



WestView

The New Voice of the West Village

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School Overcrowding in Greenwich Village

By Ann Kjellberg

Surely you've noticed them. The strollers crowding Village sidewalks, the playgrounds loaded with kids on warm Saturday afternoons, the proliferation of shops dedicated to baby couture and elegant European toys. Manhattan is in the midst of a baby boom.

To a certain extent, it was predicted. The Grier Partnership Enrollment Projections, commissioned by the New York City Department of Education (DOE), concluded in 2005 that School District 2, which covers the Upper East Side, Midtown, Chelsea, Greenwich Village, Tribeca, the Financial District and Chinatown, would see public school enrollment increases of 24.7 percent between 2004 and 2014 (their more recent projections, for 2005–2015, are somewhat lower). But these projections were based on demographic data alone—analysis of who was having babies and how many, and who was staying in the city and who was leaving. They did not take account of the new buildings sprouting like mushrooms in many parts of the newly prosperous island. Representatives of the DOE now



TEACHER'S LOUNGE AND A LOCKER ROOM have been lost to overcrowding at P.S.41, which is currently operating at 112% capacity as the Village experiences a baby boom.

say that they underestimated enrollment growth from new development in District 2 by 3,381 seats (it is not clear whether this figure applies to the last five or ten years).

On April 14, the Manhattan Borough President's office issued a report establishing that 40,000 new apartments were approved for construction in Manhattan in the last eight years, but the Department of Education is woefully behind in creating seats for the children of those residents. (The press release

and full report are available at: http://mbpo.org/newsroom_details.asp?id=1163.) The report identifies four neighborhoods—downtown, the Upper East Side, Greenwich Village/SoHo and Flatiron/Madison Square—that are at especially high risk of neighborhood-wide school overcrowding. The city approved enough new residential buildings to add up to 2,300 new students in K-8 schools in these neighborhoods, while increasing

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Captain Caroli Takes Command

New 6th Precinct Commander Enforces No Parking for Cops

By George Capsis, Publisher

In September 2005, I was standing on the corner of Bleecker and Charles Streets when an on-call hook-and-ladder fire truck tried to make a turn from Bleecker into Charles. The truck was stopped in its tracks by a police car illegally parked in the “no standing” zone on the corner. We got a picture.

For two years, I have been trying to prevent this from happening

again by writing first to the police commissioner and then to the Manhattan commissioner of the Department of Transportation, requesting that the DOT build out the sidewalk to prevent illegal parking. I got—pretty much—nowhere.

Then last week, I came upon not one but two wooden barriers on the very corners in question, but with something new—a sign

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ILLEGALLY PARKED POLICE CAR BLOCKS ON-CALL FIRE ENGINE

In September 2005, WestView captured this photo of a hook-and-ladder trying unsuccessfully to make the turn onto Charles Street at Bleecker Street. The new 6th Precinct commander has acted to end this abuse.

Speaker Quinn Chided by Councilmembers for Leading Sheep to the Slaughter

By Henry J. Stern

April 18, 2008

I report on the past four days' events in the burgeoning scandal involving City Council budget lines allocated to fictitious entities,



and fund transfers from those accounts to organizations whose officers stole the city money they received. It may be slow going to read, but it adds up to a situation that requires prompt correction.

Tuesday, April 15: Tax Day was day 13 since the scandal became public via an intentional leak to Frankie Edozion of the New York Post, which broke the story on page one under the headline “City Haul: Quinn Crew Probed Over Hidden \$\$\$.” The New York City tabloids, however, are not to be outdone. The Daily News used “Slush Puppies” on page one the same day. Each paper devoted two

inside pages to the scandal on April 17.

Wednesday, April 16: U.S. Attorney Michael Garcia announced the indictment of two City Council staffers for embezzlement. They worked for a Brooklyn member, Kendall Stewart, who is a podiatrist and a landlord. The aides, including former chief of staff Asquith Reid, allegedly stole \$145,000 and spent \$21,000 on Stewart's political needs, so the councilman's denial of any knowledge of the crime rings exceedingly hollow. We assume from the threatened 80-year sentence for the 64-year-old

former chief of staff that the authorities' intention is to loosen his tongue with regard to his former employer.

Thursday, April 17: The indictment was amply covered in the local papers.

Friday, April 18: The most important development reported today was that Speaker Christine Quinn was making the rounds of Council offices, expressing regret for her proposal that would give the right to allocate discretionary funds to the mayor. Not even the Pope's visit has driven this story out of the newspapers. It will, however, run its course unless something either happens or is discovered.

The result of this uproar is that Christine Quinn will have an enormous handicap if she pursues

her projected mayoral candidacy. If she cannot oversee a \$55 million City Council budget, people will say, how can she handle the \$61 billion that New York City spends annually? She could have a shot at Manhattan Borough President if Scott Stringer runs for Public Advocate, provided that she has not committed any wrongdoing such as perjury or obstruction of justice.

The problem with these investigations is that even if you did not steal one cent, if you answered questions differently at different times, or failed to report what you knew to the authorities, you may be pursued for perjury or obstruction of justice. It is hard to remember exactly what one said months ago, especially if you can no longer rely on staff to

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WestView

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Neighborhood Communities Come Together to Help Support Parks

By Dennis Kuhn

All over the city, parks provide natural greenery for urban residents. To support community involvement in neighborhood parks, Partnerships for Parks, a joint program of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and the City Parks Foundation, offers Capacity Fund grants to local parks groups. Grants range from \$250 to \$5,000.

The grants help strengthen neighborhood park groups. Deadlines to apply for these grants are February 1, June 1, and October 1.

Successful grant applications can improve a group's ability to care for their park, put on programs and events, or expand collaborations with other neighborhood groups. Past funded projects have included a newsletters, bulletin boards, and outreach brochures.

Starting this September, a free one-year program called Partnerships Academy: Street Trees will help those residents and street tree stewards who are interested in caring for the many street trees throughout the city. Through group workshops, small grants, training, and networking, participants will gain the necessary tools to sup-

port projects that aim to have significant, long-term impact on street tree stewardship.

Workshop sessions will include such topics as caring for trees, raising visibility and partnering effectively in a community, building relationships with school and civic groups, and many more. Applications for Partnerships Academy: Street Trees are due on June 15.

For more information on Partnerships for Parks, the Capacity Fund, and Partnerships Academy: Street Trees please visit www.partnershipsforparks.org. ■

Letters to WestView

Dear Publisher:

I've been a loyal reader ever since I moved to the West Village many years ago.

It's spring again, and although this time of the year is when we are supposed to enjoy the West Village the most, for some of us in the Far West Village, it means more prostitution, drug dealing and sleepless nights. Throughout the year, this is a nightly ordeal, but during the warmer months, it worsens exponentially.

Is there any way the WestView can do a story on this issue? I bet that this quality-of-life issue is very high on your readership's lists of concerns. I was happy to see your recent article about the new Commanding Officer at the 6th Precinct. Many of us reached out to D.I. Shortell in the last couple of

years with either inconsistent results or no response/action whatsoever.

Any visibility you and WestView can give this ongoing issue would be sincerely appreciated by me and my neighbors.

Regards,
Eric on Charles Street

Dear Editor:

I would like to address a couple of issues with regard to the proposal of the P40P and the Camp Group for the redevelopment of Pier 40. First, the rendering used for their proposal shows a pedestrian bridge crossing from the east side of the West Side Highway over the bike-way and onto the pier. As much as we would all like to have the pedestrian bridge in order to avoid the

"Weekend Warriors" on bicycles, this is not something that any proposal can, in fact, include. It is entirely the responsibility of the Department of Transportation to decide and implement, so depicting it misrepresents the facts.

Second, I do not believe that the Camp Group has sufficiently addressed the question of how much they are proposing to charge the public for the use of the pools, ice rink, basketball courts or any of the other amenities they plan to include. In their initial proposal to the public, they made it clear that they would be using much of the area for their camp during the summer, and after camp ended they would be renting out the spaces. What areas will still be under the domain of the Hudson River Park Trust and therefore accessible to the local schools? Camp Group also

stated that many private schools would be interested in "renting" the spaces, something the P40P group seems to support strongly. What will be left for the common use or for open space? Are we going to have another Chelsea Piers? There seems to be a lot of information that we have not been given pertaining to the use, time and cost of the courts, pools, playgrounds, etc.

I think we need a very clear understanding of the proposal before we all start cheering about how grand it will be. Remember, there is no part of this pier that is up to the building code at this moment. Repairing the structure is one thing, but bringing it all up to code for the general public to be able to use is quite another issue.

Peggy Lewis
Director, bizkids ny, inc.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

■ WestView, the new voice of the West Village, will be celebrating the launch of its website at westviewnews.org. Starting in mid-May, you'll be able to read your favorite local stories online. The site is currently under construction but will be finished soon. Keep checking westviewnews.org, and let us know what you think of the finished site.

■ Community Board 2 will be holding a second hearing about school overcrowding in our neighborhood. Called "No Room to Learn, Part 2," the hearing will take place on May 8 at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium of P.S. 41, located at 116 West 11th Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Pizza and childcare will be provided.

■ On April 9, the New York State Legislature approved a budget that includes \$21 million in capital funding for Hudson River Park. This appropriation, which will be matched by a like amount from New York City, will significantly advance the progress of construction on the waterfront park. The new pool of \$42 million will allow

the Hudson River Park Trust to complete the construction of the largest area of contiguous open space in the park, running from 22nd to 26th Streets in Chelsea. In addition, it will fund the construction and revitalization of most of the Tribeca section of the park between Chambers and Houston Streets. These sections, which are expected to be complete in 2009, will establish four new public park piers in addition to the current six.

■ The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation invites you to explore the hidden interiors of Greenwich Village by participating in our annual tour of Village homes. This cherished tradition will take place on Sunday, May 4, as we celebrate ten years offering an exclusive look into some of the Village's most spectacular and historic homes. Join us after the tour for a special post-tour cocktail reception and celebration at the remarkable studios and roof garden of the Stephan Weiss Foundation. To purchase tickets, go to <http://gvshp.org/benefit/>.

Village Politics

An Interview with NYC Comptroller, William C. Thompson, Jr.

By Aubrey Lees

New York City Comptroller William (Bill) Thompson was first elected in 2001 and was re-elected to a second four-year term in 2005. Due to term limits, he must leave the position in 2009. A Democrat, Thompson is widely rumored to be running for mayor (he has not yet made a public announcement) and has already raised \$4.2 million, more than any of the other potential candidates: Anthony Weiner, Christine Quinn and Tony Avello. Thompson is the son of a judge and a teacher, a lifelong resident of Brooklyn, and a product of the New York City public school system. Before being elected comptroller, he worked for a Brooklyn congressman, served as Brooklyn's youngest-ever Deputy Borough President and was appointed to the New York City Board of Education in 1994, serving five terms as its president. During the 1990s, Thompson was also employed as a Senior Vice President for Public Finance at an investment-banking firm.

I recently spoke with the comptroller in his large, sunny office at 1



MEET THE CITY'S CFO New York City Comptroller Bill Thompson, charged with the complicated task of managing the city's finances, looks toward a possible mayoral bid in 2009.

Centre Street. He explained his primary responsibilities as the city's chief financial officer: auditing the city budget; overseeing contract registrations with the city; setting and enforcing the prevailing wages on

public contracts; approving all legal settlements with the city; overseeing, along with the mayor, all bond related-matters, including choosing the investment firms; and advising all five of the city's pension funds as a

custodian and investment adviser. The funds are invested in markets all over the world, but 50 to 60 percent of the overall funds are invested in domestic equities. The investments must yield a return of eight percent, which, according to an actuary, is the return that is needed to run the city. Thompson said that in 2007, the yield was greater than eight percent.

As comptroller, Thompson has advanced corporate governance and corporate social responsibility reforms, including the adoption of standards for the protection of the environment and global human rights. He has fought for prohibitions against workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and has increased the assets in the New York City Pension Funds that are managed by women- and minority-owned firms.

Due to the recent revelation that the City Council used phantom organizations as a means to allocate discretionary funds, Thompson will now require that all agency agreements funded by City Council discretionary monies, regardless of the amount, be reviewed by his office before any monies are disbursed. In

addition, the city's auditor, Deloitte and Touche, independently will audit the Council's discretionary fund budget process.

We also discussed his thoughts on a variety of issues such as congestion pricing (in favor), social promotion (against), term limits for state legislators (against), teacher tenure tied to test scores (against), and same-sex marriage (yes!). Thompson also indicated that he is considering taking a position on the St. Vincent's development proposal. He is weighing the need for improved hospital facilities versus the burden and impact on the neighborhood.

When asked what issues will drive his mayoral campaign, he said that affordable housing and education issues will be two of his top priorities. I also asked him what he thought about politicians blabbing about their personal issues, such as their extramarital affairs and hotels of choice, drug use 30 years ago, etc. He responded by saying that there should be a zone of privacy and that some things should be kept private. On that basis alone, he's got my vote. ■

Zoning Battles Continue in the Far West Village

City Supports Developers' Request for Rezoning, Ignores Community's Zoning Pleas

By Andrew Berman, Executive Director, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

The City Planning Commission is considering a request by a developer to rezone five blocks between Barrow and Clarkson Streets west of Hudson Street. The rezoning, if approved, would allow residential development of up to 125 feet in height, which is prohibited under the current zoning for this area. GVSHP and many community groups are opposing the rezoning, which must be approved by the City Planning Commission and the City Council to be enacted.

The city tried to pass this rezoning in 2002, but a coalition of neighborhood groups including GVSHP opposed it, and it was defeated in the City Council. Now a developer has resurrected the rezoning to facilitate a devel-

opment he would like to undertake, but it would allow other developers to do the same. GVSHP opposes the rezoning

45-story buildings. GVSHP has urged the city to undertake a desperately needed rezoning of this area, and they have thus far

building proposals in the Greenwich Village Historic District just a block apart on Washington Street. At 145 Charles Street, a

Meanwhile at 145 Perry Street, a developer proposed demolition of a two-story building, to be replaced by a nine-story hotel. The LPC required some revisions to the design and some reduction in its size, but then approved the building.

These developments highlighted how the underlying zoning on these blocks in the Far West Village still allows large new development in spite of landmarks regulations, and offers big bonuses for hotel development. GVSHP is therefore working with neighbors to pursue a possible zoning change for the area, to ensure that any new development is of an appropriate scale and compatible type for the neighborhood. ■

To allow a developer-driven rezoning that is not wanted by the community while refusing to move on a community-requested rezoning in an adjacent area is especially problematic.

proposal because there is no apparent benefit to the community and definite potential drawbacks in terms of inappropriate development, overburdening of local services and infrastructure, and displacement of existing businesses.

Even worse, directly south of the proposed rezoning is a zoning district that includes the Trump SoHo Condo-Hotel and allows

refused. To allow a developer-driven rezoning that is not wanted by the community while refusing to move on a community-requested rezoning in an adjacent area is especially problematic.

To find out more about the status of this proposed rezoning and how you can get involved, go to www.gvshp.org/FWVZoning.htm.

We have also seen two rare new

developer proposed to replace two one-story buildings with a garish new nine-story mixed-use structure. Fortunately, GVSHP had successfully fought to include this site in the expanded historic district in 2006, thus making the design subject to landmarks review. The oversized, out-of-character design was rejected, but may be revised and resubmitted at a later date.

Community Board 2 Votes to Extend M8 Crosstown Bus at Pier 40

By George Capsis, Publisher

Right now, if you walk down to the West Side Highway at West 10th Street, you will find the 8th Street crosstown bus waiting to start its scheduled run. I had suggested to Community Board 2's transportation committee that the bus should extend to Pier 40 so that kids, oldsters and the 2,000 car parkers from the West Village can easily ride to the pier and cross the highway in safety. Below is the resolution that CB 2 sent to the MTA and DOT. The proposal also got the nod from Assemblywoman Deborah Glick and State Senator Tom Duane. WestView will follow its tortured progress through the bureaucracy in subsequent issues.

Resolution in support of extending the M8 cross-town westbound bus route to Pier 40:

- Whereas each day, all week long, hundreds of children walk across West Street at Houston Street to use Pier 40's athletic facilities, thousands of people cross there each weekend to access the Hudson River Park, and many others throughout the week also venture across the street there to access the park and Pier 40's playing fields and parking facilities (over 2,000 people park their cars at Pier 40); and

- Whereas West Street's extremely wide, highway-like expanse, coupled with heavy

vehicular traffic going north and south as well as entering from the east on Houston Street, makes it difficult and dangerous for pedestrians to get across the street, especially children and seniors; and

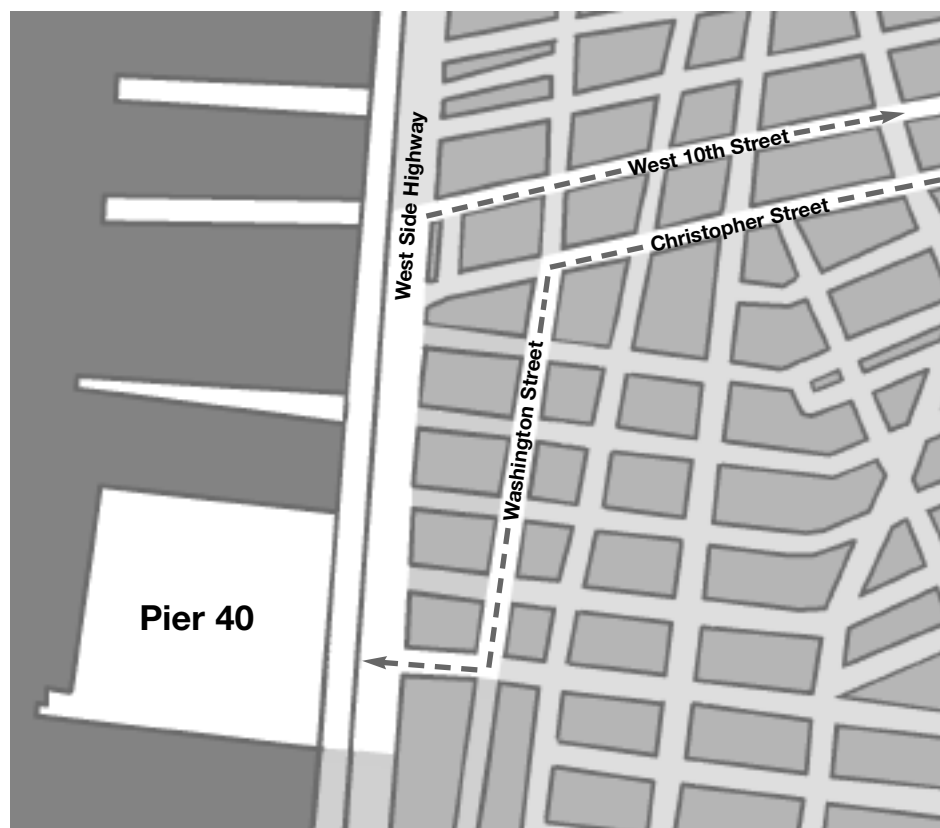
- Whereas there's no direct public transit to Pier 40 and/or along the Hudson River Park in District 2, and the long walk to the west side is arduous for seniors and for many others; and

- Whereas the M23 crosstown bus route extends on West 23rd Street to Chelsea Piers on West Street where the bus drops off Pier users, and waits to pick up passengers there; and

- Whereas currently the M8 crosstown westbound bus ends its run and waits for the scheduled departure on the east side of West St. and W. 10th St.;

- Therefore Be It Resolved that Community Board #2, Manhattan requests that MTA NYCT develop a proposal to extend the M8 crosstown bus route to drop off passengers at Pier 40 and wait to pick up passengers there and present such proposal to the Community Board for final approval.

Vote: Unanimous in favor. ■



PROPOSED M8 BUS EXTENSION Community Board 2's transportation committee has requested that the MTA New York City Transit extend the M8 crosstown bus to serve Pier 40



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Open Space Should Be Part of the MTA's Plan at Mulry Square

By Brad Hoylman
and Shirley Secunda

This article is based on testimony presented by Community Board 2 at the MTA/New York City Transit Public Hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed subway emergency fan plant to be located at one of three sites near the intersection of Seventh and Greenwich Avenues. The most likely site being considered by NYC Transit is the triangular lot surrounded by the 9/11 memorial tiles at Greenwich and Seventh Avenues. The other two proposed sites are the roadbed on Greenwich Avenue between Seventh Avenue and Perry Street, and the roadbed on Perry Street between Seventh and Greenwich Avenues.

It isn't as if we hadn't figured it out, but now it's confirmed. The recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) by NYC Transit for its proposed subway fan plant at Mulry Square at the corner of Greenwich and Seventh Avenues reveals that we're in for the rockiest of rides once construction gets going, and maybe even after construction is complete. The new fan plant will provide necessary ventilation in case of fire or smoke on the Seventh and Eighth Avenue subway lines in the vicinity of Greenwich Village. As the DEIS shows, however, the road to getting it built is fraught with destructive effects.

"Substantial adverse impacts" are the telling words. These impacts are forecast to plunder every part of the project's surrounding neighborhood from historic resources and businesses to air quality and traffic. The DEIS crystal ball predicts noise, vibrations, dust, blocked access, and felled trees and greenery. Such effects will reach far beyond the project area—into the whole community.

More disquieting, the DEIS lacks prescriptions for sufficient mitigation measures to lessen these negative effects. What's more, there's no plan to alleviate the specific impacts of this project. To ease our pain, typical boilerplate approaches used in many other EIS's are offered, like traffic light timing shifts or structural underpinnings to support affected structures. Identical mitigations are suggested

for all three proposed locations, with no attempt to customize them to the actual needs of each site and no indication of how relief can be reached by employing such measures. It makes one wonder what the hundreds of thousands spent on such an EIS process really accomplish, other than going through the motions.

Whatever final alternative is chosen, the DEIS gives no guarantee that those vague mitigation measures will help ease the blow that this project will inflict. In some cases, in fact, it actually cautions that they could be harmful. On the structural underpinnings, for instance, the DEIS forewarns: "if the underpinning is incomplete or faulty, the integrity of the structures could be compromised," and "while faulty construction is avoided as much as possible... errors could occur."

Worse, although mitigations must be proposed, there's no requirement to implement them. The DEIS itself asserts, "Mitigation measures would be implemented to the extent feasible and practicable."

While we recognize the need for subway fan plants to ensure safety in emergencies, given the dire impacts that this proposed plant will have on our community and the limited prospects for achieving adequate mitigation, our community is left in a fall guy position, forced to hold the bag without any benefit.

Despite the shockingly adverse effects that the DEIS divulges and the insufficient or even non-existent mitigation it hints may be in store, NYC Transit has resisted considering compensation to our community for the hardships it will endure.

Yet giving back to a community as reparation for harsh construction impacts is a common practice of both government and private entities. The latest instance in our own community is the NYC Department of Environmental Protection's gift of a completely new Seravalli Park as mitigation for water tunnel installation impacts. The fan plant project will have a far greater impact. A commitment to easing this burden with a significant community benefit should be a matter of course.

Community Board 2 Manhattan's goal is to maximize public open space at the



FUTURE OPEN SPACE? The MTA New York City Transit hopes to build an above-ground fan plant on the triangular lot at Greenwich and Seventh Avenues. Community Board 2 proposes putting the plant underground and creating public green space on the site. (Photo by Jessica Williams)

Greenwich Avenue triangle, where the only alternative now is an aboveground structure. NYC Transit claims that if this alternative is chosen, "a limited area... may be available for public use." That area would encompass only a few hundred square feet on an almost 3,000-square-foot property, hardly a community benefit.

The DEIS promises consultation with the New York State Office of Historic Preservation to "design an above-grade structure... to ensure its compatibility with the area's urban design and visual resources." However, this past January, that same Office of Historic Preservation wrote to NYC Transit expressing its "preference that the vent plant be kept underground to reduce any possible visual impacts to the Historic District."

Community Board 2 agrees. It's far more appropriate to have an open green space at this location, contributing a much-needed public amenity and gateway to Greenwich Village, than an above-grade fan plant enclosed by a building that's no more than a bad disguise.

To that end, we're asking NYC Transit to include additional alternatives for evaluation in the final EIS, first and foremost a below-grade fan plant at the triangular lot. We're

also suggesting alternatives that use the triangular lot and Greenwich Avenue roadbed sites together, as well as alternatives with less intrusive fan configurations, including ones that would use the elements as art. All are aimed at providing a substantial public open space on the triangular lot. In connection with this, we're encouraging a design competition. We're also recommending that all concepts be submitted to the New York City Art Commission.

In view of the generalized mitigation measures put forth so far, we're urging the transit agency to provide detailed information in the final EIS on how specific impacts will be minimized by targeted mitigations. We're also asking for concrete evidence of work with federal, state, and city preservation agencies to protect historic structures.

Although the Mulry Square fan plant DEIS confirms that negative impacts are inevitable, this project offers an opportunity to provide a community amenity that will give positive benefits long after the fan plant is constructed. It's up to NYC Transit to make this happen. ■

Brad Hoylman is Chair and Shirley Secunda is Traffic and Transportation Committee Chair of Community Board 2 Manhattan.

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Second Childhood Vintage Toy Shop Closes Doors after 39 Years

By Henry I. Kurtz

Second Childhood, an internationally renowned antique toy store and a Greenwich Village landmark for 39 years, recently closed its doors for the last time. Located on Bleecker Street between Seventh Avenue South and Jones Street, the shop had been a magnet for collectors from all over the world since its proprietor Grover Van Dexter founded it in 1969. But like many small specialty stores in the area, Second Childhood fell victim to soaring rent and taxes.

Although still spry at 87, Van Dexter sadly acknowledged that high costs, coupled with declining revenue, had led to his decision to shut down the business. "I started Second Childhood on a shoestring," he observed. "I sold my stamp collection and emptied my savings account to get the thing going. It was the right time. The hobby of toy collecting was just taking off. You could make a living back then."

When he started the business in 1969, the rent was only \$350 per month. By 1980, it had risen to \$3,500, and when

he signed his most recent lease in 2001, the rent was \$5,200 plus \$1,600 in real estate taxes for a total monthly tab of \$6,800. The landlord plans to charge the next tenant \$15,000 per month.

"Bleecker Street has become Fashion Alley," Van Dexter noted wistfully. "There are very few nice little antique stores and gift shops left. The old mom and pop stores are gone. Now you have two Ralph Lauren boutiques and tourists lining up at a bakery to buy two-dollar cupcakes."

Regular customers of Second Childhood expressed their regrets at the passing of this Village landmark. Jack Szwergold, a computer consultant, commented, "This place has been more than just a vintage toy store for me. It was a clubhouse, a place where you could come and meet people who shared your interest in wonderful old toys."

"I can't believe I won't be able to come here anymore and pick up little treasures for my collection," said attorney John Gresham, another long-time customer.



SECOND CHILDHOOD, a toy store owned by Grover Van Dexter, has closed after 39 years. (Photo by Henry I. Kurtz)

When asked about future plans, Van Dexter—who had an earlier career as a stage and screen actor—shrugged and remarked half-jokingly, "Maybe I'll go back to performing—I still have my actors equity card. If there are any agents out there reading this, I'm available!" ■

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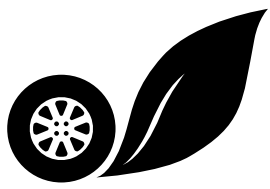
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A Small Circle of Friends

By Chris Dalrymple

Littlewood's Law states that miracles are not so miraculous; that they occur to an individual on a regular once-a-month basis. How else to explain the 10 people who recently gathered for dinner in my apartment. We had all been teenagers in the Sixties. And I had never expected to see most of them again. But I had heard about a website—greenwichvillagekids.com—that commemorated this band of ragamuffins



Photo by Alex Berg

who grew up and went to school in the neighborhood. Not much. Just a list of names, some gone and some missing. Most were names I had not thought about since those days of parties, pot and pills with a soundtrack supplied by Dylan, the Stones and Motown.

The site put me back in touch with Bibbe Hansen. She and her husband, Sean Carrillo, had launched it after moving back to the city. When I first met her, Bibbe was fourteen, going on forty. She was a friend of Andy Warhol and had a band with Jack Kerouac's daughter Jan. Soon circumstances beyond her control landed her in the youth house upstate. That's what they had renamed reform school. By her own account she missed a lot of the Sixties before busting out. She then ended up in L.A., married and had a few kids, became a midwife, remarried and started a restaurant/salon with Sean for Southern California's avant-garde, such as it was. Once she was back in town she contacted Bob Goldman, who grew up in a penthouse on Christopher Street and wrote for the Newark Star-Ledger before becoming a lawyer and signing on with a city agency. It was he who came up with many of the names on the site.

My wife Eileen and I had put together a restaurant reunion last year, but I promised them and myself a dinner at home and here it was. Seated around the table were Bibbe and Sean; Bob Goldman; Andy van Felix, a former dope fiend who went to Israel and got born-again but is still a great guy; Bob Zurer, who grew up above his father's off-Broadway theater, the Renata, and later managed the first duplex movie theater in Brooklyn Heights; and Steve Zukmann—the lone conservative in our group. A son of two shrinks who burned out early, he now sells real estate in Los Angeles.

I had not seen Steve in over 30 years and had hoped to make up for lost time when I walked Chris Lang and out the door went that idea. Still a singer-songwriter, Chris brought his guitar for a gig he would be doing later that night. Everybody had a drink or three and pretty soon things got raucous. Bibbe left early to tend to a grandchild, Chris pulled out his axe and the idea of a joint was floated but that has felt like chasing a dream for some time now so I demurred. Not that I hadn't had high hopes. But I forgot that without staff the host almost always gets short-changed. I couldn't cook, serve and talk. At least I made eye con-

tact with some.

The next morning amid the debris I thought about the good times I had shared with these people. Once, Steve and I and our friend Danny Bernstein had dropped some LSD at Steve's place, as we were wont to do back then. This was before Cathy Wilkerson blew up her father's house across the street. Steve's parents were at their weekend house. Which is what parents did and my daughter tells me they still do. It's nice to know the old traditions live on. Anyway, Steve and Danny and I were watching Jerry Lewis's Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, caught up in the surrealism that is TV on psychedelics, when something Jerry said caught our attention. "Steve Zukmann of New York City has just pledged a donation of ten thousand dollars. Thank you, Steve." The phone rang. We were afraid to pick it up. The caller was another friend also watching at home who had done the deed as a practical joke. Steve didn't laugh. Danny and I could not stop laughing.

The night before at dinner, I felt like Steve and I had picked up right where we had left off just before he totaled a car and married a minister's daughter. It's rare when your worldview syncs with another person and you can converse in shorthand. After all, he's divorced, his perfect blond children are grown up or almost so. Why doesn't he move back here? Oh, right. Maybe he doesn't want to. Don't these conservatives pride themselves on seeing things clearly: for what they are, not what they were?

Still another event begs that question. Eileen and I were walking up from having dim sum in Chinatown and as we entered Washington Square Park we first heard and then saw people playing banjos. Dozens of them. And fiddles and mandolins. Dozens of them. And washtub basses. I had not seen a washtub bass since I was 10 years old.

I wandered past a gray-haired man teaching a young Japanese girl a bluegrass fiddle lick and stopped at the statue of Alexander Holley, an engineer who had helped make steel production cheaper. Grateful steel men had erected his memorial in 1890. To this kid that monument had looked as big as Rushmore and as impossible to scale. Now from a perspective of 50 years, it looked commonplace. Like a half-scale replica of a memory.

Like the men who paid for his statue, Holley had believed that commerce was the basis of civilization. Yet here were the people singing the jug-band songs, some of them songs that had probably survived him. And then I saw John Sebastian playing guitar. And Maria Muldaur singing. And for a moment the hateful Eighties and the nasty Nineties disappeared. It had all the makings of really bad melodrama. But that's how miracles go. ■

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Gelato Wave Hits the West Village

By Lynn Bechtold

Just in time for spring, the block of Bleecker Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues has become a breeding ground for gelaterias, with three shops—Cones: Ice Cream Artisans, L'Arte del Gelato, and GROM—vying for customers as the weather gets warm.

Cones: Ice Cream Artisans, the long-standing gelateria on this block, opened in 1998. They must be “in,” as evidenced by a photo of the lovely Heidi Klum and her mom licking away at their ice cream cones, not to mention numerous “best of” awards from the likes of Citysearch and Time Out New York, plus a 27 rating in Zagat's. Founded by two brothers from Buenos Aires, Raul and Oscar D'Aloisio, Cones makes everything fresh daily on the premises and uses all-natural ingredients. Originally a construction manager and an architect, the two brothers decided to try their hand at gelato-making after working on the opening of a new Häagen-Dazs store in Buenos Aires. They decided to introduce artisanal ice cream, in the gelato tradition, to New Yorkers. After training at a friend's gelateria in Buenos Aires, they opened their West Village store, and the rest is history. (By the way, that Häagen-Dazs store didn't do too well in Argentina.)

Cones's list of flavors includes the standard offerings, plus seasonal and creative ones like corn, maté, Champagne and yogurt. They use no pre-mixes: just milk, cream, sugar and the additional ingredients for a particular flavor. This mixture gets put in a pasteurizer, which warms the base to 180 degrees Fahrenheit and quickly cools it to 39 degrees. The batch then goes in the freezer for 12 minutes. For this artisanal process, Cones won a seal of approval from Slow Food (www.slowfood.com), a “non-profit, eco-gastronomic, member-supported organization that was founded in 1989 to



NEW GELATO ON THE BLOCK With the opening of GROM last month, the block of Bleecker Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues boasts three gelato shops. (Photo by R. Umar Abbasi)

counteract fast food and fast life.” Oscar contends that “when you produce a product for one shop only, you produce a different product than if you have to supply 15 shops.”

Commenting on the proximity of L'Arte del Gelato and GROM, both brothers felt that the competition will be positive. “It's good for people to have the chance to taste and compare, and it promotes gelato-style ice cream,” they stated. Raul added, “The more they taste and see, the more they understand the time that goes into making the gelato and why it costs what it does.”

Opening in Chelsea Market in 2005, L'Arte del Gelato opened their second store on Seventh Avenue South, just north of Bleecker, last summer. Founded by Francesco Realmuto, a Sicilian-born American, and his business partner Salvatore Potestio, L'Arte del Gelato also makes gelato in the “artigianale” style. Realmuto spent twelve years as a diamond cutter before deciding that he wanted a career change. Having grown up in Italy, where gelato is a huge part of everyday life, he felt that New York needed more gelato places. He went back to Italy to research gelato-making for his new venture. He insists on using only top-quality, fresh ingredients, such as pistachios from Bronte, Sicily and nocciola nuts from Langhe, a town in the northern Piedmont region of Italy. His product is made from organic whole milk and organic eggs, and fruit flavors use seasonal fresh fruit. Every day, batches of the gelato are made from scratch at the Chelsea Market location.

Realmuto went on to explain a little bit about gelato. While American-style ice cream has a butterfat content of at least 12 percent and is pumped with air, gelato only has a 7–9 percent butterfat content, and no additional air. Generally made from whole milk, as opposed to heavy cream, gelato thus has fewer calories than ice cream.

This first location proved so successful that Realmuto began searching for a second storefront last year. He and his partner chose the West Village because they feel that well-traveled Villagers can appreciate their gelato. In addition, the many tourists add to foot traffic. Plans to expand the West Village location will include an upstairs room where customers will be able to enjoy additional treats.

Commenting on the close proximity of his West Village location to Cones and GROM, Realmuto also said that competition is good, and added that he is proud of his gelato: “People will come to us, look at our gelato in the glass case and see our presentation: the innovative flavors, the freshness of the gelato. Our combination of traditional and more innovative flavors makes it fun.”

GROM, the newbie on the block (it opened in mid-April), opened their first store outside of Italy last year on the Upper West Side. A New York Times article helped spread the word, and long lines soon formed.

GROM was founded in 2003 in Turin, Italy by two friends: Guido Martinetti, a winemaker, and Federico Grom, a businessman. Following the success of their first store, the two have since given up their other professions to concentrate fully on gelato. Nicolò de Rienzo and his business partner Stefano Ciravegna brought GROM to New York City and run the chain's operations here. GROM currently has 16 stores in Italy and New York.

GROM is different from other artisanal gelaterias in that it makes its gelato at a plant outside of Turin. According to the Times article (May 2, 2007), they started out as a single gelateria, making the gelato on-site. When their gelato maker was hurt in an accident and the owners had to make the gelato themselves, they realized that expansion would not be easy. They decided to produce their gelato in one central location before shipping it to the stores. De Rienzo says this “ensures quality control on the product by eliminating having many different people make the gelato in different cities.”

As the chain uses only fresh, top-quality ingredients, they have a monthly flavor list that highlights seasonal products: lemons from Amalfi, and pistachios and hazelnuts from Bronte and Langhe (like L'Arte del Gelato). When the “best” ingredient is not from Italy, GROM looks elsewhere. For example, they get dark chocolate from Venezuela and vanilla beans from Madagascar. GROM, too, has been honored by Slow Food. Since the chain's expansion, they have purchased land in the Piedmont region and have begun to farm their own fruits. “I sleep easily at night because I know we make something healthy and of high quality for our customers. It is not about money, and we are not trying to be the Starbucks of gelato,” says de Rienzo.

Once GROM's gelato is made into liquid batches, it is “flash-frozen” and then shipped to the stores. Then, the batches are thawed and whipped in a machine before being re-chilled to the proper temperature. For certain flavors, ingredients are added after the final mixing, such as chestnuts in “Marrons glacés,” a March Flavor of the Month. According to de Rienzo, if he and his partner in New York have an idea for a flavor, they talk with the founders, who may agree to let them try it. Some flavors are more popular in the U.S. than in Italy.

Why did GROM choose the gelato-saturated Bleecker Street area for their second New York store? After living downtown, de Rienzo always knew that he wanted to open a store in the West Village. He particularly likes Bleecker and the area near Father Demo Square. He feels that the West Village is a real community—even while hosting many tourists—and hopes that this community will embrace his new establishment.

With the arrival of spring, it's always a good time to have a gelato, especially since we have three artisanal options to choose from. There are a few more vacant storefronts on the block, so who knows? Perhaps Ciao Bella and Il Laboratorio del Gelato of New York, or Capogiro of Philadelphia are on the way. ■

L'Arte del Gelato
75 Seventh Avenue South
(between Bleecker and
W. 4th Streets)
212.924.0803
www.lartedelgelato.com

Cones: Ice Cream Artisans
272 Bleecker Street
(between Sixth and Seventh Avenues)
212.414.1795

GROM
233 Bleecker Street (corner of
Carminie)
www.grom.it/eng



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Interview with Dr. Mark Burns of the West Village Veterinary Hospital



Dr. Mark Burns, owner of the West Village Veterinary Hospital.

By Barbara Chacour

Mark Burns, DVM, owner of the West Village Veterinary Hospital as well as two other downtown practices, announced that construction is underway at 75 Eighth Avenue on an enlarged animal hospital (4,600 sq. ft.) to replace the Washington Street practice (1,300 sq. ft.), currently operating in a building slated for demolition. Dr. Burns has run the West Village practice since 1995, when he purchased the practice established there in 1979.

Dr. Burns had opened his first New York City practice in Tribeca in 1982, a pioneering move in that neighborhood. He later opened in Battery Park City as well (www.tribecavets.com; www.batteryparkvets.com).

In October 2001, a fireman came to the Tribeca hospital with a small kitten he had rescued from the ruins of the World Trade Center. Dr. Burns named her Zero and took her home. His children added a middle name—she is Zero Veronica. He estimates her date of birth as right around

9/11 and wishes she could tell her story. The family also has a cat named Emily, two birds, and an aquarium. They are mourning the death of their dog. He expects they will get another one.

Dr. Burns is a 1970 graduate of the University of Minnesota Veterinary College. The Greenwich Village practice is staffed by veterinarians Dr. Caroline Quagliata and Dr. Lucy O'Byrne.

WestView interviewed Dr. Burns in April:

WestView: *What is the timing of the move?*

Mark Burns: We hope our new location will be ready by August. We have no guarantee that we will be able to remain at Washington Street until the new hospital is ready, so we have sent clients a letter explaining how the practice will continue in case of a gap. Basically, Drs. Quagliata and O'Byrne would arrange appointments at the downtown locations. We will make deliveries of food to clients' homes and schedule some house calls for existing clients. We will arrange transport to Tribeca for in-patient care, if necessary. Our phone will remain in service, and we will post updates on our website: www.westvillagevets.com. It's very important to us to maintain the practice and care for our patients, so we want to minimize any potential inconvenience to clients.

WV: *Eighth Avenue and 14th Street seems like a promising location.*

MB: Yes, we are very excited about the move. The spot has great public transportation and is easy to find. Try to explain how to get to Perry and Washington or to Lispenard Street, our Tribeca address. Once we get established there, our aim is to offer expanded hours, even possibly around the clock.

WV: *Can you give us any health tips for our pets?*

MB: Don't overfeed them. Obesity and Type 2 diabetes are becoming more and more common in animals. I tell people that if your pet makes you feel a little guilty at feeding time, you are probably doing the right thing. Remember that dry food is higher calorie than canned food. On the other hand, city pets have amazing life expectancy, being safe from predators and cars. ■

West Village Veterinary Hospital will move to 75 Eighth Avenue (below 14th Street). For now, it is still open at 705-A Washington Street during construction. The practice's telephone number is 212-633-7400.



Dr. Lucy O'Byrne with her dog, Aloha.



Dr. Caroline Quagliata and Renee Porfido with patient Pip, and Penny and Jack.

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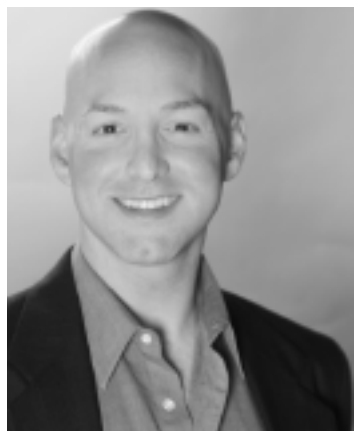
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Me, Me, Me!

Narcissists Alive and Well



By Dr. Art Bowler

I'm a fan of Deepak Chopra. I know and practice the Secret. I just finished watching for the third time "What the Bleep Do We Know" about how subatomic particles impact our reality and world. I get it on a big level—our energy brings back energy of the same sort. And I live a fuller life thanks to these ideas. But that's not where this article is going. So if you are afraid to step into the dark for a spell, stop reading now.

This article is about the "ME, ME, ME" culture. No, not Mariah Carey's "Emancipation of Mimi" hit record of 2005 that sold millions of copies and is certain to be matched by her latest work. It's the culture of narcissism. And as a psychologist, I've been asked to write about narcissists and the Narcissistic personality disorder. The trouble is, I'm having difficulty, because it seems that there are so many ways to discuss narcissists and how they impact those around them and our world.

A personality disorder is a pervasive pattern of thought, affect (feeling) and behavior that is present in a variety of contexts. A disorder differs from "having traits." We all have traits, for traits make up personality. But personality disorders are less flexible and occur in most life areas of someone who lives within the confines of one. Among them is a personality disorder that consists of a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), a strong need for

admiration, and a lack of empathy that begins by early adulthood and is present in a variety of contexts. An individual who has this disorder also has a number of the following traits: a grandiose sense of self-importance; a preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love; a belief that he or she is "special" and unique; a sense of entitlement; an interpersonally exploitative style; and a need for excessive admiration. Couple this with an envious attitude toward others (or a belief that others are envious of him or her), an arrogant or haughty attitude and behavioral style, and a lack of empathy, and you have an understanding of what comprises the Narcissistic personality disorder.

First, please do not diagnose yourself based on the above criteria. Only a professional can do so, and we all have traits. I hope to take a different slant on this narcissistic idea. You see, I believe that our culture is one of narcissism. And our culture seems to present narcissists with more and more ways to emphasize their own self-importance (iPods, YouTube, Facebook, etc.). You don't need me to emphasize this issue, as I'm sure

you can add to my list. Do you know people who are preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success and power? How many of us know someone who is manipulative and exploitive in a city like New York? How many seek more rights than those around them? What a troubling situation. And it's difficult to write about honestly.

This culture of narcissism continues to impede those who are trying to respect rights, uphold laws, use empathy as a sense and source of compassion, and help others simply for the good of doing so. The world is supposedly reading "The Secret." Are we practicing it, the mission of the good-natured? I haven't lost hope, but when I see some people living so unconsciously, I ask them to get on board.

So, what is the treatment? Well, there really isn't one, because narcissists believe that it is everyone else who has the problem—they are simply stuck having to show the world how and why others must change NOW, or else. Or else what? Well, they will have to endure the narcissistic wrath that lies deep within and is very powerful, toxic, and dangerous. But if a culture is so narcissistic (one that attempts to overtake another

country, perhaps), does it really matter if your iPod is so loud that I can hear those old 80s tunes from across the subway? Is that you being narcissistic? Is it really such a big deal that I can hear what you are having for Passover dinner on the LIRR via your loud cell phone call and exactly which caterer is screwing up your wedding? I feel the frustration myself and wonder where those of us who are paying attention will wind up.

To those who exist and understand this perspective (a.k.a. have empathy and are living toward a solution), I say to you, keep going! Do what you do! Be good. Act well. Be kind. Be true. Come visit me and say hello when you see me walking in the Village or if you recognize me on the street (that would be such a narcissistic fulfillment for me, I must admit!). Because in a world that is becoming assuredly narcissistic, I will happily do what I can to make you feel well. Yes, YOU.

Dr. Art Bowler is a psychologist in private practice. Visit his website at www.drartbowler.com or phone him at 646-823-5080. He would love to hear your comments at drart@drartbowler.com.



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American Masters Fine Art Show at the Salmagundi Club

By Tim Newton



STILL LIFE WITH FRUIT by John Traynor is just one of more than 150 artworks in the Salmagundi Club's American Masters fine art show and sale, open through May 7.

The venerable Salmagundi Club is hosting a blockbuster art exhibition and sale that runs through May 7. The show features over 50 of America's finest representational artists from Clyde Aspevig to John Stobart. This landmark sale is a benefit, with the proceeds going to restore the main gallery area of Club's grand Fifth Avenue brownstone.

The exhibition consists of more than 150 paintings, sculptures and drawings. The diverse subject matter ranges from maritime, landscape, figurative, western, wildlife, still life and more.

The Salmagundi Club has been a center for American art since 1871. Founded as the New York Sketch Club, the Club and its artist members have been among the most influential members of the art world. Thomas Moran, Howard Pyle, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Stanford White, N.C. Wyeth, Frank Tenney Johnson, Augustus St. Gaudens, William Merritt Chase, Dean Cornwell, John F. Carlson, W.R. Leigh and Maynard Dixon are but a few of the greats who have graced the galleries with their presence and their artwork.

American Masters at the Salmagundi Club continues this tradition of great art by bringing together many of the finest artists of our time. Artists participating in the show and sale include such notables as Clark Hulings, John Stobart, Clyde Aspevig, George Carlson, Tucker Smith, Dan Ostermiller, and David Leffel.

This exhibition has garnered national attention. Collectors as well as art dealers are coming from all over North America to view and to purchase, and over 45 of the artists will be in attendance during the opening weekend.

The Club will host a preview party on Friday, May 2. There will be live jazz and hors d'oeuvres. The sale of the art begins on Saturday evening, May 3. Collectors attending the Saturday event will be given the first opportunity to purchase the works. Admission to the two evening events will be by paid admission.

The process for selling the artwork during the Saturday sale will be unique. Because there may be multiple collectors vying for the same work, the purchaser for each piece will be chosen by lottery. Collectors purchasing a ticket to the weekend events will each be given a book of "ballots." Each piece of artwork will be numbered and will have a numbered ballot box nearby. Patrons place their name in the appropriate box and hope to have their name drawn.

Artwork that is not sold on Saturday evening will remain available for purchase until the close of the show on Wednesday night. This is an opportunity to view and perhaps own some of the most significant representational artwork in America.

American Masters is one of the premier art events in New York City this spring. ■

The Salmagundi Club is located at 47 Fifth Avenue between 11th and 12th Streets and is open to the public without charge. The exhibition is open from through May 7. Tickets are still available for the opening weekend gala. Call the Club for information at 212-255-7740.

The Poetry Corner

West Village Poet

A native of New Orleans, Leslie Breeding has lived in New York since 1977 and in Greenwich Village for the past seven years. She worked in radio in the 1980s where she anchored NPR's All Things Considered Weekend Edition. She has a Master's degree in labor relations and, in addition to working for the National Labor Relations Board, teaches at Baruch College School of Business. Leslie is also an officer of the West 9th Street Block Association.

Leslie's poems have appeared in Sal Mimeo magazine. Last year her first book of poetry, "I'm Going Home" was published by Green Zone Editions.

The Gardener

The deer have chewed down all the rose bushes
soft mouths filled with thorns
stars that center and shine
over the garden you have made
shed their recondite glow
on the shoulders of a young man

It all waits for you
the birds and the rabbits watch for you

Why not bring the good silver out to the bed
the bone china with the bacchanal pattern
like a child, like that, working the dirt
with a big spoon

Emblematic

Bring a cloche Danae, to force the holiday blooms,
attenuate with a cherry on top, you know what I mean,
this freestanding possibility, observing the emblems
through the shutters. Then show them to me,
the funny ones, hold them up in the threaded shade,
amplitude, finitude, it's all the same. And now
I'll jump out of this Brancusi cake
with my thesaurus, careful of my tendon!
That revolution was interesting, a sucking,
sticky revolution, men and children splayed,
clanking, massive seditious concepts. Dear ones
without happy endings, pausing in their finitude.
We were riding in their snow-filled hair,
flying and falling and walking away
through the tin world of sanctions.
Great juicy stems, they're overdone
just the way you like it, put them
in mini-storage, pirates
measure my legs again.

*From "I'm Going Home" Copyright 2007 Leslie Breeding.
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*Submissions to the Poetry Corner may be emailed to:
westview.editor@gmail.com*

—W. J. Davidson is the editor of Poetry Corner.

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Opening the Beach at Bleecker Playground

By Lara S. Mullarkey

Kids can't seem to get enough of playing in the sand. They love jumping in it, tunneling holes through it, and just feeling it slip between their fingers and toes. Parents can sit their babies and toddlers down in the sandbox and know they will occupy themselves for long stretches of time, playing and experimenting, always having a soft landing for those unsteady first steps.

But for the last several years, many West Village parents have cringed at the sight of their children in our neighborhood sandbox. The sand at Bleecker Playground had become not only unsightly but also unsanitary. Dozens of children were playing in the popular spot each day, tracking in germs or dirt on their hands and shoes, and debris from the street and nearby plaza area were consistently making their way into the sandbox, with wrappers and napkins mixed into the pit. There were concerns about nearby rodent activity and reports of children getting sick or bitten by mites after playing in the sand.

When a group of parents banded together last June to officially launch the Friends of Bleecker Playground, part of the larger Abingdon Square Alliance, it became clear that sand replacement would be on the top of the agenda. Thanks to an effort spearheaded by local parent Claire Terraciano and supported by Ralph Musolino (District Park Manager),



A SATISFIED CUSTOMER Lars Mullarkey plays in the Bleecker Playground's new, clean sand. (Photos by Lara S. Mullarkey)

Bleecker Playground finally got a much needed shipment of new sand this winter.

"I got a call from Ralph letting me know the city had received some sand for us to use and quickly sent out an email asking for volunteers to help with the replacement," says Terraciano. On Saturday, January 5, over a dozen local parents reported for duty. "It was longer and harder than we anticipated," reported parent Bruce Bunner. "Luckily we had good support from the neighborhood and managed to get it done thanks to old-fashioned teamwork and elbow grease." The determined and good-natured crew spent hours removing Star Wars figures, tree roots, plastic blocks, sippy cups, and coins, along with many pounds of heavy, dirty, frozen sand.

Two days later trucks pulled up on the street

near the playground. With a line of young children looking on, piles of sand were blown over the fence into the empty pit. A new crew of parents emerged with rakes and shovels to spread and level the delivery. By Monday afternoon, on what turned out to be an unseasonably warm day, scores of local children were jumping, running, and playing in the fresh sand. "We owe a big thank you not only to the many parents who pitched in and to our support at the parks department," says Terraciano, "but also to Deborah McDowell, the park attendant, who helped at every step and has been working hard to keep the new sand clean."

As the weather warms up and families make their way back to the playground, many are noticing the difference. "You can just see that it's cleaner. And it's deeper too. There's more of it, which is nice as well," remarked Catherine Willmott.

To celebrate the new sand and general playground cleanup effort, the Friends of Bleecker Playground are planning a full day of family-oriented activities. "We wanted to bring families together and celebrate the beginning of the busy season in the playground. We also wanted to celebrate the great success of our sand replacement effort," says Lisa Dow, co-director of the Friends of Bleecker Playground. "Combining the two into a spring festival seemed like a natural idea."

The Friends of Bleecker Playground have

scheduled the first Bleecker Beach Bash for Saturday, May 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. "It's going to have a Coney Island theme," says Kelen Bunner, events coordinator for the group. "We'll have carnival games, hot dogs, music, cotton candy, fake tattoo artists and stilt walkers." All the activities will be free. There will be a table where families can make donations to the Friends of Bleecker Playground or pick up additional information on the newly formed group. According to Dow, "Everyone donating \$50 or more to the Friends of Bleecker Playground will receive a t-shirt that reads 'eat clean sand.' Our goal is to raise enough money and support to make sand replacement an annual event in the playground." ■



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Cases Are Brewing Against Coffee Houses All Because of the Tip Jars

By Sari Gabay-Rafiy
and Peninna Oren

Who would have thought that the tip jar sitting by the cashier when you buy your morning coffee could cause such controversy?

Well, if you worked at a local coffee house and had to share your tips with your supervisors, you might be a little steamy. Certain former Starbucks baristas have taken it so far as to have sued Starbucks, alleging that shares of their tips were improperly given to shift supervisors in violation of New York labor laws.

The class action plaintiffs claim that Starbucks violated three sections of New York labor law by allowing shift supervisors to share in baristas' tips. The sections include a) a prohibition against employers making deductions from employee wages, b) a prohibition against employers demanding or accepting employee gratuities, and c) a prohibition against a person or corporation asking for or receiving wages or "supplements" promised to an employee.

When you drop a tip in the jar, are you thinking about whether the person who brewed your latte is a shift supervisor, store manager, or just an employee? Well, depending on their "status" that person may not be entitled to the tip after all. The court in the Starbucks case may look at how involved as an employer the coffee giant was with its tip-sharing policy and whether the tips are expected by or promised to the employees as a supplement to their income.

Interestingly, the labor laws permit waiters to share tips with busboys or similar employees. There may be some froth to the case if arguments are made that the baristas sharing tips with shift supervisors are akin to waiters sharing with busboys and therefore not barred by the labor laws.

Assuming there is not much discrepancy in salary, what makes the shift supervisor less entitled to the tips? The proponents of the lawsuit say that the added duties of a shift supervisor make him or her "management," a category distinct from "employee." The baristas' position is that if shift supervisors' wages are too low, they should not be able to dip into the tip jar to



WHOSE TIPS? Former Starbucks baristas are suing the company, asserting that shares of their tips were given to shift supervisors in violation of labor laws. (Photo by Peninna Oren)

supplement their wages.

The tip jar may only contain some change, but this lawsuit could be worth millions. In fact, in a recent California case based upon similar facts, baristas prevailed in obtaining an award of \$105 million in back tips and interest after a State Court found that Starbucks had improperly allowed shift supervisors to share tips. California law bars managers and supervisors from sharing in tip jars. Starbucks is apparently appealing the decision.

If you are on the other side and are running a café or similar establishment with a tip jar, it may be a reality that management and employee functions overlap. While not intending to deprive employees of their hard-earned tips, when a manager or supervisor performs the same functions as the employees, do they deserve a portion of the tips? While California so far has said "no," we'll have to wait and see how the case plays out in New York.

At least for now, if management is sharing in tips, it may be a good idea to add a label to the tip jar notifying customers and employees as to where the tips are headed. This way, the tip jar cannot be considered as belonging solely to barista-like employees, and employers cannot be seen as inappropriately deducting wages, supplements, or gratuities from their baristas when tips are shared.

Fine print on the tip jar: how's that for making your café truly Americano? ■

For more information, please contact Gabay-Rafiy & Bowler LLP at (212)941-5025. This article is designed only to give general information and is not intended to provide legal advice or give a legal opinion.

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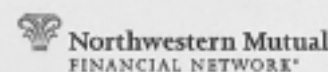
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Captain Caroli *continued from page 1*



NO PARKING, EVEN FOR COPS The new 6th Precinct commander, Raymond Caroli, put his name on a no parking sign that applies to everyone—even cops. (Photo by George Goss)

saying, “No Parking Anytime. Authority of the 6th Precinct Commanding Officer.”

Our very new Captain Raymond Caroli has done what no other 6th Precinct commander has done in the 47 years that I have lived on Charles Street. He has taken charge—and he has taken personal responsibility for illegal parking by police. I called to thank him.

The captain graciously accepted my thanks and said that he has ordered his “integrity patrol officer” to put flyers on non-6th Precinct cars parked in restricted areas designated for police parking. Repeat offenders will receive a summons.

Caroli is even cracking down on the familiar practices of civilians using “acquired” Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association cards and visiting off-duty police officers from other precincts parking illegally, convinced that no

fellow officer would issue a ticket. He is also questioning scribbled notes explaining why the driver is “allowed to park.”

Caroli hopes that by freeing up designated parking spots, the cops under his command will not park illegally. He said that on West 10th Street between Bleecker and West 4th Streets, “sometimes cops rushing into work can’t find a parking space, and they park in those [no-parking] spots.”

If Caroli discovers repeated offenses by a police officer from another precinct, he will “track them down and send them an official reprimand on paper.”

“I take this matter very seriously. Parking areas are at a premium and very limited, and it is an issue I do want to address,” stated Caroli.

“As for the corners on Charles and Bleecker,” he continued, “it does seem to be

working. I take a look every morning when I come to work, and I have yet to see the barriers being moved or cars parked in that area, so it seems to be doing the trick as of right now.” (At the suggestion of Community Affairs Officer Mike Singer, the previous commanding officer, Deputy Inspector Theresa Shortell, also placed barriers, only to have them lifted up on the sidewalk by cops late for roll call.)

“I believe that a precinct commander must work hand-and-hand with the community, and I take this very seriously,” said Caroli. “The West Village is a beautiful area, and it is incumbent upon us in the precinct to make it even better. Certainly as we get into the warmer months, especially on the weekends when floods of people come into the Village, we get into quality-of-life issues, and it is my job to address those big issues. But nothing is too small, and parking is still an issue for people in the community.”

Regarding police reaction to his parking crackdown, Caroli said, “I have my lieutenant putting out no-parking flyers, and he has received a couple of calls (presumably from other precincts) inquiring, ‘Hey, what’s going on?’ I told him to say, ‘You’re not supposed to park there—those spots are for 6th Precinct officers only.’”

Caroli has followed up on the anti-graffiti campaign of Mayor Bloomberg by having one of his officers identify areas of graffiti blight. This month, a group of volunteers led by police officers will paint over the offending areas. He asks that Villagers identify local areas of graffiti and report them to the precinct.

Caroli was born in St Vincent’s Hospital, but he grew up on the Upper West Side. In fact, Caroli and I both attended kindergarten at P.S. 192 on 138th Street, but I passed through that school 40 years before our new, truly commanding, officer. ■

Good Cop, Bad Cop

By George Capsis, Publisher

I still had a warm glow for 6th Precinct Captain Raymond Caroli and his crack-down on off-duty cops using the streets around the station as a free parking lot as I wheeled up the new bike path on Eighth Avenue, only to see a car parked right in the middle of the path with heavy traffic streaming by.

I deliberately banged into the bumper and came alongside the driver, indicating that I wanted him to open his black-tinted window. A swarthy head with weeks of beard growth allowed itself to be seen, but never looked at me when I said, “Do you realize this is a bike path? If you force bikes out into traffic, somebody could get killed.”

“Yeah, yeah. Just go, just go,” came the surly reply. Then, he rolled up the window in contempt, and some pent-up rage made me bang my fist on the window. The door flung open, hitting me, and the passenger jumped out and unleashed a flow of expletives. “I’m a cop,” he shouted, as if that made his illegal parking okay. “Show me your badge,” I demanded. He did and continued his flow of gutter talk.

A crowd gathered as I tried to reason with these two undercover bullies, who threatened me with arrest. I entertained the vision of them bringing me into the Precinct in handcuffs and explaining to the desk sergeant that I had banged their bumper with my bike. But I realized that filthy language was their only weapon with which to defend their insulted egos.

There are good cops and bad cops, and all good cops will agree with this. ■

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School Overcrowding *continued from page 1*

school capacity by only 143 seats. Staffers in the borough president's office add that the numbers probably underestimate new housing in the Village, where there have been many conversions of formerly non-residential spaces into apartments. These were not captured in the report.

Local schools are already feeling the pinch. Nursery school directors used to say that there were enough openings in the city to place every family desiring a spot. They no longer make such claims. One local nursery school had two hundred applications for sixty seats. Fewer and fewer students find placements in the city's private schools, which have a limited number of seats and are not growing. Among public schools, P.S. 41 is already at 112 percent utilization, according to DOE statistics, which some experts think understate the problem. P.S. 3 is at 102 percent, and P.S. 130 is at 118 percent. P.S. 41 went from five kindergarten classes in 2004 to

seven in 2006. As those kindergarteners age, they threaten the school's so-called cluster rooms—science labs, art rooms, music rooms. P.S. 41 has already lost its teacher's lounge, and its services for kids with special needs meet in a former locker room. Existing common spaces are no longer adequate. P.S. 3 cannot accommodate all of its kids in the cafeteria without breaking the fire code, compelling the principal, Lisa Siegman, to do some very creative lunchtime scheduling. And how to measure the tax on the school nurse, the administrators, the playground, the bathrooms, and the crowded halls, as more and more kids squeeze into the facility?

Another casualty of the school pinch is one of the great treasures of Village life—the opportunity to choose between P.S. 3 and P.S. 41. The Village is one of two catchments in all of New York City where parents are able to choose between educational models. P.S. 3 was founded as an alternative

school in the 1960s and still thrives today—its model vindicated by many studies. But because both schools are stuffed to capacity, there is no longer the opportunity to accommodate the shifts in enrollment that choice

remains one of the city's most involved and impassioned school communities), has taken up the challenge. Keen Berger, chair of the Community Board 2 Social Services and Education Committee, and Brad Hoylman,

Representatives from the DOE openly admit that more spaces are needed in District 2, and they invite parents to help seek them out.

inevitably entails. Starting this fall, if parents do not divide themselves proportionately between P.S. 3 and P.S. 41, a lottery will decide for them where their children will go.

Representatives from the DOE openly admit that more spaces are needed in District 2, and they invite parents to help seek them out. Greenwich Village, which has always had a history of active involvement in school creation (P.S. 3 was created as an alternative school by a group of parents in 1962 and

chair of Community Board 2, worked together in January to organize a hearing to gather information on school overcrowding. Parents, teachers, principals, and public officials—including State Senator Tom Duane, Assembly Member Deborah Glick, Deputy Borough President Rose Pierre-Louis, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum, City Council Members Rosie Mendez and Robert Jackson, and a representative of the district's City Council Member, Speaker Christine Quinn—all spoke decisively of their commitment to relieving overcrowding in the Village.

As a consequence, the full Community Board adopted a resolution in February stating that "CB2 Manhattan recognizes the need to include the issue of school capacity and overcrowding as part of our evaluation process for each and every new residential development project that comes before this body, and that until plans for new schools in our community are firmly set, we will view projects that will add to school overcrowding as not in the public interest." They have scheduled another hearing at P.S. 41 on May 8 at 6:30 pm to discuss possible solutions. (A list of potential school sites to be considered at the hearing can be seen on this page.) The Community Board will present these sites to the School Construction Authority for review.

"It's extremely important that the local community play a role in proposing sites for new schools to the city because it adds to the momentum, and we know our neighborhoods best," said Brad Hoylman, Chair of Community Board 2, which represents the Village, SoHo, NoHo and Chinatown. "Plus, the downtown community did it recently, and they ended up with a new school in Battery Park City. We've been in close discussions with developers and local institutions, including St. Vincent's and NYU, about this issue, and I'm very hopeful we can do the same!"

Keen Berger, chair of the CB2 Social Services and Education Committee and co-organizer of the hearing, added, "The problem—no room to learn—is now obvious: our local schools are overcrowded, and thousands of under-fives live in our neighborhood. But if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem. Community Board 2 is determined to open a new school. The May 8 hearing is about solutions—ten possible sites, eight powerful political leaders, and hundreds of parents and community members who are ready to do whatever is needed to make sure the Department of Education provides an elementary school

continued on page 17

Some sites identified by Community Board 2 and local parents for possible school construction:

Pier 40

Parents were thrilled when the future of Pier 40 came under the leadership of Urban Dove/Camp Group and the Pier 40 Partnership. Urban Dove/Camp Group was one of the first partisans of a school on Pier 40, and the Pier 40 Partnership included 100,000 square feet of school space in its feasibility study. Parents are urging the School Construction Authority to make enough money available for the space to meet the pier's financial needs. DOE officials seem to be considering a high school on the pier. However, many would like to see a middle school as well, as a high school would draw from the whole city and not alleviate local overcrowding.

St. Vincent's

Throughout the city, parents in overcrowded districts are calling on major residential developers to include school construction in their plans. A planned development at St. Vincent's hospital would add 400 units of residential housing to the very same block that holds P.S. 41, which is currently at 112% capacity. Parents are urging St. Vincent's to dedicate one of its buildings to a new school. Although representatives from the developer Rudin and the hospital have met with parents to discuss overcrowding, they have offered no concrete proposals to relieve it.

New School and New York University

Both the New School and New York University have extensive plans for expansion and are in discussion with representatives of the community and elected officials about how to balance these against community needs. Parents feel that the possibility of a collaborative relationship with NYU's School of

Education and The New School makes including a public school in such a compromise a particularly promising option.

Hudson Square and the Far West Village

There are major changes in the Far West Village from the Meatpacking District to Canal Street. Given the enormous demand for real estate downtown, many developers are applying to the Community Board to rezone traditionally industrial areas for residential development and to allow the construction of large buildings. Some blocks have already been rezoned, and some are now coming before the zoning committee. This extensive change in usage will both add to local enrollments and create opportunities for school construction. Here are some buildings the Community Board has been looking at.

75 Morton Street

75 Morton Street is a state-owned building whose future is currently in doubt. Elected officials have suspended plans for its sale in order to consider school and other potential uses.

Trinity Real Estate

Trinity Real Estate controls four sites between King and Canal Streets and Greenwich Street and Sixth Avenue, two of them quite large. Plans for the development of these sites have not been announced. Trinity representative Erin Roeder has told parents that the developers are mindful of overcrowding and amenable to school construction.

St. John's Center

St. John's Center is the very large building

that crosses Houston Street on the West Side Highway. Development plans have not been announced. Michael Kramer, representing developer Eugene Gant, has also expressed concern about overcrowding and a willingness to consider school construction on the site.

Parochial Schools

The Archdiocese of New York has closed a number of schools and announced its intention to close more. Although DOE officials have said that they have had extensive discussions with the archdiocese about buying or leasing these properties, without effect, calls by parents have found the archdiocese very willing to consider public school uses for their former school buildings.

28-30 Greenwich Avenue

The P.S. 41 playground is fronted by a long, mixed-use building 28-30 Greenwich Avenue. Calls to the owners have indicated that they do not sell as a rule, but they might be amenable leasing the building for an expansion of P.S. 41.

Current DOE buildings

District 2 parents were shocked recently to discover that a high school on East 25th Street is being phased out. Its lease was allowed to lapse, and, in the interim, its space granted to a charter school drawing students from the entire city, while nearby P.S. 116 suffers from severe overcrowding. District 2 parents would like to see that lease renewed and that space, which was renovated at DOE expense, made available to D2 students. They have also requested information from the DOE about other school buildings in the district that should be preserved for schools.

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School Overcrowding *continued from page xxx*

and a middle school for our children.”

Village parents have long loved their schools and poured their time, money and ideas into making them wonderful environments for kids. The quality of its schools attracts new residents to this neighborhood, and the presence of additional passionately-involved parents helps make the schools better and better. Observers of education often

say that community involvement is the lynchpin of school and student success. If so, conditions are ripe for a wonderful educational environment in the Village, and it is for this that parents, in partnership with their community boards and local officials, are working so hard to free local schools from the crushing burden of overcrowding and give them the opportunity to thrive. ■

Overcrowding on the Ground

An interview with Kelly McGuire, principal of the Greenwich Village Middle School (GVMS), which is housed on the top floor of P.S. 3 on Hudson Street

WestView: *How would you say GVMS experiences overcrowding?*

Kelly McGuire: Well, our classes aren't as big as some. I know most Manhattan middle schools have classes of 33 or 35, but we physically don't have the space for that. [Recent state law sets the target class size for middle school at 28, the average state-wide, but few Manhattan middle school classes achieve that.] We lack rooms that are dedicated for specials, like a tech lab or a full library. We share our music room with P.S. 3, which has allowed them to keep that room in the face of their overcrowding. We also share a gym and a cafeteria. Under fire code, the cafeteria can't even accommodate all the kids in the building. Most of mine go out to lunch. When we were given this space 10 years ago, we were promised outside gym space, but that never came through. The space we use for gym isn't really a gym—it's a sort of wide hallway with big columns in it. We've had to hire a school aide just for the gym, so we can see all the kids. Kids this age need to move around. The kids are physically too big to fit in there.

WV: *Can you tell us how GVMS came to live up here?*

McGuire: The school originally started at P.S. 41 and then it outgrew the size that was allotted there. At the time there was more room in the P.S. 3 building, so that is how we came to share this building.

WV: *What would you do if you had more space?*

McGuire: I could do a lot with a tech lab and a room for other special subjects. I would love to expand and have three classes at each grade and have about twelve classrooms. There are lots of economies of scale you can achieve with a larger school: a school can be too small to fund the programs you need. With more classes, you can also have an assistant principal—it means a lot to have two adults in the school who can be released from classes. And there are certainly plenty of students who need a good middle school placement. We also need space for intervention and services for kids with special needs. And if we were moved out of here, P.S. 3 could expand another floor, to take all those new families moving into the neighborhood.

WV: *How would you like to see GVMS five years from now?*

McGuire: I love GVMS. Our school has a lot of strengths—great teachers, great kids. This is a wonderful neighborhood for a school. One of our strengths is our diversity. Our school brings in kids of all ethnicities and backgrounds. I hope we will be able to preserve that as Manhattan changes. I think the strength of this community, how it mirrors New York, is an important part of what we have to offer.

WV: *Thanks for talking with us.*

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Christine Quinn

continued from page 1

corroborate your recollection, whatever it is.

Two things the speaker is reported to have said may require, as Senator Clinton said of General Petraeus the first time around, "a willing suspension of disbelief," a line that originated with Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1798.

The first doubtful claim is that as soon as she learned of the practice of using fictitious names, Quinn ordered it stopped, but her aides failed to follow her instructions. The second is that she was the person who brought the matter to the attention of the U.S. Attorney and the New York City Department of Investigation.

Others say that the investigation was already well underway when she called the cops. Wisely, Quinn now has decided not to answer press questions and to leave the talking to her attorney, W. Lee Richards, Jr. Although silence or pleading ignorance does not come off well to the media, it may save her considerable grief.

A collateral question is her use of city funds to pay Richards as her personal attorney.

If she were pursued for say, assault, she would have no right to a city lawyer. If she were sued for something she did on the job in good faith, she would have a right to be represented by the Corporation Counsel or a lawyer she hired, even if her decision was mistaken. First, the press and public would like to know how much the lawyer is being paid. The City Council, as a public agency of elected officials, is entitled to hire counsel, especially when the issue at stake involves their prerogatives.

All of this is sad because Speaker Quinn is widely and fairly regarded as a capable public servant. She began as an aide to Councilman (now State Senator) Tom Duane and worked her way up to the second most important position in city government. She has been a responsible speaker on almost every issue, and on the others, she had to yield to the mob.

After paying her dues to the county leaders of Bronx and Queens who made her the speaker, Quinn's appointments usually were based on merit. She did not say foolish things. She proved, if in any way it needed to be proven, that a person who was open about her sexual orientation could do a fine job in a high public office and win general respect.

When I began as a councilman in January 1974, we received an allotment for staff of \$7,500. The basic allotment for each councilmember is now about \$350,000, approximately 43 times what it was 34 years ago. Councilmember's salaries have risen from \$20,000 to \$112,500 plus

lulus, which means they have almost sextupled. There is no requirement for full-time service, and no limitation on outside income, earned or unearned.

The amount of discretionary spending, which is money that members can appropriate to outside organizations, sometimes called "earmarks," varies from member to member. Like committee chairs, the amount of funds each member can allocate is determined in part by considering three basic principles: seniority, geography and loyalty.

The same conditions exist to an even greater degree in the New York State Legislature. There is a sharp divide in funding based on whether the member is part of the majority in each house. In the City Council, all but three members out of 51 are Democrats. One of the three Republicans resigned, effective today, as part of an agreement with the Queens County District Attorney to close out a criminal case in which he was prosecuted for sexual contact, allegedly involuntary, with a woman he had met in a bar and taken to his Council office.

In the difficult circumstance of managing a body of members with diverse, sometimes conflicting, ambitions, Quinn has provided sound leadership. The inmates have not taken over the asylum. In truth, the great majority of councilmembers are honest and decent, although many are ambitious, partisan, self-absorbed and unduly frightened by noisy constituents. They have different gifts and deficits, as we all do. They are 51 men and women, chosen by different neighborhoods. Unfortunately, some are not immune to the charms of avarice, and their depredations and those of their staffs have embarrassed their colleagues and their leader, as everyone now realizes.

We await the next disclosures in this unfolding drama. In politics, people are first exalted and then, as circumstances change, they are derided. You find out who your friends are, but you pay a heavy price for this knowledge. On the other hand, if you had not come to grief, these people would still be your friends, basking in your radiance...

Fortunately, there are other New Yorkers who will join the competition for 2009. Congressman Anthony Weiner and Comptroller William Thompson are first out of the gate, but the lure of high office will draw other contenders. If the Speaker recovers from her present travails, she could be a contender. But on the basis of this week's editorials and columns, a decent interval will have to elapse before she can be regarded seriously as a candidate for elevation. Her rivals may have problems with intellect and character, but they have not been so vividly displayed to the public. ■

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Why Lafayette?



Designed by Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi, a statue of the Marquis de Lafayette gazes over Union Square Park. The Lafayette statue was a gift from the France, just like one of Bartholdi's other works—the Statue of Liberty. (Photo © F. Seidenbaum, 2008)

By F. Seidenbaum

September 2007 marked the 250th birthday of the Marquis de Lafayette. The New-York Historical Society is presenting "French Founding Father: Lafayette's Return to Washington's America" through August 10. In a two-part article, F. Seidenbaum explores Lafayette's remarkable contributions to American history. This first highlights Lafayette's crucial role in the American Revolution. The second, which will appear next month, explores his post-war activities.

Part 1: Lafayette Who?

In Union Square Park, not far from the statue of George Washington, stands another: the Marquis de Lafayette. Every New York City borough has streets named after him (Brooklyn has three and a high school), as do over 500 other places in this country (including Fayettes and Fayettevilles). He was one of only six foreigners to have been made an honorary American citizen. On post-Revolution currency, Lafayette's face was on more bills than anyone's but George Washington's. As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of his birth with exhibitions around the country, including one at the New-York Historical Society, it is appropriate to ask, "What was so special about him?"

Most people know that Lafayette helped the American Revolution, but few realize that this wealthy and privileged French aristocrat risked his fortune, his freedom and his life to help our country, for no personal gain. He came here as a teenager who spoke no English, leaving his beloved, pregnant wife in France. Although he suffered terribly from seasickness, he endured a two-month voyage just to help a group of ragtag renegades rebel against one of the most powerful nations on earth, a rebellion that seemed destined to fail.

Why did Lafayette join the American Revolution, and why is he considered such a hero?

Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du

Motier de La Fayette was born on September 6, 1757 in a rural French castle. His father was a renowned war hero who was killed by British troops when Lafayette was two, igniting a powerful hatred of the British in the young Lafayette.

After his father's death, his mother joined her father in Paris. Lafayette was raised by his grandmother and aunts, who told stories of his father's courage and character. The boy yearned for the father he never knew, dreamed about avenging his death, and hoped to achieve things that would have made him proud.

Just two years later after Lafayette rejoined his mother in Paris, tragedy struck twice: his mother died, then a few weeks later, his grandfather. At age 13, he was left with no close relatives, extensive property and a fortune that made him one of the richest men in Europe.

When he was 14 and Adrienne de Noailles was 12, their families negotiated their marriage. As was typical of the time, childhood betrothals were arranged for political and economic reasons. Love was not expected.

The Noailles family was one of France's most wealthy and powerful, but Adrienne's mother had misgivings—Lafayette seemed serious, distant and cold. To assure Adrienne's happiness, Mme. de Noailles had Lafayette move into their mansion for 18 months so the family could get to know him. When Adrienne's mother finally spoke to her daughter about marriage, she was delighted at the joyous response. Her daughter had fallen deeply in love. At the time of their marriage, Lafayette was 16, and Adrienne was 14. A year later, they had a daughter, Henriette.

Despite his wealth and connections, Lafayette mourned the loss of his immediate family and harbored a hatred of the British. He had heard about George Washington's crusade against the British and sympathized with America's cause. Mary L. Henderson, Director of the Lafayette (Louisiana) Natural History Museum says that at this point in his young life, he was idealistic, ripe and ready for his "adolescent big adventure."

Lafayette contacted Silas Deane, an American in France unofficially raising support for the Revolution. Deane, aware of Lafayette's wealth and connections, gave him a letter of recommendation for George Washington and the commission of major general.

Lafayette bought a ship, the *Victoire*, and readied to sail with about 18 soldiers. Yet both King Louis XVI and Adrienne's father forbade him to go. Lafayette sent the *Victoire* to Spain, risking execution. He sailed for America, leaving his loving Adrienne, their daughter, and a secure position in society.

Frequently seasick on the seven-week voyage, Lafayette wrote Adrienne, saying, "The good fortune of America is closely tied to the good fortune of all humanity... She is going to become the deserving and sure refuge of virtue, of honesty, of tolerance, of equality, and of a tranquil liberty."

The *Victoire* landed north of Charleston, and Lafayette and his men rode to Philadelphia to offer their services to the provisional government. The Continental Congress replied, "Go home!" Many foreign mercenaries were arrogant, assuming that they were more qualified to direct this ill-trained rebellion than the American colonists were. They also demanded payment for their services. America could not afford uniforms, weapons or munitions, let alone pay patronizing outsiders.

Lafayette wrote a letter stating that he and his men would serve without pay—he would clothe, feed and pay them himself. The Continental Congress reconsidered. They finally read Silas Deane's letter and accepted Lafayette's offer. He insisted on serving under Washington.

Entering the tavern for their first meeting, Washington was curious about the tall, well-dressed youngster with bright red hair and fair complexion. Lafayette, with his fine clothes and aristocratic manner, looked up to Washington and approached humbly, saying he had come to learn. Washington (then in

with the troops "to embrace privation and fatigue." He used his own money to feed and clothe his men and became known as "the soldiers' friend."

After Valley Forge, Lafayette returned to France. His first child had died, and he wanted to see his family. Back in France, he was astonished to find that news of his exploits had spread. His extraordinary fame gave him extensive access to France's top social circles, access that he used to obtain aid for the American cause. He convinced the French to send troops and urged they serve under Washington. Thomas Jefferson (who was in France with Lafayette) wrote, "All doors of all departments were open to [Lafayette] at all times, to me only formally and at appointed times. In truth, I only held the nail, he drove it."

Lafayette and Washington corresponded extensively about personal matters as well as politics. When Adrienne gave birth to Georges Washington Motier de Lafayette in 1779, George Washington became his godfather.

In 1780, Lafayette returned to America



At the Lafayette Natural History Museum in Lafayette, LA, tents similar to those used during the American Revolution War portray the conditions that Lafayette and other soldiers endured as they helped foster the American dream of democracy. (Photo © Kent Hutslar, kenthutslar.com)

his 40s) reminded Lafayette of the father he had heard about throughout his childhood. The childless Washington nicknamed Lafayette "The Boy," and their lifelong friendship began.

At first, Washington kept Lafayette away from the front lines. Eventually, succumbing to pressure from Lafayette, Washington let him fight at the Battle of Brandywine in 1777. Although the Americans were outnumbered, Lafayette rode into the fray, rallying his men. He was shot in the leg but stayed to organize a disciplined retreat, earning the soldiers' respect.

Washington had his personal physician care for Lafayette's injury. Soon, despite a limp, Lafayette insisted on being redeployed. Washington began referring to Lafayette as his "adopted son" and sponsored his membership in the American branch of the Masons.

Later that year, Lafayette endured the infamous harsh winter at Valley Forge. There, troops suffered appallingly—lack of clothing and shoes caused frostbite and amputations, and the army often went without food. Lafayette could have bought a warm, furnished house near the front, but chose to live

with news that the Comte de Rochambeau would bring 6,000 men, munitions, ships and money. Washington credits Lafayette with obtaining this aid, which Washington believed would assure success.

Washington and Rochambeau moved south from New York to join Lafayette, whose troops had chased Cornwallis to Yorktown. Meanwhile, the French fleet sailed into the Chesapeake Bay, and the siege began. The trapped British accepted defeat, but Lafayette insisted that they wait for Washington so he could accept their surrender. The United States was finally independent, and Lafayette could return home to France.

Lafayette impressed the Americans with his courage and character. He had risked everything for a cause in which he had nothing to gain and everything to lose, for a foreign country whose culture and religion he did not share. While Lafayette's status as a hero in France would wax and wane, the newly independent Americans would not forget his sacrifices.

F. Seidenbaum's article "Why Lafayette?" will continue in the May issue of WestView.



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