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*As of June 17th, 2020

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Village Preservation
232 E 11th St
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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to express my sincere wishes that you, and all those you care about, are safe and well at this difficult and unusual time.

Over the past eight years, I have used my President’s letter as an opportunity to talk about the challenges and their increasing numbers and intensity that have shaped Village Preservation’s advocacy agenda. I have also reported with pride that our dedicated staff has worked tirelessly to preserve, document, and celebrate the diverse landscapes and social and cultural histories of the unique communities we serve.

Like all of you, we find ourselves working in uncharted, pandemic-roiled waters. But I can assure you that Village Preservation’s leadership remains strongly committed to our mission and to working in service to our many neighbors and friends who have supported us over the years.

In this, our 40th anniversary year, I would like to briefly update you on some of what we have been doing over past 12 months and tell you about some exciting projects underway.

When New York’s lockdown took effect in mid-March, we immediately closed our offices and transitioned all our operations so our staff could continue working remotely. Our public programs have been virtual since the lockdown, allowing for a large increase in our audience, with both more programs and a lack of constraint upon the number of attendees from the physical capacity of available venues.

Our Continuing Education program is also now virtual and continues to strive for ways to inculcate real estate professionals with an understanding of the value of preservation and history in our neighborhoods.

The shutdown of New York City schools meant shifting how our Children’s Education program is presented. We have been working with schools and educators to create virtual curricula for the new school year, including a segment on the African American history of our neighborhood.

We have of course been proceeding full steam ahead with our core advocacy mission. We are building coalitions to help amplify our voice in the struggle to get the unprotected blocks of Greenwich Village and the East Village south of Union Square landmarked. To that end, we continue to focus on telling the area’s rich social justice history, including the civil rights movement, women’s suffrage and LGBTQ struggles for equality. In addition, we have documented the area’s cultural legacy as a home to a robust, prolific, and eclectic community of visual artists, writers, publishers and more. We continue to push for expanded landmark protections in places in which they are largely lacking, like the East Village, while also carefully monitoring already landmarked areas of our neighborhood such as most of Greenwich Village, and ensuring that only appropriate changes are allowed to historic buildings in those areas.

Among the most visible pandemic-related negative
extraordinary capacity for non-stop hard work of our Executive Director, Andrew Berman. Andrew has assembled and led a talented and dedicated staff who not only have adapted seamlessly to their new virtual work environment, but also have demonstrated their unshakable belief in, and commitment to, a strong and successful future for Village Preservation and the communities it serves. And none of this would be possible without the ongoing support, both financial and political, of our loyal and generous members, friends and neighbors. We thank you and hope we will continue work together for many years to come.

Art Levin
President, Board of Trustees
Prior to the COVID-19 shutdown, we were on the streets, in our local community boards, and at City Hall fighting for preservation of our neighborhoods. After the shutdown, our advocacy and work continued virtually.

We led the charge against plans to demolish a pair of altered early 19th c. houses at 14-16 Fifth Avenue in the Greenwich Village Historic District and replace them with a 244 ft. tall tower. Hundreds joined us for a frigid January demonstration, and our in-depth research on the historic significance of the buildings garnered support for opposition to demolition from elected officials, preservationists, and historians, as well as hundreds of New Yorkers. The plan remains in limbo.

We also led the campaign to stop an air rights transfer on St. Marks Place to increase the size of a planned office tower on the corner of Third Avenue. At the same time we mobilized in response to a plan by the City to require special permits for hotels in the blocks of Greenwich Village and the East Village south of Union Square. That plan fails to deliver on Councilmember Rivera’s still-unkept promise to attach real landmark or zoning protections for this area to the upzoning for the Mayor’s nearby 14th Street Tech Hub, which she approved.

We continued our fight for landmark protections for this vulnerable area of Greenwich Village and the East Village, uncovering research about its rich history connected to the African American, LGBTQ, and women’s rights movements, as well as great innovations in the arts, literature, and commerce. This attracted considerable attention for the preservation effort from across the city and country, as well as strong support from civil rights groups, scholars, writers, and city officials like City Council Speaker Corey.
Johnson.

Both before and after the pandemic, supporting small businesses was a main focus of our advocacy. Pre-COVID we helped lead the campaign for legislation to make it easier for small businesses to fairly negotiate reasonable renewals on storefront leases. Post-COVID we’ve worked in support of legislation that would provide government funding to help cover the rent of small businesses and non-profits affected by shutdowns or other pandemic-related limitations, while requiring small businesses and property owners to share the burden of covering the remainder.

Over the past year we also helped lead the response to potential zoning changes being contemplated for NoHo and SoHo which threatened the area with potential upzonings (allowing larger development than the generously-sized developments the current rules allow), greater allowances for oversized retail, and potentially weakened protections for long-term artist residents. That process has been put on hold. We also helped lead opposition to plan to gut a row of landmarked 19th century houses on 9th Avenue and 14th Street and build a large glass office tower behind them.

As always, 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.

Our research has uncovered an extraordinary history attached to 70 Fifth Avenue and its role in the Civil Rights movement, literary and film history, the peace movement, and much more.

Our demonstration at the 14th Street Tech Hub groundbreaking.
Since 1999, every year on the first Sunday in May we have held our annual Spring Benefit House Tour and Reception. This is Village Preservation’s main annual fundraiser for the year, where a half dozen or more generous neighbors open their homes to share their incredible private spaces with our supporters, followed by a joyous reception at a unique location to celebrate the day. This annual benefit, put together by a hardworking committee and powered by over 130 volunteers on the day of the event, helps make all the work we do throughout the year possible — our free programs, our research, the resources we create, the support we provide to and partnerships we form with local small businesses and cultural institutions, our advocacy promoting landmark and zoning protections and opposing inappropriate or out-of-scale development, and our informing and involving the public in the process of helping to determine the outcome of these issues.

We had a fantastic tour ready to go this year, with an amazing array of homes to share. But with the COVID epidemic, doing so was no longer a safe or responsible option, or a reasonable request of our generous homeowners. After much difficult deliberation, we decided we could not conduct an in-person tour this year, but rather to plan ahead to next year. Instead, we are filming a video with one of the owners of one of the incredible spaces which had been offered to us this year, which will include some inspiring performers and insights about and views of this unique space, to share with all those who so generously supported and continued to support our benefit this year, as well as those who may still chose to do so. That film, expressing our gratitude to our Benefit supporters and our hope for the future, will be made available this fall.

(Below) 632 Hudson Street, the incredible space appearing in our film, (above, right) its speakeasy, and (below) its interior.
Contributions from individuals continue to be the single largest source of funding for Village Preservation and its work, constituting more than two-thirds of our annual support. We’re especially grateful for this broad and diverse base of support right now as sources like government funding are understandably in doubt.

In 2019, our last full fiscal year, membership support grew comfortably, reaching $878,711. Since 2001, total membership support for the organization grew by nearly 1,200%, while the number of Village Preservation members increased by more than 500%, greatly increasing our capacity for education, research, programming, and advocacy.

Our ‘Members Only’ programming serves as a thank you to existing members for their support and to encourage new membership support for the organization. Members-only events over the past year included an exclusive tour of the collections and facilities of the Whitney Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Brant Foundation, a curated tour of exhibition of photographs by Village Voice photographer Fred W. McDarrah at the Museum of the City of New York, and a special holiday celebration at the Salmagundi Club.

By far the majority of our 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 Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo, and in historic preservation. New members came from a variety of sources over the past year, including programs, continuing education, advocacy, our Annual Awards, interaction with our website and online resources, social media, and newsletters.
Each year we honor just some of the people, places, and institutions which contribute to the special quality of life of our neighborhoods. This year due to the COVID epidemic, we had our first ever virtual Annual Meeting and Village Awards, hosted by poet Bob Holman, in which several hundred people participated.

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

- Village Apothecary, 346 Bleecker Street, for 36 years of community service, leadership in the face of the AIDS crisis, and dedicated personal service through Superstorm Sandy and coronavirus.
- Cinema Village, 22 East 12th Street, for 57 years as one of New York’s premiere art cinemas, and 35 years of operation under the fearless and passionate stewardship of Nick Nicolau.
- Ray’s Candy Store, 113 Avenue A, for 46 years of serving egg creams, soft serve ice cream, beignets and Belgian fries, and providing a unique atmosphere only owner Ray Alvarez (real name Asghar Ghahraman) could create.
- Idlewild Books, 170 7th Avenue South, for providing a bookstore loved and frequented by local residents and non-residents alike for its unrivaled selection of travel books and language classes.
- George Cominskie, for 21 years of service to the Westbeth Artists Residents Council, dedication to charities including God’s Love We Deliver, AIDS Ride, and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, and helping lead Westbeth and its many elderly residents through Sandy recovery and COVID response. George is currently running the Emergency Response Committee at Westbeth to help residents of the affordable housing artists complex, many of whom are elderly, cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 9th Precinct Community Affairs Detective Jaime Hernandez for over 25 years as a true liaison between the local precinct and the East Village community, building bridges and creating relationships based upon mutual respect.
• Chess Forum, 219 Thompson Street, for a quarter century of building a community around chess, opening its doors to all regardless of skill or means, and remaining the sole survivor of the once-thriving chess district

• M & D Shapiro True Value Hardware, 7 Great Jones Street for 85 years as an “essential service” providing personal service and specialized products others don’t, while surviving multiple moves necessitated by New York’s super-heated real estate market.

• Thompson Alchemists, 132 Thompson Street, for 27 years building a loyal community around their family-run pharmacy/health and beauty supply store, making many of their own products on site, hosting their twice-monthly “Medicine Show” of live musical performances in the shop, and providing critical service during the most challenging of times.

(Above) Imad Khachchan, the owner of the Chess Forum, believes that chess is the great equalizer of people from all walks of life | (Below, left) The storefront of Thompson Chemists | (Below, right) A mural dedicated to Community Affairs Detective Jaime Hernandez
In spite (or perhaps because) of COVID, participation in our programming has skyrocketed over the past year. As always, our programs seek to illuminate the special social, cultural, and architectural histories of our neighborhoods, through lectures, tours, panel discussions, book and film talks, and other participatory events.

**PROGRAMS**

Over the past year, we conducted 84 programs with 10,200 attendees — a whopping 68% increase over the prior year, which was already a record-breaker for us. This in spite of the fact that several of our programs had to be cancelled this year when the COVID epidemic first hit. Since that time, all of our programs have been virtual, which includes 34 of our 84 programs.

“As always, our programs seek to illuminate the special social, cultural, and architectural histories of our neighborhoods, through lectures, tours, panel discussions, book and film talks, and other participatory events.”
Some highlights of our past year of programming include those focusing on the women's movement and the centennial of the 19th amendment; the origins of punk in our neighborhood; the re-release of the classic book *Bricks and Brownstones*; Viniero's 125th Anniversary; Greenwich Village African American History; the remainder of our year-long celebration of the Greenwich Village Historic District 50th Anniversary (2019); and a series of panels focusing on our East Village research and advocacy.

We installed a new historic plaque on West 9th Street marking the home of renowned muralist James Wall Finn, while a planned plaque installation honoring Jane Jacobs was postponed to later in the year due to COVID.

Almost all of our programs were free and, with the exception of our members-only events, open to the public.
Particularly due to the pandemic and shutdown, Village Preservation greatly expanded its online and virtual resources over this last year, with much more in the pipeline and coming soon.

Most prominently, we launched an entirely new and redesigned website — villagepreservation.org — which is simpler, clearer, easier to navigate, and yet contains even more information and resources than our old one. Years in the making, it allows the public to more easily access information about the history of our neighborhoods or individual buildings; find out the latest about advocacy campaigns or proposed changes or developments in the neighborhood; sign up for our programs or our continuing education courses; and to get involved with the organization as a volunteer, member, or advocate.

We introduced new resources such as our podcast, as well as a series of video tours focused on African-American history, public art and monuments, the synergy between small businesses and landmarked areas, and biking around the neighborhood. We also created a 19th Amendment Centennial StoryMap highlighting the many people, places, events and organizations of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo that made significant contributions to the cause of women's suffrage.

Combinable Wall I and II by Hans Hoffman, a resident of Greenwich Village, and one of many subjects of our Off the Grid podcast.
We also expanded existing popular resources, with hundreds of new additions to our Civil Rights and Social Justice Map, our Greenwich Village Historic District Map and Tours, our East Village Building Blocks website, our Historic Image Archive, our Oral History Collection, and our new but growing Preservation History Archive.

We also of course added over 250 new posts to our well-read blog Off The Grid, telling new stories about our neighborhood’s history, architecture, and colorful characters. And we uploaded scores of videos to our YouTube page, as we record nearly every one of our programs, allowing the public to pore over these rich offerings again or see them for the first time if they were unable to participate live.
Both our Children’s Education and Continuing Education programs were deeply affected by the COVID-19 epidemic and shutdown, but continued to serve the public in spite of these new challenges and demands.

Before the shutdown, over the course of the last year our Children’s Education program served 1,019 students in 46 classes in 10 different schools across the city. This was one of our highest volume years, in spite of being unable to conduct our usual spring and summer sessions with schools. Over 90% of the schools served by our program this year were high needs schools, which qualified to participate in the program for free.

Unable to conduct in-person classes this spring and summer, we created online videos and tutorials for students and families to use remotely.

Heading into the fall and the partial reopening of schools, we are building remote versions of our program so classes can participate from the classroom, remotely, or in blended settings. We are also developing a new curriculum based upon the African American history of our neighborhoods, from the 17th through the 20th centuries.

We were similarly unable to conduct our twice-yearly Continuing Education program for real estate professionals and the general public in person. However, we were granted special temporary permission by the State to conduct the course remotely this spring and will be doing so again this fall. Previously participation was limited by the size of our classrooms, and thus we were frequently unable to open the classes beyond those seeking professional continuing education credits. In the remote format, however, we have been able to accommodate all who wanted to participate.

Our Business of the Month program continued unabated, highlighting and celebrating via our blog, website, enewsletter, and social media local small businesses, with a particular emphasis now on those affected by COVID-19. We continue to receive scores of nominations for our Business of the Month program. Additionally, through our “Small Businesses Thrive In Landmarked Areas” video series and our new “Small Business/Big History” storefront signage program, we are promoting small businesses in our neighborhood and educating about their history and that of their buildings and surroundings. These programs promote appreciation of our neighborhoods and patronage of our small businesses while building the relationship and connection between the two.
**FISCAL YEAR 2019**

**INCOME**

- **Membership & Individual Support** $878,711
- **Benefits & Events** $196,893
- **Grants & Contributions** $439,939
- **Earned & Other Revenue** $622,709

**TOTAL INCOME** $2,138,252

**EXPENSES**

**Program Services**
- **Preservation & Advocacy** $411,849
- **Membership Services & Newsletter** $275,455
- **Lectures, Tours, & Meetings** $148,793
- **GVHD 50th Programming & Resources** $127,859

**Total Program Services** $1,045,668

**Supporting Services**
- **Fundraising** $137,098
- **General & Administrative** $157,177

**Total Supporting Services** $294,275

**TOTAL EXPENSES** $1,339,943

**FUND BALANCE**

- $798,309
COMMITTEES 2019-2020

ARCHIVE COMMITTEE:
Chair: Judith Stonehill
Trustees: Mary Ann Arisman, Kyung Choi Bordes, John Lamb, Arthur Levin
Non-trustees: Susan De Vries, Yukie Ohta, Jay Shockley, Vicki Weiner, Anthony Wood

AUDIT COMMITTEE:
Chair: Marilyn Sobel
Trustees: Arthur Levin, Trevor Stewart, Tony Zunino

AWARDS COMMITTEE (2020):
Co-Chairs: Tom Birchard, Katherine Schoonover
Trustees: Mary Ann Arisman, Jessica Davis, Anita Isola, John Lamb, Jeanne Krier
Non-trustees: Mike Levine, Dan Levy, Santo Mollica, Hoai Ngo, Linda Pagan, Carole Teller, Pam Tillis

BENEFIT COMMITTEE (2020):
Co-Chairs: Kyung Choi Bordes, Leslie Mason
Trustees: Mary Ann Arisman, Blaine Birchby**, David Hottenroth, Anita Isola, John Lamb, Justine Leguizamo, Arthur Levin, Ruth McCoy, Judith Stonehill, Naomi Usher
Non-trustees: Patrick Ciccone, Jane Forman, Steve Halprin, Bridget Harvey, Stephen Larkin, Debra Kameros, Christina Kepple, Susan Kolker, Leslie Rylee, Pam Tillis

COMPENSATION COMMITTEE
(Appointed to serve through)

January 2020):
Chair: Arthur Levin
Trustees: Allan Sperling, Kyung Choi Bordes, Trevor Stewart

DEVELOPMENT / MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:
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Trustees: Mary Ann Arisman, Kyung Choi Bordes, Jessica Davis, Cassie Glover* Jeanne Krier, Arthur Levin, Ruth McCoy, Judith Stonehill

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Non-trustees: Shirley Wright, Susan De Vries

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
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FINANCE COMMITTEE:
Chair: Allan Sperling
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Trustees: Marilyn Sobel, Arthur Levin, Trevor Stewart

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:
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Trustees: Tom Birchard, Kyung Choi Bordes, Jessica Davis, Arthur Levin, Judith Stonehill, Linda Yowell, Tony Zunino

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Non-trustees: Penelope Bareau, Peter Cohen, Jonathan Geballe, Brendan Sexton

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* Served as Trustee through June 17, 2020
**Began term as Trustee June 17, 2020
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Trustees: Mary Ann Arisman, Tom Birchard, Kyung Choi Bordes, David Hottenroth, Anita Isola, Marilyn Sobel, Trevor Stewart, Judith Stonehill

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Trustees: Leslie S. Mason
Non-Trustees: Miles Chapin, Tom Cooper, Frank Cronin, Elaine Masci, Shari Matluck, Monica Rittersporn, Lauren Rose, Lisa Vaamonde

Exec. Dir. Andrew Berman (l.) with homeowners Nina and Rob Kaufeldt, and Jennifer Tonkovich of the Morgan Library & Museum (between them) at our James Wall Finn historic plaque unveiling.
After initially being postponed due to COVID-19, our annual benefit house tour had to be cancelled this year to ensure the health and safety of all participants. Instead, we are sharing a thank you film of one of the spaces from the planned tour. We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to all those who so generously continued to support the benefit this year regardless of these changes. As the full program for the film will not be finalized until closer to its October release date, we are not yet able to list all the supporters of this year’s benefit here as we go to print. A complete list of supporters will be shared soon.

Interior of 643 Hudson Street, to be featured in our Benefit thank you film.

2019 MEMBERSHIP

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GRANTS, IN-KIND AND OTHER SUPPORT

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Your support makes Village Preservation a more effective preservation leader. Contribute $1,000 or more and receive an invitation to a special thank you event at a unique Village location.

YES!  I support Village Preservation and its critical work.

☐ $10,000 Landmark  ☐ $25 Gift Membership:  Special offer for members!  Please put recipient’s name below.
☐ $5,000 Founder  ☐ I am already a member and want to contribute $________.
☐ $2,500 Benefactor  ☐ Please send information about how I may include Village Preservation in my will or estate planning.
☐ $1,000 Patron
☐ $75 Family/Dual
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☐ $75 Individual
☐ $250 Sustainer
☐ $100 Contributor
☐ Other $________

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For credit card donations visit villagepreservation.org/membership

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