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Village Reform
Democratic Club
60 East 9 Street/Suite 533
New York, New York 10003



Liz Shollenberger District Leader

Report from—

Village Reform Democratic Club—212/473-2787

1987

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Far West Village: More play space

The baby-boom generation is now fully in its child-bearing prime, and nowhere is that more evident than in the far-West Village, where little ones are crowded in the existing play space. Neither the piers nor the Village's small "vest-pocket" parks are appropriate places for small children, and the City has not responded to the influx of residents by adding public playgrounds.

The northwest corner of West 12th and Washington Streets, until recently a refrigeration site, has been leveled and is being used as a parking lot. Before its owner is able to apply for a zoning variance to build yet another Hudson River high-rise, the City should purchase the property and convert it to play space. I will be lobbying to get the community and the City behind this concept.

Shelter: East Village Says "Enough!"

Earlier this year, the City proposed a new men's shelter on First Street, just a stone's throw away from the existing central intake facility for all the City's homeless men and from the Kenton Hotel, another City unit. Another shelter so near the existing East Village and NoHo facilities would greatly overburden a neighborhood already doing more than its fair share in helping the homeless.

BASTA, a coalition of neighborhood residents and groups which is chaired by Howard Hemsley and of which I am an active member, made persuasive presentations to most of the City's key decision-makers,

and as a result, the First Street proposal was rejected by the City Planning Commission and is now all but dead.

BASTA, glowing with this initial victory, plans to proceed with a lawsuit against the conditions in and around the Third Street shelter. I am continuing to work with BASTA to ensure that the existing facilities become decent self-contained temporary homes for a few hundred men, rather than dirty, dangerous way-stations for thousands. If you'd like to donate to the legal fight, send checks to the BASTA Legal Fund, c/o Katherine Cole Busch, 49 East First Street, New York, NY 10003.

The fight against the one-way toll

Since March of last year, West Village residents (particularly along Varick Street and Seventh Avenue) have been subjected to unacceptable levels of traffic noise, congestion and air pollution, caused by the one-way toll on the Verazano bridge. The honking horns, exhaust fumes and excess heat generated by the traffic ruins the dinner hours of thousands of Villagers.

Belatedly, an environmental impact study was prepared,

confirming what was already obvious to the neighborhood: that the one-way toll is a disaster.

I have testified before both the City Council and the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, urging each of them to work for the repeal of the one-way toll. Join me in lobbying Governor Cuomo to petition Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole on this important issue.

City Council Round-Up

Several important pieces of legislation are pending in the City Council. Among them are:

► An anti-warehousing bill which would impose stringent penalties upon landlords who hold apartments off the rental market. Currently, warehousing is illegal only when the building is about to go co-op.

► Ethics legislation which would restrict campaign contributions.

► Anti-smoking legislation, sponsored by local Councilwoman Carol Greitzer,

which would set aside smoke-free sections in restaurants.

► A Carriage-Horse Bill of Rights, one which would remove the horses entirely from city streets, restricting them to Central Park, where they will not be endangered by the heavy midtown traffic.

For information about any of these bills or to express your views, contact Council Majority Leader Peter Vallone, City Hall, New York, NY 10007, or our local representative Carol Greitzer, at the above address.

Village Reform Democratic Club—212/473-2787

Questionnaire

Return to:
Village Reform Democratic Club
60 East Ninth Street, #533, New York, NY 10003

- Where are the local trouble spots in your area for the following:
 - Drug dealing or other crime _____
At what hours would additional police be most helpful? _____
 - Excessive noise _____
What is its source? _____
 - Crowded sidewalks _____
What is its source? _____
 - Dangerous intersections _____
Why is it dangerous? _____

- What do you consider your local park? _____
Do you and/or your children use it? Yes No
If not, why not? _____

What improvements could be made in it? _____

- What are the two worst problems in your immediate neighborhood? _____

Name _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Would you like to be on the Villiage Reform Democratic Club mailing list? Yes No.

New greenmarket opens

The Village has gained another greenmarket—at the southeast corner of West Fourth Street and Sixth Avenue. The greenmarket program brings local farmers and their produce to the site each Saturday morning.

As a member of Community Board 2 and its Parks Committee, I helped to select this location for the new farmers' market. It is my hope that this wholesome community amenity will help to

displace the undesirable—and often criminal—activities which have previously plagued this corner.

There are three other thriving markets already operating in the neighborhood: on Gansevoort Street on Saturday mornings; at St. Mark's Church at Tenth Street and Second Avenue on Tuesdays; and at the north side of Union Square Park on Wednesday, Fridays and Saturdays.

Photo: Barbara J. Steinberg



Village Reform Democratic Club Vice President Tim James joined me at the opening of the new Sixth Avenue greenmarket.

Help beautify the village

Community gardening efforts—tiny oases of flowers and greenery—brighten numerous Village corners, including the southwest corner of Jane Street and Eighth Avenue (the Jane Street Garden) and the southeast corner of Greenwich Avenue and Tenth Street (the Jefferson Market Garden). If you'd like to make a fully tax-deductible contribution toward ensuring the future of these treasures, here's how:

For the Jane Street Garden—Make checks payable to *The West Village Committee*, 304 West 11th Street, New York, NY 10014.

For the Jefferson Market Garden—Make checks payable to *The Village Committee for the Jefferson Market Area*, 18 West 9th Street, New York, NY 10011.

Also in the works is a restoration of the so-called "LaGuardia Place Strip," the land on the east side of LaGuardia between West Third Street and Blecker. I have been working closely with the Friends of LaGuardia Place, which is energetically chaired by Al McGrath, and which is working to raise funds to erect a memorial statue of the late New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, as well as to landscape and beautify the now-desolate space. Long-time Villager Wally Popolizio chairs this group's fundraising committee. Those wishing to contribute to Friends of LaGuardia Place may send checks to 1 Washington Square Village, #13E, New York, NY 10012. Contributions are tax deductible.

Stop Bork

We Democrats have high hopes for recapturing the White House in 1988, ending the Republican reign of indifference to so many underrepresented groups. Unfortunately, unless the Senate acts now, the Republicans may have a chance to go right on imposing their social and economic views on the country for decades, through the Supreme Court.

You can play a role now in stopping 1990s Reaganism, by lobbying your U.S. Senators to veto Reagan's nomination of Bork. Bork, already on the lower Federal bench, has proven himself to be an enemy of the elderly, the poor, gays, minorities and especially women.

Write to both your Senators—Democrat Daniel P. Moynihan and Republican Al D'Amato—at the U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 to let them know what strong feelings you have about this upcoming vote.

Pedestrian alert

Beginning on August 31, the City will ban bicycles on Fifth, Madison and Park Avenues. That will mean a much greater concentration of bikes on other thoroughfares.

Keep an eye out for the additional traffic and help me to monitor the effect on the Village, particularly on pedestrian safety. The City will be evaluating the policy after a 90-day trial period, so please let me know how you think it's working out.

Continued from previous page

I am working to see that Consumer Affairs continues to restrict licensed peddlers from primarily residential areas. There will be both Community Board and City Consumer Affairs public hearings in the near future. Call me if you, too, would like information about testifying.

As a member of Community Board 2's sidewalk cafe committee, I use my vote to see that only law-abiding cafes get their licenses renewed. I am also working to come up with a coherent strategy to control the proliferation of book dealers, when they threaten pedestrian passage. Please feel free to contact me if you have specific sidewalk usage complaints or creative ideas regarding sidewalk usage.

Photo: Caitlin James



Book and magazine vendors have taken over stretches of Sixth Avenue.

Washington Square— Finally, more an oasis than an eyesore

In my last newsletter, I reported to you that the City was beginning to make an all-out effort to clean up the Washington Square Park area—the broken glass, the late-night partying, the round-the-clock noise, and most of all, the drug trafficking. The combined efforts of the Parks Department and the police have led to enormous improvements in and around the Park.

The new ban on radio-playing and glass bottles is being implemented with great (but not total) success, and the enforcement of the midnight closing time has afforded nearby residents late-night quiet. Best of all, the park and the blocks

around it are no longer “Drugsville, U.S.A.” Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward has made a commitment to me that he will continue his strong anti-drug efforts in the area, despite the wishes of a vocal minority in the neighborhood who would like to see the area returned to its previous state of crime-ridden free-for-all.

Because the police have done such a good job of dispersing the dealers from this central area, some other neighborhoods have noticed an increase in drug trafficking. If your neighborhood is one of them, please let me know.

Photo: Caitlin James



Even though drug trafficking is down, the Village still hosts many “beadshops,” like this one. Urge stores you patronize not to sell drug paraphernalia.

Coors—It leaves a bad taste

The makers of Coors beer have for some time been the subject of a multi-state boycott, organized by labor, feminists, gays and minorities. The New York City Council has signed on, forbidding

Coors products to be sold at City-sponsored events.

I introduced a boycott-Coors resolution to Community Board 2, where it was passed, and supported a similar resolution in the New York County

Democratic Executive Committee, of which I am a member.

If you're female, gay, a union member, or a minority, then it makes good sense to join with the Village Reform Democratic Club in boycotting

a company which will use its profits to hurt your interests. Don't buy the products of this right-wing, union-busting company.

Report from—

District Leader

Liz Shollenberger

Democratic District Leader, 61st Assembly District, Part A

Village Reform Democratic Club—212/473-2787

Dear Neighbor,

I am writing to you once again to let you know what I've been up to and to suggest ways in which you can get more involved in the community and in the political process. I think it's important to keep in touch, and that's why you've been hearing from me periodically. If you have projects you'd like me or my club, the Village Reform Democratic Club, to undertake or problems you need help with, please feel free to call or write me, using the form inside or otherwise.

Sincerely,

Liz Shollenberger

**Liz Shollenberger
Democratic District Leader**

Sidewalks are for walking

In various parts of the Village, vendors, both licensed and unlicensed, have all but taken over the sidewalk, leaving little room for pedestrians. Their wares, often spread out on blankets or rickety tables, take up precious sidewalk space needed by those walking through the streets.

The book vendors, some of whom have erected semi-permanent structures on the curbside, are the worst offenders. The City has been reluctant to enforce any peddler restrictions against them, fearing a First Amendment court battle.

Vendors, of course, are not the only sidewalk obstruction. Restaurants with legal cafes inch out beyond their boundaries, other unlicensed restaurants set up renegade cafes, and some even go so far as to enclose—illegally—the public space. Commercial operations stack mountains of garbage in front of their establishments, creating a stench and drawing rodents.

Some parts of our neighborhood—such as the Sullivan/MacDougal/Bleecker area, the Eighth Street–St. Mark's strip, and East Sixth Street—are plagued by late-night and week-end congestion on both sidewalks and streets, with the pushing, shouting, frolicking crowds keeping apartment dwellers above awake until the wee hours.

Continued on next page

ABOUT LIZ'S AND TIM'S OPPONENTS AT THE VILLAGE INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

Tim James and incumbent Liz Shollenberger are opposed by candidates from the Village Independent Democrats. The VID, a once-proud reform club which was the reasoned voice of liberalism in the Village for more than two decades, has, in recent years, been widely discredited. As a result, most of its early leaders have disassociated themselves from VID. Numerous community leaders have concluded that the VID no longer effectively serves either the community or the reform movement.

That "*patronage mill on Sheridan Square*," as the *New York Native* has repeatedly called VID, exchanged its reform credentials for a buddy-buddy relationship with the Manhattan party boss, Denny Farrell, who has helped broker lucrative jobs for VIDers. This cozy relationship was noted by the *Village Voice*, which observed in an editorial last fall that "*the VID is beginning to show signs of being dominated by Manhattan county leader Denny Farrell*," as well as by a recently-disillusioned long-time VID executive committee member, who wrote that "*in one stroke, [the VID's 1986 judicial delegates] terminated VID's 30-year role as leaders of the reform movement and helped substantiate the charge by the Village Voice that VID had become little more than a tool of the County leader.*"

Tim's opponent, Anthony Hoffmann, has been Male District Leader for 6 years without a single solid accomplishment to cite. Hoffmann emerges in election seasons but otherwise rarely attends community meetings, and even when he does, those present often wish he'd stayed at home. Some examples:

- Last summer at a block association meeting, Hoffman attacked the concept of citizen court monitoring, a tactic widely used by neighborhood organizations and groups concerned about crimes against the elderly or anti-gay violence and which has been endorsed by the District Attorneys in all five boroughs.
- Two West Village leaders described Hoffmann's 1984 testimony about the refurbishment of a local park as "*an angry and abusive speech, insulting and berating American veterans because they objected to having their World War I memorial removed from the Park . . .*"
- Hoffmann not long ago joined in demanding that the homeless be allowed to camp out in Washington Square Park and in attacking police efforts to clean up the Park's drug trade as "racist."
- In 1985, Hoffmann's club co-sponsored a rally held in P.S. 41 comparing our local police force to the right-wing "death squads" in El Salvador.

Liz's opponent is a sometime paid political consultant who launched her campaign against Liz by allying herself with the musicians' union in attacking Liz for Liz's strong position against unwanted cabaret and nightclub noise in our residential neighborhood.

VOTE 1987
TUESDAY, SEPT. 15

LIZ SHOLLENBERGER, as the Village's Female District Leader and as a member of Community Board 2, has time after time demonstrated that intelligence, compassion, hard work, and attention to detail are all needed in solving difficult neighborhood problems. Liz, an attorney, is a volunteer in the Gay Men's Health Crisis legal clinic and in her club's constituent clinic, where she has helped tenants obtain needed repairs and has stopped unwarranted evictions. She has also pursued appeals for death-row inmates in Florida and used her legal skills to help the Coalition for the Homeless.

Liz was a founder of the Village Reform Democratic Club and its first president. She is active in the Housing Committee of the New York City chapter of Americans for Democratic Action and in BASTA, a group dedicated to improving conditions in and around the Third Street Men's Shelter and to stopping the placement of yet another shelter in that over-burdened East Village neighborhood.

Liz is a founding member of both Save the Village and Save the Piers and a long-time member of Common Cause and ACLU. She is on the Advisory Board of Transit Riders in Pursuit, a transit advocacy group. Liz also belongs to the Bar Association for Human Rights, the Greenwich Village Coalition Against Nuclear Arms, the West Village Committee, and the Washington Square Association.

TIM JAMES, 30, a graduate of Princeton University and NYU Law School, has worked for Village interests for years, first as an aide to Village Council Member Carol Greitzer, then with the Community Assistance Unit, where he worked to make Community Boards more effective.

Tim, a Democratic County Committeeman for 10 years, has long been active in Democratic politics. He was elected as a Kennedy delegate to the 1980 Democratic National Convention and in 1984 headed Villagers for Mondale. In 1986, he was elected to the National Board of Americans for Democratic Action, the nation's leading liberal advocacy group.

In 1973, Tim wrote *Watergate Scorecard*, a handbook for viewers of the impeachment hearings. More recently, he authored a history of the anti-Westway movement. Tim's articles on political topics have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Newsday*, and the *Village Voice*.

A founder and former president of the Village Reform Democratic Club, Tim is also a member of the ACLU, the West Village Committee, the Greenwich Village Coalition Against Nuclear Arms, the National Organization for Women, Save the Village, the Lawyers Alliance for Nuclear Arms Control, and the National Writers Union.

**HAVE A PROBLEM? CALL YOUR
DISTRICT LEADER AT THE
VILLAGE REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB.**

Phone: 473-2787

**REELECT
DISTRICT LEADER
LIZ SHOLLENBERGER**



**ELECT TIM JAMES
DISTRICT LEADER**



Liz Shollenberger and Tim James – Doing Things That Matter To The Village



FOR A SAFER, DRUG-FREE VILLAGE

Liz, as District Leader, and Tim, as president of the Village Reform Democratic Club, provided political leadership to the many community activists who lobbied for more police for the Washington Square Park area; they succeeded in getting a greatly increased police presence in the Broadway-to-Seventh-Avenue corridor. They are determined to keep that corridor clean and to repeat that success throughout the district, to protect Village residents and our local merchants.

Tim authored legislation which made it possible for the Village to be exempted from police coterminality, which would have forced the Village's precinct to cover a much larger area.

FOR LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS

Liz is a volunteer with Gay Men's Health Crisis, and has twice been warmly endorsed by the *New York Native*.

Liz and Tim have been strong voices for greatly increased governmental funding for AIDS research and patient care.

Tim and Liz supported passage of the City Gay Rights Bill and spoke out against weakening amendments.

In 1984 and 1985, Liz and Tim worked hard for the election of Bill Thom, New York City's first openly gay judge.

FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Liz has been a vocal proponent of rent protection for commercial tenants. As president of the Village Reform Democratic Club, she conducted a survey of Village opinion on commercial rent protection for small businesses that showed that the overwhelming majority of Villagers favored commercial rent protection. Tim and Liz support the Messinger Last-Offer-Binding-Arbitration bill.

Liz Shollenberger has *"a record of work over the years that demonstrates two virtues we admire in a public official. One is her willingness to deal not only with the more 'high profile' issues, but also with those problems in our immediate neighborhood that don't usually grab the headlines. The other is that . . . Shollenberger has built a steady, solid record of achievement that, while not necessarily glamorous, has produced tangible results."*
The Villager, in its September, 1986 endorsement of District Leader Liz Shollenberger

FOR A QUIETER VILLAGE

Liz succeeded in having Washington Square Park declared a "Radio Free Zone," where radio playing is permitted only with headphones.

Tim and Liz are lobbying to get rid of the one-way toll on the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, which has caused excess traffic and the accompanying honking, heat, and air pollution along Seventh Avenue.

Liz and Tim were vocal opponents of the so-called Community Destruction Act, the 1985 amendments to the city cabaret law which allow all city restaurants to function as mini-cabarets.

FOR TRANSIT USERS

With Council Member Carol Greitzer, Liz, as District Leader, convinced the Transit Authority to greatly increase the hours that the token booth is open at the downtown Astor Place subway station, thus making the commute a little easier for thousands of Villagers every day.

Liz and Tim were consistent foes of Westway and are continuing to work to ensure that trade-in funds are actually used to benefit transit riders

Liz also worked to document the need for improved West Village bus service.

FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

At the NOW Legal Defense Fund, Tim worked on a historic lawsuit challenging sex discrimination in insurance.

A longtime supporter of Planned Parenthood, Liz has been named to the Honor Roll of the National Organization for Women's local chapter.

Tim, as a Human Rights Commissioner, initiated an investigation into sex discrimination in the public schools in Rye, New York.

FOR OUR HISTORIC WATERFRONT

Liz was a founder of Save the Piers, the group which blew the whistle when the State tried clandestinely to remove the acres of passive recreational space which the piers afford.

When the piers' total destruction seemed imminent, Tim helped to obtain New York City's agreement to the State-City pact which stopped the advance of the wrecking equipment.

Tim and Liz are both members of Save the Village and the West Village Committee, groups dedicated, among other things, to preserving the unique low-rise character of the West Village and to preventing landfill or platforms in the Hudson.

FOR HOUSING

As president of the VRDC, Liz set up the club's housing clinic, where she, Tim, and other club members have helped scores of tenants facing eviction, harassment, and lack of services.

Tim authored the recently-adopted Civil Rights law which bans discrimination in housing based on one's lawful employment.

Strong voices for tenants' rights, both Liz and Tim have worked for continued rent protection for *all* tenants and support the efforts of residents in the East and South Village to protect their neighborhoods from real estate speculators.



Liz Snollenberger

District Leader

Report from—

1987

Village Reform
Democratic Club
60 East 9 Street/Suite 533
New York, New York 10003

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Astor Place IRT: Use it or lose it



In the year since the renovation of the Astor Place subway station, which involved permanently closing the dank and dangerous tunnel that had connected the uptown and downtown sides of the station, downtown travelers were frequently inconvenienced and infuriated by the absence of token clerks at most off-peak hours and even some rush-hour times. The floor-to-ceiling turnstiles turned away the tokenless, forcing them to climb the stairs, cross the street, purchase

a token on the uptown side, recross the street, and begin again. Worse, the ancient turnstiles often ate the tokens without admitting the passenger, leaving the downtown traveler with no choice but to seek another method of getting downtown.

City Council Member Carol Greitzer and I, lobbying with other local transit activists, persuaded the Transit Authority to give us a 24-hour clerk, on a six-month trial basis, which began in late November.

At the end of May, the TA

will compare transit activity at Astor Place with that at other stations, to see if our use warrants keeping the clerk permanently. For the next few months, I'll be a frequent IRT local rider when I'm going downtown and I hope you will be too.

AIDS— More funding and less hysteria needed

Continued from inside

dedicated to helping those diagnosed with AIDS in all facets of their lives, from the sometimes enormous legal and financial difficulties they face

to the day-to-day problems they have in common with all seriously ill persons. Volunteers are also needed for clerical tasks, telephoning and other office work. Whatever your talents, GMHC can use your assistance. Join me in being a GMHC volunteer by calling the volunteer office at 807-6572.

Youth program saved

In December, I learned that because of some minor omissions in its paperwork, the youth program so ably run by John Pettinato out of Our Lady of Pompeii Church's facilities was going to be denied its lifeblood—city funding. The program has ser-

ved hundreds of youths in its ten-year existence.

Community Board 2 District Manager Rita Lee, other Community Board 2 members, and I made the phone calls, wrote the letters, and attended the meetings required to assure that the neighborhood would not lose this valuable resource. Funding has been restored, and the program will be able to continue helping teens.

Fighting for our waterfront

The joint State–City Westside Task Force in January submitted its final recommendations for a roadway to replace the old Miller Highway, and, in places, to make the waterfront accessible for community use. The Task Force has called for a six-lane highway costing \$530 million. The lion's share of the expenses would be devoted to making portions of the highway — at the north and south ends — either elevated or depressed. Task Force planners estimated that a 100% at-grade roadway would cost a mere \$150 million, and Clean Air Campaign and anti-Westway activist Marcy Benstock estimates that a simple at-grade roadway could be constructed for even less, based on Federal Highway Administration estimates in 1984 that the roadway could be rebuilt for \$53 million. The less the State spends on the road, the more will be left for mass transit — when Westway was officially scrapped in the fall of 1985, Governor Cuomo and Mayor Koch pledged to use any of the money not needed to redo the roadway for mass transit.

One state senator has suggested that the primary beneficiaries of the complex and costly underground roadway — the World Trade Center and Battery Park City — be asked to help find additional outside funding for that portion of the roadway, rather than fund a special interest's project from limited monies otherwise available for mass transit. This and other similar suggestions should be explored.

While the Task Force was in existence, I joined with other Community Board members, the West Village Committee, and various block associations in lobbying for the Village's interests: against the use of landfill or other outboard develop-

Saving the piers

The ugly fences erected by the State last summer along the waterfront are coming down, but there's a long way to go in keeping our piers as a recreational resource. It will be at least five more years before construction begins on the new roadway, and this community desperately needs passive recreational space *now*.

Over the years, the piers have provided acres of open space, where joggers, sunbathers, dog-walkers and sunset admirers have gone to get away

More money for the institutionalized elderly

Last fall, I joined with more than a hundred residents of the Village Nursing Home in a demonstration calling for an increase in the "personal needs allowance" for the institutionalized elderly — those in nursing homes.

The State "needs allowance" is, for many of the elderly who have already paid over their life's savings to nursing homes or doctors, their only source of income and must cover all their purchases beyond shelter and food. The current allowance is set at \$40 per month, a ridiculously low amount when you consider that the purchase of a new winter coat would eat up at least two month's allowance or that a weekly outing, via public transportation, to a movie, followed by coffee would easily add up to the entire allowance, leaving nothing for phone calls, toilets or an occasional paperback book.

State Legislation is still pending.

ment; against the use of Greenwich Village's historic streets, feeding into the landmark district, as exits or entrances for the highway; in favor of preserving our unique waterfront as a recreational area, and, of course, in favor of the largest possible subsidy for mass transit consistent with a workable — not a deluxe — roadway.

from the buzz of city streets. In a neighborhood where every inch of formal park space is jealously guarded, the piers provide an essential safety valve.

When the wrecking cranes moved in last summer, many of us on the Community Board, in the VRDC, and in the community worked with our legislators to ensure that these historic piers would not be removed before the issue could be publicly debated and discussed. We succeeded. Now, those same groups, including the Ad Hoc Committee to Save the Piers, of which I was a founder, are lobbying to obtain joint State–City funding for needed safety-related renovations. The battle for our recreational space continues.

Another blow struck against housing discrimination



Photo: Joan Vitale

VRDC President Tim James and Council Member Carol Greitzer (also a VRDC member) recently made the world a little

safer for tenants who stick up for their rights. Those who work for government, for unions, and for law firms (even as non-lawyers) have for years been shunned by landlords,

Report from—

District
Liz
Sho
Democratic

Working to preserve businesses

More and more commercial stretches in our neighborhood have nothing in the storefronts except "For Rent" signs. Those empty spaces represent the loss of butchers, shoe repair shops, and other neighborhood-oriented services. If the stores are filled, it will likely be with fast food outlets, tourist-oriented

t Leader

ollenberger

District Leader, 61st Assembly District, Part A

erve small

restaurants, or outrageously expensive trendy clothiers. Neither the State nor the City has yet acted to protect small businesses. The City Council took a step in the right direction by holding hearings in December to address proposed legislation.

I spoke at those hearings, urging the City Council to adopt

who classified them as "troublemakers" and refused to rent to them. To some landlords, a "troublemaker" is anyone who isn't afraid to complain about a lack of basic services!

At James's suggestion, Greitzer introduced and worked to pass an amendment to the City's civil rights law, to ban discrimination in housing on the basis of one's lawful employment. Under current law, except in some small owner-occupied buildings, a landlord may not discriminate against you on the basis of your age, race, national origin, religion, sex, physical disability, marital status, or sexual orientation as well as lawful employment. If you're being discriminated against because of your job or on any other unlawful basis, you can contact the City's Human Rights Commission at 566-5050, or call me and I'll help you through the bureaucracy.

the Last Offer Binding Arbitration Bill before that body. The legislation would guarantee the current tenant the right to remain in the space; the new lease terms would be settled in binding arbitration, a dispute resolution technique used successfully in the labor field.

The Mayor called for a study of commercial leases and small businesses two years ago. The Commission's findings, public since last summer, showed that 38% of all small retail businesses saw potential unregulated rent increases as their most serious problem, more serious than crime, taxes, or labor.

Our State Legislature has been unwilling to act. It's time the City Council took steps to preserve the stability of the neighborhood by keeping service providers here. I will continue to lobby at both City and State levels for this protection.

AIDS— More funding and less hysteria needed

AIDS—acquired immune deficiency syndrome—is being diagnosed in more patients each day. The only hope for those with the disease is that a cure will be found; cures are found only through painstaking and expensive research, research which government should be pumping funds into. Funds are also needed to care for those already diagnosed and to educate the general population about the disease.

Money is desperately needed, but hysteria isn't.

Homelessness— The problem continues

Pending in the State Legislature is a tough anti-warehousing bill, one which would deny residential landlords who keep apartments off the market rent increases on their other rental units. According to Coalition for the Homeless spokesperson Robert Hayes, there are between 40,000 and 100,000 warehoused apartments in the City now; similar figures—between 60,000 and 80,000—are quoted for the number of homeless. Current antiwarehousing legislation, effective in the City only, bars warehousing in buildings where conversion to cooperative or condominium status is anticipated; even then, landlords may legally hold up 10% of their units off the market. The new bill's author, Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, was quoted as saying that the pass-

age of the bill would be an "uphill fight."

Many of us who have been active in lobbying for the rights of the homeless are agreed that the solution should *not* include that portion of Mayor Koch's proposal (creation of 20 new shelters in the City, 4 per borough) which would put a homeless shelter on the corner of First Street and the Bowery. I have joined with hundreds of outraged neighbors to protest the choice of this site, just blocks from *four* existing shelters. Every neighborhood *must* do its share in the compassionate duty to house the homeless, but it is good for neither the community nor the homeless themselves to pack them into one already overburdened area of Manhattan while so many neighborhoods are without any shelters.

AIDS is not easily transmitted, and those who have been diagnosed as persons with AIDS must be allowed to continue in their jobs and in their housing for as long as possible. The problem of discrimination against persons with AIDS, as well as against people who are perceived to be in a high risk group can and *must* also be addressed. I am working with legislators to address these and related problems.

If you'd like personally to lend a hand in the crisis, you may want to consider volun-

teering with the Gay Men's Health Crisis, an organization

Continued on the back



Washington Square Park:

**No more
rock-around-the-clock**

In the fall, Washington Square Park got a much-needed facelift. Parks Commissioner Henry Stern heard the voices of many community groups and activists, including mine, telling him that our community would no longer tolerate an “anything goes” attitude in the largest park in the Village.

Changes included:

- ▶ Closing the park for several days for repairs, including painting, replacing missing bench slats, resurfacing the mounds and removing graffiti;
- ▶ Moving the park’s closing time back from 1:00am until midnight and making a decision, along with the police, to enforce this nighttime rest for the park;
- ▶ Making the park a *radio-free-zone*, as the Village Reform Democratic Club and I had been seeking for more than a year; now the park has been added to the growing number of city parks and beaches where music lovers must use headphones or earplugs, so as to keep their musical tastes to themselves;
- ▶ Declaring the park to be a glass-free area, at the suggestion of Community Board 2 member and Park activist Lucy Carney. No glass bottles will mean significantly less broken glass.

Nearby residents said that the park was becoming cleaner and quieter. However, the displaced criminal activity was radiating out onto side streets, especially to the south and west, where fewer doormen were there to chase them away. I worked with many other community groups to bring more police to the Village — see the accompanying letter — so that a cleaner, safer Park doesn’t have to mean dealers in every doorway, and in mid-February the police responded by putting an additional cadre of officers into the area.

THE VILLAGE REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB

January 25, 1987

Dear Commissioner Ward:

Drug dealing is tearing the Village apart. We need your help, and *soon*. Washington Square Park is at the heart of the problem. Now, because of the Parks Department’s and the 6th Precinct’s efforts, the park is somewhat cleaner, but both dealers and users have radiated out into the side streets, onto our stoops and into our very doorways. They know that their customers will come to look for them in this general vicinity, and we need your help to convince these purveyors of death once and for all, that our residential streets will no longer tolerate being an open-air drug mart.

The less wealthy residents who can’t afford to live in doormanned buildings are hit disproportionately hard by this. Enclosed is a letter from a resident of West 4th Street. We have listened to similar horror stories from residents of almost every block within a 10-block radius of the Park, particularly to the south and west, where there are fewer doormen to scare them away.

The Precinct is doing the best it can, with its limited manpower. We need more help. We know that our area is already receiving its full allotment of officers, but your allocation formulas do not adequately take into account the massive police manpower needed to turn around an area which has become established as a drug market.

It would be great if we could, as if by the wave of a magic billy club, clean up all the City’s drug problems. This is not possible. We, however, think that it *would* be possible to rescue this residential neighborhood, a neighborhood which has for too long borne more than its share of substance trafficking. To do this, we need bodies—perhaps from narcotics, perhaps just more cops on the beat. You can’t do this alone, and our organization, the Village Reform Democratic Club, is lobbying for stricter and more enforceable laws. (See enclosed copies of letters to legislators.) We have met locally with our Precinct officers, but they can run up against a cement wall, in terms of stretching their resources to give more coverage to the drug problem.

Sincerely,

Liz Shollenberger

Liz Shollenberger
Democratic District Leader
61st Assembly District
Part A (Greenwich Village)

Tim James

Tim James
President
Village Reform Democratic Club

THE VILLAGE REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB

February 1, 1987

Tony Hoffman, District Leader
Village Independent Democrats
224 West 4th Street
New York, N.Y. 10014

Dear Tony:

In light of the disclosure, made at your December meeting, that VID spent about \$35,000 on the '86 campaign, there are a few things I feel have to be said.

I don't regard \$35,000 as an outrageous amount of money to have spent on a hotly contested race in a district the size of ours. But learning of that figure was a stark reminder of the calculated campaign of falsehoods on which you embarked in the immediate aftermath of VRDC's victory in the contest for Female District Leader, falsehoods typified by your allegation in a fundraising letter sent to your members and others in the political community in which you attributed VID's defeat to the fact that you had been "obscenely outspent." That, as you well know, was a crock. Our campaign expenditures totaled \$24,000 or \$26,000, depending on which expenditures are counted. (Our filings with the Board of Elections included about \$2,000 worth of rent and telephone payments that I think might better have been regarded as general club overhead.)

Regardless of which figure is used, our spending was, in fact, a great deal lower than yours. And your \$35,000 figure obviously doesn't include the nearly \$2,000 a month you folks pay in rent. If it did, your total spending would move up over \$40,000. Even if you had not added up all the figures by the time you sent out your outrageous October 1 letter (copy enclosed), you must surely have known enough about your own expenditures (and about the kind of campaign we waged) to have known full well that your claim of having been "obscenely outspent" by us was a gross falsehood--and indeed, as it turns out, the opposite of the truth.

Of a similar character have been your repeated complaints that you were beaten by a "scurrilous" campaign on our part. It's hard for us to tell exactly what "scurrilous" means in the VID lexicon, but we do have some hints. Apparently, "scurrilous" applies when we inform the voters that VID is running candidates for party office who, in one case (Sherri Donovan), moved to the district six weeks before becoming a candidate

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and, in the other case (Margaret Chin), in fact does not live in the district but has merely registered from a relative's address. It's also "scurrilous," apparently, when we tell the voters, with great specificity, of outrageous positions taken by your club on issues ranging from conditions in Washington Square Park to U.S. policy in the Mideast.

"Scurrilous" apparently does not apply, however, when VID disseminates charges, without any substantiation, that our campaign was run with "real estate big bucks." "Scurrilous" seems not to apply to the disgusting charge that our Liz Shollenberger--a volunteer for Gay Men's Health Crisis--was "anti-gay." And "scurrilous" obviously doesn't include the bizarre charges, made by you personally, that our campaign was "racist" and "anti-Semitic."

I guess you can see why we're a little confused about this "scurrilous business." The standard doesn't seem too consistent.

If it makes your members feel better for you to fulminate about having lost to a "scurrilous" campaign in which you were "obscenely outspent," I obviously can't stop you. But you're kidding yourself (and your members). VID lost the female district leadership because you fielded a candidate so abysmal in every way that your support dried up on one front after another. The Village Voice, which has rarely had a kind word to say about us and which supported your candidates against ours in 1984 and 1985, ridiculed Sherri as a candidate who "does not possess the minimum qualifications for office and has rarely even voted herself." (I suppose it was pretty scurrilous of me to call her shoddy voting record to their attention.) The Villager, which had endorsed VID candidates for party office for years, endorsed both of ours this year. And I suspect you know as well as I do how many of your own members stuffed buildings for us, gave us money and voted for Liz.

In short, you ran a candidate who personified the very characteristics that have been consistently at the heart of our critique of VID:

- 1) Increasing dominance of the club by people who don't even live in the Village--with the accompanying insensitivity to community sentiment on local issues; and
- 2) A mindless, sloganeering, don't-confuse-me-with- the facts brand of radicalism.

Tony, you know as well as I do the factors that are swallowing up the VID: The unwholesomely close relationship with a County Leader who doesn't share the Reform principles VID was organized to promote, but is terrific at brokering jobs for VID members. Increasing dominance of the club by the thuggish and politically far-out AAFE--recruited into the club by the Roskoffs to solidify their power base. The gross intolerance of dissent that not only drove us out in 1983 but has driven out countless other VIDers in the years since.

Don't kid yourself about why VID lost. The answer is closer to home than you seem willing to admit. After all it was your then-president, Rick Braun, who admitted in the October VID newsletter (the first after

the primary) that "There has been a lack of acceptance of diversity at the club." And it was you, Tony, who summed it all up very nicely at your first membership meeting after the primary, when you said: "Part of the problem that we have been having here has been not hearing our community."

After such promising ventures into self-criticism, I'm sorry to see you've opted instead for a Big Lie offensive consisting of false, unsubstantiated and--dare I say it?--scurrilous charges. Sorry to write such a long letter, but the genius of the Big Lie, as Joe McCarthy knew well, is that it's hard to answer concisely. I've done the best I could.

Sincerely,



Tim James
President

2/1/89