



gvshp



GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT



PRESERVING
OUR PAST,
ENGAGING
OUR
FUTURE.

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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

SANDY HECHTMAN



Art Levin

I am pleased to report that the Society has seen great success with its programs over the last year, and is in a strong position to face the challenges presented by a new City administration and an increasingly aggressive real estate lobby.

Over the past year, we secured designation of our long-fought-for South Village Historic District, which at two hundred fifty buildings and more than a dozen blocks is the largest expansion of landmark protections in Greenwich Village since 1969. After decades of effort which began with Jane Jacobs and her contemporaries in the 1960's, what many consider the "heart" of Greenwich Village – the area south of Washington Square – is at last largely protected by landmark designation.

We published a wonderful book, *Greenwich Village Stories, A Collection of Memories* with Rizzoli, bringing together incredible original stories,

photographs, paintings and prose. The book captures memories of the Village, East Village, and NoHo written by a diverse and notable collection of artists, performers, writers, chefs, actors, and politicians who have called these neighborhoods home.

We issued a report looking at the way in which the Landmarks Preservation Commission has allowed unscrupulous developers to destroy great pieces of our city's history before they could be landmarked, and offered suggested reforms which could help better protect our city's architectural and cultural heritage.

In early 2014 State Supreme Court Justice Donna Mills ruled in our favor in a lawsuit, in which we were one of the lead plaintiffs, and against the city's approval of NYU's massive expansion plan, putting the project on hold pending an appeal.

We led the charge in responding to the recent state legislation allowing air rights transfers from the Hudson River Park to enable larger development along our waterfront. And we worked to build strong support for alternative means to fund the park without subjecting our neighborhood to overdevelopment.

We reviewed, publicized, and responded to more than one hundred applications for changes to landmarked properties in our neighborhoods, advocating always for preserving the human scale, sensitive design, and varied detailing which define our neighborhoods.

And we mounted scores of educational programs throughout the year featuring the history and culture of our neighborhoods. These programs reached thousands of people, including the general public, school children from throughout the city, and real estate professionals.

Of course much work remains ahead for the Society. The Real Estate Board of New York continues to attack the very foundations of our system of landmarking. Vast swaths of our neighborhoods remain without adequate landmark or zoning protections. And even in those areas with landmark protections, the Landmarks Preservation Commission has issued some increasingly troubling approvals. We believe that this demands an ever-more vigilant and vigorous engagement of the system both by GVSHP and the public. And with the City and NYU appealing our legal victory, we must continue that fight to prevent the university's twenty-year Village expansion from overwhelming our community.

The good news is that the levels of participation and support from our members and our communities continues to grow. Because of this I am confident the Society can and will rise to the many new challenges we face now and in the future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "ART LEVIN".

President
Board of Trustees



GVSHP's home in the Neighborhood Preservation Center, located in the Ernest Flagg Rectory of St. Mark's Church, 232 East 11th Street, in the St. Mark's Historic District.

ADVOCACY

In late 2013, after a roughly ten year fight, the City finally approved our new South Village Historic District, covering 250 buildings on more than a dozen historic but endangered blocks south of Washington Square. GVSHP had proposed this district for landmark designation, which includes some of our neighborhood's most beloved sites, and which is the largest expansion of landmark protections in Greenwich Village since 1969. We fought successfully to expand the district to include several NYU buildings, including the full-block Vanderbilt Law School on Washington Square South – a building which, without landmark protections, could be demolished at any time and replaced with a 300 ft. tall dorm. GVSHP also successfully proposed State and National Registers of Historic Places designation



for the entire South Village, and presented a rezoning plan for the entire neighborhood which would protect its character and prevent out-of-scale development.

In January, NY State Supreme Court Justice Donna Mills ruled in our favor in our lawsuit against NYU's massive expansion plan, finding the City had illegally handed over public parkland to NYU, thus significantly hamstringing the university's ability to move ahead with the entire project. This ruling was a great vindication of our contention that this plan was not only wrong for our neighborhood and our city, but fundamentally legally wrong as well. NYU and the City appealed; GVSHP and our co-plaintiffs responded and cross-appealed. New hearings are expected in late 2014.

GVSHP commissioned and issued a report



showing how delays and other changes in the practices of the Landmarks Preservation Commission have allowed unscrupulous developers to demolish or compromise historic structures before they can be landmarked. GVSHP coupled the report, which garnered significant media attention and support in the preservation community, with recommendations for systemic reform which would prevent such losses in the future.



Proposed tower at St. Luke's; a slightly revised version was approved.

Over the past year, we have also been on the forefront of the fight to ensure that air rights transfers from the Hudson River Park – recently made possible by State legislation – does not result in misuse or overdevelopment of our waterfront. GVSHP held a well-attended Town Hall meeting on the topic and issued a three-point plan, which gained wide support in the affected communities, for restricting and regulating the use of these air rights for new development.

Over the past year, the Society reviewed one hundred eight public hearing landmarks applications – up 29% over the prior year, in part due to the expanded landmarks designations we helped secure in the East Village and elsewhere -- for changes ranging from storefront alterations to demolition and new construction within landmarked sections of our neighborhoods. This included applications to which

we strongly objected, such as for a new residential tower on the St. Luke's campus in the West Village and for a new hotel adjacent to the Merchant's House Museum in NoHo/the East Village – both of which were approved -- and for an inappropriately-designed new building at 192 7th Avenue South, which was not approved. The Landmarks Preservation Commission also approved an application we strongly supported for the restoration of and a very modest addition to 43 MacDougal Street, a derelict 1846 house which GVSHP has fought for years to see restored. The Commission also approved an application we supported for redesign and reconfiguring of 25 Great Jones Street, a never-completed, out-of-character high-rise in the NoHo Historic District Extension which was begun before landmark designation took effect. The new approvals will result in much more sensitive, contextual building.

GVSHP also pushed for landmark designation of the Tifereth Israel Synagogue at 334 East 14th Street (1866), which was first considered for landmark designation in 1966 and whose future is uncertain since it was advertised for sale last year.



Tifereth Israel Synagogue

BENEFIT HOUSE TOUR



On May 4, 2014, GVSHP staged its 16th Annual Benefit House Tour. This was one of our highest-grossing and best-attended house tours ever, with nearly 600 tickets sold. The Benefit House Tour is GVSHP's main fundraising event for the entire year, and raised \$170,625 for the Society, over a quarter of our annual budget.

The tour was made possible by the hard work of more than 130 volunteers, our 20 hard-working benefit committee members, and of course the eight incredibly generous families and individuals who opened their homes for the tour.

As always, the tour is an incredible opportunity to share the inspiring and compelling ways in which living spaces in our neighborhood are preserved, restored, and transformed, providing a rare and exclusive glimpse inside some of our neighborhood's most intriguing homes. The post-tour reception, held this year in a stunning private home on Morton Street, gave many of our most generous supporters a further opportunity to celebrate the day and GVSHP's accomplishments.

Please see the index in back for the full list of donors to the event.

GREENWICH VILLAGE STORIES

In March, a great milestone for GVSHP was the publication by Rizzoli of *Greenwich Village Stories*, GVSHP's new book of memories, recollections and impressions of the Village and East Village as told by more than sixty artists, poets, musicians, playwrights, directors, and other Villagers. Contributors include Lou Reed, Andrew Solomon, Mimi Sheraton, and Hettie Jones, among many others. Artwork and photographs by Berenice Abbott, Milton Avery, Allen Ginsberg, Saul Leiter, and Weegee are among those which grace the book.

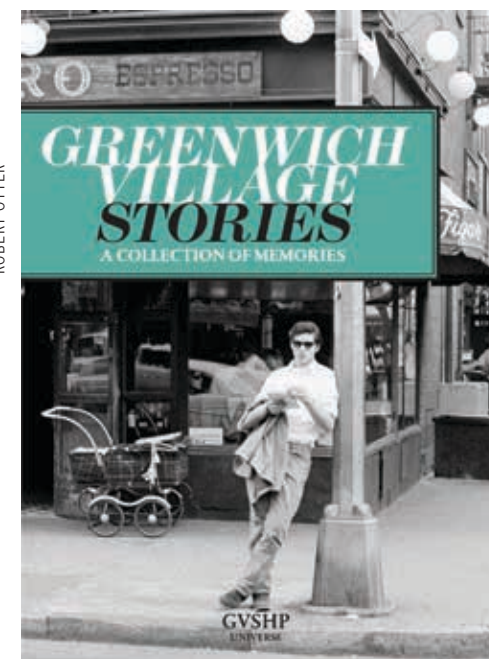
Over 1,100 people attended our book events following the release, including an opening reception at Keith McNally's Morandi restaurant, and readings at the Strand, the Writers Room, and Symphony Space. John Leguizamo, Lenny Kaye, Penny Arcade, Dave Hill, Ralph Lee, and Isaac Mizrahi each read their stories to rapt audiences. The book – edited by GVSHP Trustee Judith Stonehill, with royalties supporting GVSHP's work – has received rave reviews from the *New York Times* and *Vanity Fair*, and is already in its second printing. The book is available for purchase through GVSHP's website, gvshp.org, with all proceeds benefitting the Society.



Penny Arcade and Lenny Kaye reading their contributions from *Greenwich Village Stories* at The Writers Room.



Bleecker Street Cinema, 1965.



COVER IMAGE: ROBERT OTTER: CAFE FIGARO (DETAIL), 1965

VILLAGE AWARDS

Each year, GVSHP honors just some of the people, places, businesses, and institutions which contribute to the special quality of life in our neighborhoods

A near-capacity crowd filled the 500-seat Auditorium at The New School in June for GVSHP's 24th Annual Village Awards, hosted by Village author (and long-time GVSHP friend and Advisory Board member) Calvin Trillin.

This year's awardees, chosen by our Awards Committee from among scores of nominations from the public, were: **LaMaMa Experimental Theater Club** for its pioneering and enduring leadership and service to the theater community, and more than half a century of groundbreaking performances; **New York Central Art Supply**, for more than a century of providing artists with the most comprehensive stock of supplies and instruments available, and thereby keeping the creative spirit of the Village strong; **New York Marble Cemetery**, for keeping a unique piece of the East Village and New York alive, and restoring it to a healthy, thriving condition; **Pino Prime Meats**, for more than a century of providing extraordinary products and customer service to its customers in the historic South Village; **Unoppressive Non-Imperialist**



Jim Drougas of Unoppressive Non-Imperialist Bargain Books accepts his Village Award.



Deborah Clearman, Sally Curtis, David Shehigian, and Rob Buchanan of Village Community Boathouse

Bargain Books, for providing a unique, eclectic, and unabashedly independent bookstore that's accessible and affordable to all; **Village Community Boathouse**, for its unique and accessible way of connecting the Village to the Hudson River, and New Yorkers with our maritime history; and **Kathy Donaldson** was the recipient of the Regina Kellerman Award for her dedication and leadership in preserving, improving, and beautifying her beloved neighborhood for more than four decades.



GVSHPE Executive Director Andrew Berman and Awardee Kathy Donaldson.

MEMBERSHIP

Contributions from individuals continue to be the single largest source of funding for GVSHP and its work, constituting more than two-thirds of our annual support.

In our last fiscal year, membership support to GVSHP increased by over 16%. Membership support and individual giving to the Society has increased steadily in the last ten years, with the number of GVSHP's members increasing by 200%, and the amount of support they have given increasing by close to 600%.

GVSHPE has implemented 'Members Only' programming, both as a thank you for existing members for their support and to encourage new membership support for the organization. Members-only events included an exclusive advance screening of the Coen Bros. film *Inside Llewyn Davis*, tours of historic libraries and museums, and a book reading and signing with Lenny Kaye and Penny Arcade.

By far the majority of GVSHP's membership support comes from neighborhood residents. But we also receive support from across the city, country, and even the world, from those who believe in our mission of preserving the special character and legacy of the Village, East Village, and NoHo, and supporting historic preservation generally. New members came to GVSHP from a variety of sources over the past year, including our programs, continuing education, advocacy, our Annual Awards and House Tour, interaction with our website and on-line resources, social media, and electronic and printed newsletters.

Membership Support 2013



Support from hundreds of individual GVSHP members, pictured here at our 2013 Annual Meeting, funds the majority of the organization's work.

PROGRAMS

GVSHP had a very busy programming year, with fifty-one public programs attended by more than 3,100 people, a nearly 40% increase over the prior year. Almost all of our programs were free and, with the exception of our members-only events, open to the public. Programs ranged from widely-attended panel discussions about jazz or lectures on wooden houses in the Village, to our series on churches and synagogues of the Village and the 50th anniversary of the demolition of Penn Station, to intimate guided tours of the East Village Historic District, St. Brigid's Church, and the modernist Sasaki Garden in Washington Square Village.

We also added three historic plaques in the neighborhood. One marked the birthplace of the organization Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) at the Church of the Village at 13th Street and 7th Avenue, placed in conjunction with the church

“Absolutely fabulous---not only was the topic and content fascinating, but it was delivered in a way that was like listening to an exciting story being told.”

Carole T.



GVSHP Panel Discussion and Performance: **The Shape of Jazz to Come: Downtown Jazz in 1959 and Now**

“Thank you for organizing these lectures and making our neighborhood better.”

Svetlana M.

and PFLAG. Two more, placed in partnership with the Two Boots Foundation, marked the site of the San Remo Café, a mecca for the Beats and the New York School of painters, artists, and poets, at Bleecker and MacDougal Street, and the former home of renowned poet Frank O'Hara, on 9th Street in the East Village.



GVSHP's programming educates the public about historic preservation, and provides new insights and perspectives on the unique architectural and cultural heritage of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo.



GVSHP Lecture and Slide Show: **Wooden Houses of Greenwich Village**

PUBLIC EDUCATION

GVSHP continued to work to improve and grow our two main educational programs – Children's Education, offered to first through eighth graders in schools throughout New York City, and Continuing Education, a New York State accredited program serving real estate professionals.

GVSHP secured several grants which, along with membership support, allowed us to continue to offer our Children's Education program to any school in New York City regardless of need or ability to pay. Our Children's Education Committee worked through much of the year to redesign and expand our Children's Education workbook, which accompanies the program. The workbook redesign will reflect the program's expanded curricula, make the material more interactive for young students, and convey information about the growth and transformation of our city and society as reflected in the built environment, particularly in the Village.

Our Continuing Education program, conducted in conjunction with our Brokers Partnership, nearly quadrupled the level of participation by real estate professionals over the prior year. Classes covered topics including Fair Housing law, the architectural vocabulary of Greenwich Village, zoning, and the basics of tenement design.



Continuing Education Program, with classes at GVSHP (l), and in the field (right-facing page).



ON-LINE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

GVSHP provides a number of resources on its website for those seeking to perform research, get involved, or learn more about the culture, architecture, or history of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo.

Our website got more than a quarter million pageviews this past year, with some of our most popular pages receiving more than 10,000 views. Our blog, *Off the Grid*, accounts for a significant part of this viewership, and continues to attract a worldwide audience. Over the past year, it saw approximately 100,000 visitors.



GVSHP's research services, such as landmark and historic district designation reports, oral histories, walking tours, Village history, and other pages were accessed over 15,000 times over the past year.

Our social media presence has been expanding as well. Over the past year our Facebook reach, and our number of Twitter followers, have each grown by about 40%.

Our Landmarks Application webpage, the only of its kind in the city, allows the public to review any public hearing landmark application in our neighborhood and find out how to weigh in with city agencies before they vote. Over the past year, more than 7,000 people have used this webpage, and individual application pages have been viewed nearly 22,000 times, each an increase of more than 10% over the prior year.

GVSHP greatly expanded our YouTube page over the past year, now posting videos of almost every program we sponsor, allowing the public to view and hear our book talks, panel discussions, and lectures even if they cannot attend. We have also added links to videos of Landmarks Preservation Commission hearings and meetings on items in our neighborhood, so the public can learn more about these important deliberations and decisions, even if they cannot be there themselves. And this past fall, in the lead up to the municipal elections, for the first time GVSHP partnered with Manhattan Neighborhood Network to provide on-line and video information about City Council and Citywide races and candidates, to help educate and inform our members and encourage them to participate in the electoral process.

GVSHP FISCAL YEAR 2013

Membership & Contributions.....	\$535,719
Fundraising Events.....	\$173,418
Grants.....	\$100,155
Earned Revenue	\$26,659

Total.....\$835,951

Programs.....	\$95,720
Personnel	\$416,006
Fundraising & Membership.....	\$51,519
Rent	\$45,668
Office Supplies & Expenses.....	\$13,257
Telecommunications.....	\$5,129
Printing & Mailing	\$22,415
Accounting Fees	\$7,914
Payroll Fees.....	\$2,541
Other Fees.....	\$9,567
Other Operating Expenses.....	\$4,218
Fund Balance	\$161,997

Total.....\$835,951

APPENDIX

Committees 2013-2014

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Your support makes GVSHIP a more effective preservation leader. All members receive copies of the Anthemion newsletter (published twice each year), invitations to attend special members-only lectures and walking tours, and access to the Society's research sources. Contribute \$500 or more, and receive an invitation to a special event at a unique Village location.

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