



# THE ANTHEMION

Spring 2001

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

## Advocacy Continues

**T**he Gansevoort Market continues to be the focus for advocacy efforts by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, with increased public interest in protecting this historic neighborhood in the northwest corner of Greenwich Village. Under the aegis of the Save Gansevoort Market Task Force, a number of programs and events have helped raise

awareness of the value in preserving the distinctive character of this vulnerable area, which has been a wholesale market for more than 150 years, first as a farmers' market and for the last half century as a wholesale meat market.

Thomas Mellins has been commissioned by the Task Force to write a comprehensive study of the cultural and architectural history of Gansevoort Market. As co-author of an award-winning series of books on the city, *New York 1930*, *New York 1960*, and the recent *New York 1880*, Mr. Mellins has extensive experience in writing about architecture and urbanism. He also collaborated on the documentary television series, *Pride of Place*. It is planned that his study of Gansevoort Market will be submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission in the summer, in response to their request for additional information on the architecture and history of the area. Regina Kellerman originally compiled archival research of the

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*GVSHP Executive Director Kimberly Stahlman Kearns and Save Gansevoort Market Task Force Co-Chairs Jo Hamilton and Florent Morellet accept a check from Scott Heyl, President of the Preservation League of New York State. Photo courtesy of Corky Leel The Villager*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Those contacting the Society in the coming months will hear a new voice representing the organization, as I will be away on maternity leave for a few months beginning mid-February. Sue Radmer will be taking charge as Interim Executive Director in my absence.

Sue comes to the position highly qualified, with a graduate degree in Historic Preservation from Columbia University, and professional experience at the Municipal Art Society, the New York City Office of Human Resources, and most recently as a consultant for New York preservation and civic organizations.

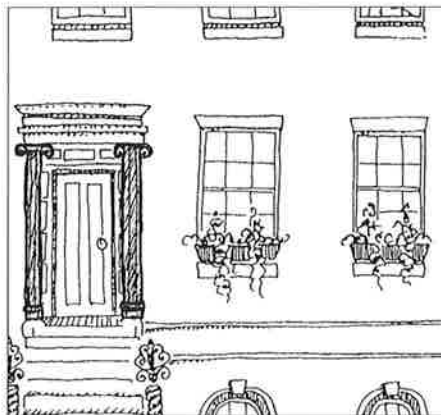
Sue and I will both have our hands full - I with a newborn, and she with a vital organization - each post offering its unique challenges and rewards!

I hope you will join me in warmly welcoming Sue to the Village and the Society. See you in the Summer!

## The Society Celebrates Ten Years of the Children's Education Program!

**N**ow celebrating its tenth year, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation's education program is in full swing for the 2000-2001 school year. Revamped and expanded for the new millennium, *Greenwich Village: History and Historic Preservation* is now poised to teach even more elementary-school students about the history and importance of Greenwich Village and its architecture.

During the past ten years, over 3,000 children from all over the city participated in the Society's education program, which was started in 1991 through a generous gift from the Felicia Fund. Originally consisting of three sessions that included a slide lecture, a walking tour, and a visit to the Merchant's House Museum, the program--in its new and improved iteration--now comprises four sessions. The first session



*One of the many engaging drawings from the Children's Education Workbook.*

remains the slide lecture, where students are shown historic and contemporary images of Greenwich Village. In addition

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*As we go to press, there is news about our youngest preservationist: Kate Stahlman Kearns, born February 12, 2001, and thriving.*

# Greenwich Village: Have You Been Counted on the Census of Places that Matter?

One of our recent Preservation Café programs featured Laura Hansen, the co director of Place Matters, a unique project that works to discover, interpret, celebrate and protect places that tell the history of New York City. Since our Preservation Café audience was fascinated to hear about the census being conducted by Place Matters, we thought that other Greenwich Village Society members would like to learn about it, too.

Villagers, along with hundreds of other New Yorkers, have nominated more than 300 places to the Census of Places that Matter - a citywide inventory of places important for their connections to history or tradition, or for their role in community life.

The Census is also the heart of Place Matters, an education and advocacy initiative of City Lore and the Municipal Art Society. These "places that matter" include public markets and street corners, a beer garden and a bird garden, basketball courts and stickball blocks, industrial signs and union halls, war memorials and graffiti murals, artists



Webster Hall at 119 East 11th Street. East Village, Manhattan, constructed ca. 1895. Photo courtesy of Martha Cooper.

lofts and housing projects, and more.

Census nominations from Greenwich Village provide one of the many lenses through which to view New York - revealing the multi-faceted history and contemporary character of the Village. These include:

Caffe Cino (now Po' Restaurant) at 31 Cornelia Street. Nominated as the "birthplace of out-of-the-closet gay theater in New York City," this site connects gay and lesbian history to off Broadway and the city's theatrical culture.

Minetta Tavern and its portrait of Joe Gould. Nominated to remind us of one of the city's most memorable characters and the milieu in which he lived: "Joe was the populist poet who used to trade a poem for a martini. Minetta Tavern holds the memory of Joe and the martini and the slow dust of myth."

The Strand Bookstore. Nominated as a true Village "landmark," this legendary bookstore is a "destination for readers from throughout the city, and helps sustain the neighborhood's literary character."

The newsstand and cigar store at Sheridan Square. "A meeting place, a stopping off point, a hub, this little triangle is the very heartbeat of the Village."

Webster Hall. A place where history happened over and over again: the founding convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America in 1914; an annual gay ball in the 1920s; and the legendary folk hootenannies led by Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie in the 1950s.

If you would like to be counted on the Census of Places that Matter, call or e-mail Place Matters: 212-935-3960, x259 or [placematters@mas.org](mailto:placematters@mas.org). Or nominate a site on-line at [www.placematters.net](http://www.placematters.net)

## VILLAGE MAILBAG

Q: Is it true that Washington Arch had a predecessor?

A: A temporary wooden arch was erected in 1889 in honor of the centennial of George Washington's inauguration. Designed by Stanford White, the arch was decorated with papier-mache garlands and laurel wreaths and was ingeniously painted so that the wood simulated marble. Spanning Fifth Avenue between the first houses on the street, north of the existing arch, this classical structure cost \$2,756 and was paid for by nearby residents.

This wooden arch proved to be so popular that plans for a permanent marble arch were immediately proposed and a cornerstone was laid the next year. Dedicated in 1895, it too was designed by Stanford White of the architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White. A public subscription paid for this second arch, which cost \$128,000.



Temporary Washington Arch in 1889. Photo courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York.

Q: How long has Greenwich Village been a designated Historic District?

A: Thirty-two years ago, on April 25, 1969, Greenwich Village was designated an Historic District. It took more than four years and seven public hearings for the Landmarks Preservation Commission to decide upon one contiguous historic district that included approximately 90 blocks in Greenwich Village. This represented a change of direction within the preservation movement since it was one of the first times in which emphasis was placed on the integrity of streetscapes and neighborhoods, rather than on isolated buildings.

*Do you have a question regarding Greenwich Village history, advocacy or violation issues, technical assistance, or anything else the Society might be able to help you with? Please send in a question for our newsletter. You may mail it to 232 East 11th Street, or email it to [gvshp@gvshp.org](mailto:gvshp@gvshp.org).*

## NOTECARDS FEATURING IMAGES FROM THE GREENWICH VILLAGE ARCHIVE AVAILABLE NOW!

As many of our members know, the Greenwich Village Society houses an extensive archive of Greenwich Village history that ranges from newspaper articles and historic photographs to oral history interviews with some of the preservation pioneers in the community. Although many researchers have visited the Society's offices to peruse the material, we are always seeking ways in which a larger audience of members and friends can enjoy the archive.

The Society has recently published a set of Greenwich Village notecards featuring images from the photographic archive. This first set of notecards highlights four diverse and unique images: the front door and stoop of number 61 Washington Square South (circa 1945), a double-decker bus traveling on lower Fifth Avenue (1929), the demolition of the Sixth Avenue elevated train (1939), and a snowy Washington Square Arch (circa 1940.)

The notecards are a wonderful way for Villagers to stay in touch with friends and at the same time pass along the distinctive sights of Greenwich Village. Notecard sets include eight cards and envelopes (two cards of each image), and can be purchased directly from the Society for a member price of \$8.00, and a non-member price of \$10.00. Shipping and handling is \$2.00. Please call 212-475-9585, e-mail us at [gvshp@gvshp.org](mailto:gvshp@gvshp.org), or send a check directly to GVSHP, 232 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003. Notecards can also be purchased at select Village shops and bookstores.



Double-decker bus traveling on lower Fifth Avenue, an image from the Society's new notecards.

## SAVE THESE DATES for GVSHP Spring Programs

**M**embers will receive notice of upcoming spring programs but there are several being planned that you may want to put on your calendar now.

### Sunday, May 20th

GVSHP's Third Annual Tour of Village Homes

Past tours have featured the studios and homes of Roy Lichtenstein, Jennifer Bartlett, Diane von Furstenberg, Stephan Weiss, Jan Hashey and Yasuo Minagawa, Andrew Kohler and Michael Koch, and Joy and James Howell. Last year's tour featured the homes of Nancy Dine, Genevieve Faure, Joost Elfers and Pat Steir, Anne Kennedy and Peter Nadin, Howard and Katia Read, and Scott Newman and Gregory Long. This year's tour promises to be just as remarkable. Watch your mailbox for your invitation!

### May 23rd - July 6th

Berry-Hill Galleries, 11 East 70th Street  
"Homage to the Square: Pictures of Washington Square, 1890-1960"  
For more information, call the gallery at 212-744-2300

This exhibition will present approximately seventy works, including oil paintings, drawings, prints and photographs devoted to the subject of the historic Washington Square section of lower Manhattan. The period will span from Childe Hassam's paintings of the 1890s to Andre Kertesz's photographs of the mid-twentieth century, as well as works by Edward Hopper, William Glackens, Everett Shinn, John Sloan, Guy Pene du Bois, Oscar Bluemner, Jessie Tarbox Beals, Berenice Abbott, Weegee, Diane Arbus, Robert Frank, and Paul Strand.

### Saturday, June 16th, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

David Garrard Lowe: Walking Tour  
"Architectural Monuments in the East Village: Sullivan, White and Renwick"  
Reception following the tour at the

Neighborhood Preservation Center,  
232 East 11th Street.

\$25 per person.

For reservations and meeting place, call 212/475-9585.

David Garrard Lowe's many fans will be pleased to hear that he will lead a walking tour of the East Village, in a collaborative program of the Greenwich Village Society and The Beaux Arts Alliance. Mr. Lowe lectures across the nation on art and architecture and will be giving a series of talks at the Metropolitan Museum of Art this spring. He is the author of many books, including the acclaimed *Stanford White's New York*.

### June 25th

21st Annual Meeting and Presentation of the 11th Annual Village Awards

Mark your calendar for the Society's Annual Meeting and Village Awards. The Society's Annual Village Awards, saluting the special people and places that contribute to the quality of life in Greenwich Village, are selected from member's nominations. Take this opportunity to tell us about your favorite things in and about Greenwich Village, then join us as we present the awards at our Annual Meeting!

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*Don't forget to look up GVSHP on the web  
at [www.preserve/gvshp.org](http://www.preserve/gvshp.org)*

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### **Advocacy Continues**

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Gansevoort Market in her encyclopedic study of the Greenwich Village waterfront that was published in 1989 by GVSHP and New York University Press.

Fundraising for Save Gansevoort Market got off to a lively start last October with Beefstock, a bluegrass and folk music festival that raised \$5,000 and was sponsored by the local production company Hudson River Pictures. In November, at a Kick-Off Party at Restaurant Florent and the next-door architectural office of Fairfax and Sammons, over 150 people - elected officials, business leaders, and local residents

- turned out to express their commitment to protect the Gansevoort Market. Scott Heyl, president of the Preservation League of New York State, was at this event to present a check of \$5,000 from Preserve New York, a grant program of the Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council on the Arts. Thus far, over \$30,000 has been raised for the Gansevoort initiative. Plans are being made for a late-spring fundraising party at the studio of Diane von Furstenberg, an enthusiastic supporter of Save Gansevoort Market.

### **The Society Celebrates Ten Years of the Children's Education Program!**

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to learning how Greenwich Village developed from a rural outpost to a distinctly urban neighborhood within New York City, students are now given an illustrated architectural vocabulary sheet. Armed with architectural terms, the students are then able to identify Federal-style and Greek Revival architecture (which abounds in Greenwich Village) and their components.

During the second session, students take their knowledge from the slide lecture into the field for a tour of Washington Square Park and its environs. Historic photographs are compared to extant conditions, and students have ample opportunity to draw, observe, and hunt for history with the aid of a 12-page workbook. For older students (third grade and up) a visit to the historic Merchant's House Museum is part of the program. For the new ses-

sion, students use their architectural and historic knowledge to create picture frames designed to look like the Washington Arch, an exercise that serves to reinforce the lessons of the program.

Jane Cowan, an architectural educator, revised the Society's children's education program this past summer. Ms. Cowan, who also teaches all of the Society's sessions, has a graduate degree in historic preservation from Columbia University, and is a former elementary-school teacher. Her experience with children and knowledge of architecture and historic preservation make her uniquely suited to helping the Greenwich Village Society reach the next generation of preservationists so that they, too, will understand and appreciate the importance of Greenwich Village and its architecture.



**GVSHP**

GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY  
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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