TRUMP, BORN TO BE A CRONY CAPITALIST  P5
EDITOR'S CORNER

LET US DREAM TOGETHER

To publish a newspaper is to live a circular existence. Over the course of a month, there are writers to be contacted, story budgets to be updated, fundraisers to be organized, edits to be completed. Then there’s the final stretch of all-nighters with our production team as the pages are designed and proofed, headlines and captions written, final changes made and then — with the press of a computer key — the whole month’s work is sent to the printer.

It’s exhausting and exhilarating. And as one cycle ends, another beckons. But before diving back into all that, one of my favorite tasks is to go out for at least one day with our delivery truck and help drop off papers.

It’s eight hours of loping in and out of the archipelago of libraries and laundromats, bookstores, cafes and community centers that carry The Indypendent. Unplugged from the computer and traveling from one New York City neighborhood to the next, it’s a chance for me to see first-hand how well the previous issue moved, chat with the people who carry our paper and with readers who approach asking for a copy before I have even opened the bundle tucked under my arm.

Each time I go out, I feel like I’m participating in a small miracle. Quite simply, a newspaper like this — with high editorial and design standards but unabashedly leftist, perpetually underfunded and volunteer-based — is not supposed to exist, at least not for very long.

Yet, here we are celebrating our 15th anniversary. Since its inception, The Indypendent has told the stories of grassroots social movements and the causes they fight for. We’ve done so on a budget that has never exceeded $100,000 per year. With this issue, we thought we would take a moment to share our own story, reflect on what we’ve learned from our experiences and look to the future.

The 15th anniversary special section that runs from page 9 to 16 features highlights of our best coverage over the years. There are also personal stories from seven people who have worked on the paper, plus a recounting of some lessons learned along the way that may be of use to other organizations and activists as well.

Looking back over the past decade and a half, what stands out to me is that in a society where success is almost always defined in individual terms, the Indy’s ability to survive and thrive is a success story collectively authored by the hundreds of people who have worked on the paper as well as the hundreds more who have supported it financially.

What accounts for the fierce devotion of so many Indy volunteers and readers over the years? I think the answer lies in the larger media landscape, in which a handful of enormous media corporations dominate public life. In such a setting, this paper stands out as a rare media institution that belongs to “us” and not for very long.

As the best-selling author Naomi Klein said at a 2008 benefit for the Indy, “the Indy reminds us that we exist.”

Now imagine having a thoughtful, fearless newspaper in New York that could offer a powerful riposte to the phony right-wing populism of the Post and the Daily News as well as the smug, out-of-touch liberalism of the Times. That paper could do some agenda-setting itself while reflecting and fostering the culture of hope and resistance that progressive social movements flourish in.

The Indy will always be the underdog. But, we’ve beaten the odds for 15 years and still have so much more room to grow. If you want to help us make something big happen, let’s be in touch. Meanwhile, we need to address the more immediate challenge of stabilizing this paper financially once and for all.

Enjoy reading the special section. If you feel inspired like we do, please heed the call on page 16 and become a sustaining member at whatever level works for you. There’s much more the Indy can achieve and whatever we do, it will be a success collectively shared by many.

— John Tarleton
Executive Editor & Co-Founder
John Tarleton can be reached at john@indypendent.org.

THE INDYPENDENT HAS THRIVED AGAINST ALL ODDS FOR 15 YEARS. WITH READER SUPPORT, THERE’S STILL MUCH MORE WE CAN ACCOMPLISH.
RATS!
LANDLORD GETS TAX BREAKS, BRONX TENANTS GET SQUALOR, RENT HIKES

By Steven Wishnia

In the depths of the crack era, 1111 Gerard Avenue was an oasis in the Bronx.

“When I first moved here in 1991, the building was beautiful,” says Abigail Diaz. “If they saw the floor needed polishing, they would do it.”

While the residents of 70-year-old tenements nearby were shivering without heat for months in the winter and worried about their kids being poisoned by lead paint dust, 1111 Gerard, which sits on the slope between the Grand Concourse and Jerome Avenue, was brand new.

At a time when the 44th Precinct averaged one murder every four days, the building had video security, so residents could look on Channel 8 to see who was ringing their buzzer. There was a playground out back with slides and monkey bars. And in order to receive tax breaks from the 421(a) program, the owners agreed to set rents low and keep it rent-stabilized for the next 25 years. You could rent one of the 122 apartments for around $400 a month.

Now, Diaz says, “the building is disgusting.” The playground is gone, and kids play soccer in the backyard between piles of garbage bags. The side doors are unlocked and a stairwell reeks of urine, somewhere between garbage bags. The side doors are unlocked and a stairwell reeks of urine, somewhere between garbage bags. The side doors are unlocked and a stairwell reeks of urine, somewhere between garbage bags.

They have added over $200 for a one-year lease,” says Jacqueline Yeborah, a Ghana-born mother of three young children who had her rent raised last month from $988 to $1,195. If she had wanted a two-year lease, she says, it would have gone up $400. Yeborah’s apartment is supposed to be rent-stabilized, so the maximum legal increase would have been less than $10 for one year and about $27 for two years. She says the landlord told her the tax-subsidy restrictions were “no longer in effect.”

In early August, 18 tenants filed a lawsuit in Bronx Supreme Court accusing the owner, Shree Ganesh Bronx LLC, of illegally raising their rents. They want the court to rule that the apartments are still rent-stabilized and order the owner, a Long Island-based firm that bought the building in 2010 for $8.6 million, to reimburse tenants for overcharges.

In a response filed September 1, Shree Ganesh Bronx denied all of the more than 200 allegations in the suit, except for admitting that it owned the building, the plaintiffs were tenants and it had tried to evict some of them. It demanded that the suit be dismissed, claiming that the tenants had no legal rights to sue, there was “no genuine dispute” and “some or all” of the plaintiffs were not living there as their primary residence.

The status of 1111 Gerard Avenue is not typical of rent-stabilized buildings, but it is an example of the many ways landlords try to jack up rents beyond the legal limit. A 2011 survey by the housing-activist group Make the Road New York found that at least 45 percent of the 200 apartments in its sample had illegally high rents — and those were all apartments that were still rent-stabilized and where the landlord had registered the rent history with the state.

Ironically, Shree Ganesh Bronx could have begun deregulating the building legally in 2017, when the tax subsidies expire, if it had followed proper procedures, says Carolyn Norton of Legal Services NYC, a lawyer representing the tenants.

“It’s not that this building could stay rent-stabilized forever, but the landlord didn’t follow the rules,” she says. “Their apartments should be rent-stabilized as long as they live there.”

First, Norton says, in buildings that will become deregulated once tax breaks expire, landlords are required to warn tenants every time they renew their leases that their rents will not be permanently limited. The owners of 1111 Gerard never did, she says, and the penalty for that is that apartments must be kept rent-stabilized as long as the current tenant lives there.

Second, Norton says, the building’s owners have been unlawfully registering its rents with the state housing agency since it opened, listing them as much more than the tenant actually was paying. In 1991, she explains, the original owner registered a $407 per month apartment at $703. This is a common scam used to make massive rent increases.

Continued on page 17

CELEBRATE 15 YEARS OF THE INDYPENDENT

JOIN US ON THE EVENING OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15 IN THE SPACIOUS BROOKLYN HOME OF ONE OF OUR SUPPORTERS AS WE CELEBRATE THE INDY’S MANY ACHIEVEMENTS AND BUILD FOR THE FUTURE.

SPECIAL GUESTS:
MICHAEL GOULD-WARTOFFSKY
AUTHOR OF THE OCCUPIERS: THE MAKING OF THE 99% MOVEMENT
RONALD HOWELL
AUTHOR OF ONE HUNDRED JOBS: A Panorama of Work in the American City, Professor of Journalism at Brooklyn College and Mentor to Some of the Indy’s Best Young Writers.
ABBY SCHER
JOURNALIST AND ASSOCIATE FELLOW AT THE INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES, FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION-NEW YORK.

A LIGHT DINNER WILL BE SERVED ALONG WITH ALCOHOLIC AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.
FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO PURCHASE TICKETS, GO TO INDY15.BPT.ME.
A DECISIVE YEAR FOR NYC’S EMBATTLED PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By Leonie Haimson

With 1.1 million students in over 1,800 schools, New York City’s public school system is the largest in the nation. And for more than a decade it has been a special target of self-styled “reformers” — many with ties to Wall Street and the corporate world — who have sought to impose a rigid, top-down model of education that ignores the real needs of students while disempowering parents and communities.

Corporate-style education reform has bred increasing resistance. In many ways, this year will be decisive for New York City’s embattled public schools. We have a new state education commissioner, MaryEllen Elia, a former superintendent from Florida, who took office on July 1. With more than 220,000 students who opted out of standardized state exams last year, Elia must figure out how to address the massive disaffection of parents with the current state policies. Though the number of kids opting out was much lower here in the city, the number of opt-outs was still three times larger than the year before.

Opposition to the Common Core standards, curriculum and high-stakes tests is rapidly growing among both parents and educators, because of the resources and time they consume, the stress they cause kids and the way in which they reduce real learning to rote test prep and worksheets. Initially, Elia took a hard line on the issue, saying she thought teachers who encouraged opting out were “unethical” and making vague threats that schools with high numbers of opt-outs could lose funding. More recently, she has backtracked and moderated her tone after her comments prompted a backlash.

Other issues Elia will be pressed to address include the failure of the state to enforce a 2010 law that requires charter schools to serve equal numbers of high-needs students as public schools before they are renewed or allowed to expand, and the state’s refusal to implement a 2014 law to protect student privacy, which grew out of the battle against the multi-state data sharing project called inBloom.

FARIÑA & DE BLASIO

At the same time, Chancellor Carmen Fariña will be beginning her second full year at the helm of the city’s public schools. Mayor Bill de Blasio and the chancellor have introduced many important reforms, including expanding pre-K education to all 4-year-olds and providing wraparound services at many struggling schools — called the “Renewal” schools — at risk of being closed by the state. More recently, in a well-publicized speech, the mayor announced plans to add second grade reading specialists and new classes in algebra and computer coding and on the advanced placement level.

Both the mayor and chancellor claim to be more responsive to parents’ input than the previous administration, and in a recent press release, the chancellor said, “The more we listen to the feedback of students, parents and teachers, the better our schools are going to be.” Yet

Continued on page 17
THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING
SELF-MADE MAN? HERE’S HOW TRUMP REALLY GOT RICH

By Peter Rugh

Wayne Barrett recalls a night in 1991 spent gazing up at 106 Central Park South. Ten years earlier, the 36-story building, a former hotel designed in the art deco style of the 1930s, was purchased by Donald Trump, renovated and converted into luxury condos. As a reporter for the Village Voice the veteran investigative journalist had spent most of his career tracking Trump, covering his shady financial dealings through the 1970s and ‘80s and watching as the golden-haired playboy rose to become one of New York’s wealthiest and most recognizable developers.

Barrett remembers that looking at the apartment complex, only one light went on during the entire night. “Nobody was living there,” he recently told The Independent. “To the degree that Donald has built housing at all it’s mostly for corporate tenants. The kind that buy apartments and when one of their executives visits from Japan they stay there a couple nights a week.”

Such a revelation would be of little interest to people living outside of the New York area, except that Trump has licensed his name to building projects around the globe, several of which have gone bankrupt. More important, he is the leading Republican candidate for president and his position at the top of the GOP field is based in large part on the image he has cultivated for himself, through books and media appearances, as that of a self-made man and expert negotiator who has overseen developments unparalleled in scale.

When Univenision reporter Jorge Ramos asked Trump in August how he was going to build a 1,900-mile wall in the outer boroughs, erecting large developments in Brooklyn, becoming the borough’s biggest builder. Through the New Deal administration of President Franklin Roosevelt, Fred Trump received mortgage guarantees from the Federal Housing Administration (HUD) that allowed him to build thousands of homes in Brooklyn, becoming the borough’s biggest builder. During World War II, Fred constructed FHA-backed housing near major East Coast shipyards in Chester, Pennsylvania, and in Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia. He later refused to testify at the hearings held by Republican Homer Earl Cephehaut, chair of the Senate’s Banking and Currency Committee, during which Trump and a host of other developers were accused of pilfering millions of dollars from the war effort.

After the war, Fred Trump returned to building in the outer boroughs, erecting large developments in Brooklyn and Queens with city, state and federal assistance. Trump Village in Coney Island stands as his largest accomplishment and one of the few to which he lent his name. The 61-acre, mostly uninhabited area on which Trump Village was built was originally slated to become a cooperative complex erected by the labor union-backed United Housing Federation (UHF).

But drawing on his close political connections with the Brooklyn Democratic Party machine and the administration of Mayor Robert Wagner, to whom Trump was a top donor, he denounced the UHF plan as an affront to the free-enterprise system and an attempt to use tax abatements in order provide housing to “privileged few.” Fred wrangled 40 of those acres for himself. He also made an offer to then-Mayor Ed Koch to house homeless people in the building’s vacant apartments, not out of a good Samaritan instinct, but in the hope that the rent-controlled tenants would flee. Koch rejected Trump’s proposition.

By 1998 Trump struck a deal with the building’s remaining inhabitants that allowed them to either purchase their apartments at a mark down or to keep renting without further pressure to leave. Meanwhile, 106 Central Park South offers a glimpse of the kind of housing Trump would have built next door had he had the chance: the type of property that Trump Village in Coney Island stands as his largest accomplishment and one of the few to which he lent his name. The 61-acre, mostly uninhabited area on which Trump Village was built was originally slated to become a cooperative complex erected by the labor union-backed United Housing Federation (UHF).

But drawing on his close political connections with the Brooklyn Democratic Party machine and the administration of Mayor Robert Wagner, to whom Trump was a top donor, he denounced the UHF plan as an affront to the free-enterprise system and an attempt to use tax abatements in order provide housing to “privileged few.” Fred wrangled 40 of those acres for himself. He then took advantage of the same tax abatements he criticized the UHF for receiving.

All told, Jerome Tuccillo notes in Trump: The Saga of America’s Most Powerful Real Estate Baron, New York State put up 90 percent of the funding to erect Trump Village. An eventual review by the State Investigations Commission after it was complete revealed that Fred exaggerated the costs of construction by renting equipment at inflated prices from a company he owned and by distorting the purchasing price of the property.

Continued on page 8

TRUMP VS. TENANTS

With the 1981 purchase of 106 Central Park South, Trump secured not only the hotel but an adjacent apartment complex at 100 Central Park South. The two buildings were part of what was known at the time as Barbizon Plaza but were soon added to the long list of properties to which the tycoon lent his name. They were rechristened “Trump Parc.”

“In order to derive the most value from the site,” Trump wrote in his 1987 memoir The Art of the Deal, he initially planned “to knock down both buildings and construct in their place one huge, beautiful, modern luxury condominium tower.” But the tenants living in rent-controlled apartments at 100 Central Park South weren’t eager to vacate. They took the Trump Organization to court, complaining of harassment. Trump in turn smeared them in the press as wealthy moochers too cheap to pay market rates for their homes. He also made an offer to then-Mayor Ed Koch to house homeless people in the building’s vacant apartments, not out of a good Samaritan instinct, but in the hope that the rent-controlled tenants would flee. Koch rejected Trump’s proposition.

By 1998 Trump struck a deal with the building’s remaining inhabitants that allowed them to either purchase their apartments at a markdown or to keep renting without further pressure to leave. Meanwhile, 106 Central Park South offers a glimpse of the kind of housing Trump would have built next door had he had the chance: the type of property that has become all too common in New York over the last two decades, luxury developments that sit largely vacant accruing value for their super-wealthy owners.

In Wayne Barrett’s estimation, Trump’s father, Fred, was a much more successful builder than his son. “He built 20,000 units of real housing for real people,” he said. “Good housing. Single-family units, multi-family units that stretched all over Brooklyn and Queens. Most of it is still lived in and enjoyed today. He did remarkable work. People loved it and your average working-class family could buy it or rent it.” Yet, Barrett added, both father and son were “state capitalists or crony capitalists of the worst order.”

GOVERNMENT HANDOUTS

That’s because the pair amassed their fortunes thanks in large part to government assistance, a narrative that conflicts sharply with the image of the self-made man Donald Trump has promoted in his numerous books, on his reality television shows and now on the campaign trail. Even Friedrich Drumpf, Trump’s grandfather, relied on a government handout. In his case, the U.S. Army cleared routes through Alaska into Canadian Yukon Territory by displacing Inuit tribes ahead of the Klondike gold rush. It was deep in those expropriated Arctic regions where Friedrich operated a saloon, brothel and dining hall, the beginnings of the Trump fortune.
WHY IS HILLARY CLINTON A FEMINIST?

By Linda Martín Alcoff

Hillary Rodham Clinton is running hard for president. After 227 years of men filling this position — men who ranged from good to bad to incompetent to criminal — she just might win. So, what’s a feminist to do?

Since Clinton entered the national political scene as First Lady in 1992, she has been cast as our unofficial feminist head of state. From the beginning, she established herself as a political operative with a focus on women’s issues, and after Bill left office, she followed up with an eight-year term in the U.S. Senate and four-year tenure as Secretary of State. Clinton is the most serious female contender for the presidency in U.S. history, and, unlike Carly Fiorina, at least she’s a Democrat.

This summer she made an effort to bolster her reputation as a progressive. She has made substantive statements about race and policing, as well as the need to raise the minimum wage. Yet of course, Clinton’s credentials as a social progressive are as fake as a teenager’s ID. She helped devise the brutal U.S. welfare system that stood by while her husband expanded the prison industrial complex. She made use of racist dog whistles in her 2008 campaign against Obama and abandoned the Palestinian people to the Israeli right wing. In the midst of war fever, Clinton voted for the war against Iraq. And she still wants to nail Edward Snowden even while she has been protecting the privacy of her own emails. These issues — from war to welfare to racism to the security state — are women’s issues just as much as reproductive rights and gender violence.

One might imagine that the right wing would welcome a Clinton run given this track record. Yet they are in hysterics. And Hillary haters also abound in liberal and left public venues, throwing around mean-spirited caricatures and sexist imagery — Saturday Night Live’s regular portrayal of her shouting with bared teeth is a prime example. The male-dominated left seems to think such jokes are fair game given her neoliberal politics.

Clinton’s feminist supporters, meanwhile, say that “it’s her turn.” Despite the inadequacy of her record, they are suggesting that we need to make a priority of integrating the boys club.

A TROUBLED HISTORY

The idea that it is “her” turn, or “our” collective female turn, invokes a troubled history that should give every feminist pause. After the Civil War, when an expansion beyond white male suffrage was on the table, the coalition that had fought against slavery fell into a civil war of its own. At first, abolitionists and supporters of women’s rights continued the alliance they had built since 1840 and demanded the vote for all former slaves and all women.

Leading allies, however, balked at this proposal. They included Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, who called women’s suffrage too “revolutionary.” He held that public sentiment would not support such a “radical” transformation in “social and domestic life.” Frederick Douglas also opposed universal suffrage, arguing that until women are “dragged from their houses and hung upon lamp posts” their claim to the ballot did not have the same urgency as that of black men. In the ensuing split, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton put the vote for women first, while Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell advocated for a staged fight starting with black male suffrage.

In truth, this was not a competition of gender against race, but of white women against black men, with women of color left hanging. Anthony unashamedly began to make explicitly racist, elitist and xenophobic arguments, casting white women over former slaves, workers and new immigrants. She wrote that without female suffrage, “fifteen million white women” will have been “cast under the heel of the lowest orders of mankind.”

Today, such a move epitomizes what has come to be called white feminism. As in, Jim Crow feminism, racist feminism. And it’s a clear contradiction in terms if feminism is supposed to be for all women.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY

How should we think about the intersecting issues of gender alongside race and class in Clinton’s candidacy? We seem to have a divide between her feminist supporters, who want gender prioritized, and her Progressive detractors, who minimize the gender stakes in her campaign.

While liberals like Maureen Dowd join in the gender policing of Hillary’s dress and mannerisms, the left — male and female — castigates the identity politics of her supporters, as if her gender makes no legitimate difference. Laura Flanders said on Melissa Harris-Perry’s show that women should not get bamboozled by the playing of gender in this race. Paul Krugman editorialized that the problems facing white women and African-Americans can be summarized in one word: poverty.

They are not totally wrong, of course, but the misuse of identity doesn’t mean it has no use whatever. Radicals and liberals make a big mistake to slam gender and race as side issues and the identity of candidates as nothing but a smokescreen. Allow me to differ.

First, Hillary is getting an inexcusable amount of sexism from all sides. She has been called “emotional” (CNN), “lesby” (Atlanta Journal-Constitution), “cackling” (Bill Maher), not to mention ambitious, maniacal and demonic in spirit. Her face has been put on a tap-dancing doll and sold at airports. Sexism still dominates the public domain of discourse without sufficient response from the left. We need women candidates of all races to reconfigure the social imaginary, including that of the left.

Second, women, even some women of color, identify with Hillary, and this is not just about being duped. She has been cheated on, smeared by innuendo and taunted for the size of her thighs. Her commitment to feminism has earned her some formidable enemies. And still she keeps coming back, speaking out, standing up. It’s no wonder that some teenage bloggers declare their passion for her campaign.

Third, Hillary’s feminism is not actually white feminism, it’s corporate feminism. Her track record on economic issues has not helped white women, not to mention African-American women or Latinas. White women’s mortality rate is increasing sharply, and no wonder: their median income is $722 a week, before taxes, meaning that half of them take home less than that. The occupational fields they dominate — educational and health services, wholesale and retail, and leisure and hospitality — remain seriously underpaid. No wonder the 1% has garnered 88 percent of all new income since 2008. Clinton’s campaign, meanwhile, is mum on tax increases for the rich, on austerity measures in Europe and on the desperate need to fight for the right to organize workers.

Fourth, both gender and race are central political struggles that cannot be sidelined in a generic approach to economic struggles. The struggle around class has to include an understanding of how poverty, unemployment and exploitation are calibrated via social identities.

COMPETING CLAIMS

Let’s return to 1866 for a moment. While Anthony’s racism and elitism was exposed in this fight, Douglas’s call for black male suffrage on the grounds of the serious violence black men suffered ignored the serious violence in women’s lives, across racial communities, from being raped and beaten in their own homes to being raped on the job as the price of employment. Race and gender issues have long been set in competition and put forward in contorted versions that shouldn’t brook support for either side. Racist feminism or an anti-racism that ignores gender? No, thank you.

Clinton’s political record has followed nearly in this tradition. Her voting record is solidly liberal, which is to say, inadequate. She’s voted right on health care, immigration, gun control and reproductive rights while also getting high marks from government contractors and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. She speaks constantly on women’s rights but has only supported a weak $12 minimum wage. Worst of all is her late, politically expedient apology for supporting the Iraq War: When it was safe, and to her advantage, she expressed regret for an imperial war that murdered tens of thousands of people, decimated the U.S. economy and turned the poor into cannon fodder.

I’m voting for Bernie Sanders, the white guy. His economic agenda
makes him a better candidate for the majority of women than Clinton. And he opposed the war consistently from the beginning. But we have to stop approaching issues such as class as distinct from gender, race, sexuality and other identity-based forms of hierarchy. Sanders is the best candidate not because his “class” agenda trumps all else, but because he offers the most on these interrelated fronts. Meanwhile, as long as the left feels justified in ignoring the sexist comedy parade against women candidates, and dismisses identity issues as so much dross obscuring our vision, they deserve to lose ardent teenage girl support. Clinton’s upfront feminism and the sexism she faces daily don’t justify our votes, but they do justify paying serious attention to the multiple and complicated identity issues that beset the political field of play.

Linda Martín Alcoff is a professor of philosophy at the City University of New York. Her latest book, The Future of Whiteness, was just published by Polity Press.
The Global Center for Advanced Studies (GCAS) is a radical educational alternative committed to democracy and debt-free education with renowned professors and activists from all over the world, featuring courses online and in-person taught by renowned thinkers, filmmakers, activists, and organizers.

Join us!

Information:
E-mail: contact@thegas.com
Toll Free Phone Number: (855) 843-4227
Website: globalcenterforadvancedstudies.org

TRUMP
Continued from page 5

The commission estimated Fred skimmed $1,850,000 off the state in the deal, equivalent to more than $14 million today when adjusted for inflation. Investigators sent their findings to the Brooklyn district attorney’s office, but charges were never filed.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Donald took over the family business in 1974 at the age of 28, and one of his first orders of business was settling a Department of Justice (DOJ) suit accusing the Trumps of violating the 1969 Fair Housing Act by systematically refusing to rent to African-Americans. Much of the evidence was collected through an Urban League investigation, which found prospective tenants at Trump-owned properties were screened on the basis of race. In court testimony Donald feigned colorblindness, though under cross-examination he conceded that he managed properties that were inhabited entirely by whites. Through court filings and in press releases he alleged that by suing him the DOJ was attempting to force him to rent to welfare recipients. In 1975, Trump settled with the DOJ, agreeing to place ads for Trump apartments in minority-run newspapers.

Charges of racism against Trump surfaced again on the campaign trail this year. Announcing his intention to run for president, Trump complained that lax border enforcement was allowing “rapists” and “murderers” to enter the United States — hence his scheme to erect a massive wall, as well as deport 11 million undocumented individuals and their families. Trump has continued to demonize welfare recipients too, lamenting to Sean Hannity of Fox News that those who receive government assistance “lack an incentive to work.” “They make more money by sitting there doing nothing than they make if they have a job,” he claimed.

But like his father before him, Donald has made millions off the government by essentially doing nothing.

When the Trump Golf Links in Ferry Point, Bronx, opened in April, the city’s Independent Budget Office estimated that $230 million in public subsidies had been poured into the project. It’s unclear exactly what taxpayers get out of the investment, except that Trump will manage the site. He was supposed to build a children’s park nearby, though as of July, when the New York Times investigated, it did not have bathrooms or much playground equipment beyond a slide. Since 2004, Trump Tower in Midtown has been receiving tax breaks on its commercial real estate that will eventually total $163.8 million by the time they expire next year, the conservative National Review reported in August.

The developer’s dependence on government generosity goes back to his earliest Manhattan ventures in the 1970s. By leveraging his father’s political connections, this time with Mayor Abraham Beame, Trump secured building rights on railroad yards owned by the bankrupt Penn Central Transportation Company along Midtown’s western shore from 59th to 72nd Street and to the Hotel Commodore above Grand Central Terminal on 42nd Street. Trump eventually built Trump City (since renamed Riverside South by new owners) on the west side with millions in public subsidies and received a 40-year tax abatement worth $400 million to transform the Commodore into a Grand Hyatt.

BEYOND THE HYPE

Trump attributes such gifts to his brilliant negotiating style. Yet, despite all the self-generated hype surrounding Trump’s acumen as a businessman, the National Journal recently suggested that he would be even richer today had he done less. If Trump had put the $200 million Forbes estimated he was worth in 1982 into a mutual fund of S&P 500 stocks, “it would have grown to more than $8 billion today,” the journal reported. Trump’s recent statements that he is worth $10 billion are widely viewed as exaggerations in the financial press. Forbes estimates he is worth $4.1 billion; Bloomberg, $2.9 billion. In recent years Trump ventures have undergone a number of bankruptcies. His primary sources of income appear, based on campaign filings, to be speaking engagements, “Celebrity Apprentice” (though NBC finally fired him this summer after his remarks disparaging Mexican immigrants) and licensing his name to developments nationally and abroad.

In a 2011 deposition over a failed condominium project bearing his name in Florida, lawyers representing clients forced to forfeit their down payments when the project went bust asked Trump if he ever exaggerated the value of his properties. “Not beyond reason,” Trump stated.

Likewise, Trump’s financial empire is built on his exaggerated image as a success, not on actual success. What he has accomplished is largely thanks to his father’s government-gifted wealth and contemporary taxpayer largess. He has further demonstrated a willingness to attack people of color and the poor (for example, the infamous full-page ads he took out in several New York City dailies 1989 calling for the reinstatement of the death penalty worth $400 million to transform the Commodore into a Grand Hyatt.

BEYOND THE HYPE

Trump attributes such gifts to his brilliant negotiating style. Yet, despite all the self-generated hype surrounding Trump’s acumen as a businessman, the National Journal recently suggested that he would be even richer today had he done less. If Trump had put the $200 million Forbes estimated he was worth in 1982 into a mutual fund of S&P 500 stocks, “it would have grown to more than $8 billion today,” the journal reported. Trump’s recent statements that he is worth $10 billion are widely viewed as exaggerations in the financial press. Forbes estimates he is worth $4.1 billion; Bloomberg, $2.9 billion. In recent years Trump ventures have undergone a number of bankruptcies. His primary sources of income appear, based on campaign filings, to be speaking engagements, “Celebrity Apprentice” (though NBC finally fired him this summer after his remarks disparaging Mexican immigrants) and licensing his name to developments nationally and abroad.

In a 2011 deposition over a failed condominium project bearing his name in Florida, lawyers representing clients forced to forfeit their down payments when the project went bust asked Trump if he ever exaggerated the value of his properties. “Not beyond reason,” Trump stated.

Likewise, Trump’s financial empire is built on his exaggerated image as a success, not on actual success. What he has accomplished is largely thanks to his father’s government-gifted wealth and contemporary taxpayer largess. He has further demonstrated a willingness to attack people of color and the poor (for example, the infamous full-page ads he took out in several New York City dailies 1989 calling for the reinstatement of the death penalty.

Continued on page 17
Why is New York becoming unaffordable for working people who’ve stuck it out in the city through good times and bad? Heather Haddon breaks down the policies that have made New York City ripe for hypergentrification at the beginning of the new millennium.

**November 2000** — Why is New York becoming unaffordable for working people who’ve stuck it out in the city through good times and bad? [The Indypendent](https://www.theindypendent.org/

**May 2001** — Union organizer Stephanie Greenholtz takes readers through a grueling campaign to win union recognition for more than 300 overworked and underpaid residents at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospital. She writes, "The process of organizing a union has only flashes of idealism and high-road inspiration..."

**September 2001** — The Indypendent’s original collective managed to eke out a four-page, black-and-white first issue on September 8, 2000, just in time for a series of anti-corporate protests being held in the city that week. With the paper now circulating, a new wave of aspiring volunteers showed up at the next editorial meeting, including individuals who would become deeply involved in the paper for years to come.

**November 2000** — How will we get the union? Well, come to a meeting with Community Board 3 and ask for its support. Will that work? No, but it will help.”

**Happy Birthday to the Indy**

By Nicholas Powers

Can I get this right? I ask the question whenever I touch the keyboard. My fingers tap on the letters. I sense the gulf between reality and how it appears on the page. And the effort it takes to cross that distance.

Who enjoys reading about war and the protests against it? Or police brutality? Or the hypnotic effect of media, or how lives are scarred by violence? Sometimes, I want to look away from the keyboard, to say no, don’t think about this, no, don’t feel it anymore, no, just use someone else’s language. Breathing slowly, I focus on everyone I love and the world they deserve to live in. Then the words move through me like a wave.

For 11 years this has been the rhythm of my life at The Indypendent. Using the body as a sponge to soak in other people’s voices and squeezing it out, line by line, on the page. Writing is life, making it way to language. In my clumsy hands, it often slipped and snagged on an image, or was trapped inside a shiny idea. After hours of typing, I would re-read the story and find where I betrayed people I knew for the pride I wanted.

Sometimes, I wrote the last word at sunrise. Leaning back in my chair, I looked over the article and saw in it, despite my flaws, the real world we lived in. After emailing it the editors, I’d go to the roof and watch the horizon glowing red. And those were the sanest hours of my life. Seeing a city wake up, seeing a city rise. Leaning back in my chair, I looked over the article and saw in it, despite my flaws, the real world we lived in. After emailing it the editors, I’d go to the roof and watch the horizon glowing red. And those were the sanest hours of my life. Seeing a city wake up, knowing I had tapped into its truth. I gave voice to people’s rage and desperation and hope and rebellion.

It was a source of pride. Maybe a bit too much. I nixed the editors’ wanting to know when the new issue was coming, then raced to a cafe to grab the latest edition. I read my article obsessively and once home, placed the paper on top of older issues. Over the years the stack grew and I grew with it. And then I saw in those months the journey I didn’t know I was on until I made them into a book. It was published, if not widely read, and its words are as dear to me as my own breath.

And now, it is the 15th anniversary of our newspaper. I look at that stack of issues, going back to the very first one, a thin, black and white edition.

It was first called The Unstated. In 2000, I saw my future friends on its pages. I wouldn’t meet them until 2004, when I walked into their office. The paper had changed its name to The Indypendent, the place was busy like a beehive, someone slept on the couch as activists rushed in and out, people typed away and the smell of coffee, long nights and stale food wafted through the office.

Continued on page 16
MARCH 2002 — Six months after 9/11 and long before most people were paying attention, Mike Burke examines the long-term impact on New Yorkers of the collapse of the Twin Towers. "Many experts," he writes, "including dissident scientists within the Environmental Protection Agency, describe the event as an environmental disaster on a scale unlike any the city has ever seen."

NOVEMBER 2002 — Four months before the United States invades Iraq, the Indy publishes a special issue titled "Why War? Why Now?" The issue debunks the war on terror, offers a firsthand glimpse into the lives of ordinary Iraqis, and covers the growing antiwar movement. A two-page center spread highlights dozens of sites in the United States where weapons of mass destruction are developed and produced. It is later reproduced as a glossy, full-color 24-by-36-inch poster. Thousands of copies are sold across the country, financing the growth of the paper.

NOVEMBER 2003 — "A growing number of landlords are using tenant-screening companies that offer detailed data on prospective renters far beyond routine credit checks," Steven Wishnia writes in an expose about intrusive new data gathering practices that punish prospective tenants who have previously used housing court to defend their rights.

FEBRUARY–APRIL 2003 — The Indy distributes 25,000 copies of an eight-page special issue at the Massive anti-war protest, held February 15 in Midtown, that draws upward of 400,000 people. The Indy collective proposes five more.

JUNE 2004 — Bennett Saumur makes his way into a rigged longshoremen’s union election. "At the Holiday Inn," he writes, "no third party mediated the voting and locks did not appear on some boxes. I asked [Local 1235 President Al] Cernadas if the voting had ended. Grocerying to the union members, he said, ‘Oh no, they have until 6 p.m. to vote. Putting his arm around me, Cernadas steered me toward the other end of the room from the open ballot box.”

15 STEPS

CHANGE YOUR NAME

UNTIL IT FEELS RIGHT

The inaugural issue of the paper was published under the name Unst8ed. Unsatisfied with the name, the paper’s staff decided on a new moniker, The Indypendent. It was derived from the paper’s affiliation with Indymedia, a decentralized global network of grass-roots media collectives that had its origins in the Seattle WTO protests of 1999. During the paper’s first year, other name changes — The Brick Through the Window Gazette, The New York Beacon and The Indepen- dent, minus the “y” — were debated but rejected.

GETTING THE PAPER STARTED

By Ana Nogueira

The Indypendent’s very first meetings were held during the spring and summer of 2000. There were eight of us who would meet at each other’s houses. We were inspired by the global justice movement, which had erupted in the United States in November 1999 at demonstrations that shut down a summit meeting of the World Trade Organization.

A groundbreaking new website, indymedia.org, had played a key role in the “Battle of Seattle” and again at the April 16, 2000 protests in Washington, D.C., that targeted the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. People around the world were challenging corporate-led globalization.

Being one of the first open publishing sites on the Internet, indymedia.org made it possible for protest- ers and their supporters to tell their side of the story by uploading articles, photos, audio and video, and thereby directly challenge the corporate media’s ver- sion of events. This was a huge breakthrough at the time.

During the week of protests in Seattle, indymedia.org received more traffic than CNN’s website. Back at home in New York City, we wanted to create a local version of Indymedia that would serve as an enduring home for independent media activism.

My personal first taste of rage against filtered journalism came during my junior year at SUNY-Purchase, a state college located an hour north of the city. I enrolled in the school’s new journalism program and became the first editor-in-chief of our student newspaper. We covered controversial issues such as police brutality, rape on campus and protests against the administration’s secret plan to build a huge art gallery in the middle of a student square.

On several occasions the journalism program di- rector stole the final copy of the paper and edited it to put the college in a more positive light. I was outraged. This woman had enjoyed a distinguished career in journalism. She saw me as her protégé at first, and promised me a scholarship to the Columbia School of Journalism and an internship at the Wall Street Journal. But when I loudly protested her cen- sorship of critical issues, she told me I was through, because “that’s not how the real world works.”

Shortly after I graduated college in 1999, I got a $300 grant from the Puffin Foundation to publish a DIY paper. We used that money to print the inaugu- ral issue of The Indypendent, although that first issue was called The UnSt8ed. It was published in conjunction with protests at the U.N. Millennium Summit, a gathering of world leaders that sought to give a veneer of legitimacy to a number of pro-corpo- rate policies backed by wealthy nations.

Honestly, the first issue looked terrible! Yet, when we handed it out people were very supportive of what we were trying to do. Someone who heard about what we were doing gave us free office space to work out of near 29th Street and Park Avenue, which was a game-changer for the project.

After that first issue circulated, more people came to our meetings to work on the paper as well as start a video team and an internet radio station. The sec- ond issue — now called The Indypendent — also got a badly needed makeover!

When 9/11 happened a year later, we had already established a fairly regular publishing schedule. But the events of 9/11 pushed us to a whole new level. It is as times like these, when people are asking critical questions and the cracks in the system are visible, that independent media can make the biggest differ- ence. The impact we made by distributing our post-9/11 special issues at Union Square, where ordinary people were asking extraordinary questions, is what truly ignited the passion for independent reporting and that still shines in The Indypendent today. Please keep supporting this steadfast print publication!

A co-founder of The Indypendent, Ana Nogueira has worked as a video producer at Democracy Now! and directed the documentary film Roadmap to Apartheid. She is currently a core organizer of the MANDAY COMMUNITY SPACE in Bushwick, Brooklyn.

ESTABLISH STANDARDS

Should basic writing errors be allowed to appear in the paper out of deference to the “authen- ticity” of the writer’s voice? Or must mistakes be fixed to preserve the over-all credibility of the publication? These questions were a source of contentious de- bate during the paper’s early days before consensus was reached in favor of editing articles for spelling, grammar and punctua- tion. This impulse to ensure quality writ- ing appeared in the paper would gradually become the norm in the culture of the Indy, enhancing the newspaper’s credibility with readers while making it more attractive to potential volunteers.

15 STEPS

CHANGING YOUR NAME UNTIL IT FEELS RIGHT
COVERING 9/11

By Mike Burke

I thought a bomb had gone off. It was 9:59 a.m. I was working in an office building on Nassau Street, blocks away from the burning Twin Towers. Our building shook. My colleagues and I could see a stream of people running on the sidewalk. Then the sky went black. Dust engulfed our building. The South Tower had collapsed, 56 minutes after being struck. Thirty minutes later the sky went black again.

The police soon ordered a full evacuation of lower Manhattan. Along with thousands of other stunned New Yorkers I walked home across the Williamsburg Bridge, occasionally looking back in horror at the plume of smoke hanging over where the World Trade Center had stood just hours before.

By the time I got home, the calls for war had already begun.

Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger appeared on CNN saying, “There is only one way to begin to deal with people like this, and that is you have to kill some of them even if they are not immediately directly involved in this thing.”

The New York Post ran a column titled “Simply Kill the Bastards.” Steve Dunleavy wrote, “As for cities or countries that host these wars, bomb them into basketball courts.”

I returned to Manhattan the next day, first stopping at a vigil in Union Square and then heading to the NYC Indymedia office, where The Indypendent was housed, for an emergen- cy editorial meeting to begin work on a special issue.

I recently uncovered my notes from that meeting. Some of the topics raised: “civl liberties,” “anti-Arab,” “what kind of war,” “anti-war movement,” “airport security,” “history of Middle East conflict” and “right-wing nuts.”

Within 24 hours the paper was published. The special issue featured a photograph of downtown Manhattan after the towers collapsed. A box detailing ways to help ran down the left side. The lead article, “After Shocks,” described the city in the first 24 hours after the attack, when families were desperately searching for missing loved ones while others held impromptu vigils in Union and Washington Squares.

At the time we still didn’t know how many people had died or who was behind the attack.

Other articles in the issue included “Middle East conflict,” “right-wing nuts.”

My contribution to our special issue was headlined “How Should We Respond.” I interviewed leading peace activists, including Dave McReynolds of the War Resisters League and Carmen Trotta of the Catholic Worker Movement.

Mike Burke is a senior producer at Democracy Now! and a co-founder of The Indypendent.
I was at an activist meeting—Using the
passionately committed more than someone
practically its own meet-up site, with vol-
unteers from around the country conver-
ing urban slum on the edge of Hoxton,
was meeting people and physically get-
ing there.

I was at an activist meeting—Using the
passionately committed more than someone
practically its own meet-up site, with vol-
unteers from around the country conver-
ing urban slum on the edge of Hoxton,
was meeting people and physically get-
ging there.

I was at an activist meeting—Using the
passionately committed more than someone
practically its own meet-up site, with vol-
unteers from around the country conver-
ing urban slum on the edge of Hoxton,
was meeting people and physically get-
ging there.
Wealthy backers of corporate-style “school reform” have dominated the debate on public education for the past decade. But in a special back-to-school issue of the Indy, we hear from activist parents, teachers, students and radical education scholars on issues such as the overreliance on standardized testing, the importance of teachers unions and the misuse of “gifted and talented” programs to maintain a system of de facto segregation in New York City’s public schools.

A PHOTOJOURNALIST FINDS HER CALLING
By Antrim Caskey

I came to The Indy during the 2004 Republican National Convention held here in New York. I had picked up a copy of the paper that showed all the upcoming protests and related events and thought, “Oh, this is just what I’ve been looking for.”

I had been the assistant to the art director at the New York Times Sunday Magazine, where I helped coordinate between the production and the editorial departments. It was a dues-paying job, and I got pretty bored and restless. I wanted to be out shooting photo assignments. So I decided to go freelance.

When I attended my first meeting at the Indy, I found a thriving hive of production. I tried to find a place to fit in and eventually became photo team director. There was professionalism and you were allowed to do your thing, and you did it.

I thought it was impressive that people stayed up all night working together to finish the paper. There was a refrigerator that was always stuffed with all sorts of good food that people shared. It was the first time I came into contact with dumpster diving.

At the beginning of my time at the Indy, I did one of the reporting workshops the paper regularly puts on. From that, I found I could do reporting that would complement my photography. The Indy was a wonderful venue to publish in.

I did cover shoots of tenants fighting to stay in their homes, atomic bomb survivors visiting the United Nations and dockworkers in New Jersey fighting to regain control of their union from the Mob.

One night when I was hanging out at the office after a meeting, a personal turning point came. Someone called out from the front room, “Hey, there’s someone from West Virginia here!” I was introduced to Maria Gunnoe, a native West Virginian who, earlier that day, had been kicked out of a shareholder meeting of one of the coal companies that was engaged in an especially destructive mining practice known as mountaintop removal.

An Indy reporter was already working on an article about young activists who were planning to spend the summer in that state supporting locals who were trying to stop coal companies from engaging in mountaintop removal. When Maria described the destruction being visited on her hometown of Bob White, West Virginia, and many others like it, my jaw dropped to the ground. It was a 45-minute monologue. She never blinked and neither did I.

Three days later I drove to West Virginia and began photographing. I would be there for the next 10 years.

I lived in a cabin at the end of a road. I was chopping my own firewood and was arrested several times for trespassing on coal company property when I was out doing my work. In addition to the Indy, my photos appeared in Clamor, The Smithsonian, Nature, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times.

In 2010, I published Dragline, a 76-page photo book with all my best work from West Virginia. That won the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Prize for Domestic Photography. It was pretty neat when I got the call from Ethel Kennedy.

There’s been a huge step forward in awareness about mountaintop removal in the past 10 years. And there’s a lot of talk in the air about climate change and renewables. Now it’s a matter of people wrapping their heads around it all and making the change.
LEARNING TO THINK LIKE A JOURNALIST

By Jaisal Noor

I worked as a production assistant at Democracy Now! after I graduated college in 2007. Being in that environment gave me ideas for all kinds of stories I wanted to tell but didn’t know how to. Some people at DN! asked me if I had heard of The Independent and told me it was a place where you could volunteer, be involved in the news process and do on-the-ground reporting.

Attending the Indy’s editorial meetings was valuable for me as a young journalist. Listening to experienced people discuss and debate the issues of the day — such as whether Obama was actually going to be a hero for change — helped me think about how to gauge a breaking story, what the progressive response can be and how to put events in historical context.

Every young journalist wants to find an under-reported story they can jump on and make their contribution with. For me it was Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s attack on New York City’s public schools. The Indy had been doing critical coverage of this issue for years, as had Democracy Now! and Juan Gonzalez of the New York Daily News. But that was about it, and on many of the big issues — the spread of privately-managed charter schools, the expansion of standardized testing, the de facto segregation of the city’s schools and demands for greater community control — there were still many stories to be told.

At that time I had a position with the New-York Historical Society teaching a history class at various schools. One day I would teach at a school on the Upper West Side, in one of the wealthiest zip codes in the country. The next day I would be a half-mile away at a school in Harlem, where the kids lived in crumbling New York City Housing Authority buildings and there were two charter schools moving into the public school and taking over the gym and the art rooms. I could see firsthand the impact of Bloomberg’s policies. Conversations I had with teachers further deepened my understanding of what was happening.

My coverage for the Indy of the impact of Bloomberg’s school closings led to my first video reports for The Real News Network, where I got my foot in the door. The connections I made covering public education in New York made it easier for me to hit the ground running when I covered protests in Chicago against school closings orchestrated by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the 2012 Chicago teachers strike.

I moved to Baltimore a couple of years ago to work full time for Real News. We post four to five stories a day that are disseminated via social media and YouTube. We will be going to a daily national news cast later this fall. In the past year, I’ve reported from Ferguson and Greece, as well as on the uprising against police violence here in Baltimore. As a senior producer, I review everything that goes up on the website and write the headlines, a skill I spent many hours honing at the Indy. My prior experience at the Indy and elsewhere also enriches the contributions I make at our staff’s editorial meetings, where we discuss what stories to go forward with and the angles we want to develop. Once you have learned the basics of good journalism, those skills can be used over and over again in many different situations.
Continued from page 9

out, people typed away and the smell of coffee, long nights and stale food wafted through the place. I loved it.

It was more than a newspaper, it was a giant magnet pulling us together. At the editorial meetings, we pitched stories. Some spoke with halting caution, some with hot rage, some with aloof arrogance. Every idea illuminated our sacred dream of a just world. Afterward, we gossiped in the hallways, then went out, reported, researched, wrote and sent back the pieces to the editors, who put it together like a puzzle. When the paper came off the presses, we handed it out on subways and street corners, thousands and thousands of copies like revolutionary pollen blowing through the city.

After giving out papers, I stared at the crowds pouring in and out of the subway, buying magazines or gazing at billboards, and wondered, how could our small paper change anything? But in the oddest, most random moments, I’d see a New Yorker, holding a copy on a bench in the park or on the subway or tucked into their purse. They make their way through a story, a pensive, thoughtful expression on their faces, I know why we survive. The sincerity of our paper is easy to mock. I do it all the time. But when I see strangers reading it, nodding as they make their way through a story, a pensive, thoughtful expression on their faces, I know why we survive. Our belief that a better world is possible makes our critique of this one, even as its harshest, a hopeful one. They see what we see. The sacred vision that pulls us back to the keyboard like a magnet.

A few weeks ago, I came to our office in The Brooklyn Commons and looked at the dozens of Indy covers on the walls. It looked like a diary of the New York Left. We had covered the movements, the elections, the disasters, the big ideas, the many stepped-on people and the few powerful faces looming over the city skylines. Here was our vision, growing through the cracks of the city. Here was a fresh stack of papers, ready to blow through New York like pollen.


HELP BUILD THE INDY

We’re kicking off our 15th anniversary fund drive this issue. To lock in a vibrant future, we’re asking everyone who enjoys reading this newspaper to become a sustaining member of The Indy. (continues)
facts would change Trump supporters’ minds,” he said. “I don’t know what as well as if he were better vetted. He was doubtful. “A lot of threatening by the shifting racial composition of America. The southwestern portion of the Bronx is one of the city’s lowest-rent neighborhoods, but that might very well change in the near future. Mayor Bill de Blasio’s administration is planning to rezone the Jerome Avenue area, as part of its strategy to stimulate affordable-housing construction by allowing luxury high-rises in working-poor neighborhoods with good subway access and then mandating that some of the units built rent for lower rates. Meanwhile, Yankee Stadium is a few blocks away, and the Grand Concourse, a boulevard dubbed “the Champs-Elysees of the Bronx” in the 1930s, would be ripe for gentrification if the neighbor- hood is deemed “hot.”

“We don’t hate landlords. We just want them to follow the rules,” says Emmanuel Yusuf, 71, a retired photographer originally from Nigeria who’s lived in the building for 18 years. Shree Ganesh Bronx tried to raise his rent from $746 to $1,100, he says, putting an addendum on his lease that said the building is no longer rent-stabilized. So far, he’s refused to pay.

Dorcas Anponsah, a Ghanaian immigrant, said she hasn’t signed her lease yet because of the increase. But Aristides Guzman, who lives with his 84-year-old mother, said he felt he had no choice when their rent was raised from $779 to $1,000: “You have to pay the rent.”

For many of the tenants, those rent increases are the last straw piled on top of years of bad maintenance and reduced amenities. “They put the garbage close to the building and the kids don’t have a place to play,” says Guzman. “They’re not taking care. They only want the money. You come here at night, you can see a thousand rats.”

A group walks around the building, pointing out the wide-open side doors, the holes in the fence, the rat holes in the backyard and the parking lot once reserved for residents. It’s since been sold to a private owner who rents the spaces to Yankees fans. They say the fans often take advantage of the open doors to piss out the stadium’s $6 beers in the stairs-wells after games.

The space crunch in our schools continues unabated, with nearly half a million students attending severely overcrowded schools. The rapid expansion of pre-K has made a serious problem worse, and last year, we found that more than 11,800 pre-K seats were located in 254 schools that were above 100 percent utilization, according to DOE figures. The capital plan for school construction is already vastly underfunded, and though the administration claims to be removing the trailers that currently house thousands of students, the plan does not allocate a single dollar to replace their seats. In fact, trailers were still being added to schools in Queens this fall.

The mayor’s plan to build 200,000 afford- able housing units and an additional 160,000 market-rate units over the next 10 years will create the need for even more school seats. Yet he has developed no plan to ensure that the schools in these neighbor- hoods will not become even more over- crowded. Many parent leaders, along with Public Advocate Letitia James and 22 mem- bers of the City Council, sent a letter to the chancellor and the mayor in June, urging them to create a commission to improve school planning and to double the seats in the capital plan. So far, neither the chancel- lor nor the mayor has responded.

Yet parents are not willing to sit back and have their concerns ignored — whether on class size, school overcrowding or student privacy. The widespread protests that caused the state to change the law on student pri- vacy in 2014 and the growing opt-out move- ment that led to 20 percent of the students opting out of state exams last year show that if sufficiently provoked, parents will fight to ensure that their children receive the edu- cation they deserve. Parent resistance will continue to grow until policymakers hear our voices, and start focusing on what re- ally makes a real difference in the learning conditions of our children.

Leonie Haimson is the executive director of Class Size Matters.
CONFRONTING THE GHETTO, FROM THE BLACK PANthers TO HIP-HOP

By Matt Wasserman

The Black Panthers and N.W.A were united not only by their shared experiences of oppression in the ghettos of California, but also by their shrewd instincts for spectacle. Both groups acquired national profiles through the strategic cultivation of controversy and confrontation with reactionary white lawmakers. The Panthers, initially conceived of as a cop-watching group, captured public attention after taking advantage of California’s open-carry laws to show up at the statehouse packing machine guns. They were opposing, in their incendiary style, the efforts of then-Governor Reagan and his allies to take away their guns. N.W.A, meanwhile, went out of their way to provoke law enforcement and white politicians pandering to the “silent majority” by decrying gangsta rap. The most electrifying moment of Straight Outta Compton is when N.W.A defies the order of the Detroit police not to play “Fuck tha Police” in concert, helping incite a riot — and getting arrested in the aftermath. Defiance of the state’s claim to a monopoly on legitimate violence may never have looked more fun.

Straight Outta Compton is a study in what happens to the rage born of racial oppression and relative deprivation in the absence of politics. It is the failure of groups like the Panthers and the curdling of hope for systemic change that created the conditions of possibility for N.W.A. The members of N.W.A were occasionally thrust into an ill-fitting position as representatives of the 10-Point Program. As the Panthers called for integrating the white system and making the state restructure itself, N.W.A’s songs show the eruption of a new generation’s frustration at a perceived lack of possibilities for N.W.A.

Although Black Panthers only has time to hit some of the Party’s highlights, it is mostly successful in bringing out the continued relevance of a movement for collective liberation led by those most affected. While elders may snipe about its admittedly real limitations, the film offers an energizing and stylish introduction of the Panthers to a new generation. The Black Lives Matter movement could do worse than learning from the example — and the failures — of the Black Panther Party if they want to not only fight individual incidents of police brutality, but also organize against a system of racial domination. The Black Panthers eventually collapsed under the weight of state repression and internal conflict, but for a brief moment they were a nationwide group with its own newspaper, community social programs and political platform that managed to unite the energies of thousands of militants in a common struggle. Whatever the organizing possibilities of social media, the activists of Black Twitter have yet to build a comparable infrastructure. Straight Outta Compton offers no such lessons, but it is a mostly entertaining 2.5 hours — and “Fuck tha Police” remains essential listening.
EXHIBITIONS

PRAISE THE LORDS

“¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York”

Bronx Museum of the Arts
Through October 12

El Museo del Barrio
December 12

Loisaida Center
Through December 1

By Mike Newton

What can you do when your city doesn’t care for you? If the people in your neighborhood are sick, but the city of New York refuses to provide public health services, what then? You can write newspaper editorials, and you can put in requests with the local officials, but if that doesn’t work, well, maybe you just take what you need by force. On June 17, 1970, several members of the activist group known as the Young Lordsam-bushed and stole a tuberculosis-screening truck to use in their own underserved, Puerto-Rican-heavy neighborbords. It would be easy to dismiss this as a brazen act of prank, but it worked: the city reluc-tantly supported the effort, and the Lords were able to screen over 770 people in just three days. In the July 3, 1970 issue of Palante — the bi-weekly newspaper edited and published by the Young Lords — group member Carl Pastor wrote, “THE YOUNG LORDS PARTY has always said that the time will come when people take over all the institutions and machin-ery that control and exploit our lives. On June 17, the YOUNG LORDS PARTY put this idea into practice.”

The Young Lords burned bright and fast: The organ-ization was officially founded in 1969, and officially ended by 1972. They’re not as famous now as some of their like-minded contemporaries like the Black Pan-thers or Students for a Democratic Society, but the Young Lords’ legacy has an endless, sprawling quality — the bi-weekly newspaper continued until 1972, and many of its ideas and practice have become a part of the mainstream. In December 1969, just a few months after the Garbage Offensive, the Lords seized control of a church on 111th Street. As with the TB truck, it was a violent action in the interest of tenderness and care. For the 11 days that they held the church, the Lords used it to host free breakfast programs and poetry readings. Look- ing back at the group’s fraught history, in some ways the moment is lost in a had-to-be-there billow of youthful rebellion, societal tumult and ultra-specific local politics. But then, to see what they were seeking in this city — justice, well-being, support and space — it’s hard not to relate. In the July 17, 1970 issue of Palante, Pablo Guzman wrote, “we decided to liber-ate the church’s potential and open its doors.” In a city growing ever more walled-off, we need more re-minders that the potential for liberation is there, wait-ing for the doors to be opened.

El Museo and the Center can trace their respective lineages straight back to the Young Lords. In these exhibitions there are newspapers and posters, poems and songs, documentary films and black-and-white photos, and yet, in a way it feels like these exhibits are only just scratching the surface.

One important thing that these shows remind us is that New York used to be a much dirtier place. At the Bronx Museum, we see a spread from Palante with a collaged image of the Statue of Liberty looking down on a trash-strewn city street (“Amerikkka the Beauti-ful,” the text reads. Nearby is one of the strongest artworks in the show: Raphael Montañez Ortiz’s Ar-chaological Find #21: The Aftermath, a transfigured chunk of street trash (an old sofa) appearing as a sort of bloated, distressed body. Technically this piece pre-serves the Lords, but the Lords dealt with similar ideas in their 1969 Garbage Offensive, in which they spread garbage across 110th Street and 3rd Avenue and then set it on fire in a sort of performance-art protest against urban poverty.

The Garbage Offensive was meant to be offensive in the sense of upsetting and shocking, but it was also an offensive, as in armed attack. Guns are everywhere in the Young Lords’ iconography. At El Museo, a cir-cula-1970 Party poster (also recreated in a sculpture by con-temporary artist Miguel Luciano) shows four assa ult rifles labeled “HEALTH,” “FOOD,” “HOUS-ING,” and “EDUCATION”; the message is that the Lords were not shy about armed struggle in the name of justice. The tensions between the Lords’ lofty goals and their paramilitary structure raise questions that weren’t answered during their scant few years in New York: Can artistic freedom really flourish within a militaristic society? Can equality for women really exist within a male-dominated hierarchy?

In December 1969, just a few months after the Garbage Offensive, the Lords seized and occupied the First Spanish United Methodist Church on 111th Street. As with the TB truck, it was a violent action: the moment is lost in a had-to-be-there billow of youthful rebellion, societal tumult and ultra-specific local politics. But then, to see what they were seeking in this city — justice, well-being, support and space — it’s hard not to relate. In the July 17, 1970 issue of Palante, Pablo Guzman wrote, “we decided to liber-ate the church’s potential and open its doors.” In a city growing ever more walled-off, we need more re-minders that the potential for liberation is there, wait-ing for the doors to be opened.

Harassment: Growing Activism around Harassment. Hosted by movement lawyers Heidi Rogish, Executive Director, National Lawyers Guild; Michael Ratner, President, Center for Human Rights; Michael Smith; New York City attorney; and attorney Maximo Colon, Untold, c. 1970

FRI OCT 23 • 7PM • $5 SUGGESTED BOOK TALK: THE DOG WALKER: AN ANARCHIST’S ENCOUNTERS WITH THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE CANINE. The Dog Walker is the hilarious story of a relentless activist who also happened to be a dog walker for the rich and powerful.

SAT OCT 24 • 7PM • $5 SUGGESTED BOOK TALK: VOICES OF THE PARIS COMMUNE. Join historian and translator Mitchell Abidor for a talk on a new book that re-envision The Paris Commune of 1871 by presenting only the voices of people who lived through the Commune.

THU NOV 5 • 7PM • $5 SUGGESTED DISCUSSION: STOP GLOBAL STREET HARASSMENT. Holy Keal, author of the new book Stop Global Street Harassment: Growing Activism around the World, will discuss how street harassment is a human rights violation and the various ways that people, organizations and governments globally are working to end it.

SEE MORE: www.betterhumanrights.org
THE FORGOTTEN SIDE OF FOLK MUSIC

“Folk City: New York and the Folk Music Revival”
Museum of the City of New York
Through January 10

By John Cohen

To most people, especially those in New York, folk music has always had a political connotation. It was the soundtrack of political actions, the music heard on picket lines and at union meetings and rallies. It was identified as the music of the working class, the farmers and factory laborers.

But conceptually, “folklore” was defined by professors and academics. The word “folk” emerged as a way for the upper class to deprecate the culture of the lower class and was used by urbanites to distinguish themselves from those in rural areas. The people whom the term “folk” defined never used it to describe themselves or their culture. The word has suffered under this origin ever since, and after several hundred years, “folk” as applied to music has become a confused tangle devoid of specificity.

Entering “Folk City,” now on view at the Museum of the City of New York, we see that the exhibition doesn’t attempt to define folk. Instead, it plunges headfirst into how the idea of it was constructed in New York City between the 1930s and 1960s. One is inundated with images and the voice of Pete Seeger, reflecting his all-embracing contributions to creating the folk revival. The exhibition places great importance on embracing contributions to creating the folk revival. The exhibition doesn’t attempt to define folk. In doing so, it plunges headfirst into how the idea of it was constructed in New York City between the 1930s and 1960s. One is inundated with images and the voice of Pete Seeger, reflecting his all-embracing contributions to creating the folk revival. The exhibition places great importance on embracing contributions to creating the folk revival.

Folk music thrives on disputes, assertions and the world.

The exhibition depicts the New York City folk music scene in great documentary form. It features film clips, 78 rpm record covers, posters and ephemera, including Lead Belly’s actual guitar. The catalog for the show devotes almost 15 pages to the Washington Square “Right to Sing” protest of 1961, and almost 30 pages to Bob Dylan. The exhibition looks especially at folk music in Greenwich Village in the 1960s — indeed, even its title, “Folk City,” comes from the name of a club in the Village that featured folk singers in those heady days.

However, it fails to mention the Jug Bands, the blues revivals or the bluegrass scene that dominated Washington Square. Also barely mentioned is the impact of Harry Smith’s Anthology of American Folk Music, issued by Folkway Records in 1952, consisting of wonderful performances on commercial recordings from the 1920s and ’30s. This anthology opened the doors of the folk revival to great traditional music and inspired the blues revival and the old time music scene.

“Folk City” conveys how the music became exploited as a commercial commodity by groups such as the Kingston Trio, the Limelighters and eventually Peter, Paul and Mary. Some critics have pointed out, rightly, that the exhibition’s comes up short by celebrating the musicians who found a way to monetize folk music while omitting most of those who didn’t.

There is a small section about the Friends of Old Time Music and the New Lost City Ramblers, who were dedicated to performing the traditional roots of this music, learned from old hillbilly and blues records and from the field recordings at the Library of Congress. As a member of the Ramblers, I was involved personally. We reintroduced fiddles, mandolin and autoharp to the folk revival. We made field recordings of mountaineers, sitting at their feet and learning from them. We brought them to New York City for solo concerts. We were building bridges at the same time as the civil rights movement was examining and challenging differences. Both were part of the same broad picture, and the exhibition devotes a lot of space to the role that topical songs and the activists played.

LIKE A PBS DOCUMENTARY

For years, the survivors of the folk revival have been discussing the idea of creating a folk music museum in New York City. The problems they faced were never about music, but about real estate and financing — “just looking for a home,” as some old songs say. The exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York was organized and shaped by historians, not by musicians. With dramatic red walls and graphic displays, it ends up like a well-balanced documentary production for PBS. But in diligently covering such a wide spectrum and paying informed attention to all the chronology and issues, it leaves viewers knowing something about everything but not quite feeling the passion, commitment or challenge of it.

Folk music thrives on disputes, assertions and challenges to the establishment, along with its traditional roots. Stepping back, the folk revival may be seen from today’s perspective as a tremendously vital tempest in a cultural teapot, which was and still is an integral part of New York City. In telling its story, “Folk City” is an intense show and a rare opportunity to see what went down. I am left wondering, though, if it will inspire anyone to pick up a guitar, banjo or fiddle and start singing.

John Cohen is a founding member of the New Lost City Ramblers as well as a musicologist, photographer and filmmaker. Since 1958, the New Lost City Ramblers have brought the diverse sounds of rural American string band music to audiences throughout the United States and the world.
How well do you know your own mind and memory? Have you ever repainted your own deeds with rosier colors? Has your sense of disappointment ever been so crushing that you felt you couldn’t trust any of your other thoughts? Arthur Richman’s play *The Awful Truth* asked these timeless questions in 1922, and it holds up as a seriocomic meditation on them. The Metropolitan Playhouse is now offering a consistently good, sometimes sterling, production of the work, best known to most audiences as a 1937 “screwball comedy” film with Cary Grant and Irene Dunne.

Both the play and film pivot on stormy relationships and infidelity, but the play is shorter on plot, and spends more time examining the social context of its era and the emotions that shape the characters’ struggle. In it, a divorced socialite, Lucy Warriner, is set to marry self-made Oklahoma oil tycoon Daniel (“Dan”) Leeson, and his proper aunt wants to make double-sure her divorce wasn’t the result of some unseen hanky-panky. The nephew and aunt even drag in Lucy’s ex, Norman Satoney, and it is precisely what people think of when they hear the awful truth out there now, and it holds up as far as our quibbles went.

The visuals of the play deserve special mention. From the moment you walk into the very small theater — it can’t be more than 80 feet square — it can’t be more than 80 seats — a grand set, full of pains-taking detail that Sidney Fortner and it was precisely what people thought of when they heard the awful truth out there now, and it holds up as far as our quibbles went.

The visuals of the play deserve special mention. From the moment you walk into the very small theater — it can’t be more than 80 feet square — it can’t be more than 80 seats — a grand set, full of pains-taking detail that Sidney Fortner and it was precisely what people thought of when they heard the awful truth out there now, and it holds up as far as our quibbles went.

The visuals of the play deserve special mention. From the moment you walk into the very small theater — it can’t be more than 80 feet square — it can’t be more than 80 seats — a grand set, full of pains-taking detail that Sidney Fortner and it was precisely what people thought of when they heard the awful truth out there now, and it holds up as far as our quibbles went.

The visuals of the play deserve special mention. From the moment you walk into the very small theater — it can’t be more than 80 feet square — it can’t be more than 80 seats — a grand set, full of pains-taking detail that Sidney Fortner and it was precisely what people thought of when they heard the awful truth out there now, and it holds up as far as our quibbles went.
CALENDAR

THUR OCT 8
6:30pm • $5
DISCUSSION: THE CHANGING FACE OF ACTIVISM.
This discussion on the evolution of social change activism from the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter will be moderated by Alethia Jones of 1199SEIU and will include veteran activist Barbara Smith, Joo-Hyun Kang of Communities United for Police Reform and Jose Lopez of Make the Road NY. 128 Pierrepont St 718-222-4111 • brooklynhistory.org

THUR OCT 8–SAT OCT 24
8pm • $18
PERFORMANCE: MACBETH (OF THE OPPRESSED).
This queer reimagining of Shakespeare’s classic will feature the Macbeth husbands and the Macduff wives at the center of it all, the Macbeth husbands and the Macduff wives. This queer reimagining of Shakespeare’s classic will feature the Macbeth husbands and the Macduff wives at the center of it all, the Macbeth husbands and the Macduff wives. The Theater at the 14th Street Y 330 7th Ave, Suite 1901 212-647-8966 • jfrej.org

WED OCT 14
7pm • $10
DISCUSSION/EXHIBITION:
This 12-year visual study of color and others who have been marginalized within the Jewish community. Please visit the website for the training registration form. Jews for Racial & Economic Justice 330 7th Ave, Suite 1901 212-647-8966 • jfrej.org

SAT OCT 17
11am–5pm • Free
EVENT: SUPER SABADO: DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS.
Join in the 3,000-year-old Mexican celebration of commemorating the dead. Festivities include music, performances, face painting and art-making at various locations. El Museo del Barrio 1230 5th Ave 212-831-7272 • elmuseo.org

SAT OCT 17
8pm • $18 suggested donation
MUSIC: JOLIE RICKMAN TRIBUTE CONCERT.
A sweeping lineup of musicians will honor the memory and achievements of singer-songwriter activist Jolie Rickman, who died in 2005. On set for the night are Barry Kornhauser, Bev Grant and the Dissident Daughters, Colleen Kattau and Dos XX, Elisabeth DeMaria, Jamie McCallum and Nickolas Orth. At the Community Church of New York Unitarian Universalist 55 W 13th St, 2nd Fl 212-787-4000 • peoplesvoicecafe.org

SUN OCT 17
6pm • Free
TRAINING: RACIAL JUSTICE FOR WHITE PEOPLE.
This training seminar will focus on racial justice, accountability and allyship. JFREJ has created the training to cultivate anti-racism within the organization, with the goal of becoming a more empowering political home for Jews of color and others who have been marginalized within the Jewish community. Please visit the website for the training registration form. Jews for Racial & Economic Justice 330 7th Ave, Suite 1901 212-647-8966 • jfrej.org

TUE OCT 20
6:30–8:30pm • Free
DISCUSSION: LIFE AFTER SURVEILLANCE IN BAY RIDGE’S MUSLIM COMMUNITY.
With a city administration that says it’s moving away from the heavy-handed surveillance of Muslim neighborhoods that has characterized the post-9/11 era, community leaders will discuss whether life for Muslims in Bay Ridge has changed. Brooklyn Historical Society 128 Pierrepont St 718-222-4111 • brooklynhistory.org

TUE OCT 20
9–11am • Free
BOOK LAUNCH: SOUTHERN INSURRENCY: THE MAKING OF THE GLOBAL WORKING CLASS.
Drawing on extensive field research he did in South Africa, India and China, CUNY professor of political science Immanuel Ness will discuss his new book on the rise of an industrial proletariat in the Global South and the prospects for new approaches to international solidarity and anti-capitalist struggle. Brooklyn Commons 388 Atlantic Ave thecommonsbrooklyn.org • marxedproject.org

THUR OCT 22
7:30pm • Free
CINEMA: NEW FEST: NEW YORK’S LGBT FILM FESTIVAL.
Featuring several dozen films, docs, shorts and panels. The primary venue will be Chelsea Bow Tie Cinemas, with select screenings at the LGBT Community Center. newfest.org

THUR OCT 23–TUE OCT 27
Various times • Various prices starting at $12
SOUTHERN RITES.
National uproar forced Georgia’s Montgomery County High School to racially integrate its prom last year. Photojournalist Gillian Laub will talk about her 12-year visual study of the community, which introduced the rest of the country to the racial tensions in its prom rituals and more. A book signing will follow. International Center of Photography 1114 Ave of the Americas 212-857-0000 • icp.org

"It all began in the first few weeks of 2010, when I made the life-changing decision to release to the public a repository of classified documents that provided a simultaneously horrific and beautiful outlook on the war in Iraq and Afghanistan… It can be hard, sometimes, to make sense of all the things that have happened to me in the last five years (let alone my entire life). The things that seem consistent and clear to me are the support that I receive from my friends, my family and the millions of people all over the world. Through every struggle that I have been confronted with, and have been subjected to—solitary confinement, long legal battles and physically transitioning to the woman I have always been—I manage not only to survive, but to grow, learn, mature and thrive as a better, more confident person.”
—Chelsea E. Manning (Guardian Op-Ed, 31 May 2015)
In the summer of 2014, renowned American Indian studies professor Steven Salaita had his appointment to a tenured professorship revoked by the board of trustees of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Salaita’s employment was terminated in response to his public tweets criticizing the Israeli government’s summer assault on Gaza.

Salaita’s firing generated a huge public outcry, with more than five thousand scholars pledging to boycott UIUC. His case raises important questions about academic freedom, free speech on campus, and the movement for justice in Palestine.

“Steven Salaita’s astute meditations on racism, settler colonialism, anti-Semitism, and Israeli apartheid skillfully convert the inauspicious conditions surrounding his ousting by the trustees of the University of Illinois into an opportunity to elevate the campaign for Palestinian solidarity to a new level. As US antiracist consciousness grows broader and deeper, Uncivil Rites argues for the internationalization of that consciousness and for Palestine as a polestar of our struggle.”

—ANGELA Y. DAVIS
MNN: Manhattan’s Community Media

Manhattan Neighborhood Network is Manhattan’s public access cable network with studios in Midtown and East Harlem. We offer all Manhattan residents FREE state-of-the-art studios and equipment and media education classes in studio and field production and digital video editing.

MNN programs are created by you and reach Manhattan’s over 620,000 cable subscribers. We also stream all of our programs live online.

Visit mnn.org to learn more and for upcoming Midtown orientation dates!

Connect with MNN

Visit mnn.org for more information and follow the Firehouse on facebook.com/elbarriocommunitycenter.