EXPANDED EVENT LISTINGS, P2
NYC STATUES WE LOVE, P12
COASTAL CITIES & CLIMATE CHANGE, P14
WHO IS FEMINISM FOR? P20

PRINT IS DEAD, LONG LIVE PRINT
COVERAGE STARTS ON PAGE 4
**Community Calendar**

**FRI SEP 22**
7PM–9:30PM • FREE BOOK LAUNCH: WHY BAD GOVERNMENTS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE
Join Indy contributor, humorist and author Danny Ketch for the launch of his new book, Why Bad Governments Happen to Good People. VERSO BOOKS 20 Jay St.

**SAT SEP 23**
7:30PM–11PM • $5–$10 DONATIONS
TALK: THE RAMAPOUGH VS. THE PILGRIM PIPELINE
Speakers from the Ramapough Lenape Nation and Science for the People will lead a discussion on the devastat- ing potential impacts of the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline on sacred lands and the Ramapo River, as well as specific po- litical actions supporters can take. Drinks and mingling in the backyard of Unnameable Books will follow. Proceeds go to the Ramapough’s legal fees. UNNAMEABLE BOOKS 600 Vanderbilt Ave.

**FRI SEP 29 THRU FRI DEC 22**
6PM–8PM, WEEKLY • $15–$20 CLASs: FRIDAYS AS IN MURDER
In traditional hard-boiled and crime novels, women either provoke violence as femme fatales or need protection as paying clients or wander- ing daughters. Some authors were dissatisfied with this convention. Drawing upon the potentials of pulp fiction and film noir’s formula of restless- ness, dread and discontent within social corruption, women novelists subverted the genre to explore early feminist and political themes. To learn more, view the reading list and register, visit marxedproject.org.

**TUE SEP 26**
6:30PM–8:30PM • $10 DONATION
HISTORY: TRUMP WALKING TOUR
Prior to becoming president, Donald Trump played an inte- gral role in shaping the modern landscape of New City. Exploring Midtown Manhat- tan, we are able to get the full spectrum of the Trump story and his rise to power. Register at socialjusticetours.com. 33rd St. & 6th Ave.

**THU SEP 28**
7PM–9PM • FREE BOOKS: READINGS FROM VANISHING NEW YORK—JUST THE QUEER PARTS
From The Rawhide to Folsom Street East queer New York is disappearing. Blogger and author Jeremiah Moss reads from the queer sections of his celebrated new book, Vanish- ing New York: How a Great City Lost Its Soul. Signing to follow.
BUREAU OF GENERAL SERVICES-QUEER DIVISION 208 W 13th St. Rm 210

**FRI SEP 29**
12PM–6PM • FREE UNDERGROUND LIT: PAPER JAZZ SMALL PRESS FEST
Paper Jazz Small Press Fest (formerly Paper Jam) is a twice yearly celebration of zines, comics and chapbooks of all types, fully curated by the Silent Barn Zine Team, as well as regularly rotated guest cu- rators. Silent Barn is dedicated to maintaining a space for small presses within the greater DIY community.
THE SILENT BARN 603 Bushwick Ave.

**SUN OCT 1**
11AM–7PM • FREE PROTEST: VISIT A GUN SHOW WITH GAYS AGAINST GUNS
Join Gays Against Guns as they visit a gun show near the New York metro area. The group attends gun shows to spread awareness about gun violence and disseminate information that people who are purchas- ing or own firearms might not already know. The group will be disembariking from the LGBTQ Center in Manhattan.
LGBTQ CENTER 208 W 13th St

**WED OCT 4**
6PM–10PM • FREE FOOD: SLICE OUT HUNGER’S $1 SLICE NIGHT
Slice Out Hunger is a culinary charitable celebration that’s a win-win for everyone: All slices of pizza are one dollar and all profits go straight towards the charities Sylvia Center and City Harvest.
THE SHRINE CHURCH OF SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA 154 Sullivan St.

**THU OCT 5**
6PM–8PM • FREE TALK: CRIMINALIZING POVERTY
It’s been four years since courts determined that New York City’s “stop-and-frak” policy was unconstitutional, but communities across the city continue to be subjected to ‘broken windows’ policing. Join the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund for a discussion of...
how community organizations are fighting back against the criminalization
of poverty. Panelists Josmar Trujillo with the Coalition to End Broken
Windows and Alyssa Aguilerawith VOCAL- NY
will speak with Brooklyn
Law School professor
Joseph Simonsen. Doors
open at 6 P.M. Register at
eventbrite.com.

BROOKLYN HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
129 Pierrepont St.

THU OCT 5
8:45PM • FREE
MUSIC: AUTOMATIC FOR
THE PEOPLE
R.E.M.’s surreal, somber
and resonant album Auto-
matic For the People turns
25 years old. Musician
Chris Blacker and friends
will recreate and perform
the entire album live.

ARLENE’S GROCERY
95 Stanton St.

FRI OCT 6
8PM • $45
MUSIC: ESPERANZA
ALEXIE
Join National Book
Award for Young People’s
Literature winner Sher-
man Alexie to celebrate
his iconic young adult
novel, The Absolutely
True Diary of a Part-Time
Waiter, the 10th anniversary of
its premiere on Oct. 15.

PERFORMANCE: NATIVE
TONGUE: A STORY
SLAM
Rikers Island was one of the most violent
adolescent jail on
Rikers Island. Lorenzo
uses photography and a personal testimony that
offers a visual journey into the “Bing.” Riker’s
adolescent solitary con-
finement unit. All images
on display were taken
between 1987 and 1999,
one of the most violent
and brutal eras in Rikers
Island’s history.

THE LIVINGギャラリーオーガン
246 E 4th St.

FRI OCT 13
7PM–8:15PM • $21
LITERATURE: AN EVE-NING
WITH SHERMAN ALEXIE
Join National Book
Award for Young People’s
Literature winner Sher-
man Alexie to celebrate
the 100th anniversary of
his iconic young adult
novel, The Absolutely
True Diary of a Part-Time
Indian. Tickets at sym-
phony space.org.

SYMPHONY SPACE
2537 Broadway

FRI OCT 20
7PM–10PM • $25
MUSIC: THE PROTEST
SONGS OF ANI CORDERO
Puerto Rican-born singer,
songwriter and multi-in-
strumentalist Ani Cordero
is a soulful vocalist in-
spired by Latin America’s
Nueva Canción move-
ment, as well as pan-Latin
funk and indy rock.

LYN POETRY SLAM —
JAZZFEST EDITION
Each month, the Brooklyn
Poetry Slam brings to-
gether the borough’s best
slam poets for a monthly
gathering of words and
wisdom. For this special
JazzFest edition, guest
poets and hosts Ma-
hogany Browne and DJ
Jive Poetic highlight the
criss-crossing influences
and beats of jazz, poetry
and hip-hop. Open mic to
follow.

BRIC
647 Fulton St.

THU OCT 19
7PM–11PM • $35, 21+
PARTY: GENDER BASH
Come support Third
Wave, a nonprofit that
provides young women,
transgender and gender-
nonconforming youth
with the skills, power and
opportunity to engage in
and lead efforts for social
justice. Gender Bash
features a dance party
fueled by DJ Bearcat
(Discwoman) and DJ
Prewoman. LITTLEFIELD
635 Sackett St.

FRI OCT 20
7PM–10PM • $25
MUSIC: THE PROTEST
SONGS OF ANI CORDERO
Puerto Rican-born singer,
songwriter and multi-in-
strumentalist Ani Cordero
is a soulful vocalist in-
spired by Latin America’s
Nueva Canción move-
ment, as well as pan-Latin
funk and indy rock.

ELEBASH RECITAL HALL
365 5th Ave.

THE RHYTHM NEVER
DIES: Nikhil P’s Low Mentalty
headline a funk-infused tribute to the
late great Fela Kuti at Nublu 151 on the

LIFT OFF: She may play bass but
she’s taking jazz to new heights. Catch
Esperanza Spalding at Pioneer Works
in Brooklyn on Oct. 6.

BLOOD PRESSURE: Set
your heart pounding at the Brooklyn
Horrer Fest this October. The Book of
Birdie, which features an all-female
cast performing in some truly bloody
scenes, is making its North American
premiere on Oct. 15.
By Steven Wishnia

When I got out of journalism school in the late 1980s, working at the Village Voice would have been my dream job.

The Voice, founded in 1955, defined the format for the “alternative weeklies” that would appear in most of the country’s major cities over the next 50 years, from the Boston Phoenix to the L.A. Weekly. A mix of news, investigative, and arts coverage with local entertainment listings, left of the mainstream both politically and culturally, they weren’t as militantly radical or hippiefied as the “underground” papers that proliferated in the late ’60s, but their writing and editing was much more professional. Few of the underground were still around past 1972. (The Independent has lasted 17 years.)

As a weekly paper in the pre-Internet era, it could do stories more in-depth than a daily newspaper and more timely than a monthly. The Voice tracked how South Bronx landlords sold buildings to shell companies to pump up their value before torching them for insurance money. Jack Newfield and Paul DuBrul dissected the permanent government of finance and real-estate interests after the 1975-76 fiscal crisis, and Newfield and Wayne Barrett chronicled the corruption of Edward Koch’s administration. Barrett’s 1979 piece on a certain loudmouthed real-estate scion wangling government subsidies to build hotels and towers in Manhattan, despite his family business’s history of discriminating against black apartment-seekers, was particularly prescient.

The Voice gave writers like Jill Nelson, Greg Tate, and Nelson George the freedom and resources to write in their own styles and do long, in-depth stories, earning it the reputation of a writers’ paper.” When four teenagers in a New Jersey suburb committed suicide in 1987, writer Donna Gaines spent weeks hanging out with the town’s “burnouts” for a piece titled “Teenage Wasteland.” On the lighter side, there was Michael Musto’s gossip column, with its blind-item specials like “What is ostensibly straight Broadway producer...?"

Equally important, it was rigorously edited. One writer praised music editor Robert Christgau as a “someone who has never let me get away with a lazy thought.”

The Voice’s arts editors were all deeply steeped in the scenes they covered — film, theater, dance, music, art, books. In contrast to today, when performers seeking an audience either have to keep dragging their friends out or spend hours promoting themselves online, a mention in the Voice would mean lots of strangers knew who you were. Off-off-Broadway theatre and the late-’70s Lower Manhattan music scene would not have developed the cultural legs they did without the exposure they got in the Voice.

This cut both ways. People who didn’t get covered often resented arts-section editors for excluding them; Sonic Youth once recorded a song joking about killing Robert Christgau. The post-modernism fad of the ’80s meant a lot of insufferably pretentious and incomprehensible prose made it in, like a music piece that talked more about Jacques Derrida than the band at CBGB it was reviewing. There were several reasons for the Voice’s decline. The archetypal readers it imagined — bohemian and educated enough to go to foreign films or catch Cecil Taylor at the Knitting Factory or Patti Smith at the St. Marks Poetry Project, and who also cared about politics and could afford to buy unfurnished bookcases and platform beds — gradually disappeared as Manhattan gentrified.

Competition from the New York Press forced it to go free in the early ’90s, cutting off its newsstand revenue. The Press at first gave an outlet to good writers who couldn’t find room at the Voice, but by 1994 or so, it had adopted a pre-Internet form of flame baity as its business model. Publish

New owner Peter Barbey, who acquired the paper in 2015, tried to rejuvenate it, beefing up news coverage and bringing back book reviews, but eventually decided that print was not sustainable. The decision to go web-only was preceded by the layoff of almost all the remaining union staff.

I got a chip of my dream job when I got a feature published in 1994, breaking the story that the city planned to evict five squares on East 13th Street and give them to a housing-development nonprofit merely run by the Lower East Side’s Giuliani-Democrat City Councillor. (It was a little incestuous: The squatters I interviewed for it were mostly friends from the neighborhood.) My editor, Andrew Hsiao, spent four hours going over the story with me line by line, and I got paid more than a month’s rent for an 1,800-word article. That seems like an unimaginable luxury in today’s media world.

It didn’t last: I did several more articles for them over the next year or so, but then both of the editors I was working with left, a perennial peril in the life of a freelancer. I didn’t get back in until last year. Now I have the historical footnote of being one of the writers in Sept. 20’s final print edition, with stories on the history of landlords harassing tenants as a business model and on local Virgin Islanders and Antiguan-Barbudans organizing hurricane-relief efforts.

The Voice follows the San Francisco Bay Guardian to online-only publishing. The Boston Phoenix folded in 2013, and the Philadelphia City Paper in 2015. The L.A. Weekly and the Chicago Reader have survived, but suffered severe layoffs. The few alternative weeklies still going strong include the Austin Chronicle, the St. Louis Riverfront Times and the Seattle Stranger.

Publishing on the web is much easier and cheaper than print, but something is irrevocably lost for that cheapness & instantaneousness.

Continued on page 6
FAKE NEWS FACTORIES
WITH TRUMP’S HELP, RIGHT-WING MEDIA GOES MAINSTREAM

By Bianca Fortis

Though conservative media has existed for decades, the presidency of Donald Trump has allowed for the proliferation of the right-wing media into the mainstream. That Trump considers any news that doesn’t suit his needs to be “fake” has helped right-wing media, typically cast to the edges of the political periphery, thrive in the current climate.

There are three notable ways in which the media landscape has morphed since Trump first announced his campaign, according to Angelo Carusone, the president of the watchdog group Media Matters.

First, what Carusone calls the “leapfrog phenomenon”: Trump’s ability to amplify fringe voices and inject misinformation into the public discourse simply by retweeting something or making offhand comments, thus leapfrogging over the traditional channels through which conspiracy theories typically spread.

Second, fragmentation: During the presidential campaign, hardcore conservative websites suddenly found themselves vying for Trump’s attention and arguing among themselves. That led to them splintering off from one another, demonstrating tribal behavior. Fragmentation inevitably leads to extremism, because websites can only keep their smaller audiences engaged by becoming more extreme, Carusone said.

And finally, there’s fake news. Right-wing message boards serve as factories for conspiracy theories, which are then written up as news by fake news websites that are typically only after clicks and are designed to mislead readers into thinking they are real. Those stories are then posted to Facebook and other social media platforms where they saturate the internet with lies.

“It’s not that the media itself changed, but their relationship to misinformation has changed,” Carusone said. “There are a lot of lies injected into the daily news cycle.”

It’s clear that Trump favors Fox News as his source for information, often tweeting about the network’s ratings and encouraging his followers to watch segments from the network’s morning show “Fox and Friends.” There is evidence that the show influences his agenda: In July “Fox and Friends” incorrectly reported that James Comey had leaked information about meeting with Trump, a claim which Trump repeated on Twitter. Though the show’s hosts issued a correction the following day, the president did not.

Prior to his campaign, Trump was a frequent guest on the network's morning show “Fox and Friends.” There is evidence that the show influences his agenda: In July “Fox and Friends” incorrectly reported that James Comey had leaked information about meeting with Trump, a claim which Trump repeated on Twitter. Though the show’s hosts issued a correction the following day, the president did not.

Prior to his campaign, Trump was a frequent guest on the network’s morning show “Fox and Friends.” Though the show's hosts issued a correction the following day, the president did not.

Trust in the media is at an all-time low, but a recent Pew Research poll shows that a majority of adults still use TV as their main source of news. Another Pew Research poll shows that a majority of adults still use TV as their main source of news. But because Sinclair owns local television stations in markets that reach 72 percent of the country, it’s unwise to allow one company to achieve such a large presence in the local TV news landscape. “It’s bad for competition, it’s bad for media democracy and it’s bad for consumers,” he said.

Karl Frisch, executive director of the consumer watchdog group Allied Progress, said that regardless of Sinclair’s partisanship, it’s unwise to allow one company to achieve such a large presence in the local TV news landscape. “It’s bad for competition, it’s bad for media democracy and it’s bad for consumers,” he said.

Frisch encourages the public to contact the FCC and members of Congress, who can still stop the merger. The FCC has received more than 16 million public comments mostly opposed to rescinding net neutrality and has pressed Sinclair to provide more details about its plans, which leads Frisch to think the merger could be stalled until next year, according to multichannel.com.

Continued on next page
TO OUR READERS

BY JOHN TARLETON

As the Village Voice ends its remarkable run as a print publication, it’s easy to forget how tenuous its early existence was.

Launched from a Greenwich Village apartment in 1955 with $10,000 in seed money from Norman Mailer, the early Voice teetered on the brink of financial ruin throughout its first seven years. It eventually found its footing at the intersection of the cultural, sexual and political upheavals of the 1960s and grew into a behemoth that spawned a whole new genre of “alt-weekly” publications. Its original editors eventually tired of the grind and unloaded the paper for $3 million in 1974, the first of many times the Voice would be bought and sold.

The Indypendent recently marked its 17th anniversary. Our early years if anything were more precarious. We started the paper with a $500 foundation grant to cover the printing costs of our first two black-and-white issues. We were also given free office space by a supporter, which several of us moved into because we had nowhere else to live. From there, the paper was on its own and we had to learn on the fly how to survive and thrive. Unlike the liberal Voice, which eyed the left warily, we embraced it and filed a void in the New York media landscape.

The radical journalists, activists and dreamers who were drawn to The Indy came out of various strands of the left. We generally shared a belief in the proven ability of visionary social movements to change the world for the better while harboring no illusions about the left’s shortcomings and pretensions.

If we had realized at the time how difficult it is to publish a high quality leftwing newspaper on a shoestring budget year after year, we might not have tried. But we persisted. And here we are, all these years later, still publishing while much of the newspaper industry has crashed and burned around us.

But while our continued survival has been something of a miracle, merely surviving isn’t enough. Since Donald Trump’s rise to power last fall, we have responded of a miracle, merely surviving isn’t enough. Since Donald Trump’s rise to power last fall, we have responded to voices and opinions that have been historically excluded from the mainstream. And there are still newspapers like The New York Times that are not alone.

The Indy is a paper of ours and its rapid growth is in keeping with a resurgent interest we’ve seen in recent years in left ideas and politics. We’re still operating on a lean budget in which we make every dollar go as far as we can. The only way we can sustain this growth is with the support of more of our readers.

To that end, you can sign up to become a monthly donor at patreon.com/indypendent. Giving through Patreon is quick and easy and in return we have many gifts on our Patreon page to share with you as tokens of our appreciation.

The Voice’s hulking red plastic boxes will soon fall empty, a reminder that a free press isn’t free even if the newspaper is. At the youthful age of 17, we believe our best work lies ahead of us and we will be able to reach increasingly larger numbers of people with it. Thank you for everything you do to make that possible.

John Tarleton is the editor-in-chief and a co-founder of The Indypendent.

VILLAGE VOICE

Continued from page 4

information, are different on a screen, snapping quick bits off the chyron instead of slowing down to concentrate on a long-form story with nuance and detail. The lack of revenue and demand for immediacy online mean writers usually don’t make enough money to research in-depth stories, and they are often posted with minimal editing. For all the “you can be the media” rhetoric and complaints about “gatekeepers,” there’s value in an article that’s been knowledgeably reported, written well, and professionally edited and fact-checked.

More important socially, print provides a common, public point of reference. Like it or not, agree or disagree, you see the headlines on the subway, and people you know and many you don’t know will be talking about it, far more than in the morass of myriad niche markets and insular subcultures on the web. The difference is akin to that between the specialization of a website for gay men who like Asian bears, and the catholicity of a small-city queer bar that draws in both gay men, lesbians and the artier local heteros.

That’s what the Village Voice was to New York City for decades. It will continue to publish online, and I hope it succeeds — not least because I hope to continue writing for it regularly — but its end as a printed newspaper is a tragedy for the city.

FAKE NEWS

Continued from previous page

NET NEUTRALITY IN PERIL

Advocates are also concerned that the FCC will roll back net neutrality, the “1st Amendment of the internet” that prevents large telecommunications companies from controlling online content and requires that all traffic be treated equally. If this were to happen, the nation’s largest internet service providers — Verizon, Comcast, AT&T — would be able to block and censor websites and charge extra fees for faster service, leaving smaller sites at a competitive disadvantage.

Asked about solutions to the right-wing media takeover, Media Matters’ Angelo Carusone encourages people to speak up within their own social circles and online networks.

“Of course you don’t need to become a hall monitor for the internet,” he said. “But being silent against active misinformation and lies creates a clear landing strip for lies to be promoted.”

It’s also necessary, of course, to support independent media, which typically lacks the deep coffers that benefit right-wing and corporate-owned outlets. Progressive alternatives including the daily television and radio news show Democracy Now!, Manhattan Neighborhood Network and Brooklyn’s BRIC TV, WBAI-99.5 FM and podcasts like “Chapo Trap House” and “Street Fight” are a boon to voices and opinions that have been historically excluded from the mainstream. And there are still newspapers like The Indypendent, determined to persist.
The Indy is growing like never before, but we can only sustain this growth with your support. Go to patreon.com/indypendent and sign up as an Indy Patron for as little as $2 per month. You will be eligible to participate in our annual conference call in which we discuss the direction of the paper and to receive these rewards for your support.

$2 per month:  
Indypendent bumper sticker

$5 per month:  
1-year gift subscription

$10 per month:  
a free commemorative Women’s March poster  
from Indy illustrator Christine Larsen + 1-year subscription

$15 per month:  
Tote bag + 1-year subscription + Women’s March poster + bumper sticker

$25 per month:  
A copy of Naomi Klein’s No Is Not Enough  
or the contemporary classic Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA  
+ tote bag + 1-year subscription + Women’s March poster + bumper sticker

$50 per month:  
Dinner with Indy editors + No Is Not Enough or Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA  
+ tote bag + 1-year subscription + Women’s March poster + bumper sticker

$100 per month:  
Your own personalized Indy cover +  
Dinner with Indy editors + No Is Not Enough or Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA  
+ tote bag + 1-year subscription + Women’s March poster + bumper sticker

SIGN UP TODAY!

BECOME AN INDY PATRON

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或拨打212-904-1282。
CONCON PROS & CONS

NEW YORK STATE VOTERS TO DECIDE THE RISKS OF CALLING A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION THIS NOVEMBER

BY PETER RUGIS

On Nov. 7 voters in New York State will have an opportunity to gamble. Every two decades the option to call a statewide constitutional convention, or ConCon, appears on ballots. It is a chance to enshrine into law new progressive provisions lawmakers are unwilling or unable to enact — campaign finance reforms, term limits on the state legislature and enhanced worker rights and environmental protections.

Lawmakers in Albany can enact constitutional changes subject to voter approval, but a ConCon is “the only mechanism in New York that bypasses the legislature’s gatekeeping power,” said J.H. Snider, who runs the New York State Constitutional Convention Clearinghouse. He sees this year’s vote on a potential ConCon as a much-needed opportunity to clean up the state’s foundational text.

“The constitution needs to be modernized,” Snider said of the 43-page document. “It’s a cesspool. Nobody reads it. It’s way too long. It’s full of obsolete laws.” The ConCon “provides a unique democratic function in New York. People may decide they want to exercise that right or not, but they should understand that right.”

If voters give the ConCon the go-ahead this November, the following year they will have the ability to elect delegates, three for each of New York’s 63 Senate districts and 15 statewide. On April 2, 2019 the ConCon would convene in Albany. Any changes to the existing constitution, which dates back to 1894 and was last altered in 1938, will be up to voters to ratify. Delegates can either elect to substitute their constitutional alterations on ballots as an entirely new constitution or as a series of amendments to be approved or struck down individually.

“We know that our democracy is broken here in New York,” said Dick Dadey of the government watchdog Citizen Union, which supports the ConCon. “Corruption is rampant. Voter turnout is low. Money is determining the outcome of too many of our political battles, be they legislative fights or elections. The machinery of our democracy is so obsolete and varied — warn Albany’s swampy culture of corruption could subsume attempts at reform and the convention could have quite the opposite outcome its advocates intend. The very systemic problems that ConCon supporters want to alter could corrupt the ConCon process itself. There is no limit on campaign expenditures on ballot measures or on donations to political action committees in New York, for instance, and contributions made 19 days before elections are exempt from disclosure until after tallies are complete.

“The money that is going to be wired into the process from large financial institutions is going to be quite extraordinary,” said Mike Fabricant, vice president of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), a union that represents 27,000 faculty and staff at the City University of New York. “We do not, at this moment, have the power to push back against that kind of money.”

There are also a lot of known unknowns surrounding the ConCon, including what statutes the legislature will enact on the delegate selection process. Will potential delegates’ party affiliation appear beside their names on the ballot, as it has in the past? Will parties run slates for the 15 statewide delegate slots or will voters have the opportunity to vote for candidates individually. Ironically, elected officials are eligible to run and even receive parallel salaries, which could nullify the ConCon’s chances of bypassing the legislature.

SUPPORTERS OF A CONCON SEE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PERFORM A BROKEN STATE GOVERNMENT, WHILE OPPONENTS WARN ALBANY’S SWAMPY CULTURE OF CORRUPTION COULD SUBSUME ATTEMPTS AT REFORM.

“Con, con, con: the ConCon is a con,” said Donna Lieberman of the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU). Lieberman raises another issue with the process that undermines the likelihood the convention will represent the will of the people: delegates will be elected from Senate districts carried out to benefit Republicans who narrowly control the State Senate in an otherwise solidly liberal state. “We don’t object inherently to the notion of using State Senate districts [to determine delegates], but the districts have been gerrymandered in such a way as to frustrate any illusion of this being a convention determined on the basis of one person, one vote,” Lieberman said.

Fearing the worst, cats and dogs are working together to dissuade the electorate from rolling the dice. Along with NYCLU, the Working Families Party has teamed up with the Conservative Party, Planned Parenthood with anti-choice groups. LGBT rights advocates, unions and environmental organizations have joined forces with the likes of the State Rifle and Pistol Association. Together they’ve formed a broad coalition calling itself New Yorkers Against Corruption.

“We’re aligned with groups we don’t traditionally agree with and they certainly don’t agree with us, but I think we’re on the right track,” said Mike Long, Chairman of the Conservative Party. “We have a pretty good constitution. It has nothing to do with the corruption that goes on in our state. You can have all the constitutional conventions in the world and pass all the laws that you want to make tougher penalties, but there will always be people who fall into the corrupt path of life. Corruption alone is not an excuse to open a can of worms and throw the baby out with the bath water.”

One might think of the effort to put the kibosh on the ConCon as a kind of stand-off between different interest groups. Each wants to protect the niche they have carved out within New York’s political ecosystem and each is fearful a ConCon will present an opening for new or existing rivals to exploit.

“The people who are against this are the people who have a great deal of power right now and are essentially protecting the status quo,” said Dick Dadey of Citizens Union. “People who protect the status quo have a lot to lose if this convention is convened and the power structure is realigned.”

Many of the groups opposing the ConCon today were once some of its greatest advocates and have gained the most from past conventions. In 1894, amid the burgeoning conservation movement, a “forever wild” provision was added to the constitution that shields the Adirondacks and Catskills from development. The 1938 convention added amendments safeguarding the right to collectively bargain, protected pensions for state employees and placed the onus on the state to provide for those in need — a law later interpreted as a right to shelter for the homeless.

During the 1938 convention, “people responded to the material circumstances of their lives,” said PSC’s Mike Fabricant. “They were in depression. Many were not close to starvation; they were starving. ... Movements emerged out of the drop in the market and those movements carried forward a reform agenda. We don’t have those movements presently.”

Fabricant is not unique among labor leaders, particularly those who represent state employees, in urging for what he calls as a “tactical retreat” from the ConCon. Much to the ire of budget hawks in Albany, New York is essentially forbidden from defaulting on its pension obligations thanks to the 1938 convention. Given the legislature’s willingness to chip away at retirement funds — over the past 40 years they’ve gradually established a six-tier system in which new hires on the bottom rung receive a fraction of what their older counterparts cash out with — pensions are not a subject public employee unions want to open up for debate.

“Many on Wall Street and off see pensions as a
A sharp-witted indictment of our broken political system and a vision for a socialist alternative that is truly by and for the people.

“The perpetual choice between the corrupt Republican Party or the inept Democratic Party has left millions of people without a real alternative in the contests that are supposed to determine our political representation. With wit and clarity, Katch argues for social movements, political activism, and socialism as the alternatives we need to win the world we want. Get this book!”
—Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, author, From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation
By Astha Rajvanshi

As Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the White House’s plan to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program on the morning of Sept. 5, the attorneys at the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights (NMCIR) gathered around to talk about what to do next.

Many of their clients made up some of the 800,000 Dreamers who had arrived in the United States as children and found legal means to stay in the country through the Obama-era executive action also known as DACA.

After the program was introduced in 2012, NMCIR worked to get over 400 people DACA status, and their clients had returned every two years to renew it. “They were a part of our family,” says Angela Fernandez, the executive director of NMCIR.

By noon, NMCIR had called each and every one of them to tell them the news and talk them through the next steps. The recipients were told to check the expiration date on their status — if it expired on, or before, March 8 of next year, they had to come into the office urgently to fill out their paperwork by Oct. 4, the expiration for renewal set by the Department of Justice.

“The most insidious part of it was that a lot of people are not aware of what can happen to them,” Fernandez said. “800,000 people go out of status from one day to the next. It’s the cruelty of it; the complete disregard for the fact that these people are human.”

The announcement to end DACA has caused a huge stir across the United States, with thousands of affected families and friends rallying support for the Dreamers. Many community and legal organizations like NMCIR, major businesses, religious leaders, Democrats, and even some Republicans are now appealing to Congress, which has been tasked by the Trump administration to legalize DACA or find legal means to stay in the country through the Obama-era executive action also known as DACA.

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Fernandez told The Independent that getting a protection bill for Dreamers approved in Congress would involve a range of tactics — many of which are already being implemented on the local level. For example, on the day that Sessions announced the repeal, 34 DACA recipients got arrested in front of Trump Tower, there was a hunger strike in Washington, D.C. and many marched out of schools, jobs and homes to protest on the streets.

“All of this elevates the issue and shows that people are willing to make a sacrifice for it with their bodies,” said Fernandez.

But on a strategic level, Fernandez said it was crucial to do an analysis of how many votes were in support of the bill from both the Republicans and the Democrats. “Then, we can inundate the office of the reps who are in-between, or do sit-ins in their offices, or find out when their district visits and town hall meetings are held to ask them, ‘Are you going to support the bill?’,” Fernandez said. “If they don’t support it, we need to call them out on it.”

While it was encouraging to see that Democratic leaders Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi were working towards a deal with President Trump to extend protections for those under DACA, Fernandez believes that only a combination of advocacy efforts and public awareness will force the hand of Congress.

“My main concern is publicly we’re going to see a lot of political jujitsu,” she said. “Trump is the master of smoke in mirrors. It’s important to get enough votes from those in-between by ripping them over the line.”

Fernandez also called on the wider community to show support. If an ally is willing to donate money, for example, they should write a check to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and mail it to their local community organization representing Dreamers.

“How many young people and DACA recipients would have a spare $500 to petition USCIS to extend their status?” she said.

Other ways of showing support included rallying relatives who live in districts where members of Congress need pressure put on them to vote in favor of DACA. Fernandez suggested getting together as a community to do constituency calling, and raising awareness about the issue.

And finally, she said, “Just be kind and loving to your undocumented neighbors.”
SOME PLACES YOU CAN FIND

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GOOD RIDDANCE TO CONFEDERATE GENERALS & OTHER UNDESERVING HONOREES FROM THE PAST. HERE’S A GUIDE TO LOCAL MONUMENTS THAT HONOR HEROES WE CAN ADMIRE.

WALT WHITMAN
The author of Leaves of Grass is now wandering in the woods upstate. A walking, full-size bronze figure of Walt Whitman soars through the trees near Park, New York, cabaret was the legacy of his poetry. Unveiled in 1940, the monument by Jo Davidson is located only a few miles outside the city. The park, which houses a museum dedicated to the Underground Rail Road and a zoological garden, provides a perfect setting for the author’s epic "Civil War" and "Leaves of Grass," the most famous of his works.

HARRIET TUBMAN
The Harriet Tubman Monument is a portrait sculpture of the Underground Rail Road conductor and celebrate of his poetry. Unveiled in 1940, the monument by Jo Davidson is located only a few miles outside the city. The park, which hosts a museum dedicated to the Underground Rail Road and a zoological garden, provides a perfect setting for the author’s epic "Civil War" and "Leaves of Grass," the most famous of his works.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS
Overlooking the boulevard that bears his name, the Frederick Douglass Monument is a monumental statue of the man who was a key figure in the abolition movement. Unveiled in 1982, the statue was designed by Neural Kandah and inaugurated in 2011. The figure's wide-brimmed hat honors the man who fled slavery as a young man and settled in the North, where he became one of the most influential African Americans of the 19th century. Located at the southeast corner of Central Park, the monument is accompanied by a series of benches created by artist Agnes Miller.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
In many respects, Eleanor Roosevelt lived a momentous life as her husband Franklin D. Roosevelt. She conditioned the role of women in an era when the ceiling wasn't glass but solid as the timber over the American domestic nest. Fiercely independent, Roosevelt was a vocal champion of rights for workers, women and minority populations. Located inside Riverside Park at West 72nd St. and 122nd Street and St. Nicholas Avenue. Unveiled in 2008, the larger-than-life bronze sculpture bears witness to Tubman's accomplishments as a freedom fighter. Born in 1822, she rescued approximately 70 enslaved people and them in the North. Unveiled in 1940, the monument is accompanied by a series of benches created by artist Agnes Miller.

VLADIMIR LENIN
A heroic-sized statue of Vladimir Lenin was kept installed atop the Red Square Communist leader's memorial from the city: Lenin has found a new home in the South of Canal Street, monuments of Confucius and Lin Zexu voice the various traditions of mainland China and Taiwan. Significantly, the legacy of this cultural divide between backers of mainland China and Taiwan is still visible today.

Text by Federico di Pasqua
Photos by Dean Patterson
Map by Mariel Taramba
The climate crisis is often imagined as a sudden, all-encompassing, simultaneous collapse in which agriculture fails, the seas flood in, disease spreads and human civilization crumbles into a Hobbesian war of all against all. But in reality, some crises will appear more immediately and others will take a long time to arrive, and if we act with speed and purpose some can still be avoided.

In the near term, perhaps starting in the 2020s or 2030s, the foremost problem will probably be a new, climate-driven urban crisis of disinvestment, abandonment and depopulation caused by rising sea levels and large inundating storms that will leave rotting urban infrastructure. As the water rises and the floods increase in severity and regularity, the once posh shoreline will be the new ghetto.

A new, climate-driven urban crisis could have major negative impacts on other parts of the global economy. The collapse of coastal real estate markets could trigger broader crises in financial markets while loss of the communication and transportation links provided by major cities could hurt the real economy. A climate-driven economic depression is not out of the question.

Even if we drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions and stripped CO2 from the atmosphere so as to stabilize temperature increases at no more than 2°C above the 1999 baseline, we are locked in for significantly higher sea levels. Melting Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, mountain glacier loss and the expansion of ocean water volume due to its higher expansion are slowly but steadily reshaping property edges. During Hurricane Sandy the storm surge inundations caused by large storm surges. These levels and large inundating storms that will leave rotting urban infrastructure. As the water rises and the floods increase in severity and regularity, the once posh shoreline will be the new ghetto.

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Here comes the ocean

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Storms vs. urban infrastructure

The real threat is not so much the slow and steady increase of average sea levels but rather, the major inundations caused by large storm surges. These floods damage the infrastructure as a whole, not just its edges. During Hurricane Sandy the storm surge that hit Lower Manhattan was 9.23 feet higher than a typical high tide.

When infrastructure gets damaged, even unharmed properties that depend on the damaged electrical, transportation and water systems lose value. A few inundations in quick succession could start a process of combined physical and socioeconomic decline. As the time and tremendous expense needed to repair water-damaged underground electric and telecoms lines, subways and rail lines, drinking water and wastewater treatment systems and power stations becomes apparent, property owners will start panic selling.

When it becomes clear that sea walls were not constructed in time and vital infrastructure has started to collapse, property values will fall, possibly triggering broader financial panics. If properly planned for, one can imagine how such problems could be managed. But if the current denial continues until markets are caught unaware, there could be regional real estate panics and, flowing from those, major financial losses.

New York City’s Department of Finance recently expanded the total assessed value of the city’s property for fiscal year 2017 at more than $1 trillion. That is real money, enough to help trigger problems in financial markets more broadly.

Collapsed property values means a collapsed tax base, which means local government will be hard pressed to make costly infrastructure repairs. And it is the infrastructure as a whole that property values depend on.

Hurricane Katrina, which famously hit New Orleans in 2005 and was quickly followed up by Hurricane Rita, offers a hint of what to expect.

Professor Bernard Weinstein, at the University of North Texas, has estimated the cost of those combined storms as $250 billion in both direct and indirect damage. Weinstein found: 113 offshore oil and gas platforms destroyed, 457 oil and gas pipelines damaged and almost as much oil spilled as during the Exxon Valdez disaster. Katrina destroyed almost half of New Orleans’ levees, wiped out most of the sugar crop and wreaked havoc on the oyster industry. Insurance companies paid out $80 billion.

Most shockingly, Katrina killed 1,836 people across the Gulf, most of them senior citizens who were trapped in houses or abandoned in nursing homes.

As the water rises and the floods increase in severity and regularity, the once posh shoreline will be the new ghetto. Loading...
corruption and poor planning. One has to assume that as the future impacts of climate change become obvious, many more people will migrate inland or attempt to go abroad.

**INFRASTRUCTURAL CHOKE POINTS**

The geography of global capitalism relies disproportionately on coastal cities as seats of commerce, trade, research, transportation, and education. They are the nodes that link the world economy together.

Much industrial production and the global food system, for example, depends not only on what happens in factories and fields but also on a small number of infrastructure bottlenecks along international supply chains at key ports, airports, road and rail links and politically sensitive maritime straits like the Panama and Suez canals.

A recent study by the British think tank Chatham House found that 55 percent of the global grain trade passes through one of fourteen “chokepoints,” all of which are vulnerable to extreme weather like local flooding, rising sea levels and the associated political and military conflict.

Shut enough of the chokepoints and the global flow of food will be threatened. Chatham House found that about 20 percent of global wheat exports pass through the Turkish Straits. Similarly, more than 2.5 percent of global soybean exports pass through the Straits of Malacca, which run between Malaysia and Indonesian.

The world got a glimpse of how local flooding can impact global supply chains in 2011 when flooding in Thailand inundated much of Bangkok, including more than 1,000 industrial facilities that made everything from cars and cameras to hard drives. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction estimates the Thai floods reduced global industrial production by 2.5 percent. The world’s top three insurance companies paid out $5.3 billion in claims.

**THE PERMANENT EMERGENCY**

As coastal cities slide into ruin and those who can migrate inland do so, inequality and relative deprivation will increase. Those left behind will be angry and have little stake in maintaining a social order that leaves them in a sacrifice zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi  ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi  ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi  ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi  ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi ce zone. Who will be the last ing a social order that leaves them in a sacrifi 339x428 to 765x1044
Dystopian themes abound in popular culture. In a world wracked by climate change, war, mass migration and a growing gulf between the super-rich and everyone else, imagining the worst has become its own industry. But what might it feel like to live and work in a future society that has begun to heal a damaged planet even as people continue to be their messy, imperfect selves?

**By Nicholas Powers**

**U.S.—MEXICAN BORDER**

“People are dying,” the reporter’s voice cracked. At his feet, skeletal families raised thin arms. He pointed to the refugees around him, tens of thousands, panting with cracked lips, dying in the dust. Their eyes gazed north, to the soldiers and the great wall barring their path.

“Heat waves have destroyed Mexico’s crops and left a nation on the move,” the reporter said, kneeling beside a father cradling his child. “These refugees camped here along the border seeking entry into the United States, or simply food.” From the other side of the border, the chants of American protesters echoed.

The father stood on shaky legs and walked to the wall. Border guards aimed their rifles at him, holler ed for him to stop. He held his baby up to them. More parents lifted their children, limp as dolls. They pleaded loudly until the father, in a spasm of a tears and grief, threw his baby over the wall.

Reflexively, a soldier aimed his gun at it as if it were a clay pe- geon. Horrified screams followed as someone in the crowd on the American side caught it.

The reporter tried to talk but broke down. Within minutes, a photo circled the world of a U.S. soldier, aiming a rifle at a baby flying through the air.

**Pennsylvania**

Every day, they stepped into a rose-colored dawn, leaned against The Beast, quietly drank coffee. Lorenzo knew their names: Leo the wrestler turned engineer, Stanley the pimpled, opiate junkie turned electrician. Politeness separated them. They didn’t know each other, except for Sage, who never shut up.

“It is sacred work to save the Earth,” he chimed this morning, patting each of their shoulders. His large eyes

**New York**

**Twenty Years Later**

Kisses flew like butterflies. Lorenzo caught one, winked at the couple who blew it and handed it to his boss, An- nie. She took it and pretended to powder her cheeks. Confetti swirled around their hard hats. Crowds cheered.

“This is incredible,” Lorenzo yelled over the noise. She patted and pointed to the heavy tractor, nicknamed The Beast. It looked like a house on tank treads. The Gover- nor sat on top and blew the horn. Lorenzo knew they de- pended on that damn thing. Dozens of road crews were following the tractors as they stamped new solar panels over old highways. His team was going from New York to the Mexican border, hauling and wiring panels to soak in sunlight and churn out electricity.

“That your girl?” Annie asked and Lorenzo saw Nefeesha’s big Afro and wide eyes as she waved.

She rugged her black shirt with the white question mark. It was her favorite piece of clothing. In bed, she stretched it like a trampoline between her knees. They both were undocumented and the shirt expressed what she felt, that nothing was stable in their lives. Nothing.

Until the Green Deal. On the news, the President said if they stop carbon emissions, they can stop the heat waves. The government needed millions of workers and offered citizenship in return for service. Lorenzo signed up for a road job. He didn’t like being away for months but in the end, he’d be a citizen and his girlfriend would not wear a question mark to bed each night.

**Sage was one of those workers who talked about the solar highway as if it was the Second Coming of Christ**

Lorenzo woke early. He leaned over the rail of The Beast and stared at the highway, knowing that somewhere at the end of it was his citizenship. On the road he saw a young black woman with thick arms covered in tattoos, whose name was Andre. The government needed millions of workers and offered citizenship in return for service. Lorenzo signed up for a road job. He didn’t like being away for months but in the end, he’d be a citizen and his girlfriend would not wear a question mark to bed each night.

The President is panicked we won’t get the highway done in time,” she said. “The scientists are panicked the world’s gonna burn up. They need more labor. They of- fered early leave to nonviolent prisoners if they work on the road. This one’s name is Andre.”

“Who the fuck knows?” Lorenzo laughed, climbing on The Beast, boots clanging on the ladder.

Leo slid up to him. “Who’s the gangbanger?” he asked. Lorenzo could smell the alcohol on his breath but he kept his gaze on Andre. She stared at the highway’s horizon. He knew what she was looking for and how far away it was.
“Get the hell away from me,” Andre shouted and pushed Sage back. Everyone looked up. Oh no, here it is. She’s going to pop.

“I don’t want to hear that shit,” she panted, as her hard hat rolled on the ground. The crew giggled as Sage held his book, face red as an apple. Annie stopped The Beast. It shuddered to a halt, its tank treads steaming. She climbed down, scooped up the hard hat and thrust it back to Andre. She pointed at the road that never seemed to end.

They began exchanging words but the others couldn’t hear what they said. It was like a strange pantomime of empathy. Annie made a motion as if holding bars, she tapped her finger against her head then pointed back to Andre, who nodded. Annie walked back to The Beast, told Sage to knock it off with the preaching and climbed back into the driver’s seat. Curious, the men looked at each other. Lorenzo scaled the ladder and asked, “What did you say to her?”

She stared at the road. “I told her I was once in jail too.”

The crowds between cities grew thin; one or two supporters who used their “Solar Hope” placards to fan themselves in the heat and then no one. Just road.

Annie drove The Beast up hills and into valleys, around mountains and through towns. The road seemed endless and the distance sapped their strength. At the end of their shifts, they would all climb the vehicle and look up and down the new highway that glowed like gold at sunset.

They were worried. Only a few test runs had been done. If the solar road didn’t turn on, they’d be laughingstocks, the president voted out and the Green Deal done. The Conservatives would regain the White House. Lorenzo’s citizenship offer, cancelled. Andre thrown back behind bars. But it was Sage who stared at the new highway the longest. “The planet,” he’d mutter. “The planet.”

The Beast moved across the land; it squatted, gears squealed and when it rose again, new panels were stamped on the cement. The road crew kneeled like monks; Stanley and Lorenzo bolted the solar cells. Andre ran cable to the grid. The interconnected system would fuel the electric, self-driving cars and buses, even some of the small cities by the highway.

Bolt. Wire. Cable. The rhythm of work hypnotized their bodies. They woke at dawn. They sweated. They pulled muscles. They cursed the sun that toasted their arms and necks until at night, when they undressed, they looked like zebras.

Leo, showed his tan to Andre and asked if it made him “black.” Stanley told him to shut up but he kept at it until Andre came over, grabbed his crotch and said, “Nope, not yet.” They howled at Leo who ironically said, “I’m so racist.” His laughter quivered and he stood.

Continued on the next page
ROAD TO THE SUN
Continued from previous page

sincerely, seeing himself through their eyes, and left.

Stanley looked at his pocket mirror. His face was clearing up. Earlier he wanted to quit and call his dealer. But now the craving for drugs was a faint echo in his body.

He asked Lorenzo about the citizenship-for-service deal. “It was a better deal than my parents got,” he responded in a flat, monotone voice. “They died at the Massacre at the Wall.”

The crew flinched. A heat wave had burned crops in Mexico and starving people pikel at the U.S. border. The president at the time ordered soldiers to shoot anyone who tried to sneak across. Desperate parents threw babies over the wall. Others gave their kids to charity workers; some of them, later, were adopted by Americans. One of them was Lorenzo.

“It is an odd feeling, my friends,” Lorenzo said. “To work so hard, to save the life of a nation that destroyed my family.”

Andre rubbed her ankle monitor. “Tell me about it.”

**ALABAMA**

“Hey mi amor,” said Nefeesha. She was glowing. Lorenzo cupped the cell phone to his face. “What’s going on?”

He dropped his phone. “Oh, my God. Oh, my God!” He she showed him a pregnancy test. Positive.

Lorenzo left the trailer on wobbly legs, heart pounding, and stood on the road. The moon overhead was bright. It cast his shadow like a compass needle that pointed back to New York City.

He held up the phone to the moon. She was on the screen, rubbing her navel. “You’re going to be a father.”

**ARKANSAS**

A boiling wind rolled through Little Rock. The road crew sweated as crowds cheered on one side of the street. On the opposite sidewalk were protesters, calling them traitors and spitting racial epithets.

They laid solar panels on the city highway. Huge light boats beamed down, they looked like actors on a theater stage. Sage was signing autographs and giving the finger to the protesters. “Hey, Hollywood,” Stanley shouted. “Want to help us out here?”

Sage kept on autographing a solar highway pamphlet for a fan, but when he turned darkness swallowed the city. Screams. Buildings draped in shadows. Eyes of shock. Eyes of rage.

People used cell phones as flashlights. Cars slowed to a crawl. Annie was on her walkie talkie, gesturing furiously. “I say yes. Pull the switch.”

She hung up. “The heatwave knocked out grids from here to Baltimore,” she said. “The mayors are panicked about riots. They want us to turn on the solar road.”

Scrambling, Andre plugged cables. Stanley and Leo read the meters. Lorenzo shouted through a megaphone at the crowd, “Get ready!” She put her cell phone into the mic. Michael Jackson’s “Billie Jean” blasted a rolling bass and snappy drum.

She gave Andre a thumbs up. The solar road brightened like a heavenly path. People awed, stepped on it lightly at first and then firmly. Some jumped. Annie bobbed as Michael Jackson played from her megaphone. People began to boogie. The city became an ethereal dance floor. Leo moonwalked for the pointing crowds. Lorenzo felt Nefeesha’s call. He picked up his phone and saw her in New York, belly large. In the background, people danced on a bright solar street. Stanley, fingers trembling, called his sister, who stared in shock from the screen then smiled. He panned the camera to show his old friends on the solar road, dancing in the light.

**GEORGIA**

“Did you see this?” Sage showed Annie his tablet. On it a man wearing an American flag as a mask said the solar road was a threat to the nation. He yelled it was the first “Did you see this?” Sage showed Annie his tablet.

“True patriots will never surrender.” He cocked his rifle and pulled at him like a magnet. He strode down the highway, walked a flight to New York that night. But he felt a strange memory pull at him like a magnet. He strode down the highway, walked

“Welcome to Texas,” Annie shouted. The road crew didn’t answer, the sun ground them down to a rueful forward motion. Bolt. Wire. Cable. They worked with grim faces, scanning the trees out of the corners of their eyes. No National Guard. The silence of the land was as heavy as the heat. The Beast back-fired and they all ducked.

Slowly, they stood and laughed at their paranoia until Sage began to teeter. Blood sprayed from his neck. He tried to walk, left a dark red handprint on the vehicle and fell. Andre screamed. The crew surrounded him but more gunshots rang through the air. They scattered.

**WEST TEXAS**

The National Guard kept the reporters behind the orange cones. They shouted questions, waved microphones and pointed cameras. The road crew squatted by The Beast, staring at the open road. Who’d be next?

The old cement highway stretched like an open grave before them. Sage, Sweet, paint-in-the-ass Sage. They felt the weight of him on their shoulders. Andre got up, took one of the spray cans and palmed the space next to his bloody handprint. She sprayed her handprint next to his. “Sacred Work,” she scrawled, then passed the spray can to Stanley and Lorenzo. They made their mark and gave it to Annie and Leo. Crawling over The Beast, they covered it with handprints. Andre climbed into the cab with Annie, who revved the engine. The crew picked up their tools and drove away to finish the job.

**MISSISSIPPI**

“One man a wearing an American flag as a mask said the solar road was a threat to the nation. He yelled it was the first step in a totalitarian New World Order. The country was going to change its currency to the Amero and fuse with Mexico.”

“True patriots will never surrender.” He cocked his rifle and aimed it at the camera as the video cut out.

Annie sighed wearily. When the crew woke, she showed it to them. A deep chill settled in their limbs. The week was off. Andre smashed her finger with a hammer. Leo tripped over wires and skinned his face. Everyone was lashing out at the tree line.

“I don’t want to get my head blown off,” Leo complained. The next day a big-bellied sheriff gave them bullet proof vests. But they were too bulky to work in. By evening, the National Guard patrolled the roadside and surveillance drones flew in circles over their heads.

**NEW MEXICO**

The sun set on the highway. Weary and proud, they hugged their tools in. Annie called to Andre, who came with a panel under her armpit. The crew circled them, smiles on their faces.

Annie gave her a folder. “Today you worked your last mile. Here are your release papers. You’re free.”

Andre palmed her face. Leo popped a bottle of champagne and froze fazed out. Andre drained and let some roll down her shirt. She reached into her tool bag for her pliers. The moni-

tor around her ankle fell to the ground. She picked it up and hurled it. Walking slowly, she flung her arms out and then ran as fast as she could. They watched her become a faraway dot inside the setting sun.

**ARIZONA**

Arizona was an oven. Lorenzo had a sonogram image of his child on his hard hat. Leo’s beard was thick as a bush; Stanley’s face was a thin arrowhead of cheekbones and eyes. Andre was riding with Annie in The Beast, corrning her hair.

The sun was low and hard as if they worked under a tan-

ning lamp. Sweat streamed down their necks and arms. They stripped off their shirts. Groped water bottles that flashed like scicles.

The Beast laid panels on the dusty highway. Bolt. Wire. Cable. They followed it through desert and sunburnt rock, up slopes and down hills. Behind them, far behind, new cars and buses were being propelled by the energy of the road itself. The Green Deal was a success. They were joyful but that world was far away. Out here, another heat wave cooked them into jerky.

Dark clouds made a charcoal smudge in the sky. Cool wind ruffled their hair. Storm shadows swept over the land. A few drops of rain sweetened their mouths. More drops and a hard rain fell.

They turned their hats upside down like buckets and drank from the sky. They splashed each other’s faces. They felt all the miles of work washed from them as if by nature’s holiness. They yelled Sage’s name.

**U.S.–MEXICAN BORDER**

They all rode The Beast to the Mexican border. A tornado of rose petals flew. Parents lifted children to touch the handprints on it. Crowds cheered.

Mexico’s solar road crew greeted them. They hugged the haggard men and women, shared stories and cases of Tecate beer. At the ceremony, an environmental scientist took the mi-

crophone and said, “We have done a great thing here. Carbon emissions are plummeting. The Earth has turned a corner!”

Lorenzo left early. Nefeesha was due and he was catching a flight to New York that night. But he felt a strange memory pull at him like a magnet. He strode down the highway, walked

over new solar panels, trying to pin it down. Where? What?

He turned onto a small path that ended in dust. The memory slid into place. He was here again; the Massacre at the Wall, where his mother and father died. Following the faded images of the past, he entered an abandoned building. He touched the door frame gently.

His phone buzzed. On it he saw Nefeesha, her face exhaust-

ed but happy. “I have someone I want you to meet,” she said. Lorenzo stood dizzily between two worlds, the old and the new, cradling the phone with his child’s face in his hands. The newborn’s screams echoed through the ruins.
A Collaborative Reading and Writing Project


RICHARD GREENEAN, a long-time internationalist, is best known for his studies and translations of novelist and revolutionary Victor Serge (1890-1947).

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ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL FEMINISM?

The H-Spot: The Feminist Pursuit of Happiness
by Jill Filipovic
Nation Books, 2017

The Mother of All Questions
by Rebecca Solnit
Haymarket Books, 2017

By Lauren Kaori Gurley

New York Times opinion writer Jill Filipovic recalls some of the happiest moments of her early adulthood were spent alone in taxis, speeding down the FDR in Manhattan, watching the sun rise over factories, billboards and bridges along the East River after late nights spent with friends or lovers. Like many college-educated American women, Filipovic — an upwardly mobile NYU graduate and self-identified “overachiever” — was hit with conflicting societal pressures as she reached the latter half of her twenties: to find a man she wanted to marry, have children, break “glass ceilings” in her workplace, be thin and normatively attractive, possess a healthy relationship to food and an active sex life. Fulfilling all of these expectations felt impossible at times, but in those early morning hours looking out at the city lights, Filipovic would tell herself, that even if she wasn’t happy, at least she had come this far.

In her new book, The H-Spot: The Feminist Pursuit of Happiness (Nation Books, 2017), first-time author Filipovic often loses sight of her relative position of power as a white woman with a graduate degree as she argues that we need a revamping of the institutions of marriage, parenthood, labor and sex toward the feminist pursuit of happiness, and away from basic equality. Her vision comes in contrast to another recent release, The Mother of All Questions (Nation Books, 2017), first-time author Filipovic often loses sight of her relative position of power as a white woman with a graduate degree as she argues that we need a revamping of the institutions of marriage, parenthood, labor and sex toward the feminist pursuit of happiness, and away from basic equality. Her vision comes in contrast to another recent release, The Mother of All Questions, which calls “an old hierarchical arrangement,” is an inherently “conservative” institution. And in her collections opening and title essay “The Mother of All Questions,” Solnit harshly critiques the expectation that childbearing should be a requisite for womanhood, discussing her own experiences with men and women who have shamed her for forgoing motherhood. “One of the reasons people lock onto motherhood as a key to feminine identity is the belief that children are the way to fulfill your capacity to love. But there are so many things to love besides one’s own offspring,” she writes. In her typical ruminative style, Solnit weaves history and current events to provide thoughtful analysis of misogyny in America — but offers little in practical frameworks for overcoming the patriarchy behind it.

2017 is a strange year to discuss the feminist pursuit of happiness, as it will go down in history books as a major setback for women’s rights in the United States, a time when many of the institutions that have promoted and protected women’s social and economic equality have come under attack by the executive and legislative branches. It is also a year when one would expect feminism and its proponents to be on the defense — yet the Jan. 21 Women’s March on Washington, the challenges facing working women in the United States do not all look like those experienced by Filipovic or Solnit. But in The H-Spot, Filipovic attempts to formulate a feminism that could address the issues of the majority of women. Although “the details are different and the struggles are often more pronounced” among poor women of color, the “overarching questions [facing all American women are] similar,” she writes. For Filipovic, who speaks largely from her own perspective (discussing how she made the decisions to marry and forgo motherhood) though also incorporating statistics and interviews, the central questions of feminism today involve sex, marriage, childbirth, work and food. She argues for paid leave and universal childcare — and reports that childless women claim higher levels of happiness than those with offspring. “Sex,” she writes, “is the thing that many women report brings them the most pleasure, and also one that has brought many of us the most pain.” According to Filipovic, a feminist “pleasure-centered public policy” would be directed toward making interpersonal relationships (conventional and non-conventional), motherhood, work and sex pleasurable and fulfilling for all women. While the breadth of her book is extensive, the depth of her discussion of these issues and recommendations remain surface-level — and largely tailored to an audience that looks like herself. If Filipovic wants to improve institutions and social norms, Solnit is ready to throw many of them out, particularly the notion that happiness should be the aim of a feminist movement. “The problem may be a literary one: we are given a single story about what makes a good life, even though not a few who follow that story line have had lives,” For Solnit, marriage, which she calls “an old hierarchical arrangement,” is an inherently “conservative” institution. And in her collections opening and title essay “The Mother of All Questions,” Solnit harshly critiques the expectation that childbearing should be a requisite for womanhood, discussing her own experiences with men and women who have shamed her for forgoing motherhood. “One of the reasons people lock onto motherhood as a key to feminine identity is the belief that children are the way to fulfill your capacity to love. But there are so many things to love besides one’s own offspring,” she writes. In her typical ruminative style, Solnit weaves history and current events to provide thoughtful analysis of misogyny in America — but offers little in practical frameworks for overcoming the patriarchy behind it.
Most people have never heard of Charles W. Leslie or J. Frederic “Fritz” Lohman. It’s a shame when you work so long — over 50 years — to shape a culture and remain largely unappreciated. Simply put, queer art would not be what it is today without these men. The couple saved works that would have otherwise been thrown away, and created a collection of more than 30,000 pieces, according to a press release. In 1987, their gallery became a nonprofit, and by 2011, Leslie (Lohman died in 2009) had a museum on his hands — the first of its kind, their website tells us. “Expanded Visions” celebrates their achievements.

It would have made more sense to call it “Queer Life Through the Ages,” because that’s what you’re getting. Sophia Wallace’s 2009 photo Untitled (Ena and Sin) and Arthur Hammer’s 2005 oil painting Jack and Harvey are quite striking in this respect. Wallace’s features two topless women embracing. We don’t know what their relationship is, but their smiles make us think they’re thrilled to be together.

Another piece challenging typical trans narratives is Empire, a 2015 photo created by AndreTavet — the newly married artists André St. Clair and Tavet Gillson have taken for their collaboration. Through the magic of technology, St. Clair presents as a man and a woman in the same photo. The woman is straddling the man and wearing revealing undergarments. It resembles your average hip-hop cover and could be interpreted as a plea to hip-hop to become more inclusive; a commentary about the nature of low and high art; a playful way of expressing self-love; a protest against the commodification of women’s bodies; a PSA about the dangers of assuming someone’s gender; and a sly way of saying there are already a bunch of queer people in hip-hop and we just don’t know it because they’re too terrified to come out. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that Empire — that popular TV show about queerness in the hip-hop community — was chosen as the title.

Zanele Muholi’s Being series from 2007 and Untitled (Charles and Fritz), a 1975 pastel study for a painting by Marion Pinto, show queer eroticism coexisting with reverence. Muholi’s work — a trio of pictures of black queer women — is as hot as a Sunday in August, but also features, in one photo, facial expressions that would not look out of place on a wedding day. In Pinto’s work, Leslie and Lohman cherish a deep emotional connection while enjoying a sensual experience. Muholi’s work flies in the face of the idea that queer women aren’t sexual, while Pinto’s challenges the idea that queer men are only about emotionless sex.

There are works in “Expanded Visions” that didn’t expand anything but my lack of patience: a photo of a blindfolded replica of a horse (Deborah Bright’s Wild Secret Girl from 1996); a black canvas with protruberances (Harmony Hammond’s Tiny Aperture #3 from 2013); and a childish etching with a sticker (Nicole Eisenman’s Untitled from 2016), among others. I didn’t think these had a strong association with queerness at all, and I didn’t appreciate the visual impact. Maybe I’m just not the right audience.

Originally scheduled to run until May 21, “Expanded Visions” will now be on display until October 29 — which is good because it gives more people the chance to appreciate this couple’s unique contribution. Specifically, I hope queer artists who go ask themselves how they can push boundaries with the same force so many of these artists have.
Place and identity are intimately tied to one another. That’s truer in no other musical genre than hip-hop. Kendrick Lamar reps Compton, Chance the Rapper praises Chicago, even Machine Gun Kelly gives a shout out to the “216,” a reference to his native Cleveland. There’s always a little bit of hometown pride inherent in the representation, as if only a place like home could spawn a talent like these emcees, whose circumstances and experiences make them unique and define them.

On Brick Body Kids Still Daydream, Open Mike Eagle applies microscopic focus to Chicago’s Robert Taylor Homes, where he spent time as a child with his aunt and cousins, painting a grandiose picture of shared experience among communities of color.

The album kicks off with “Legendary Iron Hood,” which finds Open Mike Eagle positioning himself as a superhero. He rattles off X-Men references, saying “ Ain’t nothing gonna stop me now.” The album begins with a daydream, and what kid doesn’t do this exact thing?

This Iron Hood character makes an appearance in the music video for “Brick Body Complex” as a masked Michael Eagle defending a model of three high-rise homes from a faceless white businessman. A young girl holds a sign that reads, “They forgot about the children.” These same kids who would spend days dreaming of superheroes have their homes and very lives threatened. Iron Hood encounters a slew of young, white, wealthy community invaders: a yoga enthusiast, a wax-mustachedoed man, a sunhat-wearing woman sipping juice out of a mason jar.

For Eagle, and for these communities, gentrification is an imminent threat, a form of violence. In the case of the Robert Taylor Homes, the dismantlement of the housing complex as Chicago moved to a low-rise, mixed-income public housing model in the early 2000s — the so-called Plan for Transformation — led to widespread displacement on the city’s South Side.

In the “Brick Body Complex” video, the faceless villain destroys two of the high-rises before he is confronted by Iron Hood. Our villain threatens Iron Hood but our hero is unafraid. Troubled by this defiance, the villain demolishes the third and final high-rise, prompting Iron Hood to fight the villain. In an effort to unmask this raider of homes, Iron Hood unmasks himself as well, and he is left to deal with the police and answer for his own “violence.” You only need to be peripherally aware of the modern day news cycle to know how this story will end.

The song contains a call to attention — an enormous priority for Eagle. He’s currently developing a comedy and music show for Comedy Central with actor Baron Vaughn titled “The New Negroes.” The concept is based on a live show of the same name that seeks to expand and challenge ideas of black entertainment and black life in America. “A lot of times with the faces that people are making, it looks like they are hearing perspectives on things happening in everyday lives in a way they haven’t thought about before,” Eagle told the New York Times in 2016, describing the reaction the show received.

Brick Body Kids Still Daydream seems to have the same goal. Sonically, the album feels intimate. Relaxed beats ride under a calm cadence. Even at his most intense, Eagle feels as if he’s gripping you by the shoulder and looking you in the eyes more than shouting from the rooftops. The album as a whole feels as if Eagle is sitting with you on your front stoop, soothing the breeze. The conversation changes from the impassioned accounts of community goings-on to happy bounts of nostalgia. “95 Radio” portrays a desperate search for a radio in order to hear a song by a group from the neighborhood. The video explores a single community and the cast of characters that inhabit it. Later, Eagle marvels at being on the radio himself: “[A piece of me show feels personal, circled on all sides by used car commercials. It’s worth it though, whole block listenin’…”

Through his hyper-local focus on the Robert Taylor Homes, Eagle reveals the universality of his experience. Gentrification isn’t just impacting Chicago. Just this September, a mass of people, organized by the Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network (BAN), gathered in Crown Heights to protest plans to turn the disused Bedford-Union Armory into luxury apartments. Eagle knows the story well, even though it’s happening in our own backyard half a country away, and he stands in front of us now warning of an unhappy ending for communities under siege.

Brick Body Kids Still Daydream ends with a heart-broken, angry, personal account by Eagle of his aunt’s home being demolished and replaced by an empty lot, as if its mere presence was a detriment. “Who else in America deserves to have that feeling, where else in America will they blow up your village?” Eagle asks, but he already knows the answer: “They say America fights fair, but they won’t demolish your timeshare.”

Black communities painted as violent and problematic are the first victims of urban renewal but, as Eagle notes in his lyrical effigy, neighborhoods are much more complex than the broad strokes that portray them. “It was people there and kids there and drug dealers and church folks,” Eagle raps.

Eagle masterfully calls attention to the destruction of black lives wrought by gentrification. Brick Body Kids Still Daydream is a timely chronicle of a community in crisis and hopefully it reaches an audience with open ears. Eagle wants you to know that the sound of homes being demolished is the “sound of them tearing my body down…” His album is a call for us to stand in the way.

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