



GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Art Levin

As Andrew Berman our Executive Director reported at our 2018 Annual Meeting this past June, "this has been a real watershed year for GVSHP." We have faced ever-present and growing challenges to preservation in our city and statewide that threaten the continued livability of the communities that we serve.

As always, our advocacy has primarily focused on preventing development that would, if permitted, ride roughshod over landmarks and neighborhoods. As a successful advocacy organization, we increasingly have had to fight threats of legal action brought by elements of the real estate industry determined to derail our preservation agenda.

Carrying out our mission became increasingly difficult this past year as the Mayor and other elected officials prioritized commercial development at the expense of maintaining and strengthening our neighborhoods. GVSHP continues to believe that the priority of those who govern should be serving in the best interest of those who live, work and visit our unique communities.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." The words of Ralph Waldo Emerson seem especially fitting to me in characterizing the activities of GVSHP over the past year. "Enthusiasm" perfectly describes the behavior of all who have worked and continue to work as our colleagues, supporters and friends to preserve a community subject to exponentially growing threats.

Enthusiasm is in the DNA of our Executive Director, Andrew Berman, our staff, Sam, Sarah, Harry, Lannyl, Matt and Ariel, and all our Trustees, as well as members and friends. Enthusiasm for mission explains much of GVSHP's impressive record in saving our neighborhoods from the ravages of the literal and figurative wrecking ball.

I am pleased to report that again this year GVSHP continues to grow by every measure of an organization's success. Especially gratifying is the steady growth in our membership and the critical financial, political and moral support members provide for the organization.

While GVSHP's past and present are important, so obviously is our future. During the past year Trustees and staff have been engaged in several projects focused on ensuring that we continue to be relevant for the next decade or more. To that end, we are working on a major update of our website so that there is more and richer content, easier navigation, simpler maintenance and a more attractive presentation. Simultaneously we are creating an updated "brand and brand design" that will provide a unified and easily recognizable GVSHP "look" across all our many programs. We believe this work is key to enhancing public recognition and support for who we are and what we do. This effort has been well under way for over a year and my hope is that before the end of 2018, we will be able to introduce you to the tangible results.

At the same time, I want to reassure you that neither our vision nor mission is changing—they have served us and our neighborhoods well for the past 40 years and remain relevant today.

AZT LEVIN

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.

PRESERVATION & ADVOCACY

GVSHP took on preservation issues locally, at City Hall, and in Albany, all as part of our ongoing efforts to preserve and protect the special architectural and cultural heritage of our neighborhoods.

Locally, we secured landmark designation of two endangered 1866 cast-iron and masonry loft buildings at 827-831 Broadway (12th/13th Streets), which were slated for demolition and replacement with a 300 ft. tall office tower. GVSHP waged a year and a half campaign to save the buildings, which came dangerously close to demolition (demolition permits had been approved but not issued; once issued, landmark designation would have been impossible).



827-831 Broadway

Citywide, we led the successful campaign to turn back a proposal by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to cut the public out of an important part of the landmarks



Protesting the proposed LPC rules changes

review process. The LPC had planned to change its rules so that more applications for changes to landmarked buildings, including for certain types of rooftop and rear yard additions, could sidestep the public review and approval process, and be decided behind closed doors by LPC staff. This would have meant the public would not know about, be able to see, or be able to comment upon these applications, as they do now. After significant pushback led by GVSHP, the plan was withdrawn and most of the most egregious elements removed.

GVSHP also led the effort to ensure that whoever is appointed the new head of the LPC following the chair's resignation in June would be a true preservationist with an established record of advocating for the preservation of our city's historic heritage. In addition to urging the Mayor to do so, we initiated a letter-writing campaign which resulted in thousands of letters to not only the Mayor but the City Council, which must approve any such appointment by the Mayor, demanding such qualifications and orientation by any new Chair. In August, Speaker Corey Johnson joined in urging the Mayor to also consider such qualifications for any appointee. A permanent replacement has not yet been named.

The Society also played a leading role in advocating against a proposed change to State law which would have allowed Mayor de Blasio to "supersize" development in



A change in state law could have allowed the city to 'supersize' buildings in residential neighborhoods

residential neighborhoods in New York City. The Mayor and the real estate lobby were pushing to repeal a State law which limits the size of residential buildings in New York City (a law which currently allows 1,000 ft. tall towers or even greater). Had the law been repealed, the Mayor would have been free to propose massive upzonings in our neighborhood and elsewhere in New York City, which he has made clear he intends to do. GVSHP worked with state legislators and other preservation and civic groups, and generated thousands of letters to Albany in opposition to the plan, which actually passed the State Senate. But we were able to prevent its adoption by the State Assembly twice in the 2018 session.

Another high priority for GVSHP was helping to preserve small businesses in our neighborhoods and address the blight of empty storefronts. We worked with local and citywide groups to advance measures which would limit the proliferation of chain stores in certain areas, and prevent landlords from denying storeowners in good standing lease renewals if they could pay a fair market rate for the space. Through a variety of programs such as our Business of the Month and #ShopBleecker, we also directed public support towards valued local independent businesses.

GVSHP reviewed nearly one hundred applications for changes to landmarked buildings that require public approval in our neighborhood over the past year. We continued to monitor on a daily basis all 6,500 building lots in our neighborhood for demolition, alteration, and new construction permit applications, as well as 3,500 landmarked building sites for applications for approval for changes.

BENEFIT HOUSE TOUR

On May 6, 2018, GVSHP held its 20th Annual Spring House Tour Benefit. One of the most important sources of income for the Society, this year's house tour raised about \$200,000 to support GVSHP's work.

The tour was made possible by the hard work of more than one hundred thirty volunteers, more than a dozen hard-working Benefit Committee members, and of course the incredibly generous



families who
opened the
doors to their
homes for
the tour and
reception that followed.



Tourgoers enjoyed exclusive access to an incredible array of houses;

Homes throughout Greenwich Village, including two exceptional lofts in the 827-831 Broadway buildings which we saved from demolition, were included on the tour. The tour began at the former Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Studio, in the New York Studio School

(the original Whitney Museum). The collection of homes contained lush gardens and peerless private art collections, and ranged from painstaking restorations to innovative and imaginative renovations.



The reception afforded a stunning view of the Hudson River

The post-tour reception was held in a spectacular space overlooking the Hudson River in the Whitney Museum, giving many of our most generous supporters a further opportunity to celebrate the day and GVSHP's work. Thank you to all who contributed and participated.

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

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.

Membership support for GVSHP grew steadily over our last fiscal year, with 1,631 paying members giving over \$779,000 in membership support—both a high-water mark for the Society. From 2001 to 2017, total membership support grew by over 1,100%, while the number of GVSHP members increased by 500%, greatly increasing GVSHP's capacity for education, research, and advocacy.

GVSHP's 'Members Only' programming serves as a thank you for existing members for their support and to encourage new membership support for the organization. Members-only events over the past year included a book talk *Elaine de Kooning: Quintessential New Yorker & Art World Catalyst* and reception with the author, Cathy Curtis; a curated tour of exhibits at the Whitney Museum and Morgan Library; and a special insider's pierogi making lesson at Veselka.

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



GVSHP members learn how to make pierogis at Veselka

VILLAGE AWARDS

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

A near capacity crowd filled the 500-seat historic main auditorium at The New School in June for GVSHP's Annual Village Awards, hosted by performance artist Penny Arcade.

This year's awardees, chosen by our Awards Committee from scores of nominations from the public, were:

• The Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, an international center dedicated to the preservation, study, and exhibition of film and video, particularly independent, experimental, and avant-garde cinema



Host Penny Arcade with Anthology Film Archives founder Jonas Mekas.

- The Comedy Cellar, 117 MacDougal Street, a family-run business and world-renowned center for stand-up performance, which has launched countless notable comedians' careers since its opening in 1982
- **Greenwich Locksmiths**, 56 Seventh Avenue South, a family-owned business and living art piece, where Van Gogh's "Starry Night" is rendered in keys on the exterior, and the vanishing art of locksmithing is practiced and perfected on the inside
- Ralph Lee, resident of Westbeth (55 Bethune Street), lifelong artist, master puppeteer, and father of the Halloween Parade
- Theater for the New City, 155 First Avenue, an award-winning four-theater complex which has nurtured the creation and performance of new American theater, with an emphasis upon diverse audiences and voices, since 1971
- Bea Arthur Residence, 222 East 13th Street, recipient of our Regina Kellerman Award for restoring and breathing new life into a rotting and abandoned 1851 rowhouse, while providing path breaking services and housing for formerly homeless LGBTQ youth



Ralph Lee



Bea Arthur residence





PROGRAMS



From our tour of West 14th Street



GVSHP had an exceptionally busy programming year, with over seventy public programs attended by over 6,100 people. Almost all of our programs were free and, with the exception of our members-only events, open to the public. These ranged from lectures on Greek Revival architecture to the life and legacy of Lou Reed; film screenings on Yiddish Second Avenue to a salute to women poets of the Village at the Cherry Lane Theater; a Fiftieth Anniversary celebration of the Fillmore East to walking tours of Bleecker Street, West 14th Street, and West Village Holiday lights.



Unveiling of our Elizabeth Blackwell plaque

We also added two new historic plaques in the neighborhood. One honored the first woman doctor, Elizabeth Blackwell, and the New York Infirmary for Women and Children which she founded, the first hospital run by and for women, at 58 Bleecker Street. The second, done in conjunction with the Historic Landmarks Preservation Center, marked the former home of playwright and civil rights leader Lorraine Hansberry, the first African-American woman to have a play produced on Broadway ("A Raisin in the Sun"), at 112 Waverly Place.

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.



Book talk on disappearing storefronts

PUBLIC EDUCATION

GVSHP continued to expand and improve our two main educational programs—Children's Education, offered to first through fifth graders in schools throughout New York City, and Continuing Education, a New York State accredited program serving real estate professionals. Participation and interest in our new **Business of the Month** program, begun in late 2014, also grew.

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. Throughout the 2017-2018 School year, our program served nearly 1,300 students in fifty-seven classes in schools throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. About 84% of the classes received need-based scholarships allowing them to participate in the three-session program for free, while the remainder paid a small administrative fee.



Our children's education program in Washington Square



Our Continuing Education program on a tour of MacDougal Sullivan Gardens

Our **Continuing Education** program, conducted in conjunction with our Broker's Partnership, reached scores of area real estate professionals over the past year, teaching members of this important industry the value and importance of preservation and history. Classes covered topics including the legacy of Jane Jacobs, the history of rowhouses, New York City zoning, and the impact of immigration upon the development of Greenwich Village and East Village.

GVSHP continued our **Business of the Month** program, launched in 2014. Each month, a local, independent business is featured on GVSHP's website and blog, and shared via our electronic newsletter, showcasing one of the Village, East Village,

or NoHo's retail or commercial treasures. Local businesses are the backbone of our neighborhoods, and many find themselves in an increasingly tough, competitive environment of rising rents and proliferating chain stores. We invite the public to nominate their favorite businesses for consideration for our Business of the Month, and hope to increase support for and patronage of independent stores that provide vital services or unique amenities in our neighborhoods. Hundreds of individuals have submitted nominations, and our Business of the Month selections have been seen by thousands of viewers. This past year we celebrated theaters, hardware stores, food shops, music stores, bathhouses, tea shops, and florists, among others—all independently-owned, and providing a unique service or product.

ONLINE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In the past year GVSHP continued to expand our Historic Image Archive. The collection extends from the late 18th to the early 21st century, with most images dating to the 20th century. GVSHP added seventeen new collections, totaling approximately 1,500 new images, most of which were donated by the public. Some came from GVSHP's own photographic records; others were painstakingly culled from nine years' worth of landmarks applications GVSHP has retained, creating a treasure trove of historic images of our neighborhoods.

GVSHP also for the first time mapped all of the more than seven hundred applications for significant changes to landmarked buildings in our neighborhood that we have tracked and shared with the public since 2009. This incredibly useful tool now allows you to search your block or immediate vicinity for past or present landmarks applications, and see what has been proposed, and what has been approved or denied. It's all part of our ongoing effort to help make the landmarks application process as accessible and transparent to the public as possible.

Several new additions were also made to our Civil Rights and Social Justice Map of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo, containing over one hundred locations connected to African-American, LGBT, women's, immigrant, Latino, labor, Jewish, and Asian-American history. The very popular map, first released in early 2017, has now had over 80,000 views.

GVSHP also released a series of oral histories reflecting the diverse and inspiring stories which can be found throughout our neighborhoods. These included Chino Garcia, co-founder of the East Village's legendary CHARAS-El Bohio Community and Cultural Center; Beverly Moss Spatt, the first female chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission; artist Paula Poons, who's lived for over four decades in a Greenwich Village loft building which was, in the mid-to-late 20th century, the center of the New York art world; activist, theater producer, and Fortune Society founder David Rothenberg; Dr. Victor Keyloun, former St. Vincent's Hospital doctor who served during the height of the AIDS epidemic; and Rich Wandel, former archivist and historian for the LGBT community center.

Our blog Off the Grid (gvshp.org/blog) and our Landmarks Application Webpage (gvshp.org/lpc) continued to provide an invaluable public resource. The former is updated daily with facts and stories about our neighborhoods' rich history, while the latter tracks every single application for a change to a landmarked building in our neighborhoods that requires a public hearing, letting the public know how they can affect the decision, and what the outcome is. Among the most utilized pages on our website, they collectively received over 130,000 pageviews over the past year.

Fritsch Family Collection: Dismantling of the High Line in the West Village, 1962.



Additions to our Historic Image





Chino Garcia (top) and Beverly Moss Spatt, two of our new oral histories



GVSHP FISCAL YEAR 2017

Income

	Total	\$ 3,125,342
Earned & Other Revenue		\$ 61,008
In-Kind & Scholarship Donations		\$ 15,210
Grants and Contributions		\$ 2,047,314
Benefit & Events		\$ 222,402
Membership & Individual Support		\$ 779,408

Expenses

Children's Education	\$ 31,433
Broker Education	\$ 24,896
Lectures, Tours, and Meetings	\$ 159,270
Archive & Oral History	\$ 42,720
Membership Services & Newsletter	\$ 200,251
Preservation & Advocacy	\$ 307,973
Program Services Subtotal	\$ 766,543
General & Administrative	\$ 135,046
Fundraising	\$ 145,657
Supporting Services Subtotal	\$ 280,703
Fund Balance	\$ 2,078,096
Total	\$ 1,047,246

APPENDIX

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Chair: Marilyn Sobel

Trustees: Arthur Levin, Trevor Stewart, F.

Anthony Zunino

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Your support makes GVSHP 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 \$1,000 or more, and receive an invitation to a special event at a unique Village location.

Yes! I support the Greenwich preservation work:	Village Society for Historic Preservation and its
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