

Amaryllis



Spring, 2021

Amaryllis, a newsletter for the Penn South community, was conceived, and has been researched and written by Jane Hogg since 1996.

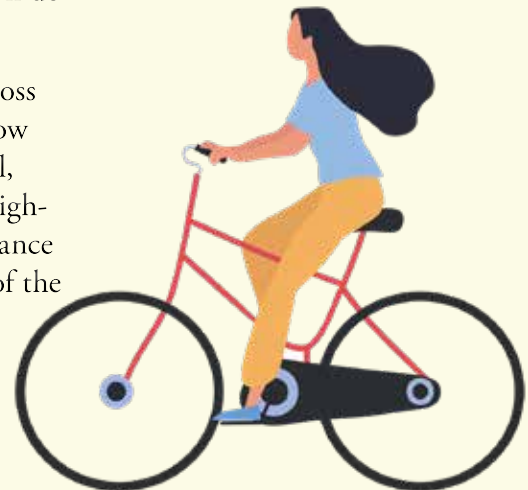
What a Difference a Year Makes

Pre-pandemic, when Second Street, a Japanese retail shop, was preparing to open at 142 West 26th Street, they described themselves as buying and selling gently used clothing. Talking with the manager, she explained their *Hand2Hand* project ensured all garments are re-used in some way. I asked why that mattered; her response was, “It helps reduce global landfill waste.”

Second Street seems to have a re-directed focus—same owners, same location. Currently, it’s a large shop carrying three categories of merchandise; men’s, women’s, and accessories. They boast stocking “better than brand new” second-hand clothing. Curious customers are even given a card showing *Second Street’s* inventory. Dozens of names, neatly alphabetized, range from Balenciaga to Yves Saint Laurent, including my favorite, Issey Miyake.

Still roaming, I shuddered to see *Citi Bike* had installed another location, really l-o-n-g, a few short of seven dozen. I watched a fashionably dressed woman mount a bike, take it up on the pavement, and pedal away. When I told her that the NYC law states that cyclists older than twelve years cannot bike on the sidewalk, she screamed, “I don’t give a damn about laws; I’ll do whatever I want.”

Buy now. See later. *Maximeye Optical* at 200 W. 24th is diagonally across from the *Citi Bike* racks. *Mind Body Project* on the east side of 7th below 23rd Street is now open for business, and a business it is. Chris Stockel, its founder and CEO, describes it as the world’s first meditation and high-intensity fitness experience. He explained his prime objective is to enhance mental and physical health through a unique studio experience. One of the

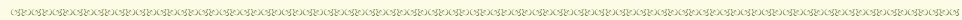




small businesses allowed to open in mid-May, a number of the activities available are given on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Hours of operation are adjusted to meet the flexible schedules of participants; 7:30 to 9:00 AM and 5:30 to 7:00 PM.

Pandemic times have meant some competent craftspeople have started to work from home. Their services are often posted on local bulletin boards. Apartment laundry rooms are also a good place to look, and commercial laundromats often put up notices.

Finding fabric is essential if something is to be sewn. Close by is *Truemart Fabrics* on the south side of 25th, just east of 7th Avenue. Further away, but worth the walk, are several other fabric shops on 8th Avenue between 37th and 38th, and others can be found on 39th between 7th and 8th. ☺



Wandering Chelsea

Excitement came to the south side of 23rd street in the shedded-over area just west of 7th. Early in May, when theaters first opened, the *Gotham Comedy Club* was one of them. First performer? Stand-up comedy star Jerry Seinfeld!

Walking east, after crossing 7th on the south side of 23rd Street, you will soon have new faces... or maybe just new “For Rent” signs. Two multi-windowed curbside shops, *Orange Theory Fitness* and *Peloton*, appear to be paring down within. Gone are their curbside metal benches, long used by weary walkers.

But at least the city is earning money. They charge for film shoots, and Manhattan is a prime location. One week, signs found on lamp posts announced **No Parking from Wednesday 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM**. Two large crew vans were in place, and tables set up on the sidewalk had pots of coffee and bowls of bottled drinks.

At first, I thought I saw a pair of industrious young men with a quick buck in mind, but then I realized they were part of the crew, making sure the morning snacks weren’t snatched. ☺

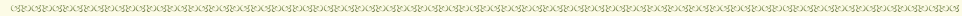


Wandering Chelsea

Wander the area regularly, and you'll see all sorts of new things. The Muhlenberg Library is no longer simply grab-and-go; now they've added another service. Readers can browse book aisles and borrow.

Chelsea just got its own little island. Where? Walk as far west as possible on 14th Street. Mid-May's ribbon-cutting event made the morning news.

City Council Speaker Corey Johnson definitely sees someone who supports many of the district programs most significant to him—Erik Bottcher. In addition to the Speaker's support, Erik Bottcher has also been championed by three Congress people, three NYC assembly members, the Manhattan Borough President, and our state senator. 🍷



Lots of Looking

Need something medical? *Urgent Care* on the north side of 23rd Street, between 6th & 7th. Medical equipment? You'll find it at *C.O. Bigelow* on the 2nd floor at 414 6th. *Ayla Yavin Acupuncture and Herbs* at 135 West 29th might appeal to you. Gregory Kushnick in Suite 802-B4 at 138 West 25th is a psychotherapist with openings.

Private schools of some sort for high schoolers include Corlears at 324 West 15th. Xavier, a Catholic school run by Jesuits, is at 30 West 16th. Krown Vocational School is at 146 West 29th, and both Borough of Manhattan Community College and the Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development are downtown at 25 Broadway.

Close by, food markets include *Fairway* on 6th near 25th. *Trader Joe's* is on 6th below 22nd, and *Whole Foods* is on 7th and 24th. More than food, *Whole Foods* just introduced a new service pairing with *Amazon*—imagine your daughter, heading off to sleep-away camp, has just received a gift of snazzy sunglasses. The problem is they're blue-framed, and she was counting on bright pink. No problem! Take them to the *Amazon* counter at *Whole Foods*, and they'll replace the item as requested, having the correct item back at the counter in time for you to pick them up when you visit her next week.

Chelsea Market on 9th near 15th has a slew of gourmet foods. Need something more specific? *Health Food and Vitamin City* includes a





range of organic fruits and vegetables, nuts, herbs, and even cosmetics. You can find them at 400 W. 23rd, on the south side of the street, just west of the corner.

Need something new to wear? *Housing Works* on 17th, just east of 7th, has clothing for men, women, and children. By the way, every Tuesday, all *Housing Works* shops offer a 10% senior discount.

Sugar Cookies Lingerie—its name says it all. Then, at 122 West 20th is *DXL*, a clothing store exclusively for big and tall men. You'll find your sizes at *DXL* on the west side of 6th, just below 23rd. You can also look at *Men's Warehouse* on the east side of the avenue just below 20th;

Kleinfeld Bridal is at 110 West 20th. Former fashions? Visit *Vintage* at 117 West 25th.

Looking for something to eat? *The Meatball Shop* at 200 9th boasts humanely sourced meats; one bite signals the need to return. More than mere classics, selections include veggie, chicken, and pork. Considering Cajun? Try *Hot 'n Juicy Crawfish* at 243 West 14th. Want a martini? *Oscar Wilde* at 45 West 27th hands you a hint of history as you sip (the site was formerly HQ for prohibition enforcement).

ABC Carpet & Home at Broadway and 19th Street has locations on both sides of the street. More than merely carpeting, the furniture you might want to place on top of your new carpet can be found there too. Perhaps, you're starting from scratch with bare concrete. *Architectural Flooring Resource* on the 6th floor at 135 West 27th provides information about a range of new products and how best to install and maintain them.



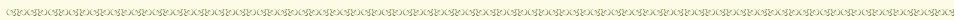
Car concerns? *A1 Collision NY* at 528 West 39th receives Manhattan's AAA calls. They work with your insurance company to make sure pricing is fair, and if your car needs to be in the shop for several days, their crew will help set you up with a rental car. *Marty's Auto Body* at 500 West 25th is reliable. They also do routine auto inspections. Credit cards are convenient, but if it's an expensive job paying cash reduces the lump sum.

Biking? Want to own rather than rent? *Bicycle Habitat* at 288 7th is a good place to go. Their wide range of choices includes everything from city to mountain bikes, and every type of bike in between. Plan to make it a family affair? You will find stuff for kids of all ages—gear, helmets, locks, racks, even GPS attachments. No matter what happens, you'll be ready to roll.



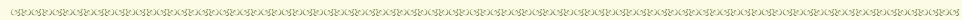
Farewell to a friend. So long to CVS on 24th and 8th. They are no longer receiving shipments, just reducing what's on their shelves. They'll be gone before the kids head back to their school's Fall semester.

Dollar Stores are disappearing, but still, a few remain. The latest addition is on the east side of 8th Avenue north of 28th Street. If you continue walking in the same direction for a few blocks, you'll find another. Finally, on the north side of 25th (east of 7th) is one that's well stocked with new shipments constantly arriving. ☺



Seen from My Window, and What a Scene It Is...

Casually roaming the streets of Chelsea, for me not done since shelter-in-place became the new norm, I count myself lucky. My living room picture window overlooks the immense park area between 25th and 26th Streets. Vast green grass areas are set back from the seating area, where eight benches are placed around the wide concrete walkway surrounding a meticulously landscaped planted area. ☺



Dogs Have Their Own View of the Park



The dog walker came into the park with a leashed pet followed all the rules. With paws on the path, they circle the park, and her dog stops to produce. The woman bagged the poop and their walk proceeds. On the way, she passed a bench with an abandoned cup lid and picked that up, too. Exiting the park, she dropped items in the bin. Nice and neat—a plus.



Sudden surprise—not long after 7:00 on a weekend morning, a woman and her unleashed dog casually wander the grass area, mostly in different directions. By 7:58, a tall security guard (walking west from morning clock-in) looked across 25th Street and saw the pair. He raced over and called her to the hedge. They didn't speak long, but the woman grabbed her dog, picked up her benched possessions, and scurried away. I have never seen her since that morning. ☺





Cool Clock

A ship's clock (not a battery-operated look-alike) is a seven-jeweled authentic clock. I have two, one in the bedroom and the other in the living room.

They are routinely wound once a week (which lasts about eight or nine days). A key fits in two places. First, I wind the time; next, the bells. Horror struck one day while I was winding the bells. The key had stopped, and following the click came a sharp snap—something was broken.

Years ago, fixing a ship's clock would have meant packing it up and shipping it to the company in Boston that had made it. They'd examine it and call to tell you how much the repair would cost. Then, you'd send a check, and a few weeks later, the clock would arrive (return shipment was paid by the manufacturer). Not only would the clock be fixed, but it would also be clean, and the bright brass case would shine. Unfortunately, that route was no longer viable—they had gone out of business in the 90s.


On the north side of 26th Street, a few doors east of 7th, buried behind five old-fashioned barber chairs, is Uriel, a clockmaker. Of course, no one had haircuts during the pandemic, but Uriel was still hard at work.

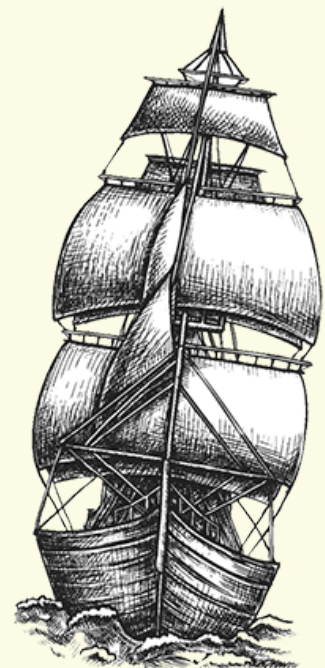
"Can you fix it?" I asked?

"Not to worry," he assured me. "I'm busy now, but call me in a week or so, and I'll tell you what it needs and how much it will cost."

Nowadays, replacement parts are mass-produced. A Japanese company provides them all, but not so with this clockmaker. He has dozens of drawers in his carefully laid-out work area, covering both walls and runs up to the high ceiling. There! The necessary spring had been carefully placed in stock years ago.

Once repaired, my clock worked perfectly. The only thing Uriel needed to know was how many bells it originally had and how often they chimed. Landlubbers work in shifts while for Seafarers it's watches. Each watch is four hours long, as a sailor rests for four hours. Eight bells sound at midnight; then start again at 4:00 and 8:00 AM (with one bell being added each half-hour).

Wonders never cease. I suspect Uriel is the sole surviving authentic clockmaker in our city, most surely in Chelsea. 




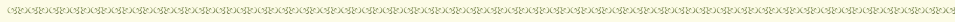


Blick Art

Blick Art on West 23rd is featuring their latest artist, a Chelseaite named Gabriel J. Shuldiner. The western window displays his five pieces propped by easels.

Each piece of art is solid black and multi-layered, created with a poured or molded substance. Describing his work as “brute minimalism,” Gabriel sees his art as situated somewhere between the abstract and absurd.

Curbside viewing isn’t too easy but is definitely provocative. Hopefully, the more curious will step inside. 



Gallery Row

Chelsea is edging its way up in the art world, and while it may never take over Madison Avenue, it will probably rank near SoHo and Tribeca. Originally it encompassed just one block—West 22nd between 10th and 11th. Now its southern boundary is nearing 20th Street, with its most northern at 26th.

Since summer can be wonderful walking weather, an afternoon of gallery-going might be a pleasant adventure—visiting galleries provides an opportunity to see Chelsea in a new way. Remember, before the art dealers moved in, this was simply a neighborhood of mostly run-down with some boarded-up warehouses. Our new residents fell in love with the possibilities presented by reduced rent and high-ceilinged spaces. However, funds were limited, so renovations were restricted to warehouses that cost the least while being the most visually effective.

Heavily scarred wood floors were refinished rather than replaced. Walls and ceilings were smoothed down and painted white, and then,

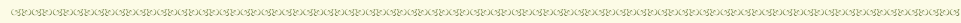




as befitting a display area—track lights were installed. Occasionally, one sees a brick wall, acid-bathed from decades of dirty; or one might find a fireplace left intact for a dot of difference.

Exhibits are wonderfully spare with little to distract the viewer. If you enjoy what you are looking at, you'll find little to divert your gaze.

Realtors now recognize the value of the area, which accounts for the most extensive addition recently completed. Remember the open lot at the northwest corner of 23rd and 10th that used to sell plants? Now, in its place, you'll find a modern building housing several galleries—even a tranquil sculpture garden has emerged. *CB*



Business is Booming

Business is booming on 23rd Street. On the first of every month, the Vintage Shop is doing live streaming by way of a smart-phone. Think of it as something you can see here and send far away.

The day I stopped by, the seller had a tripod set up to show the items while she spoke into her hand-held phone. Clearly visible was jewelry, and her audience was in China.

Ron Caldwell pays her 10% of what she sells, and she covers all the costs involved with packing and shipping. A mind-boggling concept for me but proof that times are definitely changing. *CB*

