reality-show illusionist, sexual predator, and felon. The worse he got, the more they reported on him. Then I saw an interview on the Rachel Maddow program with the head of Indivisible, a nationwide network of protest groups designed to preserve our democracy and fight the menace of creeping totalitarianism. I looked around our neighborhood to see who was doing something but I didn't see anything happening. So, I decided to form an Indivisible Group — Greenwich Village for Freedom. I posted an invite online to meet at the Bus Stop Café on Feb. 27. We had eight people show up — now we have a membership of nearly 200. We just celebrated one year of protests!

According to Parker Murff, who produces a creative monthly calendar of our events, "Greenwich Village for Freedom is founded on love — a love of this historic neighborhood, a love of this city — its diversity and passion, and a love of America's foundational promise: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Our neighbors near and far are having their lives ruined or even destroyed by draconian xenophobia, the rights of more of our neighbors are being restricted or even revoked, and every day many of us dread seeing how new turn will infringe on our community's ability to pursue happiness."

Jean Tucker, vestry member in St. John's in the Village, reports that this "grassroots group organized . . . over a year ago, has



GREENWICH VILLAGE FOR FREEDOM weekly Protest, West Side Highway and Christopher Street, October, 2025. Photo by J. Taylor Basker.

planned public actions every month since. Its members — an exuberant, eclectic, and largely older crowd — gather weekly along the West Side Highway holding signs and making noise . . . Response by passing motorists has been overwhelmingly supportive. The group has brought joy and camaraderie to resistance."

Karin Battin, one of my artist neighbors in Westbeth, notes that since many artists

are involved there are large colorful handmade signs every week. Protestors have no concern about snow, rain, winds, or extreme cold. She often can hear the many drivers honking and appreciating our work. We have sometimes topped over 350 honks in an hour!

We see many of the commuters returning to NJ through the Holland Tunnel on the Westside Highway. Occasionally we get

cursed at and threatened i.e. "I love Trump! Go back to where you came from B...." and for me that would be Brooklyn. Surprisingly, we get many honks from Jersey dissidents, who are probably happy to see our protests as they return to their MAGA NJ communities. The big surprise was the support from truckers, whom we often assume to be pro-Trump. The good news, folks, is that they are among our most enthusiastic honkers, with very LOUD horns. We even get honks from cops driving by. This activity is a barometer of people's outrage. Some weeks people honk repeatedly and passionately, especially when the news is worse.

We also have a monthly educational protest outside the ICE lawyers' headquarters at the Federal Building and Court on Varick and Hudson streets. We consulted with ACLU lawyers who told us we could be arrested for protesting the ICE lawyers, but if we produced educational materials, we would be safe. So, in six different languages, we created "Know Your Rights With ICE" leaflets and legal information for ICE lawyers and staff. The idea was to pressure ICE lawyers to perform their duties and inform the ICE staff about the limits of the law. Our leaflets were enthusiastically received by pedestrians, however not by ICE employees — some of whom were very large and threatening as they passed by.

We now have people coming down from Harlem to join us including an army veteran, and a mix of retirees and young people. And we have FUN! It is therapy for depression over politics, it is comradeship with like-minded people, and it represents the best of what this country is supposed to do — protect our democracy with freedom of speech.

Our Tuesday party on the Westside Highway at Christopher Street is from 4-6 p.m. Join us!

April 2026

EVENTS

in and
around the
West
Village

Tree Wonder Eco Fair 2026

Saturday, April 25, 12:00–4:30 PM
Northwest corner of Washington Square Park

tiny.cc/TreeWonderEcoFair26

Join Tree Wonder WSP for its Eco Fair 2026 at the English Elm, a free, activity-packed community event taking place in the northwest corner of Washington Square Park. Hosted in partnership with NYU Community Engagement, BEHOLD, and Local Nature Lab, the fair will bring together scientists, artists, educators, and community members for a day to learn, envision, and engage with nature in Washington Square Park!

Greenwich House Older Adult Centers

Earth Day Event

April 22, 2 PM until produce runs out!
Greenwich House Center on the Square,
20 Washington Square N

Greenwich House is proud to partner with Sharing Excess on Earth Day for a free, farmers market style produce distribution. We believe fresh, healthy food should be accessible to everyone. Help us reduce food waste while stocking your pantry with high-quality fruits and vegetables. Free and open to the public.

Greenwich House Music School

DANCE CLARINETS CELEBRATES THE MUSIC OF GERI ALLEN AND CARLA BLEY
Tuesday, April 15, 7:30 PM
46 Barrow Street

FREE with RSVP - Registration:
greenwichhouse.org/event/dance-clarinets-perform-the-music-of-geri-allen-and-carla-bley/

Join the Dance Clarinets for a program that explores the intersection of deep-rooted jazz tradition and avant-garde whimsy. This performance pays tribute to two giants of the genre: Geri Allen and Carla Bley, hosted in the intimate setting of Renee Weiler Concert Hall in the heart of the West Village. Featuring the return of soloist Lee Odom, it is an evening of modern jazz that moves between gritty soulfulness and playful, larger-than-life orchestrations, all within one of the Village's most storied and personal performance spaces.

ELEBASH ARTIST RESIDENCY AND UNCHARTED CONCERT SERIES

April 22, 8 PM: Jacqueline Acevedo & Audry Funk (Rhythms of Resilience)
April 29, 8 PM: DoYeon Kim & Firas Zreik (Unbound Strings)

Now in its 12th year, this acclaimed residency provides a creative sanctuary for New York City's independent performers, culminating in three nights of world-class performances in our intimate recital hall. This year's cohort features six boundary-breaking artists: Jacqueline Acevedo, Audry Funk, DoYeon Kim, Firas Zreik, Erika Ji, and Miriam Elhajli.

Greenwich House Pottery

ARTIST MEMBERSHIP OPEN HOUSE

April 12, 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
27 Barrow Street

Admission: FREE with RSVP
Registration:

greenwichhouse.org/event/artist-membership-open-house/

This event is designed for artists seeking focused time to develop their work independently while looking to engage with a creative community through a low-commitment, flexible program at Greenwich House Pottery. With live demonstrations, studio tours, and fun, hands-on activities, this is an invitation to explore our facilities, meet our makers, and perhaps even take home a new functional vessel from our pop-up sale.



STEAL THIS STORY, PLEASE!
Opens Friday, April 10 - April 16
IFC Center
323 6th Avenue
ifccenter.com

Undeterred by armed soldiers, smooth-talking politicians, and riot police, journalist Amy Goodman has reported some of the most consequential stories of our time. From the frontlines of global conflicts to the organized chaos of her daily news show Democracy Now!, she broadcasts stories and voices routinely silenced by commercial media. Oscar-nominated filmmakers Deal and Lessin (Trouble the Water, The Janes) take us behind the scenes with the warm, wisecracking granddaughter of an Orthodox rabbi—raised in a tradition of asking hard questions—as she navigates a news landscape reshaped by technology, corporate consolidation, and political assaults on truth itself. Urgent, provocative and unexpectedly funny, this is both a call to action and a celebration of resistance, posing the question: what happens to democracy when the press surrenders to power?

Spring 2026 Poe Room Event

Friday, April 10, 6-8 PM
New York University School of Law
245 Sullivan Street
Furman Hall, Room 216
(Between West 3rd Street and Washington Square South)
bit.ly/4bnuea6

New York University and Lois Rakoff, Community Director of the Poe Room, present the Spring 2026 Edgar Allan Poe Room Event. Titled "Life at the Cottage: Virginia & Edgar Allan Poe's Years in The Bronx," this event will feature Roger McCormack, Director of Education at The Bronx County Historical Society. This event is free and open to the public, but space is limited and an RSVP is required. To register, sign up online or reach out to NYU Community Engagement at 212-998-2400 or community.engagement@nyu.edu with any questions.



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?



Kelly Craig
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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.