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gvshp



GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

2014–2015 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 continued to grow its public support and engagement over the past year, which is always a positive sign of a healthy organization. At the same time, though, the challenges confronting the organization also have grown, and increasingly they have been citywide in their scope.

GVSHP has been on the front lines in response to attacks on preservation by the real estate industry and has worked to exposed the hypocrisy of the industry's false claim that landmarking negatively impacts affordability,. Our efforts have pushed the city to rethink its plan to carry out a wholesale decalendar of sites under consideration for extended periods of time for landmark designation, and we continue to challenge the Mayor's plan to lift construction height limits in residential neighborhoods—already with some progress.

Locally we've secured landmark designation of sites as varied as an 1866 East Village German church which became a Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in the 1920's and a Jewish temple in the 1960's, and an 1840's West Village stable which was converted to a club in the 1930's and then became an icon of the international gay rights movement in 1969. We've advocated for rezoning plans that would protect areas like the University

Place/Broadway corridors that still lack sufficient landmark and zoning protections from out-of-scale development. And we've sounded early alarm bells about potential future development proposals affecting the Meatpacking District and the entire West Village.

We have seen interest in our revamped and updated Children's Education program, grow tremendously this past year, as did our Continuing Education program for real estate professionals and the general public. Our Business of the Month program has engendered an entirely new base of support to help improve the environment for small, independent businesses in our neighborhoods.

With the full support of a fully engaged and dedicated board, a terrific, skilled and hardworking staff, and a growing dynamic and engaged membership, I believe GVSHP is ready to meet these challenges as well the others we will inevitably face in the struggles to preserve our community's history, built environment, and quality of life.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "ART 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.

ADVOCACY



(l. to r.) 57 Sullivan Street, 2 Oliver Street, 138 Second Avenue, and 801-807 Broadway were among the buildings the city proposed to ‘decalendar’ for consideration for landmark designation.

Two ongoing landmarking campaigns spearheaded by GVSHP reached fruition this past year. Tifereth Israel Synagogue at 334 East 13th Street, an 1866 structure first considered for landmark designation in 1966 which had recently been advertised for sale, was designated in late 2014. The Stonewall Inn at 53-55 Christopher Street, the first site ever landmarked in New York City for connection to LGBT history, was designated in June. GVSHP and a coalition of preservationists also got the City to drop a plan to ‘decalendar,’ or remove from consideration, nearly a hundred sites throughout the five boroughs which were candidates for landmark designation; instead, each site will be heard and voted upon over the next 18 months. The Society also issued a report undercutting the Real Estate Board of NY’s claim that preservation weakened affordable housing by highlighting the board’s own record of helping to block affordable housing measures. GVSHP also helped win a rezoning imposing stricter height limits on new construction in the north end of the Meatpacking District, and secured broad support for our proposed rezoning of the University Place and Broadway corridors in response to plans for a nearly 300 foot tall tower on the site of Bowlmor Lanes (the City, however, has thus far withheld support).

GVSHP also helped lead the charge against several citywide threats to preservation. The Society organized opposition to the Mayor’s proposal to lift zoning height



limits for new construction in nearly all multi-family residential neighborhoods throughout the city, which has since been rolled back somewhat. We also worked with fellow preservation organizations to fight back against Intro. 775, a City Council bill which would significantly hamstring landmarking efforts by imposing strict timeframes for designation that would prohibit landmark designations from moving ahead if tight, often unachievable deadlines are not met.

The Society also kept a watchful eye on several potential developments in our landmarked districts in the West Village where owners hoped to get approval for demolition and/or significant new construction. These included 121 Charles Street or “Cobble Court,” the ca. 1810 farmhouse at Greenwich Street which was advertised for sale as a “blank development slate” in spite of being located in a landmark district; 11-19 Jane Street (Hudson/Greenwich Streets), a no-style parking garage which was purchased for \$26 million with the intention of demolishing the building and replacing it with residential development; 177 Christopher Street and 7-11 Weehawken Street, where papers filed with the State’s Department of Environmental Conservation indicated the owner would seek to demolish and develop the landmarked properties, though no application with the Landmarks Preservation Commission has yet been filed; and 46-74 Gansevoort Street, where



121 Charles Street



Image of proposed new buildings and additions at 46-74 Gansevoort Street.

the owner has revealed plans to seek landmarks approval to demolish two buildings, build two new structures of up to 120 feet in height, and add additions to others more than tripling their height. GVSHP also tracked an impending zoning variance application for 254-56 West 14th Street (at 8th Avenue), where a developer is seeking permission to build a larger structure than zoning allows.

Over the past year, GVSHP reviewed approximately one hundred applications for changes to landmarked properties in our area, and shared information about them including how the public can submit testimony and affect the outcome. This information received over 22,000 pageviews on our website. Every day GVSHP monitors all 6,500 buildings in our neighborhood for any new demolition, building, or major alteration permits, and monitors the nearly 3,500 landmarked buildings in our neighborhood for applications for landmarks approvals for significant changes.

BENEFIT HOUSE TOUR



On May 3, 2015, GVSHP staged its 17th Annual Benefit House Tour. This was our highest-grossing and one of our 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 nearly \$180,000 for the Society, over a quarter of our annual budget.

The tour was made possible by the hard work of more than 150 volunteers, our 20 hard-working benefit committee members, and of course the six incredibly generous families and institutions who opened their homes for the tour.

As always, the tour is an incredible opportunity to share the beautiful and inspiring 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 at Ristorante Rafele, 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.

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%.

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 exclusive tours of the landmarked Dyckman Farmhouse, Morris-Jumel Mansion, and historic libraries of the East Village; architect Rob Rogers' studio; and an exhibit of the photos of celebrated Village Voice photographer Fred W. McDarrah, as well as a talk with former New York Times food critic Mimi Sheraton.

By far the majority of GVSHP's membership support comes 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 on-line resources, social media, and electronic and printed newsletters.



GVSHP members' support funds the majority of GVSHP's work

VILLAGE AWARDS



BOB ESTREMER

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 Tishman 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.



Village awardee David Rothenberg (l.) with emcee Calvin Trillin.

BOB ESTREMER

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

- local artisan and sandal-maker **Barbara Shaum**, who is keeping alive a handmade craft which once flourished in our neighborhoods;
- independent businesswoman and community activist **Bonnie Slotnick** of **Bonnie Slotnick Cookbooks**, who survived an eviction and is thriving in a new home, continuing to offer an outstanding assortment of cookbooks and other culinary items;
- trailblazing political activist and Village resident **David Rothenberg**, founder of The Fortune Society, a transformative organization which has improved the lives of countless individuals who might otherwise have been ignored or overlooked;
- **The Renee and Chaim Gross Foundation**, which has preserved and made available to the public an unparalleled collection of paintings, sculpture, and photography on LaGuardia Place; the impeccable renovation and restoration of **201 East 12th Street**, historic buildings whose facades and cornices were returned to their past glory;
- and authors and photodocumentarians **James and Karla Murray**, granted the Regina Kellerman Award for their outstanding efforts to bring much-needed attention to the plight of New York City's small businesses.



(top to bottom) 201 East 12th Street historic photo, before restoration, and after.

PROGRAMS



GVSHHP members visited the late 18th century Dyckman Farmhouse in Upper Manhattan

GVSHHP had a very busy programming year, with fifty-seven public programs attended by nearly 4,000 people, a nearly 25% 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. These ranged from programs



explaining how to research the history of your building, to the origins of the Whitney Museum in Greenwich Village; tours of East Village Community gardens, and a remembrance of West 14th Street's Little Spain district. We held panel discussions about restaurant preservation and one-on-one conversations about the state of historic preservation. Programs examined the incredible historic photos of Robert Otter and the work of artist Frederick Brosen.

DAVID JARRET



From GVSHHP's Walking Tour "Historic German Buildings of the East Village"

We also added two new historic plaques in the neighborhood in conjunction with the Two Boots Foundation. One marked the site of the Former Fillmore East on 2nd Avenue in the East Village; the unveiling ceremony included musician Lenny Kaye and Joshua White of the Joshua Light Show. The other marked the former studio of dance pioneer Martha Graham on Fifth Avenue and 13th Street.

GVSHHP'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.



From the GVSHHP Program "Fred McDarrah: The Artist's World in Pictures"

EMISPICER

PUBLIC EDUCATION

GVSHP continued to expand and improve 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. Over the course of the last year we also introduced a new program, our Business of the Month.

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 2014–2015 School year, our program served 1,113 students in forty-seven classes in fourteen schools throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. About 47% of the students received need-based scholarships allowing them to participate in the three-session program for free, while the remainder of the classes paid a small administrative fee.



Students in GVSHP’s Children’s Education program.

Our Continuing Education program, conducted in conjunction with our Broker’s Partnership, reached dozens 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 rowhouse reborn, how immigrants and bohemians transformed the Village and East Village, and urban renewal and the struggle between Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs in post-war New York.



Our Continuing Education program included tours of the Public Theater.

anywhere else. 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.

In late 2014, GVSHP launched our Business of the Month program. 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. GVSHP is committed to highlighting and celebrating those businesses that help keep our neighborhoods unique and special, and provide a service, atmosphere, or specialty that can’t be found

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.

Over the past year our website drew nearly 400,000 pageviews from nearly 300,000 unique visitors from across the globe, with our blog, Off the Grid, receiving 212,000 pageviews from nearly 178,000 unique visitors. Since its start in 2011, our most popular blog post has now received nearly 40,000 page views.

GVSHP has also been expanding our social media presence, to engage and mobilize a broader audience. In the past year our Facebook reach has grown by 20%, our Twitter following has grown by 30%, and the viewership of our YouTube page has grown by more than 2 ½ times. You can now view a video of almost every program GVSHP conducts on our YouTube page, as well as videos of Landmarks Preservation Commission hearings on items in our neighborhood.

Our Landmarks Application Webpage is the first of its kind in the city, providing invaluable information about every single public hearing application for a change to a landmarked building in our neighborhoods. It provides the history of the building, the proposed changes, when and where the application will be heard by the Community Board and the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and how you can give in-person, e-mailed, or written testimony before a decision is made. It tracks the application, in some cases for years, from its first filing to its resolution, letting the public know of any modifications to the application, new meetings that have been scheduled or decisions rendered. It also allows the public to sign up for alerts to update you on all such developments.

In the last year, this webpage has received over 22,000 pageviews from more than 16,000 unique visitors, making this an incredibly valuable and widely-used resource.



GVSHIP FISCAL YEAR 2014

Income

Membership & Contributions.....	\$284,075
Benefit & Events.....	\$170,062
Grants, Contribution, Support.....	\$496,281
Earned Revenue.....	\$41,984
Total.....	\$992,402

Expenses

Children's Education.....	\$30,609
Archive & Oral History.....	\$37,314
Lectures, Tours, & Meetings.....	\$165,658
Membership Services & Newsletter.....	\$101,152
Preservation & Advocacy.....	\$300,741
<i>Program Services Subtotal.....</i>	<i>\$635,474</i>
General & Administrative.....	\$97,825
Fundraising.....	\$105,872
<i>Supporting Services Subtotal.....</i>	<i>\$203,697</i>
Fund Balance.....	\$153,231
Total.....	\$992,402

APPENDIX

Committees 2014–2015

Archive: Mary Ann Arisman, Arthur Levin, Martica Sawin Fitch, Jay Shockley, Cas Stachelberg, Judith Stonehill, George Vellonakis, Tony Wood

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Chair: Arthur Levin
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Two Boots

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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 \$500 or more, and receive an invitation to a special event at a unique Village location.

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