

EMS Is On Life Support

BY ARTHUR SCHWARTZ



OUR CITY'S EMERGENCY MEDICAL CORPS IS IN A CRISIS. Photo credit: John Nacion/Star Max/AP.

In January 2017, I woke up one morning and knew something was wrong. I felt like a spear was going through my left shoulder, I was sweating and nauseous. Instantly, I knew it was a heart attack. My wife quickly drove me the one block to what is now Northwell Hospital. They took an EKG and a blood test and said, "You are going to Beth Israel." I was put on a gurney, pushed over to the 11th Street ambulance dock, and loaded into an ambulance. One EMT asked me if I was the labor lawyer they read about in the *Chief Newspaper*. I said yes, and asked if I was having a heart attack. (No one had said the words to me at Northwell.) "Yes," the smiling EMT said, "we'll get you to B.I. fast."

Ten minutes later they rolled me through some doors, into an elevator and to the cath lab where the door was locked. Back into

the elevator, down to emergency where my EMTs started yelling, "What the F... How can your cath lab be locked?!" The nurse sent us back, the door was opened, I was transferred to an operating table, and sedated. The next thing I knew, the pain was gone and I felt normal.

Part of what saved me was that Beth Israel was close. (That's why I worked hard to keep it open for the next seven years). But my EMTs were key. They not only saved my life, but got me there so quickly that I had no heart damage!

Our city's Emergency Medical Corps is in a crisis. There are over 3,500 FDNY medical technicians and paramedics. The average EMT makes about \$56,000 a year — and that's with lots of overtime. After taxes that's \$3,500 a month. We all know that living on \$3,500/month, including rent,

for one person is tough. And if an EMT has kids? Forget it.

The result, according to Michael Greco, president of Local 2507 AFSCME — which represents the rank and file city EMS workers — is that over the next year more than 900 will leave to seek higher pay and better benefits as firefighters. Although EMTs and paramedics are part of the Fire Department, firefighters start at \$56,000 per year. EMTs top out at around \$60,000 per year after five years and most leave after four. According to the *NY Times* some EMS workers have ended up in homeless shelters or sleeping in their cars.

What has happened with the hemorrhaging of EMS workers? The average ambulance response time for life threatening emergencies was 11 minutes and 21 seconds in 2025,

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Dapolito Demo Plans Threaten Landmark Protections

BY ANDREW BERMAN

More than 60 years ago, NYC passed its landmarks law to ensure our city's architecturally and historically significant buildings would be preserved. A large chunk of Greenwich Village is protected this way. It is the reason everything from the iconic Jefferson Market Library to the early 19th century rowhouses lining dozens of neighborhood streets survive. But if the NYC Parks Department gets its way, those protections will soon be rendered almost meaningless.

For more than two years, the Parks Department has been pursuing demolition of the landmarked Tony Dapolito Recreation Center at Carmine Street and Seventh Avenue South. Built in 1908 as a public bathhouse, sections were added in the 1920s and 30s under Mayor LaGuardia to provide accessible recreational facilities to the public. It admirably did so for over a century, attracting a broad cross-section of New Yorkers. Closed since *continued on page 3*



VILLAGE PRESERVATION Executive Director Andrew Berman, above, speaking at a rally calling for the preservation of the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center in 2025. Photo credit: Village Preservation.

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Speak Loudly and Carry a Big Message

An interview with NYC historian Robert Snyder

BY LIZ THOMSON & CLIFF PEARSON

This year's Village Trip festival, September 25 – October 4, celebrates the Revolutionary Voices that have emerged from Greenwich Village and the East Village/Lower East Side, shaping arts, culture, and politics since the U.S. declared independence. Robert Snyder, professor emeritus of American Studies and Journalism at Rutgers University and former Manhattan borough historian, recently talked about some of these voices with Liz Thomson and Cliff Pearson, joint artistic directors of the festival. What follows is an edited version of their conversation.



ROBERT SNYDER, above. Photo courtesy of The Village Trip.

Thomson & Pearson: Why do you think so many pioneering artists and activists have lived or worked in the Village?

Snyder: Greenwich Village's reputation as a center for dissent is dated to the early years of the 20th century, when a whole generation of artists and activists was drawn there by cheap rents, easy transit connections, and proximity to the Lower East Side, Little Italy, New York University and settlement houses. There was a ferment in these years. It was powerfully present in movements against high levels of corporate power, movements for workers' rights, women's rights, freedom of expression and artistic creativity. All these coursed together and intersected in fascinating ways.

And one movement affected the others.

Yes, there was a multiplier effect. The same people might go to a Mabel Dodge salon, walk on a picket line, hang out in a cafe, create art. All these things came together, intersecting in ways that cross-fertilized lives and communities. I think the physical appearance of the Village has something to do with this. It's not on the grid. You feel that you are in a place that's somewhat outside the general logic of modern New York. That can be exciting.

In the early 19th century, the Village was a place of mansions and wealth.

The history of Manhattan Island in the 19th century is the history of affluent people moving ever further north to stay remote from poor people, immigrants and working people in lower Manhattan. So, the Village,

in some sense, by the early 20th century, is well behind the cutting edge of wealth. It's open for a new kind of settlement that's going to distinguish it in new ways.

What connects all the colorful characters and the movements?

For a long time, New York City has been a place where people go to reinvent themselves. And that means something different to everyone. If you're a landless day laborer in southern Italy, maybe you came in 1900 to work on a construction job, make some money, live in the South Village, and then go back to Italy and try to buy some land. If you're a small-town kid in the Midwest who is really bored with life on a main street that seems impossibly parochial, moving to New York City is a way to break free. By 1910, 1920, no neighborhood advertised that more conspicuously than Greenwich Village. It also attracted people who had political ambitions. Socialists, radicals, and anarchists of many stripes all found their way to the Village in the early 20th century. Latin American radicals had an enclave at the northern end of Thompson Street, just south of Washington Square. It's ironic that while the United States was descending into the worst of Jim Crow, Afro-Latino radicals in the Village were dreaming of a free Cuba that would be devoid of racism and slavery.

How can the Village maintain or reaffirm its role as a creative center?

If young artists can't afford to live in the Village, it's important to sustain institutions that provide incubators for them. My daughter acted in a center on the edge of Washington Square. I wrote a book at the Writers' Center on Broadway. We need places where people can work on creative projects and bring them to fruition. To incubate new creative talent, it's important to have venues for performance, like cafes and cabarets, small stages where productions can be put on without huge fixed costs. When you put on a festival in New York City, you have no trouble finding creative people. But finding spaces — that's the hard part.

What are some revolutionary Village voices that may deserve more attention?

I've always been drawn to the radicals and reformers of the early 20th century because they all confronted the challenges of economics, politics, and cultural life that still bedevil us today. But they confronted them with a tremendous sense of optimism. Some of their hopes were dashed in the Red Scare that followed World War I and then in the era of McCarthyism. But they didn't disappear. And the idea that there were sanctuaries in the city where you could go with a dissenting idea remained an important one. The Village was one of them. Harlem was another. It's important to remember the activism for LGBTQ rights dates to the Stone-



THE WEST STREET AND NORTH RIVER PIERS, New York City. Credit: New York Public Library.

wall era and AIDS activism dates to the '80s. These were strongly grounded in the Village.

In the aftermath of the George Floyd killing, many protests happened at Washington Square Park.

Washington Square Park remains a gathering place for protest that has few counterparts in New York City. People naturally gravitate there when something's happening. They know they'll be with like-minded individuals.

Your book *When the City Stopped*, tells the stories of the people who kept the city going during the pandemic. How did COVID impact the Village?

In a neighborhood that's famed for entertainment and nightlife, it drove people indoors. I think the crisis in commercial real estate and in-person businesses that hit New York City during and since COVID is also present in the Village. When I walk around there today, I see lots more empty storefronts than is healthy. And prior to COVID, places were closing because they were priced out. The Village specialized in quirky stores that sold clothing, musical instruments, records, books, and culinary items you couldn't easily find anywhere else. Once those stores close, it's hard to bring them back.

What were some of the other crises that affected the Village?

The Village has a reputation for being welcoming and tolerant. It's a place where anything goes, but there have always been exceptions to that rule. For example, interracial couples could be seen around the jazz scene, around the Beat scene. But in certain parts of the Village, they were not welcomed. My cousin grew up in the West Village in the '40s when it was a neighborhood of Irish and Italian longshoremen. Her neighbors were not thrilled when her first boyfriend was Puerto Rican.

It's amazing how the waterfront has changed over the last 20 years. Back then, the piers were pretty rough and known for its gay cruising scene.

No place in New York City has changed more

dramatically than the West Village waterfront. In the 1940s, it's still an active waterfront with working piers. It's a place where work and residence are integrated really closely. Patterns of shipping change, though. Container shipping rises. The port moves to the New Jersey side, where it can accommodate those big cranes. All of a sudden, the piers are underused. The nightlife scene has gone as well. There's recreational space there and new forms of housing. The old piers, that world is gone.

What can a festival like the Village Trip realistically do for Greenwich Village?

It can remind people of the best legacies of its history and launch them into the future in new ways. That happens when we give performance space and recognition to artists and thinkers who are coming up with new ideas or finding new ways to look at the past that enable us to envision a different future than the one that we have already. New York City, for much of the 20th century, was concentrated on the future. It was a monument to the idea that the future could be better than the past. That idea ran strongly through Greenwich Village. We don't want to lose that. We don't want to just be a museum of what was. We should embrace what is and think about nurturing it as we move forward.

There are different layers of history and some older neighborhoods, like the Village, have a lot of layers. You can go back to Lenape times. The ability to see all of those layers enriches your understanding of not only the past, but also the present.

I don't see a change in the housing prices. But I think if people play their cards right, the Village can remain a cultural center. A place that incubates new ideas, draws in new people, makes new visions of the future possible in both political and artistic terms. If that can happen, I think that'll be a good thing.

Join Rob Snyder for Reading the Declaration of Independence: A Conversation About Our Past and Present at 4 p.m. on September 26. More details: www.TheVillageTrip.com

My View of the Village

BY ROGER PARADISO

THE LOST VILLAGE

Parcelle Wine in the Village (below) is closing and Vodka Bar will be moving in. Photo: Nadia Chauchury and Melissa McCart.



THE VILLAGE GATE



A LITTLE PIECE OF THE VILLAGE GATE survives on Bleecker. Photo by Roger Paradiso.

Art D'Lugoff opened the Village Gate, a jazz club in Greenwich Village, in 1958. It became an iconic home for jazz and theater performances. When disco came in and NYC was going broke in the 1970s, the city ran a campaign to modernize old structures for fire safety. This strained D'Lugoff as he was always straddling the fiscal red line. Finally, with the rising rents, code infractions and costs crashing down on him, he declared bankruptcy and the Village Gate closed in 1994. He searched for a new space but he ran out of time and died in 1996 with a broken heart. But his legacy shines brightly. The Village Gate sign was hung at the corner of Bleecker and Thompson suspended above the CVS sign. The magic was there for a time, but now it is gone.

MEAN STREETS

GREENWICH VILLAGE, Manhattan (WABC) — Police are searching for a man wanted in a shooting in Greenwich Village. A 41-year-old man was shot in the stomach before 1 a.m. along LaGuardia Place. He was taken to the hospital in stable condition.

GREENWICH VILLAGE, Manhattan (WABC) — Two teenage girls were shot and a third was slashed in a burst of violence

between two rival groups of teenagers just blocks from the Stonewall Inn, as Pride festivities were winding down. The victims are in stable condition.

GREENWICH VILLAGE, Manhattan (WABC) — A man was stabbed in the abdomen during a dispute in Washington Square Park. The victim, who is said to be in his twenties, was taken to the hospital where he is expected to be okay.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR OF THE WASHINGTON SQUARE NEWS

Excerpts from May 14, 2026



An attempt to grapple with saying goodbye to the most fulfilling thing I've ever done.

By Dharma Niles, Editor-in-Chief

The satisfaction of student journalism that held me captive was accompanied by the infuriating nature of the news itself. My time at WSN was marked by a transformative three years for the university, and for higher education at large. NYU, a school that once lauded itself as a space for progressive opinions — with former President Andrew Hamilton openly condemning the Trump administration's policies multiple times — now remains eerily silent when presented with any semblance of controversy.

The university punished student protesters until movements went quiet, built walls to shut down future demonstrations, unprecedentedly restricted speech and attire at graduations, and uplifted one of the country's loudest critics of progressive culture in the name of viewpoint diversity. It's easy to chalk some political ambiguity up to federal funding threats, or concerns that Barron Trump might decide to find a different business school — but the renovations and policy changes took place long before Donald Trump's re-election, and they said more about the school than the political climate.

From student suspensions to (President) Mills refusal to join hundreds of college presidents condemning Trump, I spent my tenure watching a university I was once naively proud to attend do everything in its power to isolate itself from students. Every week brought a new policy change and poor excuse. And in some ways, that's what kept me addicted: Once you start paying attention, institutional failure becomes hard to look away from.

Dapolito *continued from page 1*

2020, its chances of a long-promised rebirth may soon end, despite a campaign promise by Mayor Mamdani to bring it back to life.

The Parks Department's long-running argument for demolition has been that the center is too deteriorated and outdated for renovation to be feasible. Given how many older, more compromised and more complicated buildings have been rescued and restored, this argument was never convincing on its face. But earlier this year, a Freedom of Information request revealed the Parks Department was lying. Their own experts had found the building was completely fixable and had even drawn up plans to do so. Ultimately, the leadership of the city agency just didn't want to do it.

With this information exposed, and a new mayor who promised to repair the building, we expected that at an August meeting about the fate of the center — with Mayor Mamdani's newly-appointed parks commissioner — we'd hear plans for renovation and reopening. Instead, despite every elected official representing the area — along with Community Board 2 — supporting preservation, the parks commissioner indicated they were moving full steam ahead with demolition plans. They were even planning to use over \$100 million that had been allocated for the center's renovation for demolition and other building plans in the area. With the claim that the building was beyond repair no longer defensible, the commissioner was at least somewhat more honest — she said it was simply "more efficient" to demolish the center and start completely over with a new one in the base of a planned 400 ft. tall tower across the street at 388 Hudson Street. The completion date is TBD, but clearly many years off.

When asked why the Parks Department wasn't planning to repair and reopen the beloved landmarked center with recreational facilities as the community and its representatives have long called for — and simply locating additional and expanded recreational facilities in the new building across the street — the commissioner merely indicated that demolition was more convenient.

If this plan moves ahead, it will not only mean the loss of a beloved space with deep roots in the community. It will mean gutting the very rules that keep our neighborhood and so many historic places in our city intact.

Landmarked buildings such as the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center are only supposed to be demolished if they are infeasible to maintain or if the owner can't afford to do so. The money has already been allocated to repair the building and local elected officials have said they would work to ensure any additional funds needed are provided. Parks Department documents show the building can be repaired. Lowering the bar for demolition from financial or physical infeasibility to simply what's more convenient or purportedly more efficient puts any landmarked building at risk. Who wouldn't be able to argue that it might be more efficient, or convenient, to just knock down the old structure and start anew, rather than



Martin B Torre, Registered Architect

New York State License #027770-1
Former NYC Dept of Buildings Plan Examiner
605 East 14th Street 8A New York NY 10009
(646) 257-9081 www.mbtorrearchitects.com

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make repairs? Ironically, that's exactly the argument that was made for the demolition of Penn Station, the destruction of which is now universally recognized as a horrible mistake that spurred the passage of the very landmarks law which this action would then undermine.

How would this happen? The ultimate decision to allow demolition would fall to the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), a sister NYC governmental agency to the Parks Department, both of which fall under the control of the mayor. If the Parks Department moves ahead with its demolition plans, it means they've gotten buy-in from City Hall and LPC approval is all but guaranteed.

The implications couldn't be broader. Local city-owned landmarks like Washington Square Arch and Jefferson Market Library, which enjoy the exact same protections as Dapolito, and which have required extensive and complex repairs and renovations over the years, could be subject to the exact same argument that demolition is more efficient than preservation. And that's to say nothing of the literally thousands of privately-owned buildings, in Greenwich Village and around the city, that it could just as easily be argued are more efficient to destroy than repair.

While reflective of a troubling state of affairs in our city, this plan is far from a fait accompli. Go to villagepreservation.org/dapolito to find out the latest and how to help, including sending messages to the mayor and parks commissioner demanding campaign promises are kept and the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center is restored.



EMS WORKERS DEMAND RESPECT, 1987. Photo courtesy of Richard McAllen, retired senior EMT.

EMS *continued from page 1*

up from 8 minutes and 58 seconds in 2018. This year, according to the *Times*, that number is on track to exceed 12 minutes.

And you know why the city “can’t” address the problem? Because the city engages in what is known as “pattern bargaining.” No one union can get more than another, even when there is a critical need. After 47 years of being a union lawyer, and being part of the negotiation process, I can tell you this: the city’s public employee unions, principally District Council 37 (an amalgam of 52 unions including Local 2507) is the weakest, almost powerless union in the city. And the city always bargains with DC 37 first and that sets a pattern for the unions in DC 37 as well as all the other non-uniformed unions. Case in point — DC 37 hasn’t bargained a contract with a raise for city workers in four years! That means EMS employees haven’t had a raise since 2022.

Can the problem be solved?

It’s an interesting question. In June, the City Council gave a \$10,000 one-time bonus to school paraprofessionals, who make even less than EMS employees. Our mayor, usually radical-of-thought, took the position that since the bonus wasn’t part of the bargaining process, it violated Taylor Law, the state’s public employee labor law. He didn’t veto the bill, but once it was enacted because it was not vetoed in 30 days, he filed suit to declare the \$10,000 bonus illegal.

When the City Council passed that bonus bill (called a “Respect Check”) observers wondered why it went to paras and not EMS employees. Paras work a shorter week and a shorter year. They can get summers off or earn money in summer school. Paras earn slightly more per hour than newly hired emergency medical specialist trainees and newly certified EMTs. Why weren’t EMTs given a similar “unlawful raise?”

The irony is that the FDNY EMS charges for ambulance service. Typically, EMS brings in hundreds of millions of dollars. As of July

1, the minimum charge for an ambulance trip to the hospital was \$1,793, up from \$900 in 2021. For Fiscal Year 2025 the Mayor’s Management Report states that there were 1,101,801 medical emergencies resulting in ambulance transports. During that period, the Comptroller’s Office shows that EMS accrued over \$500 million for NYC. The current EMS budget including salaries, equipment and supplies is \$417 million.

Mayor Mamdani has shown some smarts in addressing some of the city’s other glaring needs, like affordable housing, childcare, and low reading scores in our schools. But this one is life and death.

I know EMS saved my life. When my mother died last year, she was still breathing when I called EMS. It will always irk me whether she might be here if they had arrived five minutes faster. But weak unions and simplistic assertions that state law “doesn’t allow it” are B.S. The mayor and the City Council need to address this crisis — and if the laws “don’t allow it” — change the damn laws!

Housing Expert Condemns City’s “Affordable Housing” Plans

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

Housing expert Ron Shiffman condemned the current “affordable housing” agenda as a “Trojan horse” benefiting real estate developers, a stealth strategy that actually results in luxury condos, higher rents, and displacement of low-income renters. The longtime city planner — who co-founded the pioneering Pratt Center for Community Development — spoke at a July 22 webinar co-sponsored by groups including Village Preservation, the Greenwich Village historic preservation group, and the City Club, the citywide civic group.

Shiffman contended that relying on for-profit developers to lead the way in the financing of supposedly affordable housing is an inherently problematic, backwards approach. “We have to reframe the debate,” he declared, arguing that housing should be seen as a crucial component of a larger goal. “How are we building a viable community?... A strong community has to have day care centers. It has to have schools. It has to have a social and economic and physical infrastructure that supports that housing.” Today’s narrow reliance on for-profit developers, he said, results in building luxury units for investors who may not even live in them.

“Affordable housing” as a gentrification tool

Shiffman noted that “affordable housing” is a federal term that encompasses units with rents far out of reach for moderate- and low-income New York City renters. By federal “affordable housing” standards, a three-person family with a \$152,700 household income is middle-income and eligible for affordable housing — yet the core need in New York City is housing for families whose household income is \$50,000 or less.

He explained that when for-profit developers are responsible for financing affordable housing, their juggling act to achieve tax breaks and maximum profit may include



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Village Preservation East Village and Special Projects Director Juan Rivero; Housing Expert Ron Shiffman; and Village Preservation Executive Director Andrew Berman, during the July 22nd webinar. Screenshot credit: Village Preservation.

constructing the most expensive so-called affordable housing alongside the most potentially profitable ultra-luxury housing. This results in “affordable housing” that’s not affordable to people in the neighborhood, which becomes “whiter and wealthier.”

Shiffman noted that when he helped invent the concept of “inclusionary zoning,” the goal was to promote diversity and desegregation. Now the concept has morphed into a tool for financing real estate development, and is instead increasing gentrification: “A lot of the Latino families who used to be in Bushwick and elsewhere in Brooklyn are now going all the way to Pennsylvania, and we’re beginning to see a drop in the African-American population of New York City, and many of the working class and union members.”

The costs of privatizing “social housing”

Shiffman called public housing and publicly-supported affordable housing “social housing” and described the costs of relying on for-profit entities for financing. For example, when social housing is not directly subsidized by government, the developer’s borrowing costs are passed on to tenants.

Shiffman suggested that we can choose to

do better. “In one day in Iran,” he said, we spend “enough money to build 1,400 units of public housing in New York City, debt-free, where the only cost of running the buildings would be the maintenance of the operation.”

And even without federal help, he suggested, we have options. One option he advocated was the return of an already-on-the-books New York state tax — the stock transfer tax — which charges one tenth of one percent on financial transactions. Collected from 1905 to 1981, the tax is today “instantly rebated.” Shiffman estimated that reinstating it would raise \$18 billion a year in state revenue.

Quantity at the expense of quality and community planning

Shiffman noted that when for-profit real estate developers gain control of housing development, community planning — encouraged by the city charter — repeatedly goes by the wayside. Brooklyn’s Atlantic Yards Community Development Corporation, launched in 2003, and demanding \$700 million in additional public subsidies, is proposing to shoehorn “affordable housing” into a 70-story tower at the already-dense juncture of Atlantic, Flatbush, and Fourth avenues —

a plan that would not be completed until at least 2040. Noting that tower living is inhospitable for children, Shiffman decried the focus on housing quantity and not quality.

He also condemned the recent approval of mostly-luxury tower housing in Bushwick Inlet, overriding previous community planning. This project uses public land that is currently a feeding and nesting ground for birds, where there were plans for a museum to commemorate the USS Monitor, the revolutionary iron-clad Civil War battleship that was built there.

A purely quantitative approach to housing development imperils other goals such as economic development. Shiffman cited the contested Brooklyn Maritime Terminal waterfront housing plan, which he described as not only costly from an environmental and climate-change perspective but also a short-sighted rejection of “the Blue Highway,” a plan to transform the waterfront into an active shipping route, replacing trucks in moving goods downstate from upstate New York.

Shiffman contrasted the mayor’s inclusionary vision to his actions. “He wants to serve the people of the City of New York, every ethnic group, every economic group and we need to...hold him accountable to that rhetoric.” The mayor’s “neoliberal” tactics, Shiffman suggested, were at direct odds with his vision. Still, the longtime planner expressed hope, characterizing the administration as full of “capable people.” Singling out Deputy Mayor for Housing Leila Bozorg, he said, “She understands housing. She’s doing the wrong thing, but if you forced her, she’d know how to do the right thing [if you...] provided her with the resources.”

The webinar, available on Village Preservation’s YouTube channel, is part of the group’s continuing series on housing policy, Cracks in the YIMBY Consensus.

CHARACTERS OF THE VILLAGE

Keen Berger – Educator, Author, Community Leader

BY BRIAN AND JOY PAPE

So often, the people joining their neighbors in a continuing effort to make our community better are those volunteering without compensation. They bring their life experience to the effort. We've known Keen Berger for many years as a fellow Community Board 2 member and friend of Doris Deither (a beloved Village activist). We now share our interview with our readers.

What should our community know about you?

My major claim to fame is that I am the author of the bestselling developmental psychology textbooks in the world. I'm now working on the seventh edition of one of my books, where the last chapter begins and ends with Doris Deither and beautiful Washington Square Park (WSP). I am 84 years old, which shocks me, since I've been the same person all my life and I've been doing different things all my life. Certainly, a big piece is the Village which is clearly the most interesting stuff.

Born and raised in Minnesota, our family moved to D.C. for my father's work in the Eisenhower administration and we later moved to Philadelphia. My college years were spent at Stanford and Harvard. Then I came to New York City where I met my husband, Martin Berger, in the human rights movement. A year and a half later we got married and lived on Washington Place until we bought a house on Bedford Street. We had four children: Bethany, Rachel, El-lisa, and Sarah. All of them graduated from PS 3, right in the heart of the West Village.

So in terms of my mothering and life, the Village and PS 3 were very important. I became a class parent and our parent group was involved choosing the next superintendent of District 2. This district encompasses



KEEN WITH HER GRANDSON ISAAC sitting on her lap at The Neighborhood School. Photo credit: Ed Yutkowitz.

about half of Manhattan, including the West and East Village and a lot of the upper East and West side. We lobbied for Anthony Alvarado who won the election. At this point, I'm not just a PS 3 parent, I'm a public school advocate. We wanted to make it clear we were pro-gay rights. We also spent many years fighting for a new middle school, which eventually became 75 Morton. I also served on the school board for six years.

Besides my family and career priorities, I've had four major focuses in my life including the school board and public education.

Judson Church is a Village institution that's more than just a religious center. It sponsors many study groups and community outreach programs. It is an architectural

gem and landmark. I continue my involvement as a member of the personnel committee, where we are now interviewing for a second Sunday school teacher.

I got actively involved with the Village Independent Democrat club after my husband was district leader. I went on to become district leader for 12 years and I continue my involvement with Democratic politics.

Community Board 2 (CB2) is one of the most vital and active community boards in the city. I am a long-time member, having served as an officer and chair of the education committee. It was important that CB2 endorse the 75 Morton project and made that funding request to the city as its #1 priority, leading to its creation.

What is your best memory?

I would walk to Judson Church with Doris Deither, having little talks as we walked through WSP. She was married 60 years ago at Judson Church by Howard Moody and she was well known there. We walked through the northwest corner of the park, which had the homeless and drug people who sat on benches. She was very friendly to everybody. There's a wonderful story of when she was walking alone and some man came up to her asking for money. Another man who knew her came up and said, "Doris, let me walk you home." When the first man left, it was clear that they were all watching out for Doris. It was a wonderful time there. She also had the squirrels and the pigeons as friends, but it was really Doris at home.

Favorite things in the Village?

We liked the Blue Mill Restaurant but it closed. Shoppin's General Store, on the corner of Bedford and Morton streets, sold the oatmeal chocolate chip cookies that I made and became famous for. *The New Yorker's* Calvin "Bud" Trillin wrote a story about general stores and mentioned my cookies by name. My cookies now go to Judson for our monthly coffee hour and to the Union Square "Blue Busses." I like that the cookies are still part of who I am.

WSP is very interesting and it's my favorite place because it's accessible to everyone. (See Berger's article in the August *Village View*.) It's always been a place for demonstrations and protests and musicians. There's a bench commemorated to Doris who worked hard to save the open music scene at WSP.

You can find Berger's book: *Grandmothering: Building Strong Ties With Every Generation* at Amazon.com and booksellers.

DOLLY PARTON

1946-2026

WHATA LIFE

What a legacy . Thank you, Dolly.

Photo: RCA Records, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

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Anthony Paradiso, Roger Paradiso

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Kelly Craig
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OPINION

Weaponized Narcissism

BY THOMAS LAMIA



OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL PORTRAIT of Donald J. Trump.
Photo via Wikimedia Commons.

In my March essay (*Enemy of the People*) I wrote of behaviors the American Psychiatric Association characterize as narcissism. *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* was my source. As I said in March, Donald Trump exhibits substantially all of the behaviors listed, including those for malignant narcissism.

Should the president's narcissism disqualify him from holding office? If so, how should the issue be assessed and resolved?

The importance of our process for electing leaders requires that personality traits which may affect judgment must be fair game. The rough and tumble of electoral politics demands it. What might fairly be called character assassination when whispered to a neighbor over the back fence is accepted in political give and take. Abusive, intemperate, and even false statements in political combat are protected by the 1964 Supreme Court ruling in *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*. This holds with particular effect to disqualifying health conditions.

Per the *DSM*, "Narcissistic personality disorder involves a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy." A list of specific traits follows this general description. In March, I noted that Trump showed signs of each of these traits.

My thesis is that Trump appears to have a malignant narcissistic personality disorder that he uses as a weapon to control others who fear the consequences of challenging his authority. He is hostage to his disorder. It causes him to act on impulse, avoid accountability, seek vengeance, claim unearned credit, demand obeisance and bully resisters. Those in his orbit or subject to his power are hostage to his erratic behavior, which induces fear of unacceptable consequences. This fear leads to avoidance behavior, flattery, concessions, insincere praise, and lavish gifts. Everyone in his orbit is hostage to his need for admiration and his lack of empathy. We, the people, are in his orbit.

The Supreme Court's grant of immunity from prosecution for a broadly defined set of "official acts" has given the president previously unknown and unimagined license for dominance. There is a growing list of individuals and institutions affected: law firms, universities, public institutions, foreign countries, state and local governments, Congress, and others. By his will alone, with no consultation or approval from Congress or administrative staff, he has radicalized the executive branch of the federal government. Constitutional limits

requiring joint action with Congress to pass laws and spend money have been set to the side. Trump has used executive orders and defensive litigation when challenged. His actions reflect a personal vision of presidential power as virtually unrestrained by Congress and the "rule of law."

To rule without answering to higher authority is catnip for the narcissist. Legal challenges have brought mixed results. A definitive rejection of a final court order has yet to come, but cases are still pending.

The president seeks ultimate personal control of government because anything less would be contrary to his claim to be a "unitary executive" — a claim that serves his self-image of superior status. When challenged, he says, "I am the president of the United States." End of argument.

Trump has accommodated his handlers and critics when convenient and has used his control of executive branch agencies — Defense, Treasury, State, Justice, Management and Budget, and others, to craft orders that take immediate effect. No input or objections from White House staff, executive agencies, the vice president, or the cabinet appear to be necessary — all report to him and independence is not tolerated.

He has taken an oath to "preserve, protect and defend" the Constitution. His actions on January 6, 2021, in support of an insurrection against the constitutionally mandated procedure for determining his successor belie the sincerity of that oath.

All this bears the mark of a disrupter president defiantly ignorant or dismissive of constitutional limits on his power. The resolution of several legal challenges to his authority — those that have found their way onto the court's "shadow docket" — hang fire for now, as does the effect of mid-term elections and the likely cataclysm they will cause.

The president has been able to carry out his programs primarily by executive order. His several vanity construction projects, put in motion without congressional approval or input, appear to be in limbo. The Congress and the courts stand by. Nevertheless, the president persists in support of his challenged actions. These are his chosen works, his desired legacy, the gamut from unauthorized war to mindless cancellation of university research. His works, if done, are theoretically subject to reversal at some future time when the Supreme Court or Congress or the people find an enforceable way to undo his crusade to remake the country in his own image.

The dilemma is that the president's narcissism is impervious to corrective efforts. Narcissism is not a crime or a disqualifying condition to serving as president. The Constitution's 25th Amendment does provide a remedy (removal of a president), but the mechanics necessary are wholly impracticable in this case, as the vice president and a majority of cabinet officers would have to agree to the removal. Impeachment is also impracticable, until the House and two-thirds of the Senate are in friendly hands.

The president's narcissism must be openly discussed — for this president and future presidents. A personality disorder that removes or substantially dilutes the moral compass of a president is a matter of grave public concern and requires serious and timely effort to educate the public and to find a practical, politically neutral solution. The risks posed by having a malignant narcissist in charge of the nuclear arsenal is simply unacceptable. This personality disorder of the president must be addressed openly and urgently.

Comments can be addressed to the writer at
trlamia15@gmail.com.

OPINION

HIV Spreads Like Wildfires in Gay Bathhouses

BY DOMINICK ROMEO

Syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea — just to name a few — are diseases that run rampant in bathhouses. Back during the AIDS epidemic of the 80s, to get a knock at your door from the Department of Health could mean life or death. To come home from the bathhouses and find a letter from DOH taped next to the peephole — for all your neighbors to see — saying that you may have been exposed to an infection and that you need to reach out to them ASAP, was embarrassing to say the least. Even though HIV and other diseases are more manageable today, we should not allow bathhouses to exist and infect the next generation of our LGBT youth and straight communities.

Recently, Assembly Member Tony Simone (who is up for re-election in November — running against Cristina Fontanelli from Hell's Kitchen) and Senator Erik Bottcher, introduced a bill that would legalize gay bathhouses and allow them to reopen.

This is insane!!! There is nothing good that goes on at bathhouses. To claim that we can make them safer, flies in the face of over 100,000 lives that were lost in New York City during the AIDS epidemic. These bathhouses have been connected to countless outbreaks through the years and they were the epicenter for STDs and STIs that have spread through all five boroughs.

This bill is a clear and present danger to straight and gay communities and should not be passed!

We have seen this trickery before — in the mid-80s — when our city wanted to close bathhouses down at the peak of the AIDS epidemic. That's when the owners of these establishments were dubbed "The Merchants of Death" by gay men who demanded that these places be closed due to the harm they caused. Those Merchants of Death pleaded with city officials not to close them and — as a measure of persuasion — the owners offered to provide educational literature on safer sex, along with a single condom and some lube. Although



27 WEST 20TH STREET was once the home of the Westside Club — the infamous gay bathhouse that closed in 2021.

the free lube was most certainly used, very few gay men used condoms at these bathhouses and the literature was often thrown away.

Ironically, today there are some gay men in their 50s, 60s and 70s who are in favor of this legislation. They are the same ones who survived the AIDS epidemic. They seem to have no problem trading the memories of loved ones — who died a horrible death from AIDS — for an enchanted-evening with a 20 or 30-year-old. Those young people, are unable to make rational decisions for themselves, especially if they are under the influence of meth, "special-K," and painkillers. These are some of the narcotics sold by drug dealers who work at bathhouses today.

This is another attempt by Big Pharma (and local wealthy gay leaders who plan to invest in bathhouses) to promote PEP and PrEP to our gay youth, instead of promoting the use of condoms. Politicians and wealthy leaders in the LGBT community are once again claiming that bathhouses can be used as hubs to preach the gospel of safer sex, when we all know exactly what goes on there. Safe sex is the fur-

thest thing on the minds of gay men who rent a room or a locker at these places.

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a medication made by Gilead Sciences that's prescribed to reduce the risk of getting HIV from sex and is said to be 99% effective "when used as prescribed." The problem with these types of daily doses and six-month injectables is that when you are young you tend not to take your meds as directed. You think you are invincible at that age.

The newer HIV medications, including PEP (postexposure prophylaxis) and PrEP, come with their fair share of side-effects — everything from blood clots to kidney failure to cancer. We know viruses have mutated in the past and the drugs to treat these infections and HIV have become useless. So why would we as a community advocate for the use of these medications over the use of condoms? Because Big Pharma is now in the pockets of our politicians and leaders within our gay community!

These drugs are being marketed to gay youth in their teens, 20s, and 30s, who are not even HIV positive, but who have a risk of contracting the virus that causes AIDS. Those youths would need to take these drugs for the remainder of their lives — or until they find a long-term relationship with someone who is also HIV negative — which has become increasingly difficult to find.

We should not be teaching this behavior to our youth. We should be shielding them from the horrors and the fears of our past, while sharing stories of the misery that these places once brought us. We should be sharing the memories of gay men who are no longer with us because of AIDS and other diseases that spread like wildfires throughout these bathhouses in the 70s and 80s, and even today.

Follow the money! Ask each politician and leader in our gay community supporting this bill to show us their tax returns and investment portfolios for the last 15 years!

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH US — WRITE TO EDITOR@VILLAGEVIEW.NYC

Book Review: On Call by Anthony Fauci

BY ALEC PRUCHNICKI, M.D.

Reviewing a 455-page autobiography is pretty daunting, but the recent show trial for Dr. Anthony Fauci and the accusation of contempt of Congress, made an immediate response necessary.

He started with a brief description of growing up in a relatively middle class Italian American family in New York City. There was also a description of how his pharmacist father instilled in him the value of serving others which continued with the Jesuits at Holy Cross. His academic career included being first in his class in elementary and medical schools.

He went from the U.S. Public Health Service to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) where he worked in the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). He eventually headed the NIAID and concentrated on vaccine development.

Fauci's story is not just an inside look at medical catastrophes — it shows how disaster can sometimes make changes in medical policies necessary. Usually, research on new diseases and their treatments takes many years. When AIDS arose in the early

1980s, the disease typically killed victims within a year and long-term research was a poor option. After many verbal attacks by the gay community and AIDS activists — and numerous accusations of "murderer" — he spoke with the same advocates and was able to design expedited research options. Personal accounts are a key part of his story and recur throughout the book. As a physician, I can tell you that most doctors, including myself, at some time during their career must make life or death decisions with inadequate information because of time pressure. Fauci had to do it for an entire epidemic.

As bad as the AIDS epidemic was, it was soon followed by other potential plagues such as SARS, MERS, an anthrax scare, seasonal influenza variations, and ZIKA, all of which he describes in detail. But progress was made on all of these or spread was prevented. As a person who has lost friends and family to AIDS, and also treated people with AIDS over the years, I can attest that today's antiviral treatments have transformed the hopelessness that marked the early 1980s,

turning the disease into a chronic, treatable condition for many patients.

Curing a disease is not the best form of medicine. The absence of a disease is the best outcome and that's why vaccines for AIDS, and lots of other diseases, is still the goal throughout medicine. The rapid onset of COVID from a few cases to a pandemic — and its subsequent control with effective vaccines — illustrates this. Like most medications, vaccines are seldom 100% effective but they can often bring down disease occurrence by orders of magnitude.

One of the values of this book is that it doesn't just give the history of each of these new diseases and Fauci's involvement with them. It also gives a description of how effective public health initiatives can be. He goes into detail on his relationships with Presidents Bush, Clinton, and Obama, and their staffs and how effective cooperation worked well — even with Vice President Dick Cheney. He shows how international cooperation, such as the PEPFAR program, can save lives by the millions. These results

came about because of his ability to work directly with these presidents and their staffs.

Then came Trump. Initially things seemed cordial. But as President Trump started to make public announcements that were overly optimistic or just plain wrong, Fauci was faced with a dilemma. He had to give truthful information to the public and not just private information to the president. Trump didn't like hearing bad news and really didn't like having bad news told to the public when it contradicted him. Eventually, the relationship became distant, then cold, then hostile. Other right wing politicians like Senator Rand Paul and trade negotiator Peter Navarro set their sights on Fauci — which continues to this day. Trump followers hurled "murderer" at him, sometimes accompanied by death threats to the doctor and his family. The book was written in 2024 and the hostility has continued even after Fauci's retirement and Trump's re-election, but it is not recounted in detail here.

The description of the scientific community's culture is included. Fauci describes

continued on page 11

Kudos from Contemporaries, Upon Ann Northrop's Retirement as Co-Host of *Gay USA*

COMPILED BY SCOTT STIFFLER

Proof of a life well-lived came in the form of swift and swooning responses, upon soliciting testimonials in praise of Ann Northrop. The widely influential journalist, broadcaster, educator, activist, strategist, and golfer recently retired as co-host of the long-running weekly broadcast Gay USA (gayusatv.org).

Note: The below testimonials are a partial representation of Northrop tribute content published on August 12, 2026 (LGBTQ-CommunityNews.nyc)

The Origin Story of Co-Hosts Ann & Andy

Prior to joining me as a co-host on Gay USA in 1996, Ann was a correspondent on *Gay City News'* coverage of the 1996 Democratic and Republican conventions. And when my lesbian co-host on *Gay USA*, Lee Sharmat, moved on, Ann was really the only person I considered to replace her. Had she not said "Yes," the show in its current form might have ended then and there. But she did agree, and we've been co-hosting virtually every week for the last 30 years.

Ann's depth of knowledge on LGBTQ and other progressive issues is unmatched. Combined with her extensive experience in professional journalism, her ability to clearly convey the news and what it means for our communities is what makes *Gay USA* work...No one can replace Ann – but going forward, I'll bring diverse community members to the table and keep *Gay USA* going.

— Andy Humm (co-host, *Gay USA*)

Great Strength and Determination

There are few people who have been more influential to the gay activist community than Ann. She arrived on the scene with skills that helped us plan and execute safe and effective direct actions, and journalist skills that taught us how to talk to and through the mainstream media... She's whip smart, generous, and remains calm at all times. What a gift! I look forward to having Ann join (Rise and Resist) in the streets now that she has the luxury of free time.

— Jackie Rudin (activist, documentarian, founding member of Rise and Resist)

Her Purpose Has Always Been to Uplift

The debt NYC's LGBTQIA activist community owes to Ann Northrop is incalculable. Her strategic thinking, intelligence, media savvy, and wit have been invaluable to so many of our movements. Whether it was with Gays Against Guns, Rise and Resist, The Reclaim Pride Coalition and Queer Liberation March, or Chelsea Neighbors United, when Ann has stepped up or been called upon to offer her leadership, expertise, or advice, she has approached the work without an iota of self-aggrandizement.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Andy Humm and Ann Northrop, during their tenure as co-hosts of the weekly *Gay USA* broadcast. Photo by Bill Bahlman.

Excerpts From Ann Northrop's August 4 Speech at Julius' Bar

I said on the last show that there are two things that were important to me in doing the show – truth and insight. And that was always my goal; for us to tell the truth and to be able to explain things in a way that taught people why it was important to pay attention and how to understand what was going on. And I think we've accomplished that week after week, not perfectly, but that has been a thrill every week...

It's so much fun [the activism]. It's so interesting. It is fascinating work, and I really wish more people would see that, so that they would get out in the streets and do it...And that's the message I always want to send, that people should do it for their own satisfaction – because then the ripple effect is just amazing. And I think that's proved by all of you showing up tonight, which just, you know, delights me and makes me very, very, very, happy.



LEFT TO RIGHT: "Gay USA" co-hosts Chris Cooper, Jay W. Walker, Bill Bahlman (associate producer, rear), Cathy Marino-Thomas, Ann Northrop, and Mick Meenan. Photo by Andy Humm.

Her purpose has always been to uplift the organizations and activists with whom she has worked. I am so grateful to Ann for her tutelage; but more so for her friendship.

— Jay W. Walker (co-founder, Queer Liberation March, occasional *Gay USA* co-host)

Chelsea Neighbors United in Praise of Ann Northrop

Ann became someone we turned to at Penn South when we needed help to activate folks to action...Ann joined the leadership of our neighborhood Hands Off group, Chelsea Neighbors United, despite the health challenge she was facing. In fact, she chaired our very first Town Hall meeting (attended by 200 Chelsea residents) when the threat of ICE emerged. She has always been a voice for fearless activism.

— Margarita Aguilar & Trudy Rudnick

Probably Mad at Her Coffee

I once wrote that when Ann Northrop wakes up, she's probably mad at her coffee. I bet she even yells at it. And I always felt that stance was important because we have enough complacent people in the world (and also enough keyboard warriors), so the Anns of our community have always been the ones pushing things forward and making waves and actually making a difference...She also happens to have a great sense of humor, by the way.

— Michael Musto (columnist, author, pundit)

Unfailing Welcoming

Ann is rightly lauded for her commitment to LGBTQ rights activism – but many of us got to know Ann on the public golf courses of New York City and environs. A member since 2009, Ann is an anchor, leader, and mentor to the LPGA Amateurs New York City chapter... Over time we learned that she "had a television show" or was "organizing an action." But when on the golf course, Ann is all about the golf. And our chapter has been the richer for it. It would be selfish, but truthful, to say that we are looking forward to Ann having more time for golf post-*Gay USA*!

— Marie Trexler

A Beautiful Thing to Witness

My admiration for you runs deep. Getting to know you more closely through co-hosting *Gay USA* has only deepened that admiration. Your contributions to our community and your unwavering commitment to honesty are a beautiful thing to witness – especially when they're delivered with your signature sarcasm and good humor. ... Having you as a role model has taught me to step up, even when it's scary.

— Cathy Marino-Thomas (board member of the Gilbert Baker Foundation and occasional *Gay USA* co-host)

“Ring the bell! Ring the bell! Ring the bell!”

On 9/11, parishioners at St. Luke in the Fields Church realized that “We’re all Ministers.”

BY RICHARD KIGEL



“THIS IS EXACTLY WHERE I WAS STANDING ON THAT DAY,” Reverend Ade said. This image of the World Trade Center (as seen from Greenwich and Christopher streets), conveys a sense of rebirth, resurrection and renewal, and affirms St. Luke’s position at the heart of the West Village. *Photo courtesy of Richard Kigel.*

When great trauma strikes, Fred Rogers says always look for the helpers. From 1996 to 2003, Reverend Dan Ade was the associate priest at St. Luke in the Fields Church in Manhattan’s West Village. In this interview, he recalled how parishioners stepped up to help on 9/11 — the deadliest day in New York City history. Here is the story in his own words.

September 11, 2001 was a Tuesday. It was my first day in charge at St. Luke’s. Our rector, Roger Ferlo, was on sabbatical in Italy.

I got to St. Luke’s early. Bob, our buildings and grounds manager, told me he heard that a plane just hit the World Trade Center. I remembered that a small plane hit the Empire

State Building many years before so I didn’t think anything of it.

When I went out to Hudson Street everyone was looking downtown. You could see a lot of smoke. Immediately I went back to my office in the parish house and saw that my answering machine was blowing up.

I went back out and when I got to the corner of Greenwich Street and Christopher looking south, I saw the gash in the side of the World Trade Center. It was a big cutout in the shape of a plane on the top floors.

Then I saw the second plane crash into the building. It was like a black moving dot. All of a sudden, it hit the side of the building. There was an enormous explosion.

I went back to the church and opened the doors. I said to Bob, “Ring the bell! Ring the bell. Ring the bell!” I told him to ring the bell for ten minutes to let everybody know that the church was open. Poor Bob was exhausted.

We were close to ground zero. There was the smell — like burning metallic citrus.

We could hear all the fire engines and police sirens. I saw soldiers in the streets. Checkpoints on the street. We were in a war zone. It was like something out of a movie.

I have a very clear memory of standing on the steps of the church and seeing a car coming up Hudson Street with all this stuff falling off behind it. It was white and it looked like it was covered with snow.

I had to talk to the headmistress of St.

Luke’s School about evacuating the children because the school was right next to a PATH station which we thought might also be bombed. We decided that the best policy was to keep the children in their classrooms until parents came to pick them up.

The head of the school, Ann Mellow, was a great center of calm. She led a service for the children and we offered the eucharist. They were singing “We Shall Overcome.” There is a verse that goes “We are not afraid...”

And I remember thinking “I’m afraid.”

There were tons of people in the church, around the church, at the school trying to get their kids. Some of the parents worked downtown. Later we learned that one parent was killed.

The parish house was full, people on the phone, wanting to use the bathroom. A woman had been downtown with her kids and after the planes crashed, she put them in a shopping cart and brought them uptown. Now she was worried that she stole the cart. I told her not to worry about that.

We left the church open and people filed in and out all day. On the spur of the moment we held a noonday prayer service. The church was full.

That evening at 6:30 p.m. we had a solemn mass. It was a Litany of Supplication in times of disaster. We all wore black vestments. After the mass was over people stayed on the steps talking for a long time. I

told them they should all go home to be with their families.

The Sunday after that was extraordinary. We dressed for Good Friday. The church was super packed. If you didn’t come to church that day you never go to church. Our local fire department lost almost all their men. So the collections that day went to the fund for the widows and orphans.

I preached and celebrated and cried. There were a lot of tears.

When I did a funeral for someone who was killed, his wife was so distraught she wanted his ashes next to her. We usually keep the ashes under a veil on the altar. But I thought, if this helps you that’s what we’re here for.

It took a long time for people to get over this. One time I was in my office and I heard a police siren and ambulance going by and I thought, “Oh, I must be better because I didn’t jump.”

Years later people let me know how grateful they were for St. Luke’s. It was our profound history of service that never missed a beat.

People pulled together. There was the sense of “I’m a representative of the gospel even though I don’t have a plastic collar around my neck.” That foundation was built in. People recognized that we’re all ministers.

Over the years when I talked about this, I have often said how fortunate we all were to find ourselves at the foot of the cross looking into the face of our wounded and vulnerable God. And that is where we found our hope.

The Thought Police

BY ROGER PARADISO

“People simply disappeared, always during the night. Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out, your one-time existence was denied and then forgotten. You were abolished, annihilated: vaporized was the usual word.” — George Orwell 1984

If Orwell only knew the devious battle to control minds in 2026. The Thought Police want to control everything about you for political gain and consumer impulses. The taxpayer is paying for this dark government stuff. Is it so we allow the gods of Global Internet Finance aka Project 2025, make the most money and have the most influence in our lives?

According to *Democracy Forward*, “Project 2025’s immigration agenda also doubles down on its overall attack on civil servants and the separation of powers to consolidate authority in the Executive branch.” Didn’t we see this with Hitler and other fascist rulers? ICE is a militia for Donald Trump and his financiers. How could we have elected this group? They did it using social media

and algorithms. And they are still doing it. It was no accident that Trump and Elon Musk got together with DOGE attacking civil servants. And it is no surprise that Trump’s militia, ICE, is a criminal organization hunting immigrants all over the country. Why is there no oversight from Congress or protests from SCOTUS?

“The truth is algorithms don’t just reflect your choices — they guide them. So next time when you keep scrolling, watching movies or buying an extra item from Flipkart or an e-commerce website, ask yourself: “Did I really choose this — or did the algorithm choose for me?”

— MEDIUM

Here is an Artificial Intelligence description of how algorithms shape the political landscape. AI Overview—Algorithms act as digital gatekeepers in politics, shaping what citizens see and how campaigns are run. They curate personalized social media feeds by prioritizing high-engagement, often polarizing content, and help political campaigns target voters with precision messaging based on digital footprints and data analytics.

Social Media and the Engagement Loop
Platforms rely on algorithms to keep users online longer. Because “outrage” and extreme emotions drive the most likes, shares, and comments, systems automatically amplify this content. Algorithms feed users content that reinforces their exposure to opposing views.

Micro-targeting

By burying traditional news and boosting emotional, activist-driven content, algorithms can subtly shift political attitudes. Instead of casting a wide net, modern campaigns use algorithms for micro-targeting. By analyzing voter data, browsing habits, and purchase history, political teams categorize voters into specific micro-demographics often for persuasion and fundraising.

Misinformation and Foreign Interference
Because algorithms prioritize engagement over accuracy, they are vulnerable to exploitation. Coordinated networks and foreign intelligence services use bots to artificially inflate the visibility of manipulative or polarizing narratives, spreading misinformation rapidly before elections.

AND NOW X

“The platform, just like every social media platform, is designed with two aims — to maintain engagement of users and to propagate the posts of paid members... In X, the ‘Premium’ Verified members tends to be a more rightward leaning crowd. This has been characterized by an increase in the politicization of the platform...”

— MEDIUM Yash’s stories.

Trump and Musk are in an X supported grift game financed by some of the richest people in the country. They believe all is fair in capitalism and politics. There are some who say that capitalism has no right to control free elections in a democracy by broadcasting propaganda over the internet and by donating large sums of money to candidates.

We won’t be able to pass election reforms while Trump and Musk control the Senate, Supreme Court and the social media world. However, we should fight with our own algorithms and grass roots campaigns about jobs, the economy, affordability and all the wars he screwed up. This is how you win and how you stop the corporate takeover of America.

VILLAGE BLUEPRINTS – BUILDING THE NEIGHBORHOOD’S FUTURE

140 Jane Condo Nearing Completion

BY BRIAN J PAPE, AIA

Some of the most interesting new edifices in New York have been built along the platinum shore of West Street. Famous architects have plied their talents from Canal Street up to 23rd Street, among them Frank Gehry, Rick Cook, Jean Nouvel, Norman Foster, Richard Meier, and Bjarke Ingels. More new buildings are generally replacing parking lots or smaller taxpayer buildings outside the historic districts.

We’ve watched the progress of 140 Jane Street since it was announced in 2021. We reported on the slow early start on the foundation work and how, in 2024, things picked up.

Developed by Aurora Capital Associates, listing 134 Jane Street LLC as the owner, designed by Leroy Street Studio (LSS) with BSKS Architects as executive architects, the 11-story, 120-foot-tall, 105,804 square foot structure is finally nearing completion, much to the relief of the many buyers who invested well before this stage.

According to multiple reports, the developer Robert Cayre announced that one-third of the units were sold last year, and all but one is now in contract. In 2024, Penthouse 8 sold for \$87.5 million for its 6-bedroom, 7-bath, 9,540 square-foot layout. If the condo closes for its listing price, the deal will set a new record for downtown Manhattan, exceeding a unit at the Witkoff Group’s 150 Charles that sold in 2024 for \$60 million, roughly double what they paid for it nine years earlier.

Apartment 7N sold for \$23.5 million for its 4-bedroom, 5-bath, 4,600 square-foot layout. PH10 is a 5-bedroom, 6-bath, 5,511 square foot unit marketed at \$41 million. Unit 2N has four bedrooms and 4.5 baths and went into contract for almost \$20 million.

The designers have paid special attention to taking advantage of this prime site and its river views. While its location blocks views of previous residences to the east, special care



DESIGN RENDERINGS depict a base of wide arches framing the retail frontage and entrance to a motor court on the left, looking east from West Street. The exterior is composed of light-gray concrete, expansive grids of floor-to-ceiling windows, and angled surfaces on the northern elevation along Jane Street, adding depth to the facade. A setback at the eighth floor will have a landscaped terrace, with another terrace around the tall mechanical bulkhead. Note how the west façade nearly matches the façade and setbacks of the neighboring building to the right, a nice expression of contextuality. The restored historic Jane Hotel is on the left in the picture. *Credit: Leroy Street Studio*

has been taken to angle the floor-to-ceiling windows slightly toward the west, though still an oblique view of the river. Incorporating balconies or terraces adds more opportunities to capture the river views. In an unusual gesture to reinforce the river views, a tower-like projection of rooms in the northwest corner of the building gives west-facing windows to floors 8-11. The precast concrete window surrounds have a stone-like texture with just enough mass to keep the perception of an all-glass building at bay. The heavy masonry arched openings at the ground floor will give pedestrians a radically different perception of the building than looking at it from a distance. When the developers are targeting the super-wealthy, the focus turns from housing issues to prestige gestures. Protecting the residents from “street people” demands a car court and concealed parking, amenities that seldom will be used, and a location that is becoming rarer and rarer.

LSS’s website describes the work as, “Inspired by the rich heritage and architectural significance of the West Village, 140 Jane Street is a celebration of craft and context. Nestled on a tranquil cobblestone street with views of the Hudson River, this boutique condominium features 15 immaculate residences designed inside and out by Leroy Street Studio. With unique conservatories, private balconies, or terraces in nearly all residences, 140 Jane Street provides an enticing blend of indoor and outdoor living, alongside a collection of beautifully appointed amenities including a porte-cochere, automated parking garage, lap pool, hot tub, and private park.”

The site is at the end of Jane Street where Tenth Avenue, Lincoln Highway, and West Street converge, and the only area where West Street is a local-only street in front of the Jane Hotel. Completion is estimated for early 2027.

11 West 13th Street Joins New Construction in Greenwich Village

BY BRIAN J PAPE, AIA

Even through the depths of the Covid pandemic, construction continued in Greenwich Village on both remodelings and new buildings. Despite statements from developers that there are no more construction sites available in the Village, somehow, new projects keep springing up.

One of the most controversial new construction projects is 11 West 13th Street (formerly addressed as 5 West 13th Street) for The Greenwich Spire, a 30-story residential skyscraper. The through-lot property is alternately addressed as 8–12 West 14th Street which is near Fifth Avenue and Union Square. The project is being led by Legion Investment Group and EJS Group, which bought the site for \$57 million in 2024.

Village Preservation has been calling attention to the fact that the builders of the 30-story tower are utilizing “City of Yes” zoning provisions in its construction which they say has shifted real estate regulations too far in favor of developers, while disregarding objections from local residents. It was hawked to citizens as a way incentivize the construction of affordable housing to address the city’s critical housing crisis.

In an October 6, 2025 *OUR TOWN* article, Andrew Berman, executive director of Village Preservation explains that his letter to Department of Buildings Commissioner James “Jimmy” Oddo is essentially structured as the endorsement of a previous letter sent by George Janes, a zoning specialist.

Janes makes a few elaborate objections to the zoning plans as is, the first being that “the building does not comply with ZR-35 61.” It violates “street wall base minimum height” requirements and the proposal’s facade is not aligned with the character of the buildings next to it. This is important for “contextual zoning” regulations intended to create a consis-



THE RENDERING of The Greenwich Spire at 11 West 13th Street depicts the top of the tower, previewing the views of the Lower Manhattan skyline. A tiered crown steps upward to the south. According to a *YIMBY* article on July 23, 2026, the building appears to feature a triplex penthouse on the final three stories, as indicated by a spiral staircase enclosed in a glass curtain wall with a curved corner. *Credit: Binyan Studios for KPF Architects.*

tent visual experience for locals.

Secondly, Janes and Berman argue that the proposal “has too much [residential] floor area.” They contend that some of the floor area has not been properly accounted for, which would put it out of compliance with zoning laws.

Finally, they argue that the developer’s zoning application has a “deficient” zoning drawing (“ZD1”), which is a visual illustration of the proposed tower. “The ZD1 is not complete and does not follow the required instructions for such

a drawing, containing errors and omissions which should have prompted a rejection by the Department,” Berman wrote in his letter to the DOB.

Janes wrote that “this applicant ignored the [ZD1] guide and submitted a document that clearly does not meet the Department’s minimum requirements,” noting that there “are substantial differences of hundreds of square feet per floor [emphasis his].”

On this basis alone, Janes adds, the DOB should reject the developer’s zoning application. The Department of Buildings rejected the challenge, saying that the proposed super-luxury tower does in fact conform.

The 538-foot-tall tower, reportedly ten times taller than many buildings in the surrounding area, is slated to complete construction in 2028. It will offer 34 condo units rather than 36, with an average scope of 3,200 square feet, and stand out sharply from the low-rise buildings that currently characterize the Greenwich Village neighborhood — and includes no affordable housing. Residential amenities will include a gym, swimming pool, golf simulator, pet grooming room, library and lounge, seven enclosed parking spaces, and bicycle storage.

There is a two-story podium instead of a typical five-story front along West 14th Street, leading to a motor courtyard with a porte-cochere entrance. The car port “paints a pretty accurate picture of what this place is gonna be like,” Berman said, and “also bumps up against one of the main tenets of ‘City of Yes,’ which was a move away from car-centric development and towards transit-oriented development.” The development site is located in close proximity to Union Square,

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Farewell to the SoHo REI

BY AUDREY HILL

As the sun set one Thursday evening in late July, the SoHo REI shut its doors for the last time. Its passing did not go unremarked — hundreds of New Yorkers stopped by a makeshift shrine near the entrance of the store, which had peered out of the bottom floors of the iconic Puck Building for more than 15 years.

Originally planned as a single gathering, the anonymous organizers of the “celebration of life” for the late REI store had to pivot to an all-day vigil due to the overwhelming local interest — almost 500 people RSVPed “yes” and more than 600 were “interested” in the event which was advertised on the platform Partiful.

As the day went by, people gathered a few at a time to leave notes and remembrances, often lingering to hug friends, shed a tear, or gaze up at the building’s iconic red facade. Some even sprinted into the store to do some last minute shopping before disappearing into the warm summer bustle of the city, armed with a hat or camping equipment.

On colorful, overlapping Post-it notes, some mourners bemoaned the loss of the retail giant’s first unionized store, others a rare source of outdoor gear and expertise, and still others deeply regretted the loss of a truly top notch spot to pee in a city sorely lacking in public restrooms. One note read, “THE GREATEST POTTY BREAK IN NYC! No other store will ever compare! REI FOREVA!”

One mourner, Eric Zheng, said he’d been inspired to attend because the store was where he was first able to equip himself and cultivate a burgeoning love for the outdoors. “It’s where I got a lot of the knowledge and gear that I needed to start exploring,” Zheng said, adding that he’d been heartened to see people showing up to the vigil.

Kate and Jocelyn, were some of the 72 workers (the entire staff) at the location whose jobs were cut with the closure. In the last minutes before the store closed for the



THE LAST FEW MOURNERS idle outside the SoHo REI in the minutes after its final closure. Credit: Audrey Hill.

final time, they paused to read and leave remembrances of their own.

Looking at each other and smiling, both said they were grateful for the connections that they’d formed while working there — it’s where the two friends had met — but they were ready to move on. “Working at one place for four years, especially retail — it’s like...yeah, let’s move on, let’s put away the green vest,” Kate said.

In 2022, workers at the SoHo location of REI voted to join the Retail, Wholesale and Development Store Union (RWDSU), making it the first of the company’s more than 200 locations to unionize. Since then, they had been involved in tense negotiations that had largely stalled — and ultimately never ended up ratifying a collective bargaining contract.

The company positions itself as a progressive champion, often donating to causes on the left like protecting public lands and gun safety. It calls itself a co-op because with one \$20 membership fee, customers can get a

small ownership share of the company and have voting power over things like electing board members.

Critics argue that this progressive positioning hasn’t translated into better outcomes for its employees. REI Co-op has drawn criticism from workers and labor advocates for paying unlivable wages, refusing to provide benefits, unfairly terminating workers, and engaging in union busting. According to a *Vice News* article from 2022, before voting to unionize, workers at the SoHo store were forced to listen to anti-union talking points before their morning shifts.

This was clearly top-of-mind for many mourners. “Organized, got punished for it. Yeah workers, BOO REI,” read one unsigned Post-it. Another said, “Solidarity forever! Power to the workers!” right next to a more critical one reading simply, “simpling for capitalism.”

Kate was generally glad to have been in the union. “I think it benefited us, especially with the store closing, they’ve made it so we

could get a decent severance.”

Many of the workers I spoke to said they believed the union organizing could have played a role in REI’s decision to close the store, but also pointed to its dire financial circumstances as another factor. While it’s true the company has been struggling in recent years, it has also been on an upward trajectory. In 2023 it reported \$311 million in net losses, \$156 million in 2024 and \$54 million in 2025. The company itself has said little publicly about the reasoning behind the closure of the SoHo store and doesn’t disclose the finances of individual stores, so much is up to speculation.

In early 2025, Mary Beth Laughton took over as CEO. By October the decision to close the SoHo location, as well as two other locations in Boston and Paramus, was announced — just a week after Laughton outlined her three year plan to get the struggling company back on track. In a statement about the closures, the retailer merely wrote, “As markets and customer needs evolve, we must adapt to position the co-op for long-term success.”

The future remains uncertain for the iconic Puck Building, which is a New York City designated historic landmark. It had many incarnations, from housing the 1800s cartoon magazine *Puck*, to being featured in the television show *Will & Grace*.

The building was acquired in the 1990s by the Kushner family through their real estate firm Kushner Companies. In the 2010s, Jared Kushner, the president’s son-in-law and now our country’s “special envoy for peace,” converted the top two floors into luxury penthouses — one briefly occupied by brother, Josh Kushner, and his wife, model Karlie Kloss.

Recently, another 90,000 square feet was leased to OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT — a move potentially referenced by the eloquent Post-it tribute: “Will miss REI! F*ck AI.”

As of now, the bottom floors remain empty.

13th Street *continued from page 10*

providing convenient access to many subway lines.

Contrary to all that criticism, the architect KPF claims on its website that the design for The Greenwich Spire is “a Contextually Driven Residential Tower. The slender residential tower draws inspiration from the neighborhood character and material palette of Downtown Manhattan.”

“Greenwich Village has always possessed a rare quality — an intimacy that somehow coexists with the grandeur of the city around it,” says KPF Design Principal Trent Tesch. “With The Greenwich Spire, we sought to honor that duality — from

the handcrafted texture of the wire-cut brick facade, which roots the tower in the warmth and craft of the neighborhood, to its slender, setback crown, which claims its place among the most timeless buildings in the Manhattan skyline.”

The project will also include 2,300 square feet of ground-floor retail space with two storefronts. Leroy Street Studio is in charge of interior designs.

Despite the widely opposing expert opinion on just what this zoning and this project is, the Greenwich Spire’s anticipated completion date is mid-2028 and there doesn’t seem to be any impediment to its progress now.

Fauci *continued from page 7*

himself as not political and I can attest that many members of the science community are often apolitical. Also, balancing research and clinical practice is sometimes difficult or impossible. I did this for a while with basic research on Alzheimer’s disease and many clinical duties but eventually had to give up the research.

Accusations against Fauci are numerous and this book addresses them. He has been attacked for his large pensions, but if he had gone into private practice in New York City, he could have made a lot more — and probably avoided death threats. He has been accused of loving the spotlight. But he has always acknowledged coworkers and the book is filled with hundreds of names of people in medicine, government agencies, and politics whom he praises

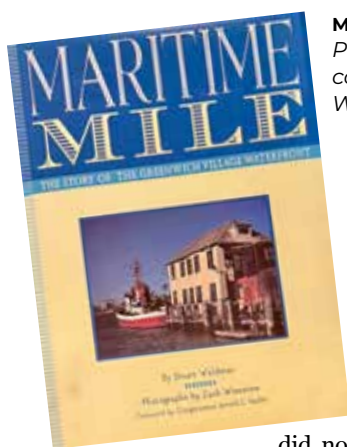
highly. He might like the spotlight, but he doesn’t hog it.

Fauci has been accused of ignoring the possibility that COVID came from a laboratory leak or that it was intentionally strengthened during research. Both of these are extremely unlikely, but with new scientific discoveries you often cannot say something with 100% certainty. There is always a small possibility of other explanations. He discusses this in the book and it is common for scientists to think this way.

So, should you read this book? It’s long with lots of details, names, and scientific discussions. You won’t just get inside gossip but also an understanding of how medical science works or why it sometimes doesn’t work. In the future, there will be more epidemics and this book will help you understand them. That makes it worthwhile.



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MARITIME MILE.
Photo and
cover by Zack
Weinstein.

Up the River

BY RICHARD ERIC WEIGLE

Who knew the phrase “sent up the river” had anything to do with Greenwich Village? I certainly did not until a very interesting book. *Maritime Mile: The Story Of The Greenwich Village Waterfront* by Stuart Waldman and Zack Weinstein was bequeathed to me from the estate of my dear friend, the late Barbara Steinberg of Morton Street. As I opened the book, I noticed numerous names of familiar friends and neighbors who were responsible for its printing and publishing. They include the Barrow Commerce Street Block Association under the superb leadership of Kathy Donaldson, Dave and Helen Gruber, Deborah Glick, Tom Duane, Albert Bennett, Bob Oliver, Christine Quinn, the West Village Tenants Association and many more including my wonderful friend, Barbara Steinberg.

The history of the Maritime Mile, which stretches from 14th St. to Canal St., is fascinating, intriguing and far too complex and expansive to summarize in this article. However, I do recommend reading this enlightening and well written and photographed book.

When the Greenwich Village Historic District was created in 1969, the Landmarks Preservation Committee placed the waterfront

outside its boundaries hoping to add it later — but it never happened. This led to developers wanting to carve up, demolish and develop the area any way they saw fit. Kathy Donaldson explained to me how this book and the years of protests and meetings by concerned Village residents, changed the minds of the mayors and city planners of the 1970s and 80s. They were proposing, among other things, to build a super highway along the Hudson River. Instead, thanks to them, we have the beautiful riverside promenades, parks and multiuse piers that we all can enjoy today.

I would like to share some enlightening facts that I learned from reading this book. I had always believed that the phrase “sent up the river” referred to someone who had committed a crime in lower Manhattan, was tried and convicted, and then sent up the Hudson River by boat to the state prison in Ossining called Sing Sing. All that is true, however, there is another part of the story well worth telling.

In the late 1700s and early 1800s six deadly outbreaks of yellow fever ravaged the city causing thousands of deaths. Many fled north to the greener and less crowded countryside — known then as Greenwich — with cleaner air and purer water from the Minetta Creek. The name Greenwich comes from the Dutch word, Groenwijck, which literally meant “green district.” It was Anglicized by the British after taking over New Amsterdam in 1664. This influx of people, along with the construction of one very important building, were the two largest catalysts for the urban-

ization of Greenwich. That building was Newgate Prison, an enormous building stretching from Christopher St. on the south to Charles Lane on the north, and Greenwich St. on the east to Washington St. on the west — which at that time was adjacent to the Hudson River. The new prison needed staff, a pier built on the Hudson River and Christopher St. to receive shipments of food for the inmates, housing for the laborers and a hotel for the visitors who came, not only to visit inmates, but to see this huge new structure.

So, long before Sing Sing was built in 1825, prisoners, who were sent up the river, were actually being sent only as far as Newgate Prison in Greenwich. The area was later called Greenwich Village because even though it was a part of a larger city, it still retained the feel of a village with its winding streets, lush greenery and quaint houses. Remember that Greenwich Village was always located below the grid of avenues and streets that were proposed in 1811 and would begin on 14th St. and proceed north.

As the population increased, so did crime. The new middle class homeowners no longer relished a prison in their neighborhood, so the prison closed in 1825 making way for Sing Sing to begin construction that same year and perhaps then claim the new destination as a reference for being “sent up the river.”

One cannot overestimate the importance that water has played in the development of New York City. From the entrance at the Atlantic Ocean to the early importance of

shipping on the East River, the Lenape and Algonquian tribes fishing and trading on the Hudson River, and perhaps the most important event of all, the opening of the Erie Canal which not only opened the Midwest, but brought shipping to the Hudson River. More ships meant more piers which meant more jobs and more people.

Reading *Maritime Mile* and writing this article has reaffirmed my gratitude and love for this incredible neighborhood of ours, and all the fascinating and interesting people who have lived and still live here. On every block we have creative, talented, tolerant, intellectual, revolutionary and unique people living in our buildings. A few months ago, my husband, Michael, and I wrote an article entitled *Grove Street — Then and Now* which explored how one little street could have such an impact on history, literature, film, and pop culture. The truth is that every street in Greenwich Village has a history worth researching and recording.

So I implore all the closeted writers out there, as well as the seasoned authors among us, to research your street, write about it and share your findings. How has your street contributed to the legacy of Little Bohemia as it is sometimes called? It is known around the world as a safe haven for misfits, creativity, culture, and tolerance. I know it's not perfect. It is sometimes too loud, too crowded and too crazy, but in my opinion, it is always interesting, never boring, and in all of my travels, I have not found a place where I would rather live.

The Illusion of Restoration—Returning home after 35 years

BY CHRISTINA WINHOLT

For 35 years I carried a quiet belief.

It wasn't something I consciously thought about every day, but it lived beneath the surface: one day I would return home, and something inside me would finally settle. The streets I knew as a child, the language, the sea, the familiar light — all of it would somehow restore the part of me that had remained suspended in time.

Home, I imagined, had been waiting.

Then I returned.

Like many immigrants, I had spent years longing for the place where my story began. We imagine that if we could only go back, something essential would fall into place.

But returning after decades teaches a different lesson. The home we long for is not a place. It is a memory.

The streets are still there, yet somehow smaller. The trees are taller. Familiar buildings have disappeared. Friends have grown older. Lives have unfolded without us. The country remembers our name, but not the life we built somewhere else.

Perhaps the greatest surprise is realizing that the person who left no longer exists either.

Over 35 years, another life quietly took shape. Another language became natural. Different customs, friendships, losses, and

successes reshaped who we were. Without noticing, we became someone our younger selves could never have imagined.

Returning home becomes an encounter between two strangers: the country we left and the person we became.

Then another realization emerges. Perhaps we were never searching for a place at all. Perhaps we were searching for the person we once were in that place.

The child who believed the world was endless. The young adult whose future had not yet been written. We begin to believe that if we return to the landscape, we might somehow return to that earlier version of ourselves.

It is a beautiful illusion. But it is still an illusion.

Life has shaped us in ways no homecoming can undo. We have loved and lost, built careers, raised families, learned new languages, buried parents, celebrated victories, and survived heartbreak.

The goal was never to become who we were again. It was to understand who we have become.

Living abroad changes more than our address. It changes the way we think.

One of the unexpected challenges of returning home is discovering how difficult it can

be to connect with people who never left. Not because one experience is better than another, but because they are fundamentally different. Those who stayed experienced continuity. Immigrants became fluent in adaptation.

Many of us become bilingual or trilingual, but the greatest transformation is not linguistic. It is psychological.

Switching between languages teaches us to switch between perspectives. We become comfortable with complexity. We learn there is rarely only one right way to live. Curiosity replaces certainty, and our understanding of people and cultures expands in ways we never anticipated.

This openness is one of immigration's greatest gifts. It can also be lonely.

Sometimes it feels as though we are translating more than words. We are translating our way of seeing the world.

Psychologists describe “ambiguous loss” — a grief without a clear ending. I wonder whether immigrants experience another kind of grief: “the illusion of restoration” — the hope that returning home will restore what time has transformed.

It cannot.

Because time never paused.

Not for the place.

Not for the people.

Not for us.

Yet there is freedom in accepting that.

Perhaps home was never meant to remain unchanged. Perhaps its purpose was simply to give us roots strong enough to grow elsewhere.

When I walk through my childhood neighborhood today, I no longer expect it to complete me. Instead, I thank it for giving me a beginning.

The memories remain, even if the landscape has changed.

The greatest gift of returning home is not restoration. It is perspective.

We discover that identity is not anchored to one street, one language, or even one country. It is shaped by every place that has welcomed us and every experience that has changed us.

The illusion of restoration eventually gives way to something far more meaningful: the realization that home was never meant to restore us.

It was meant to remind us where our story began.

And perhaps that is what coming home is truly for — not to recover who we once were, but to recognize, with gratitude, who we have become.



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IT'S ALL MY FAULT

The Future of Yesterday

BY DUANE SCOTT CERNY

Did you have a metal character-related lunch box when you were a kid? You know, those colorful 1960s tin litho treasures featuring *Peanuts* or *Superman* or the *Munsters* or *Hogan's Heroes* or *Batman & Robin* or *Get Smart* or *Star Wars* or *Gunsmoke* (if your parents were seriously lame).

Now I've been in the vintage biz nearly 40 odd years and semi-retirement has given me pause to consider how it all started. Selling collectible lunch boxes and thermoses, mostly metal but occasionally vinyl, began my career. Those pre-eBay days would be the foundation of what would much later become a multimillion-dollar business, selling 50s/60s items — now monikered mid-century modern — to famous designers, artists, musicians, actors, and fashionistas of every stripe.

When my partner and I stumbled into the graphic tin lunch box/thermos niche, we found ourselves selling them as fast as we could stock our shelves. Suddenly we were in a fast factory mode, over time retailing thousands of these artful treasures and making some serious coin. We had cheap lunch boxes, mid-level lunch boxes, and super rare pieces such as *Lost in Space*, *Star Trek*, and *The Jetsons* — boxes that today still hold their value. It became our first “collectible” home run and the learning of a serious lesson.

During the time of this resale insanity, we met a gentleman who had one of the most dazzling lunch box collections we had ever seen. For years he had scoured Wisconsin thrift stores and scored lunch box gold countless times. His apartment was wall-to-wall packed floor to ceiling with hundreds of the best examples of scarce and desirable boxes and all in superb condition. It was Disney delirium.



YOU DON'T NEED TO SQUEEZE THE LAST DIME out of a nickel just to say you don't like change. Photo credit: Duane Cerny.

Hanna-Barbera heaven.

I contacted our over-possessive collector innumerable times about buying or consigning his retro riches. “Keep your favorites,” I'd beg. “We'll get top dollar for the rest.” And yes, this collection was his future six-figure IRA account, but it wasn't liquid. It was tin. Still, he couldn't decide. We pitched every angle, offered every opportunity and begged: “Just tell us what you want to do.” The answer was always no.

My partner and I rode the collectible lunch box wave to its crest and then bailed. We had already begun to put our toe in the mid-century modern waters, and that required some serious capital. After selling nearly every lunch box in stock, we stopped buying them cold turkey. We were out and gone. It was if a bell had rung and lunch time was over.

Then guess who called? Yes, the mega lunch box collector. He had finally decided to sell his coveted horde. Out of courtesy, we looked at his lunch boxes once more, but the market was now so flattened it couldn't have been revived with a whiskey-filled *Brady Bunch* thermos. Now a lifetime collection wouldn't finance his end-of-life time. His IRA was DOA.

The life lesson? Know when to run.

Today's red-hot interests are in vintage vinyl (yes, records!), Pyrex, anything owl or tattoo-related, poster and outsider art, mahjong and chess sets, Zippo lighters, and vintage fashions from the 60s to aughts. (Gen Z has made certain new fast fashion dies on the rack.) Vinyl, too, is here to stay. Heck, vinyl pressing plants are churning out tunes once again.

Unless you have a little Nostradamus DNA in you, chances are that things will change without your predictive talents. It's the nature of the business: Style, fashion and trends will always morph and change.

Five years ago, Blenko Glass sold well. Now it blows. Ten years ago, Higgins Glass sold well. Today the Higgs boson gets better particle press. Fifteen years ago, Heywood Wakefield furniture sold for prices as heavy as their manufacture. Today the market has turned to MCM teak and spectacularly trashy tiki. And blond furniture may someday return, but I predict you will assuredly be grayer and blond will remain as dumb.

I could go on, but the topic of what no longer sells can be depressing. And before I get emails charging, “Hey, I'm selling Blenko-Higgins-Heywood for good money ...” let me say,

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

For Them, the Next Table

BY CHURCHILL STONE

MALAPARTE

753 Washington Street (at Bethune St.)

I had been to Malaparte when I was 1 year old—and I am 11 now. My parents recently took me to its sister restaurant, Malatesta, six blocks from us. Malatesta means “head-ache” in Italian, which is a strange name for a restaurant, but my father says he loves both places because the owners are real Italians.

My father still tells the story of what happened that night. The restaurant was packed, and the hostess told my parents the wait would be 90 minutes. Right then, the owner walked outside. He looked at me in my stroller, then at my parents, and then at the hostess.

“How long you tell them?” he asked. “Ninety minutes,” she answered.

He shook his head. “No. For them ees next table.” Then he turned to my father. “You like inside or outside?” He replied, “Outside would be great.”

The owner turned back to the hostess. “For them with baby, the next outside table.”

My father never forgot that. He says it was very Italian, but maybe not something you would expect in New York City. It also proves that sometimes bringing a baby to a restaurant can help you, although usually it does just the opposite.

Ten years later, we finally went to Malaparte on a Saturday night. Malaparte is named after a famous Roman journalist. I think it is a better restaurant name than Malatesta, since most people do not want a headache for dinner.

We had a table for six outside at 7 p.m. The neighborhood restaurant was already busy with couples on dates and groups of friends. There are probably just as many seats outside as inside, so Chef Mauro Campanale must be extremely busy in warm weather.



CHEF MAURO CAMPANALE WITH TWO HAPPY CUSTOMERS on a midsummer night. Photo credit: Webster Stone.

Our server was Marinella, Chef Mauro's wife. She was young, kind, and attentive throughout dinner. Just after we sat down and ordered, warm focaccia arrived with olive oil for dipping.

My sister Charlemagne ordered lemonade, and I ordered an Arnold Palmer. Mine was refreshing, but it tasted more like iced tea than lemonade, so it was not as sweet as I expected. Charlemagne's lemonade was also not very sweet.

We started with the Pane e Pomodoro, which was amazing. It is flatbread with tomatoes and stracciatella di burrata, the creamy inside of a very fancy buffalo mozzarella. It tasted like what pizza might have been before someone actually invented pizza. The warm bread, tomatoes, and soft cheese made

it very kid-friendly, even if the name sounds complicated.

Next came grilled calamari with lots of capers. It tasted good, and the adults loved it, but I prefer fried calamari with fresh lemon juice on top. Grilled calamari looks (and chews) more like a squid, so it is probably more adult-friendly.

The adults also loved the fennel, radicchio, and arugula salad, which they compared to a Caesar salad.

The pasta course was excellent. The *Ma-falde al Pesto* surprised me because I liked it much more than I expected. The pesto was creamy and flavorful without tasting too much like green plants. The *Rigatoni all'Amatriciana* was another favorite. It seemed more grown-up than plain tomato

pasta, but not so grown-up that a kid would not like it, especially because there were crispy bits of *guanciale* (it's like bacon) everywhere in the dish. And we also had *Caprellacci Caprese* which was like little ravioli of buffalo ricotta with roasted tomato sauce and basil. This one looks so good, but I didn't like it nearly as much as the others, but somehow the adults loved it even more.

Then came the *Lasagna Bolognese*, one of the best dishes of the night. It was rich, cheesy, gooey, and full of flavor. Everyone loved it.

After another round of clean plates, the *Prime Striploin Steak* arrived. Chef Mauro served it medium rare which was so perfect. It was tender, juicy, and so tasty. It was a sirloin, but somehow tasted like a ribeye, my favorite steak. *Charlemagne* was full, but she wanted some too. I could not eat as much as I wanted either. That's because everything before was so good.

Chef Mauro came outside to greet the guests, and I took a photograph with him. My father had eaten at Malaparte a few times in the past. He said this dinner was much better, so Chef Mauro deserves a lot of credit.

For dessert, we had chocolate lava cake with vanilla ice cream and tiramisu (which means “pick me up” in Italian since it has coffee in it). The lava cake disappeared in about five seconds—warm chocolate poured in the middle with cold ice cream on top. The tiramisu is more for adults and we brought it back for my grandma who loved it.

Malaparte reminded me of eating in Italy—it was like eating at a restaurant on a small street in Rome.

Ten years ago, as a baby at Malatesta, I got us the table. Now, at Malaparte, I am finally old enough to sit at the table and enjoy their incredible food. Thank you, Chef Mauro.

The Symbolic Ethnicity of San Gennaro

BY ALEC PRUCHNICKI

When new immigrants come to the United States, whether they are ethnic, racial, religious, or political groups, they are immediately faced with the need to assimilate into American society. There are some changes that occur which are common to all groups. Their family language, if different from American English, usually disappears by the second or third generation born in the U.S. Educational levels usually approach U.S. standards by a few generations also. Economic success follows education and the “American dream” of upward mobility spurs most immigrants to be hard working. They often take jobs and work in conditions that many who are American-born avoid.

But many people are still proud of their family origins and show it in a variety of ways. Sometimes there is an effort to retain the original language. Sometimes it is food or food-related traditions. It could include participa-

tion in ethnic celebrations such as parades, wearing “Kiss Me I'm...” buttons, donating to philanthropic organizations or religious institutions even when not participating in the religion itself. There are many other symbolic expressions of pride. In 1979, sociologist Herbert Gans described this as “symbolic ethnicity.” This need not involve every member of a particular group and participation can vary. When I asked one of the doormen of my building, an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, if he had gone to the recent Dominican parade he stated, “No, I know who I am.”

Retaining or changing political affiliations can vary. Leftist origins can become conservative and conservative traditions can become liberal after a few generations of involvement with American political issues. Sometimes this is controversial. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has been criticized for its support of Israel and U.S. politi-

cians who support Israel. But whether AIPAC is justified in its support or criticized, its actions are not completely unique. During the Cold War, there were many political action organizations advocating for various positions in relation to the Soviet Union. After Russia invaded Ukraine some Ukrainian and Polish restaurants on the Lower East Side of Manhattan started fund raising drives for the Kiev government (Veselka and the Ukrainian East Village Restaurant, both on Second Avenue). During the civil war in Northern Ireland (“The Troubles”) Irish American organizations raised funds, mostly humanitarian, to support people there even though Irish immigration to the U.S. peaked in the 1850s. Similar support by anti-communist Cubans, Chinese, and Koreans have occurred over the years.

My own ethnic symbolism has taken many forms. My surname is Polish but my mother was Italian American. Both Polish

and Italian ancestors were grandparents, with both my parents born in the U.S. But I grew up closer to my Italian side of the family and in a predominantly Italian neighborhood—Arthur Avenue in the Bronx. I speak neither language except for the names of a few foods, curse words, and hand gestures (that's the Italian side). The red sauce Italian food I grew up on, and still love, is a Southern Italian tradition and consistent with my grandparents' roots in Naples.

My family was never very religious but I was raised as a Catholic and received my first Communion and Confirmation at St. Martin of Tours in the Bronx. My early education was in public schools but when I went to Fordham University, I left the Church after learning more about its teachings. (Although that is a story for another day some residual Catholicism remains.) When I get together for family

continued on page 17

Raffetto's, 120 Years Young

BY JACK LOURIE

RAFFETTO'S

144 West Houston Street

What are some fun facts about this pasta shop? They have had a pasta machine that cuts noodles ("the guillotine") since 1916. They have had same phone number since 1920. And, they have a sales ledger, where Andrew Raffetto affectionately realized that the grandparents of one of his childhood friends owed his grandfather, Marcello Raffetto, \$6.50.

The shop was opened in 1906 by Marcello, who purchased the building for \$10,000. At that time, there had been a wave of Italian immigration. And with them came their incredible pasta. Raffetto's was a beacon, serving both the neighborhood and the greater tri-state area. Lacking refrigeration, Marcello dried his store's pasta, then shipped it.

Romana "Nana" Raffetto, Marcello's daughter, was the second generation in the Raffetto's line. She brought her famous recipes when it was her turn to run the shop. And though Romana passed in 2018, her legacy lingers, from the homemade sauces to the enticingly sharp aroma of Genoa toast. Even the wooden chair where she rested in her later years remains in place, ensuring that her presence is always felt.

"Once we told her how to measure things and write it down properly so that we could recreate her recipe," recalled Andrew, Romana's son and third generation store owner. "We [tried] her recipe, and it came out terrible. And we did it two or three times. Finally, she came back from the country house upstate. And the second she took her cup, not the official measuring cup, we realized what had happened. So funny."

Andrew set the stage for the family business to be enjoyed by even more loyal cus-



RAFFETTO'S, 120 YEARS YOUNG: Andrew and Sarah Raffetto stand behind their famous counter. Photo credit: Eric Jong.

tomers when he started a Raffetto's factory in New Jersey. He steered the store through the 2008 recession as well as COVID. Another concern was keeping up with fad diets like the low-carb Atkins diet popular in the early 2000s and today's interest in GLP-1. They hope that folks will still reach for the lobster ravioli. But the nationwide shipping, thanks to the factory, helps their products reach wider audiences.

Andrew's daughter and fourth generation Raffetto, Sarah, has put her new stamp on the business. She finds creative ways to make the business money, while staying true to the family's cultural heritage. She has introduced sandwiches, gelato, merch, and even the "Petite Pasta Joint," where pop-up dinners happen in Raffetto's after the shop closes.

Sarah gets to share bits of the family history throughout these meals.

To celebrate Raffetto's turning 120, Andrew and I walked around the neighborhood. He talked with a longing, happy appreciation of what the Village was when he was raising Sarah. He reminisced about the Children's Aid Society playground, Shel Silverstein's disparate target audiences, and the tiny old office of a longtime neighborhood dentist, Dr. Lois Jackson. We went inside Porto Rico, a provider of coffee and tea that was founded in 1907, one year after Raffetto's. (Andrew jokingly calls the store, "their little sibling.") He could point to tile patterns in the ceiling that marked when the store was half its current size.

The infrastructure of the community was

strong enough for Andrew to navigate being a single dad, relying on Children's Aid for its after-school programs. "I appreciated having an after-school program for \$300 for three months. And for \$5 extra, they would walk (each kid) from school to here," he said. It's where Sarah befriended Andrew's future stepdaughter, and how he met his future wife, another single parent. They now have three kids together. "I won't be retiring anytime soon," Andrew chuckled.

But when it comes to creating or maintaining a business these days, Andrew holds a lot of sympathy for his neighbors, both old and new. "It's hard for any restaurant or bar to get past that five- or ten-year lease. And I don't understand certain things. Like you just raised the rent and you drove someone away. And then you have zero rent. Why don't you just make 10, 12, or 14 thousand a year? Why'd you make it 20? I don't know, there must be a piece of the puzzle I'm missing — because mathematically, I don't follow it."

In many ways this confusion makes sense for Raffetto's because while they are always looking for new ways to expand their business, they don't look to pass costs on to their consumers. They are their own landlords, their pasta is cheap, and even items available in grocery stores, manage to be the cheapest in Raffetto's.

In many ways, Andrew has seen a different Greenwich Village than the one we see today. He remembers the gratitude that he felt for places such as Children's Aid. So, when given the choice, he charges as little as possible.

Something tells me that Andrew won't be following up to get the \$6.50 his friend's grandfather owed Marcello Raffetto.

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VILLAGE PET PAGES

BY JOY PAPE AND BRIAN PAPE

Driving With Your Pet

We were recently car shopping and were pleasantly surprised to see how pet friendly car companies have become. This led us to check information at the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and The Center for Pet Safety (CPS).

Here is information provided in the AVMA article, *Pet Safety in Vehicles*.

Many of us enjoy taking our pets with us in the car or truck. But did you know that doing so can threaten our pet's safety — and even our own — if we don't take appropriate precautions? Two behaviors are especially risky: leaving pets in vehicles and allowing them to be loose when driving.

Pets and hot (or cold) vehicles

Temperature fluctuations can make it dangerous to leave your pet unattended in your car. Your vehicle can quickly reach a temperature that puts your pet at risk of serious illness or death — even on a day that doesn't seem that hot, and even if the car is left in the shade. And cracking the windows makes no difference.

The numbers back it up. Research on vehicle safety for children indicates that the temperature inside your vehicle can rise about 20 degrees Fahrenheit in just 10 minutes, and almost 30 degrees in 20 minutes. The longer you wait, the higher the temperature climbs. At one hour, your vehicle's interior temperature can be more than 40 degrees higher than the outside temperature. Even on a 70-degree day, that's more than 110 degrees inside your vehicle!

Cold weather can also threaten pets left in vehicles. Remember: leaving a pet in a vehicle on a chilly day isn't much better than leaving them outdoors. Pets that are young, old, ill, or thin are particularly susceptible to cold environments and should never be left in cold cars.

Unrestrained pets while driving

The dangers to pets in cars don't stop with temperatures. Just as we should always wear seatbelts to protect ourselves in case of a traffic accident, so should our pets always be properly restrained. This means using an appropriate safety harness, crate, or carrier to keep them — and you — safe. And you shouldn't drive a pickup truck with a pet loose in the truck bed.

Here are a few risks posed by loose pets while you're driving:

- A small pet could crawl down in the footwell, interfering with your use of the brake or accelerator pedal.
- A large pet leaning across your lap can interfere with your view of the road.
- During a collision, unrestrained pets may be crushed by deployed airbags



DOG IN THE BACK SEAT with the CPS Certified® harness and seat belts. Credit: Paw Prosper.

or thrown out or through windows or windshields.

- Pickup trucks pose an extra risk. Driving with your dog unrestrained in the bed of a pickup truck is not only dan-

gerous, it's also illegal in many states. Besides potential injury from airborne debris, dogs can fall or jump from the truck bed and be injured or killed on impact or be struck by other traffic.

Although using an appropriate-length tether might seem like a good remedy, the tether could tangle, injure, or even choke your dog.

- Another risky venture is allowing your dog to hang their head out of windows during a ride. We get it: this practice can be fun for you both. But fun can quickly lead to regret if your dog injures their head from flying debris, is thrown from the window on an abrupt turn or stop, or jumps from the window, risking injury to themselves and anyone who tries to catch them.

Keep pets safe in vehicles

Before putting your pet in your vehicle, ask yourself if you really need to take the animal with you. If the answer is no, leave your pet safely at home.

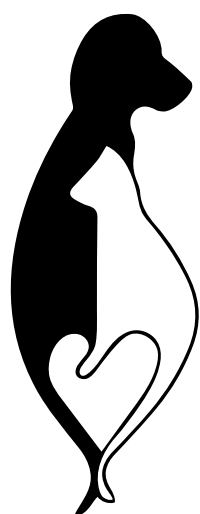
- Use an appropriate restraining device:
- Vehicle harnesses (usually for dogs only) are different from the harness you might use to walk your dog. Look for crash-tested harnesses that work with your vehicle's seat belt and keep your dog sitting upright versus lying down.
- If using a crate or carrier, choose one that's big enough to allow your pet to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably. Position the crate/carrier as near to the center of the vehicle as possible and secure it in place to prevent movement.
- If you must transport your dog in the bed of a pickup truck, use a secured and appropriately sized and ventilated dog kennel.
- Never leave your pet alone in a parked vehicle, no matter what the outdoor temperature or how long you think you'll be gone.

Center for Pet Safety Recommendations

- Verify cargo anchor strength with your vehicle manufacturer.
- Avoid extension tethers and zipline-style products.
- Use CPS Certified® harnesses, crates, or carriers whenever possible.
- Anchor crates with strength-rated straps.
- Review CPS research and certified product lists before purchasing.

Finally, it's not safe for your pet to sit in the passenger seat. They are safer and can still have an enjoyable ride in the back seat.

Learn more at:
avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/petcare/pets-vehicles



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New Book Celebrates “Diamond and Juba,” Irish and Black New York Youths Who Pioneered Popular Dance

BY PHYLLIS ECKHAUS

What made early America great? Beyond vast natural resources, slavery, and land theft, beyond a vision of radical equality that jumpstarted social mobility for white men, one could argue that what made the pre-Civil War United States such a seething cauldron of energy was the generative friction of races and cultures. In other words, multiculturalism.

This is a key take-away from April Masten’s fascinating tale of two youths who danced with such fantastic skill in the public gathering places of Lower Manhattan that P.T. Barnum took them on to become their exploitative impresario. *Diamond and Juba: The Raucous World of 19th-Century Challenge Dancing* follows Irish-American John Diamond and African-American William Henry Lane, known as Juba, from their early days by the docks to their celebrated careers as cross-country-traveling, astonishing innovators and competitors — the progenitors of tap and modern dance. Using contemporary newspaper and sporting news accounts, Masten paints a rich, detailed portrait of the melting pot of dance and popular culture in antebellum America.

From the Five Points to national celebrity

In early 19th century New York City, poverty was as significant as race, and the “color line was faintest in the lowliest wards.” Poor Irish and free Blacks lived together near what is now Foley Square, in Manhattan’s Five Points slum. They intermarried and danced together and against each other, sometimes in “public houses” or taverns (a set-up recently dramatized in the Broadway musical *Paradise Square*).

In 1839, John Diamond was reportedly

thirteen years old when he was discovered by a not-yet-famous Phineas T. Barnum, then a Bowery shoe polish merchant who “dabbled in amusements.” The Manhattan waterfront abounded with dance. Children, seeking to contribute to their households, would literally dance for eels. This was a variation on the Irish cake dance, where a winning dancer might score a “cake” made with oatmeal and sugar.

Barnum recalled “Master Diamond” as “really a genius in the dancing line,” and contemporary reports back him up. He contracted with Diamond’s father to indenture the boy and set out to make him a star. When young Diamond ran away from Barnum a year later, the promoter felt the loss so keenly he found another spectacular dancer, namely Lane, reportedly ten years old. Lane worked freelance for Barnum, who billed him variously as Master Rattler, Master Diamond, and Master Juba. Juba referred to both an African river and a Southern plantation slave dance.

“Negro dancing” and the melting pot of dance

With nuance and care Masten meticulously parses Diamond and Juba’s performances and creative cultural borrowings, including from then-famous ballerinas, such as the Austrian Fanny Elssler, beloved for her demonstrations of dance across cultures. Both boys were so-called “Negro dancers,” with Diamond and sometimes Juba performing in blackface. This signaled that the entertainment derived from racial mixing and was low-brow rather than high-brow.

But the performances themselves were extraordinary amalgams. After all, dancing was such a popular pastime, commercial dance

performances had to be extra-special to command ticket prices. On stage, there were scripted elaborate “travesties,” with allusions to current events and other popular acts. Thus young Diamond performed as “La Bayadere in Ole Kentucky!” a “concocted burlesque that twisted a famous ballet into a comment on current events” — the then-famous ballet being La Bayadere and the current events being the Hartford, Connecticut trial of the kidnapped and enslaved Africans who had mutinied against their captors on the ship *Amistad*.

Star dancers touted their ability to imitate, incorporate, and improve upon every possible technique and style. That process of amalgamation was furthered by challenge dancing. In early America, everything was a gamble, and popular dance was promoted as a boxing-like sport, via matches and competitions, often fake insofar as the “winner” might not get the advertised winnings. But Masten portrays her protagonists ultimately as true competitors and champions who challenged and elevated each other, resulting in the uniquely American dance they mutually helped create. Their rivalry — they apparently competed against each other three times — spurred excitement and ticket sales. At the height of their fame, they headlined acts that filled 1,400-seat theaters.

Race, class, and social mobility

Race animates this story in ways both predictable and surprising. First, blackface performance typically reinforced racist stereotypes, but it also enabled Juba to perform in white venues, where his dignity and talent remained evident.

The popularity of “Negro dancing” gave Diamond and Juba the leverage to break

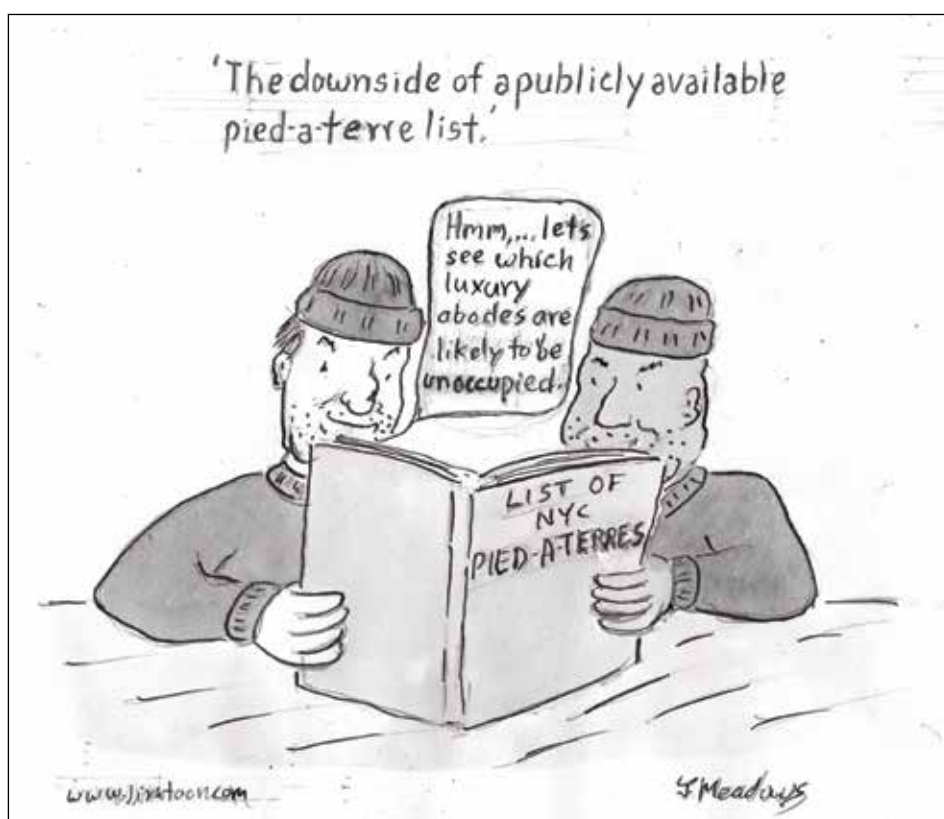
free from Barnum to oversee their own careers. Even in the 1850s, when minstrelsy rose in popularity, Diamond and Juba were the headliners, not the minstrel troupes that accompanied them.

For Diamond, Negro dancing allied him with the white working class — Democrats, firemen, and nativists. They became his ardent fan base, at one point rioting against the foreign Fanny Essle. Diamond — a frequently jailed, impetuous brawler — appeared to be at one with his fans. For a time he gave up dance to serve, poorly, in the Mexican-American War.

By contrast, for the disciplined Juba, Negro dancing was a vehicle of social mobility. When author Charles Dickens raved about Juba’s dancing, “Boz’s Juba” leveraged Dickens’ praise to launch a career in Great Britain, where he married a white woman and aspired to own a carriage. Yet both Diamond and Juba died young paupers, Juba in 1854 in Liverpool and Diamond in 1857 in Philadelphia.

The product of 15 years of research, Masten’s chronological foray into Diamond and Juba’s careers is a marvel of engaging “you are there” story-telling. She occasionally lost me, but never was I bored, nor did I ever doubt her judgment.

Instead, I felt privileged to enter a shimmering long-ago world, one both familiar and strange — a world shrouded in exoticism, celebrating sport and celebrity, and elevating extraordinary talent. Fans of dance and popular culture will savor this reconstruction of two crucially-connected young lives that jiggled, ham-boned, shuffled, tapped, and otherwise danced their way their way into American history.



San Genarro *continued from page 14*

dinners it is usually on Christmas or Easter. On Good Friday and Christmas Eve I try to not eat meat — only fish. There are specific foods for Easter (grain pie and pizza rustica), Christmas (panettone), and St. Joseph’s Day (St. Joseph’s pastry and sfingi). The Polish side of me likes baked ham for Easter and Christmas, and sometimes for parties on non-religious days.

Speaking of food, that brings us to the Feast of San Gennaro — or simply, the Feast. It started in 1926 as a religious celebration honoring a patron saint of Naples where many of the Italian immigrants to the U.S. were from, including my maternal grandparents. The food is typically red sauce Italian, lots of deep-fried sea food, sausage/braciola sandwiches, pastries, pastas, and, well you know the drill. Over the last few decades other ethnic and non-ethnic foods are available along with souvenirs, clothing, and jewelry. I got my first car when I was about 18 in 1965 — a ’56 Chevy —

and one of my first trips into Manhattan from the Bronx was to go to the Feast. I have been going there for about 60 years, only missing a few, so I’ve been symbolically celebrating my ethnicity for more than half the time the Feast has been in existence.

There have been many other feasts for various saints that I’ve gone to over the years, including many on Arthur Avenue. San Gennaro is the big one. Of course, as a physician, I have to warn you that a steady diet of this cuisine is not the healthiest even if followed by a chaser of red wine or Lipitor. But even though I, like my doorman, know who I am, from Thursday, September 17 to Sunday, September 27 I will be making my annual pilgrimage to Mulberry Street. I will be walking around what’s left of Little Italy, ignoring every dietary guideline I lectured my patients about, and I’ll probably drop into the Italian American Museum at 151 Mulberry Street. And, of course, you don’t have to be Italian, Italian American, or a Neapolitan to do the same. See you there!

Two Rivers, Two Ways: New York & Texas

BY J. TAYLOR BASKER

Rivers have profound importance in human history. Sources for agriculture and trade, they were important for religion and spirituality. The Egyptians turned their river into a god. Greek mythology divinized their energy into naiads, female spiritual creatures, that inhabited flowing waters.

The curators of the Westbeth Gallery exhibit *Two-Way River*, Sabra Booth and Sophie Sanders, conceived this show on the Hudson River and the Guadalupe River of the San Antonio River systems. Both are estuaries; both flow two ways. Both were the source of indigenous and colonial prosperity and cornerstones of social and spiritual lives. Artists in this exhibit inhabit both river areas. Their art connects physically and spiritually with them.

The work of Sabra Booth, a Texas artist, addresses the outside of the river. Her horizontal screen unfolds images of patterns of the river's surface with reflection of the moon. The rhythms evoke ripples that emanate light with a Zen tranquility. She creates this art with woodcuts, cutouts on kōzo paper and LED lights — an intersection between technology, space and perception. She invited people to bring objects found near the water, then mounted them on the walls in engaging organic patterns.

Desirée Alvarez focuses on the inside of the Hudson River, its creatures within. Her large fabric installation *Mermaid River* depicts Mermaid Weed, the nymph plant unique to the Hudson. A seahorse in colored inks presides over river creatures and spirits, a magical connection between nature and humans. Her installation *Oyster Saloon* laments the lost tradition of oysters and beer stands, and devastation caused by industrialization. Her apartment is over a stream that ran into the Hudson River. Her poem relives the old oars and canoes of tulip wood, monster 6-foot lobster and groaning giant oyster shells.

Working from antique maps of the Hudson River that show time in the erosion and different levels, Susan Rostow's sculptures depict the within and without of the Hudson. Her work addresses movement, whether it is below or above. Using shells, soil, minerals and discarded objects from the river, she creates prints, sculptures and artist books. Recreating the process where the river, humans, creatures and time collaborate to invent new spaces and living eco-structures, her work is a dialogue that emanates a life



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Patricia Melvin. "Sunset, Maple Tree" oil on linen, 18" x 24" 2023; Margaret Craig "Wall Colonies." Cast acrylic prints, re-purposed plastic, paint skins, glass beads, wire and mixed media, 2023; Sabra Booth, Moonwake II. Light Art woodcuts & cut-outs on kōzo paper with LED Lights. 24 x 110.3 x 1.5 inches; Susan Rostow, The Cartographer, 2026, sculpture, (detail), mixed media prints on paper, pigments, wood, plastic, metal, glass and shells, 16" x 11" x 9". Photos courtesy of J. Taylor Basker and Ramon Samindari.

force both playful and powerful.

Using information from maps about San Antonio waterways, Doerte Weber weaves hangings with natural and unconventional materials to explore the relationship between people and environment. *Headwaters to the Gulf* traces the network of springs, rivers and creeks that connect Texas Hill Country to the Gulf. She addresses the effects of drought, flood and environmental change. Utilizing unique weaving techniques and subtle colors she evokes the moods of natural processes and river flows. Loose hemp threads (illegal in Texas) protrude. Japanese leaves and Spanish moss join. Open spaces give emphasis, utilizing both craftsmanship and creativity.

These qualities also characterize the work of Margaret Craig, who transforms an enemy of rivers into an ally: plastic. Her installation *Wall Colonies* incarnates what she



calls the Great Trash Reef where nature uses discarded plastics to evolve new life forms. She recycles plastics through a variety of art media. Cellular forms emerge, enlarge, converge or disperse in a variety of textures and colors. This diaspora of alien shapes is mounted on the wall, weaves into patterns that explode with vitality, an evolutionary march both playful and threatening.

Harmony between nature and humans is gently expressed in the paintings of the Hudson River by Patricia Melvin. The beauty of both man-made structures and natural forms coexist in her peaceful compositions that refresh our harsh world. Using a technique that deceptively appears traditional, she presents reality with minimum effort or detail. This brings lightness and freedom in her imagery; the viewer uses individual perception to read the surface. She captures the two directions of the river currents and

paints construction equipment with the same sensitivity as skies. Her works are small since she paints spontaneously from life, yet size is irrelevant to quality.

Deborah Jensen explores the Hudson River upstate, where magnificent massive man-made interventions dot the landscape. Obtaining 19th century postcards for inspiration, she painted river scenes on both sides of plexiglass. This adds dimensionality to these works in monochrome blues and greys. This approach creates a sense that these monumental bridges spring naturally from the landscape on either side of the river. Their spans suspend above the water in harmony with the sky and landscape, offering a positive view of human technological intervention.

Yet rivers can be dangerous; the Guadalupe River's flooding caused death and destruction. Arthur Polendo's paintings present psychological insights into the shifting boundaries between humans, landscape and the river. His expressive painting *Testing the Waters* shows a large hand hovering over layered bands of water. This gesture depicts the dual qualities experienced from a river, both awe and fear. The two-way river becomes a metaphor for our memory and our hopes or fears for the future. With powerful slashes of paint, strong textured colors, he provokes the viewer into a deeper understanding of the river.

The color blue has powerful healing properties. It lowers stress, reduces blood pressure, aids sleep and improves focus. Its calming effect can be seen in the indigo cyanotypes on cotton produced by Sophie Sanders depicting mythological river creatures, the naiads. Spending her childhood walking along the Hudson River, she imagined goddesses within it, wielding magical powers. One image represents a captive phosphorescent naiad surrounded by stagnation during winter ice flows, evoking environmental uncertainty and dangers to humans. *Unraveling Chains* depicts a naiad liberated, freed to restore energy and harmony between humans and nature.

This historic exhibit is of two rivers in our country that flow two ways, one from a blue state and another from a red state. This is a parable that our deeply divided nation can go two ways and remain united, despite talk about a "national divorce." Artists are often prophets; this exhibit brought us both beauty and good news.

Yesterday continued from page 13

"Congratulations, but I'm old and out."

If you can make a quick profit in these or any other collecting categories, fantastic. I'm just relating that some of these markets are softer than DJT's brain stem.

Today's vintage lesson: Get in, make your money, then get out. You don't need to squeeze the last dime out of a nickel just to say you don't like change. Don't fall in love with the trend, the fashion, thinking the mo-

ment will never end, because it inevitably will. Don't fool yourself that somehow "you know." Most likely you do not.

No one knows where your niche collectible market might top out. Just never underestimate the depth of the bottom. It's lower than you think.

Relatedly, I often chat with a realtor friend about resale. Surprisingly, there are countless commonalities between our two businesses. When it comes to reselling, ev-

eryone is somehow an expert, a licensed reseller, a vintage reseller. Everyone magically knows the precise value of their possession, be it a George Nelson highboy or a Georgian townhouse. The West Village loft that's been on and off the market for years? The owner somehow, some way, intuitively knows what it's worth, and bully for him and his misjudging of the marketplace.

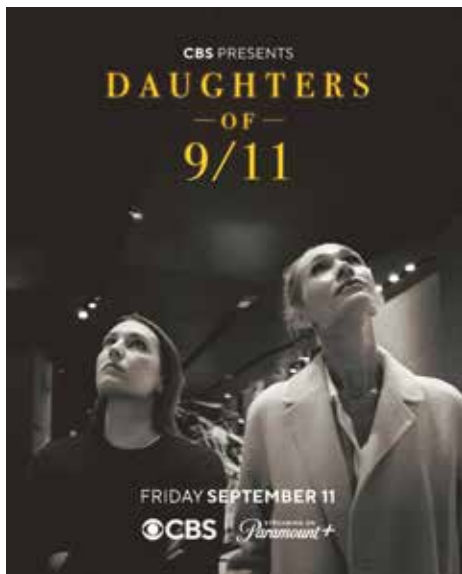
Should he choose, I could lend him a dented Dr. Seuss thermos in which to place

his tears. I still make house calls.

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

Still Rolling: Marc Levin's Enduring Documentary Vision

BY MICHAEL JACOBSON



should be. Miller opposes the death penalty, while Trant believes Mohammed should be executed. Their friendship allows Levin to put deeply human faces on questions of loss, anger, forgiveness, and justice.

A third important figure is former FBI Special Agent Frank Pellegrino, who began tracking Mohammed after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and pursued him for years. After Mohammed was transferred to Guantanamo, Pellegrino finally sat face-to-face with him during four days of FBI interviews.

By bringing these three stories together, Levin transforms a complicated legal and political history into a human drama. The daughters represent those still living with the consequences of 9/11, while Pellegrino represents the decades-long pursuit of ac-

countability. Levin's central message is simple but urgent: the 9/11 case is not over, and America still deserves a full reckoning with what happened.

Workers of Art is a full-length documentary about what happens when society decides that artists and their work have value. The film is a partnership between Blowback Productions and Creative Rebuild New York (CRNY). CRNY was a three-year, \$125 million initiative that provided guaranteed income and employment opportunities to 2,700 artists across New York State. CRNY believed that artists are workers who deserve equitable, sustainable support structures, and that improving the lives of artists is paramount to the vitality of New York State's collective social and economic well-being.

Levin shares that the film grew out of his own experience with CETA, a federal jobs program that changed his life and helped launch his career. What interested him was not simply the money but the human impact: how supporting artists can change lives and strengthen communities. The challenge, he says, was to take thousands of stories from across New York and make that idea personal, human, and accessible.

I first met Levin in 1978. We were two unemployed New York City filmmakers who were accepted into the CETA artist work program, a throwback to the WPA of the 1930s. For two years, we earned a living as we raced around the city offering our free services to communities that needed media assistance.

Levin traces his documentary career back to the CETA arts program, where he began editing on early three-quarter-inch video equipment and soon created a small studio in his loft. That independent operation evolved into Blowback Productions, a family-style company built around long-term collaborators, including his father and producer Daphne Pinkerson. He describes Pinkerson as the organizational backbone of Blowback Productions. While he sees himself as a free spirit, Pinkerson manages budgets, planning, administration, delegation, and the countless details behind the camera. Her persistence, loyalty, and decades-long partnership provide the structure that allows Levin's creative instincts to flourish.

Levin says the company's name came from his work with Bill Moyers on *The Secret Government* and the idea of "blowback" is the unintended consequences of political actions. His subjects often emerge organically through relationships, curiosity, and immersion. Rather than beginning with a fully scripted outcome, he looks for rich worlds, strong characters, and stories whose direction may still be unknown.

Sustaining that independence, however, requires constant juggling. Levin may pursue three, four, or five projects at once, knowing only some will be funded, while maintaining relationships with networks, producers, and other industry partners. HBO, and particularly his relationship with Sheila Nevins, became an important lifeline that helped Blowback survive changes in technology and the documentary marketplace.

Levin acknowledges that documentaries can now provide a career, but warns that success has also brought formulas, tighter schedules, and pressure to know the ending before filming begins. His advice to young filmmakers is practical: develop a market-

able skill like editing or shooting that can pay the bills, while also building a "tribe" of creative collaborators. Make work together, share it wherever audiences can find it, and keep one foot in earning a living and the other in personal storytelling. Independence, for Levin, depends on craft and community.

Daughters of 9/11 airs on CBS on September 11 at 9 p.m. and will stream on Paramount+ afterward.

To find out more about *Workers of Art* go to the film's website:

<https://www.workersofartfilm.com/>

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 greatly missed Cornelia Street Café. He curates and hosts a bimonthly screening of short films by New York metropolitan filmmakers at New Plaza Cinema. In mid-November, he will curate and host a selection of short AI films for the Video Art & Experimental Film Festival (VAEFF), screening at downtown's Cinema Village.



TOP: *DAUGHTERS OF 9/11* promo. **BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Jessica Trant, Marc Levin and Elizabeth Miller. Credit: Blowback Productions.

The making of independent documentaries is in flux: on the one hand, the public continues to have a large appetite for documentary film content; on the other hand, funding and exhibition venues have diminished.

To get a perspective on the state of the independent documentary world, I had an extensive conversation with Marc Levin, who has successfully run Blowback Productions on West 26th Street since 1988.

This month, two of Blowback's documentaries are coming to fruition. *Daughters of 9/11*, a CBS special program pays homage to the 25th anniversary of 9/11, and *Workers of Art* focuses on the important role art plays in our society.

Levin was drawn to *Daughters of 9/11* because he believes an important part of the 9/11 story remains unfinished. Twenty-five years later, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind of the attacks, has still not gone to trial. Levin wants viewers to understand that the story did not end with the death of Osama bin Laden.

The documentary finds its emotional center in Elizabeth Miller and Jessica Trant, two women who lost their fathers on 9/11. Though united by grief and a desire for justice, they disagree profoundly about what that justice

I first met Levin in 1978. We were two un-

TOP: *WORKERS OF ART* poster. **BOTTOM:** ANDREA ARROYO. Credit: Blowback Productions.

From Thrash Metal to Jazz: Alex Skolnick's Unlikely Musical Journey

BY KAJU ROBERTO



ALEX SKOLNICK, THRASH METAL GUITAR LEGEND FROM TESTAMENT, shows his other side by performing with his jazz trio at the inaugural Brooklyn Guitar Festival at Arlo Williamsburg. Photo by Kaju Roberto.

Few guitarists have traveled as boldly between musical worlds as Alex Skolnick, the Testament veteran who transformed himself from a teenage thrash-metal prodigy into an accomplished jazz guitarist without ever abandoning the music that made him famous.

I interviewed Alex Skolnick while visiting the Washington Square Diner in Greenwich Village, and our conversation revealed a musician whose career has been anything but conventional. Best known as the guitarist for Testament, the pioneering Bay Area thrash-metal band, Skolnick has spent much of his life moving between musical worlds — metal, jazz, fusion and classical music — without ever completely abandoning any of them.

His transformation from teenage metal prodigy to sophisticated jazz guitarist was a gradual process of curiosity, hard work and a willingness to put himself in situations where he knew he had more to learn.

The Satriani Connection

One of the important early chapters in Skolnick's development was his private study with Joe Satriani. Rather than attending Berklee, Skolnick studied with Satriani and began absorbing a more systematic approach to the guitar. Satriani introduced him to concepts such as modes, melodic minor and advanced harmony, as well as the discipline of learning music thoroughly — playing material in every key and understanding every note. Skolnick admits that the theory did not come naturally at first. He was not a star student, but he was determined, practiced hard and gradually began connecting the dots.

Years later, he would deepen that education through private study with the late jazz pianist and educator Charlie Banacos, whose own musical lineage connected back to the

influential Lennie Tristano school. Banacos helped Skolnick further develop his understanding of jazz harmony and improvisation.

Discovering Jazz

Jazz was not initially a major part of Skolnick's musical vocabulary. As a teenager, his world revolved around hard rock and heavy metal. Jazz musicians seemed to inhabit an entirely different scene.

His interest developed gradually. He read about jazz guitarists in *Guitar Player* magazine and heard musicians such as Eric Johnson discussing Wes Montgomery. Eventually, he found the recording that made everything click: Wes Montgomery's *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery*. "Sometimes you just need to hear the right thing," Skolnick explained. The right Wes Montgomery album suddenly made jazz accessible.

Following the Holdsworth Trail

Fusion entered the picture through another unlikely route: Eddie Van Halen. When Skolnick discovered that Van Halen regarded Allan Holdsworth as one of his major influences, he began investigating Holdsworth's playing.

That led to Al Di Meola, Jean-Luc Ponty, Bill Bruford and Tony Williams. Skolnick became fascinated by Holdsworth's earlier work, particularly his performances with Tony Williams Lifetime and Soft Machine.

The connections kept multiplying. Miles Davis led him to John Scofield, Mike Stern and Robben Ford. Di Meola led him back to Chick Corea and Return to Forever. John McLaughlin connected these musicians to an even broader history of jazz fusion.

Leaving Testament in 1992

By 1992, Skolnick was increasingly restless within the confines of thrash metal. He had

begun incorporating melodic-minor ideas and other harmonic concepts that were unusual in the genre, but he wanted a larger musical canvas.

He left Testament that year, beginning a period in which he explored music beyond the band. The decision was not simply a rejection of thrash. Rather, Skolnick wanted to continue growing as a musician at a time when guitar-oriented rock itself was changing dramatically.

The mid-1990s were also the era of the "shred is dead" mentality, when guitar solos were disappearing from mainstream rock. Instead of allowing the changing market to determine his direction, Skolnick chose to pursue the music that interested him.

The New School and a New Musical Education

In 1998, Skolnick enrolled at The New School in New York, where he immersed himself in jazz. This was a crucial stage in his development. For several years, he was surrounded by professional jazz musicians and educators and received the constructive criticism he had been seeking. He wanted teachers to tell him what was wrong with his playing — not simply reassure him that everything sounded good.

The Alex Skolnick Trio

The Alex Skolnick Trio, formed in the early 2000s, became the clearest expression of Skolnick's two musical identities. Rather than simply playing jazz standards with a rock attitude, the trio frequently turns the formula upside down.

Songs by Kiss, Aerosmith, Scorpions and Tom Petty have been transformed into sophisticated jazz arrangements. The trio's approach demonstrates how deeply Skolnick

understands both traditions: he can retain the character of a rock composition while opening it up to jazz harmony, improvisation and interaction.

His debut trio album in 2002 included a striking jazz interpretation of Kiss' Detroit Rock City, while later recordings continued to explore the territory between rock and jazz.

A Lifetime of Connecting the Dots

Another pivotal discovery came while Testament was recording *Practice* at Fantasy Studios in Berkeley. Fantasy Records was reissuing classic jazz recordings, and Skolnick heard newly remastered recordings of John Coltrane through the studio's powerful monitors. Hearing Coltrane's live playing at that volume was overwhelming. It opened Skolnick's ears to the intensity and freedom of jazz improvisation and became another turning point in his musical education.

Today, Skolnick continues to perform with Testament while maintaining the Alex Skolnick Trio and pursuing other musical projects. His career demonstrates that musical identity does not have to be a choice between genres.

From private lessons with Joe Satriani, through his years with Testament to his studies at The New School, and the creation of his jazz trio, Skolnick's journey has been defined by an appetite for discovery. Rather than leaving metal behind, he expanded his musical vocabulary. The result is a guitarist who can move convincingly from a Testament riff to a Coltrane-inspired improvisation — and make both sound unmistakably like Alex Skolnick.

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

Lights Out

BY KEITH MICHAEL



THE ICONIC KERJUFELL AND KERJUFELLSFOSS. All photos by Keith Michael.

*And all shall be well, and all shall be well,
and all manner of thing shall be well.*

Lady Julian of Norwich

The sun is slanting into fall with the season pushing toward Lights Out NYC to help safeguard migratory birds navigating through our blinding metropolis. I spent August trekking toward a different kind of Lights Out: the total solar eclipse in Iceland.

Iceland was always, arguably, a precarious destination to see the eclipse. Totality would only be visible from the northwest peninsulas, the totality was relatively short compared to the North American eclipse of 2024, and Iceland's weather is notoriously fickle. But, hey, no matter what, I'd be in the primordial wonderland of Iceland!

It was a trade-off missing the summer birds of NYC, but I had success in seeing at least 42 species in Iceland, roughly half of their regular summer birds. (Maybe it'll be more after I go through my photos.) Along the way there was a surfeit of photogenic waterfalls, ancient lava fields, volcanoes, glaciers, geothermal vistas, and a constant parade of ethereal landscapes. Kerid, Nauthusagil, Eyjafjöll, Seljalandsfoss, Katla, Afréttisg, Múlakvish: names from fantasy novels. Reykjavik is the hub of day tours to all the local sights and the famed Golden Circle. A whale and puffin cruise takes one out into the bay for Humpbacked Whales, acrobatic White-beaked Dolphins (a new cetacean for me) and, yes, Atlantic Puffins that nest on the harbor islands by the tens of thousands. These windup-toy birds whizz by, spreading glee with their comical charm.

Eclipse Day was still two weeks away. Like in NYC, of course, the long-range weather forecasts couldn't be taken seriously. Just look.

A five-minute ferry ride from Reykjavik is the island of Videy. Wild heaths, cliffs, and tidal coves yielded five new birds: Black-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Whimbrel, Common Redshank, Black Guillemot, and

Meadow Pipit. Even their names evoke the mysteries of their far northern world. All the while, resident Lesser Black-backed Gulls gave disapproving swoops warning that their fledglings were nearby.

Day by day, the weather for Eclipse Day was checked and rechecked. Now the forecast's clear. Now it's 98% chance of overcast skies and rain. Just keep looking.

Further afield, my photographic tour took me along the south coast, then sliced northward through the formidable barrens of the Highlands. One fantastical moonscape panorama after another scrolled past the bus windows. Ever more waterfalls: Pjófafoss, Bruarfoss, Hafragilsfoss, Dettifoss, Godafoss. Avian highlights included a tourist-complacent Common Snipe probing the edge of the turquoise mirror pool in a volcanic crater, a mythical Gyr Falcon hunting over a meadow, stiff-winged Northern Fulmars careening through the mists of thundering cataracts, and outside a hotel window, Short-eared Owls hooting to each other in the midnight twilight.

After a guidebook's roster of sights to behold, a long east to west travel day took us toward our eclipse viewing destination:

the tip of the Snaefellsnes Peninsula, northwest of Reykjavik. Our location scouting on the cloud-free "evening before" swung by the iconic Snaefellsjökull volcano and Kerkjufell rock formation and falls. That night, I was lulled to sleep amidst a seaside Arctic Tern colony.

The satellite map for The Day was, indeed, dreary: overcast with a solid storm brazenly passing through at eclipse time. Nevertheless, hoping for a prescient break in the clouds, we set up early for a good spot at Lóndrangar. The postcard-perfect vista overlooked a sweeping sea stack amphitheater with hundreds of nesting Black-legged Kittiwake gulls circling below us sounding like a kazoo orchestra warming up. I picked out a few scattered nearly all-white Iceland Gulls among the crowd, my first seen in Iceland. The wind gusted. The rain started. Cameras were sequestered under plastic. Behind the clouds—the eclipse began. Over the next hour, the celestial light was on a timed dimmer. The temperature plummeted. The combined gravitational pull of the sun and moon slammed the surf against the rocks. The dark sea and roiling sky fused. The Kittiwakes' chorus rose to a scream. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. The switch was turned off. A complete theatrical blackout with no exit signs. Absolute. Darkness. You've likely seen video clips of the cheering eclipse-celebrants from Spain. Here, it was a humbling pitch-black hush with a groin-tingling chill. The wind, the waves, the Kittiwakes, the total blackout. Fearsome. Haunting. Thrilling.

As a glow burned through from the east, it was as though time was being rebooted. Our world had held its breath and now, was rushing back—in a torrent.

I knew, then, I would be slower returning to NYC mentally than physically. Before leaving Iceland, I tracked down one more iconic Icelandic bird: the Eurasian Golden Plover, plumping up for its migration south. That helped.

The sun was shining when I landed at JFK. And I still hadn't missed fall migration in New York City.



AN ICELANDIC ATLANTIC PUFFIN spreading cheer.

Artist Cannot Paint in an Artists' Building

BY J. TAYLOR BASKER



PATRICIA MELVIN watering Westbeth roof garden, August 2026. Photo by J. Taylor Basker.

The paintings of Westbeth artist Patricia Melvin are a tour de force of skill, technique and passion for the beauty of the Hudson River, its surface and skyline, depicting harmony between the river, nature and humans.

Since she moved into Westbeth five years ago, she produced nearly 100 paintings of the river she could see clearly through her windows in her apartment/studio on West Street. However, last year the building installed new windows that used a type of UV glass that keeps out the full spectrum of light and eliminates the blue purples at the end of the spectrum. This especially kills the cobalt blues and casts a yellow-green hue on everything. Artists and photographers who need light to work are especially affected. Melvin pleaded unsuccessfully with the building to permit her to replace the windows at her own expense with a higher grade of glass that does not affect the light.

The lower grade of UV glass uses sand with a higher iron content that contaminates the glass. Cheaper glass uses low-cost chemicals and uneven coatings that block part of the visible light spectrum and fail to filter light evenly. The layers break down over time under direct sun exposure and turn yellow or hazy. Ironically, this glass has been used for an artist building where the founding mission is to provide residents "with a place to live and to work."

All types of visual artists are affected and there has been much conflict; many refuse the new windows. Melvin was one of the first to have the new windows installed before people were aware of the light problem. She has not been able to produce much work since the windows changed as she paints with light and demands accurate visibility of the blues of the river and sky from her studio. This is a great loss for her career and for people who love and value her art.

A JEWEL IN THE VILLAGE

The Architecture and Legacy of Calvert Vaux

BY CORINNE NEARY

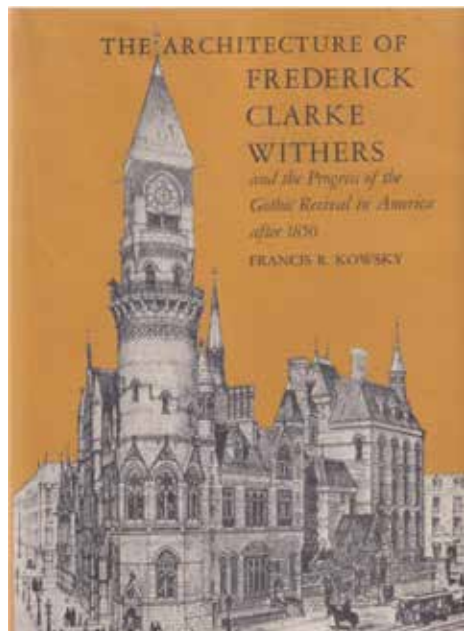


Image credit: JML.

Originally a courthouse, the Jefferson Market Library has served the Greenwich Village community since 1967. The building, a New York City landmark, was designed by architects Frederick Clarke Withers and Calvert Vaux, who also worked with Frederick Law

Olmsted in the design of Central Park. Our library, which many visitors assume was once a church due to its Victorian Gothic style, was constructed along with a jail building and market complex in 1877. The buildings once covered the triangular plot of land which we now share with the Jefferson Market Garden.

A leading authority on the Jefferson Market Courthouse design and construction is Francis R. Kowsky, who wrote the book *The Architecture of Frederick Clarke Withers and the Progress of the Gothic Revival in America After 1850*. We have two copies of this book in our Greenwich Village Collection. It is the definitive text on the background, design, and construction of the site, as well as the city politics involved, and the critical response to the project. *The New York Times* called the courthouse “a jewel in a swine’s snout” because of its location in what was then an impoverished neighborhood. The Municipal Society denounced the project, stating that it would give “to the criminal a suggestion of the gaudy vulgarity connected with gilded dens of infamy” and suggested that Vaux and Withers were “incompetent and insane.” Opinion did soon

change, and the building was voted one of the ten most beautiful buildings in America by a poll of architects in the 1880s.

Kowsky, author of *The Architecture of Frederick Clarke Withers*, which was originally published in 1980, has just published a new book, *Calvert Vaux: Landscape Architect*, and we are thrilled to host him here on Sunday, September 27 at 2 p.m. in our first floor Willa Cather room. Kowsky, who also wrote *Country, Park and City: The Architecture and Life of Calvert Vaux*, will discuss Vaux’s work in great detail, in partnership with the Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance (CVPA). This nonprofit organization, founded by preservationists, architects, and community advocates, is based in Staatsburg, New York. Staatsburg is the location of another one of Vaux’s designs: The Point, also known as The Hoyt House.

Built in 1855, The Point was a prime example of Calvert Vaux’s holistic vision combining both architecture and landscape design. The Hoyt family left in 1963 when the New York State Parks Commission acquired the entire site and incorporated it into the surrounding Mills Norrie State Park. Parks Commissioner Robert Moses’ initial plan was

to raze the house and replace it with an Olympic-sized swimming pool and parking lot for 90 buses. Those plans were not realized, however, and The Point has not been occupied or used since that year, with nature and the elements taking their toll. A main focus of CVPA now is the stabilization and restoration of this house, as well as The Hoyt Carriage-way Bridge, which was the historic main entrance to the estate, as originally envisioned by Vaux. This work is currently underway.

In conjunction with Kowsky’s talk, we have put together an exhibit for the month of September in our Little Underground Gallery. By visiting the exhibit in the library basement, you can learn more about the works of Calvert Vaux and Frederick Clark Withers, including historic photographs and blueprints. We will also have blueprints from our archive, which show designs for the building’s repurposing into a library in the 1960s by architect Giorgio Cavaglieri.

To learn more about the Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance, visit calvertvaux.org. As always, find our current event listings at nypl.org/locations/jefferson-market

The Odyssey: An Intense Experience With a Strong Moral

BY ANTHONY J. PARADISO

In late July I saw *The Odyssey*. I didn’t see it in IMAX but that didn’t impact my experience in a negative way — I really enjoyed its intensity.

I think most people went to see *The Odyssey* because they thought it would be an action film: the main character, Odysseus (played by Matt Damon) blinds a cyclops, battles the sea and kills the suitors who have invaded his home. However, this film was much more than that. The ending brought a tear to my eye because I realized that Penelope (Anne Hathaway) and Telemachus (Tom Holland) suffered emotionally during Odysseus’ 20-year absence and those actors portrayed the emotions of being Odysseus’ wife and son so well.

Below are the scenes that interested me the most and what I think the film’s main message was.

The Coastal Village

At the point in the film when Odysseus’ son Telemachus travels to the Kingdom of Sparta to ask Menelaus (Jon Bernthal) and Helen (Lupita Nyong’o) for information about his father, Odysseus has been gone a long time. Telemachus and his mother Penelope are becoming more and more doubtful that he will ever return. Telemachus learns that it took Menelaus years to return home but finds nothing about his father’s whereabouts.

On his way home to Ithaca, Telemachus and his advisor, Mentor (Ryan Hurst), stop at a temple of Apollo in a coastal village to pay tribute. Everything about this location was interesting to me: the villagers, the temple on the inside of a cliff and Odysseus

disguising himself as a beggar.

Penelope’s suitors have come up with a plan to assassinate Telemachus before he returns to Ithaca. They lure him and Mentor into the temple where they offer them drinks which turn out to be poison. When the assassins realize their plan has been found out, they draw weapons on Telemachus but Odysseus thwarts their plan and sets the temple on fire before leaving with Telemachus.

The villagers clearly held their temple in high regard but Odysseus shows a blatant disregard by setting it on fire. This action is consistent with Odysseus’ actions throughout the film as he does not fear the gods. After all, he knowingly broke the law of the king of the Greek gods, Zeus (Zeus’ law), by deceiving the Trojans with the Trojan Horse.

Zeus’ law was a moral code in ancient Greece that states that hosts must generously feed, shelter and respect strangers because any traveler might secretly be a god in disguise. Guests must honor their hosts in return.

It’s easy to say all of the misfortune Odysseus experiences is due to him breaking Zeus’ law but his fellow soldiers and officers broke it as well. So, why does Menelaus make it back to Sparta in one piece for example? This is one spot in the film which I find to be inconsistent.

Odysseus Encounters the Witch, Circe

On their return journey, Odysseus and his men encounter a tribe of giants, a cyclops and even their dead former comrades but no encounter is scarier than the one between Odysseus, his men and the witch, Circe.

When Circe allows Odysseus’ men to eat in her home, she feeds them a drugged stew that makes them shudder and convulse. Then one by one, she works their faces like clay into the faces of pigs.

To make a long story short, Odysseus comes to find his men and he encounters Circe. She is about to feed him the same drugged stew before he catches on and holds a blade to a caged raven which he has identified as Circe’s transformed sister. This gets Circe to finally give in and the two have a short yet revealing conversation.

Circe tells Odysseus that she turns humans into animals which reflect their values. Her goal is to reveal “truths.” She then turns the pigs back into Odysseus’ men and they depart.

The scenes with Circe are interesting for a couple of reasons. One is that she views human beings as savage creatures to be tamed instead of as her intellectual peers. Secondly, its place in the timeline of the film suggests that temporarily transforming the men into pigs is just what they deserve because of the massacre they carried out in Troy. The men are truly savage and by transforming them, Circe is more of a truth-seeker than she is evil.

Troy

The film crew shot the scenes inside the city of Troy on a set built around a traditional Berber fortified village in Morocco called the ksar of Ait-Ben-Haddou. According to movie-locations.com, the set spanned 2.5 acres and included 60 structures that “were temporarily added for the film” including the Temple of Athena.

A lot happens in Troy. The Trojan Horse

is dragged into the city through its main gate. The Greeks slip out of the horse in the middle of the night, set most of the city on fire and kill civilians. The one murder we see carried out is the Greeks beheading a Trojan priestess (Zendaya) in the Temple of Athena. But instead of showing her head fall off, the head of a statue of Athena falls off.

The camera then focuses on this statue head as it eerily shakes on the ground. We are shown this haunting image again at the very end of the film, when Odysseus is experiencing a flashback to Troy, which makes it a motif, or recurring element that repeats throughout a story to reinforce a central theme. Later in the film, Odysseus encounters the priestess again when he washes up on the shore of his home, Ithaca, and she is yet another reminder of the mistakes he made in Troy and on his return journey.

The Film’s Main Message

The Odyssey uses symbolism effectively to express its main themes. After Odysseus has returned home and to his status of King of Ithaca, we see a flashback of the Trojan Horse in the final frame of the movie. It was a very loud and powerful scene as we hear the flames roar along with narration and the movie soundtrack. It also reminds us that Odysseus will never be able to fully get over his tragic flaw, which was building the Trojan Horse.

The Odyssey is a deep emotional journey not for the faint of heart. There is lots of violence but no blood which I think makes it palatable to a wider audience. Overall, I highly recommend it.

September 2026

EVENTS

in and
around the
West
Village

WALKING TOURS

WALKING TOUR OF GREENWICH VILLAGE'S LITERARY LOCALS
September 26 • 10:15 AM to 12:00 PM
Hudson Park Library
66 Leroy Street

Every street of Greenwich Village is filled with literary history. Join Hudson Park Library in stepping back in time on a walking tour of the homes and haunts of the figures that paved our neighborhood's legacy in literature. Arrive at the library at 10:15 am as you will need to fill out a waiver to participate. Please make sure to wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water!

LGBTQ+ HISTORY OF GREENWICH VILLAGE WALKING TOUR
September 19 • 3:00-5:00 PM
Christopher Park
38-64 Christopher Street
outprofessionals.org/events

Discover the rich LGBTQ+ history of the Village, starting in the early 1800s through to the Stonewall Rebellion and today. During this two-hour walking tour, explore the heart of the West Village, where the modern LGBTQ+ liberation movement was born a century before the Stonewall Rebellion. Greenwich Village has been the center of the city's many countercultures and artistic movements throughout history. All ages are welcome on this tour.

MUSIC

CHRIS DAVE X MESHELL NDEGECELLO X ERIC GALES TRIO
September 18-20, 8:00 & 10:30 PM
Blue Note Jazz Club, 131 W 3rd St
bluenotejazz.com

Marquee 3-night collaboration uniting distinctive voices in jazz, soul, funk and blues.

BEN HARPER & THE INNOCENT CRIMINALS
September 21-22; doors 7:00 PM
Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St.
mercuryeastpresents.com

One of the strongest additions to the September calendar: Ben Harper and his longtime band play two consecutive nights in the intimate Lower East Side room.

RICHARD BARONE'S VILLAGE NIGHTS: THE 1970S
September 27, 6:30 PM
The Bitter End, 147 Bleecker Street
villagepreservation.org

Music, conversation and Village history focus on the neighborhood's 1970s scene, with legendary musical guests and cultural commentators.

FILM

2026 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL SHORT FILM TOUR
Opens September 2
IFC Center
323 6th Avenue
ifccenter.org

Touring program of standout shorts from the 2026 Sundance Film Festival.

KNIFE: THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF SALMAN RUSHDIE
Opens September 18
IFC Center
323 6th Avenue
ifccenter.org

Documentary examining the attack on author Salman Rushdie and its aftermath.

NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE SCREENING: THE MISANTHROPE
September 27
NYU Skirball
566 LaGuardia Pl.
nyuskirball.org

Sandra Oh plays the title role in a razor-sharp reimagining of Molière's classic dark comedy.

AFTERMATH:
9/11 AND NEW YORK
ARTISTS

Many Westbeth artists stood on their roof and watched the Twin Towers fall. Some were downtown nearby. I was working as a temp for Fiduciary Trust and supposed to be on the 96th floor in Tower 2. Many Westbeth artists had ties to the WTC. One worked on its design models, some performed there, others exhibited art there. It was an easy walk from Westbeth to the World Trade Center. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of 9/11, ten Westbeth artists share their riveting stories in the film *Aftermath: 9/11 and New York Artists*. The film was made by J. Taylor Basker and Ernie Mortuzans. It will be shown at the Westbeth Community Room on Friday, September 18 at 7 p.m. located at 155 Bank Street between West and Washington streets. A panel discussion will follow with some of the featured artists who will also answer questions. Admission is free.

—J. Taylor Basker



ART

ROY LICHTENSTEIN: 1997
Opens September 5
Whitney Museum of American Art
99 Gansevoort Street
whitney.org

New Whitney exhibition devoted to work from the final year of one of the defining figures of American Pop art.

EVERYDAY ROYALTY: AN EXHIBITION OF ARTISTS ACROSS HENRY STREET SETTLEMENT
September 11-October 18
Abrons Arts Center
466 Grand Street
henrystreet.org

Photography, collage, painting, sewing and embroidery by participants from Henry Street's Older Adult and Community Consultation Centers celebrate ordinary people as "everyday royalty." Free.

THE CHILDREN OF PALESTINE AT WESTBETH
September 24, 7-10 PM
Westbeth Community Room
155 Bank Street, between West and Washington Streets
Contribution requested

The event includes five talented poets/artists. They will respond through their art to what has been going on in Gaza and the West bank since October 7th of 2023. More than 100,000 Palestinians have been massacred. The event includes music and art of Palestinian American Farid Bitar. The art is for sale and the money generated will go to a charity that helps Gaza recover and rebuild.

LECTURES

CERAMIC PAINTING: A ONE-DAY WORKSHOP WITH RYAN FLORES
September 19, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Greenwich House Pottery
16 Jones St.
greenwichhouse.org

Hands-on workshop explores slab building, hand-building techniques and glaze layering alongside Flores's exhibition.

THEATER

ELF LYONS: THE WOMAN ON THE EDGE
September 24-October 18
SoHo Playhouse
15 Vandam Street
sohoplayhouse.com

Acclaimed British comic and performance artist Elf Lyons begins an extended fall engagement.

TILTED AXES: NECESSARY MUSIC ONLY
September 17-October 4
Theater for the New City
155 First Ave.
theaterforthenewcity.net

The guitar-driven performance ensemble returns, transforming the Johnson Theater into an evolving landscape of sound and movement.

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

COMPASS

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



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

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



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



Kelly Craig
Lic. Assoc. R.E. Broker
M: 917.656.5682
kelly.craig@compass.com