Topping Out at the New York City College of Technology (City Tech) New Academic Building

Perkins Eastman Joins City Tech in Celebrating Construction Milestone

New York, NY (PRWEB) June 23, 2015

The New York office of top international design and architecture firm Perkins Eastman congratulates New York City College of Technology and The City University of New York on the June 22 topping out of its new academic building for allied health. Designed by Perkins Eastman, the approximately 360,000 sf, eight-story academic complex is being constructed on the site of the former Kellogg Building at the corner of Jay and Tillary streets in Downtown Brooklyn. The building is expected to be completed in 2017.

Bradford Perkins FAIA, Chairman of Perkins Eastman, says, "We have been very proud of the many projects we have completed that have contributed to the rebirth of downtown Brooklyn, but none has given us more professional pleasure than this major addition to the CUNY system."

Located directly across from the school's main campus at 300 Jay Street in downtown Brooklyn, the new academic building will significantly alter the face of City Tech—the largest public college of technology in New York State—creating a new campus gateway along Jay Street and enhancing the surrounding urban context. In its striking design—a cantilevered rectilinear academic volume suspended over the sculptural theater, gymnasium, and main lobby—the new academic building creates a new identity for the college. Featuring a high-performance glazing system and natural daylighting throughout to help reduce energy consumption, the project was designed to achieve LEED-Silver certification.

In addition to classrooms, the building will predominantly house laboratories, faculty offices, clinic, and support spaces to enhance the College's health and science curriculum in radiology, dental hygiene (the oldest and largest in the New York metropolitan area), nursing, biological sciences, bio-research, chemistry, restorative dentistry, and vision care. Student life/recreation areas, a 1,000-seat auditorium, a 800-seat spectator gymnasium, and a Community Service Center will further enhance City Tech's institutional strengths and community significance.

About Perkins Eastman

Perkins Eastman is among the top design and architecture firms in the world. With almost 500 employees in 14 locations around the globe, Perkins Eastman practices at every scale of the built environment. From niche buildings to complex projects that enrich whole communities, the firm's portfolio reflects a dedication to progressive and inventive design that enhances the quality of the human experience. With work in 48 states and more than 40 countries, the firm's portfolio includes high-end residential, commercial, hotels, retail, office buildings, corporate interiors, schools, hospitals, museums, senior living, and public sector facilities. Perkins Eastman provides award-winning design through its offices in North America (New York, NY; Boston, MA; Charlotte, NC; Chicago, IL; Los Angeles, CA; Pittsburgh, PA; San Francisco, CA; Stamford, CT; Toronto, Canada; and Washington, DC); South America (Guayaquil, Ecuador); North Africa and Middle East (Dubai, UAE); and Asia (Mumbai, India, and Shanghai, China).

Renderings available.
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Renderings available.
Lhota explains amicable exit from CUNY board

Former Republican mayoral candidate Joe Lhota said Tuesday that he stepped down as a member of the City University of New York's board of trustees after receiving a phone call from Mayor Bill de Blasio's office, but insisted he left on good terms.

"I told the mayor's office early on in his term that if he ever had a desire to appoint someone from Brooklyn to represent him on the board, I would be more than happy to step aside. And the call came, and it happened," Lhota told Capital in a telephone interview. "Nothing unceremonious about this. This is just the fulfillment of a discussion that I had with the mayor's office a year and a half ago.

"Have you ever seen—ask anybody who's covered City Hall—a press release from the mayor's office that includes an opponent from the last campaign?" asked Lhota, who lost the mayor's race to de Blasio in 2013. "I had no idea who they were replacing me with. When I found it was Una [Clarke], I provided the statement to the mayor's office saying I was ecstatic about it."

Clarke represented Brooklyn's 40th City Council district in the 1990s.

MORE ON CAPITAL

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The CUNY board has 17 members: 10 nominated by the governor, five nominated by the mayor, and a faculty and student representative.

The senate's higher education committee
approved Clarke's nomination to the CUNY board—de Blasio's first—last Thursday. It also confirmed Jill O'Donnell-Tormey, a nominee of Governor Andrew Cuomo, to the board, and Michael Walsh, also a Cuomo nominee, to the board of CUNY's construction fund.

"I leave proud," Lhota said. "CUNY is in a much better place today."

Lhota served on the board for 14 years. Former mayor Rudy Giuliani first appointed him in 2001, and former mayor Michael Bloomberg reappointed him to seven-year terms in 2004 and 2011.

A spokesman for de Blasio, Peter Kadushin, referred Capital to the press release with statements from de Blasio and Lhota.

The board is next scheduled to meet at Baruch College on Monday, June 29, at 4:30 p.m.

Lhota, former chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, is currently chief of staff at NYU Langone Medical Center.
This Program Is Empowering Young Latinas With L.O.V.E.

A silver necklace that reads "Love" lies flat across Claudia Espinosa's chest. It's a constant reminder of what matters to her most -- the mentoring program she founded to empower young New York City girls called Latinas On The Verge of Excellence, or L.O.V.E.

"Today is about choosing the major that you love," Espinosa, 36, announces. She's addressing the six mentors and seven mentees attending L.O.V.E.'s weekly session at The Young Women's Leadership School of East Harlem.
It's a Friday afternoon near the end of the school year. But the high school students who had been rowdily anticipating the weekend just moments earlier become completely focused when Espinosa speaks. Everyone begins discussing the difference between a major and a concentration when a mentee abruptly asks what happens if she's not sure what she wants to study in college.

“When you go to school, you’re never wasting your money or time,” Espinosa responds, reassuring the student that many people are undecided when they enroll. “Everything you learn will help you.”

Espinosa created L.O.V.E. three years ago to mentor young Latinas. Since then, she's implemented the program in three New York City schools, working closely with the Young Women's Leadership Network in low-income, majority minority communities in Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn.

This fall, Espinosa expects to expand the program to a total of seven schools, including its first in the Bronx.

“L.O.V.E. is like a machine, making sure that young girls can fulfill their potential -- and by potential, I mean their biggest dreams,” Espinosa told The Huffington Post.

Though the program has grown in a short period of time, Espinosa's journey really began 15 years ago, when she moved alone from Cali, Colombia, to the U.S. to follow her lifelong dream of becoming an FBI agent. She studied English for two years and became a personal trainer -- a job that still keeps her afloat financially and helped fund her bachelor's and master's degrees in forensic psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. But by the time graduation came around, Espinosa realized the FBI was not for her.

While she contemplated her future, Espinosa worked as a counselor at Life Is Precious, a suicide prevention program for Latinas. The experience would, in her words, “change everything.”

“[I was] working one-on-one with the girls, 13, 14, 15, up to 17 years old,” Espinosa said. “Girls came in referred from the hospitals saying, ‘Yeah, I don't want to live anymore.’”
Hispanic girls in high school are more likely than their non-Hispanic peers to have attempted suicide. According to a 2012 report by the Centers for Disease Control And Prevention, **13.5 percent of young Hispanic female students said they attempted suicide**, compared to 8.8 percent of black, non-Hispanic girls and 7.9 percent white, non-Hispanic girls.

Working as a suicide counselor took an emotional toll on Espinosa. "The girls would vent with me, but I would take that and have dreams or nightmares with it every night," she said. "So I quit the job. But then I said, 'I have to do something.'"

Espinosa went back to school, enrolling in a master's program in public administration at New York University, where she worked with faculty to develop the pilot program and curriculum for L.O.V.E.

The program was originally designed to pair 10 to 25 students per high school with female college mentors from NYU, Columbia University and the City University of New York. Ideally, college mentors share interests with their mentees and communicate regularly to help guide them from ninth grade to graduation. During after-school L.O.V.E. meet-ups, they listen to guest speakers or discuss study tips, college applications, domestic violence and other topics.

While the program was initially intended to target Latinas, L.O.V.E. is open to young girls of all backgrounds. In fact, most of the East Harlem mentees are black, including Lauren Drungold.

The 18-year-old will enter Bates College as a biology major this fall and was recently honored alongside two other seniors at a special L.O.V.E. graduation ceremony. Drungold, who hopes to become a veterinarian, said she first started getting excited about attending college and studying abroad during a L.O.V.E. mentoring session.
"The first year I did it, there was a lady who came and she was a life coach. We had to envision ourselves a few years from now in college," Drumgold said. "In my school, we talk about college, but you don't always see yourself there. And at that moment, I was able to see myself on a college campus or across the world studying what I love."

The L.O.V.E. program can be equally eye-opening for the young women who volunteer their time. Amanda De La Torre, 26, is one of the program's newest mentors and recently earned a master's in higher education and student affairs at NYU.

"You can talk about it and write about what people are struggling with and barriers to higher education," said De La Torre, who is Mexican-American and mentors a 15-year-old of Ghanaian descent. "But you don't see that unless you're actually in the classroom and involved with them."

"[Barriers can be] little things, like 'What does a major mean?' Not even knowing the terminology is one -- especially for students whose parents immigrated here and are first-generation college students," De La Torre added. "So we talk about female empowerment, fitness, things that maybe you're not exposed to in your house but you can gain that knowledge here."
Describing the struggles that young girls and Latinas specifically face, Espinosa says that many young women encounter cultural pressure that prevents them from reaching their goals.

"I think that there are a lot of expectations for women, and by expectations I mean roles that you should fulfill," Espinosa said. "You should, yes, finish school, but perhaps later on you should get married, and then you should have a couple of kids, and then you should take care of your family."

"I mean, if you think about the Latino community, that's what I grew up seeing," she added. "That [outlook] is what I think is still pretty prevalent here."

With L.O.V.E., however, she hopes that will change. "You're kind of the pillar of the family as a woman," she said. "So that's really engrained. ... And as an individual, you have your own goals and dreams and passions. That, to me, is what the important part is."

Espinosa hopes to eventually open high schools that are entirely dedicated to supporting young girls and helping them achieve their dreams.

"I think what I see is myself," Espinosa said. "I moved here by myself and I've been doing it alone. So that's why when someone tells me, 'No, it's too hard, I can't,' I don't agree with it. Because even if you are in the hardest situation, you can change that and go for whatever it is that you want to do. That's the message that I want to convey."
New York: STATEMENT BY CHANCELLOR JAMES B. MILLIKEN ON THE NEW YORK CITY BUDGET AGREEMENT FOR 2015-16

LENGTH: 269 words

DATELINE: Albany

The City University of New York, The State of New York has issued the following News release:

With deepest appreciation, we commend Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and The New York City Council on the budget agreement on the 2015-16 New York City budget and for its historic investment in The City University of New York. The budget agreement provides for a long-term commitment to expand and fully fund the CUNY Accelerated Studies in Associates Program, or ASAP, up to $42 million in 2019. This nationally recognized initiative developed by the University to improve student completion at community colleges has resulted in more than double the traditional graduation rate. The new funding will allow CUNY to more effectively meet the educational needs of our students and prepare them for entry into the workforce. The budget agreement includes needed support for capital construction and renovation at CUNY campuses to ensure that all the community colleges continue to offer modern and safe facilities. We are also most grateful for the inclusion of the City Council’s Merit Scholarship program for academic achievers. We wish to especially thank the City Council’s Finance and Higher Education Committees, led, respectively, by Councilmembers Julissa Ferreras and Inez Barron. This budget agreement provides a strong affirmation of support for a culture of innovation as exemplified by ASAP and other CUNY programs that strengthen student access, achievement and success.

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Miriam Schapiro, 91, a Feminist Artist Who Harnessed Craft and Pattern, Dies

By WILLIAM GRIMES  JUNE 24, 2015

Miriam Schapiro, a pioneering feminist artist who, with Judy Chicago, created the landmark installation “Womanhouse” in Los Angeles in the early 1970s and later in that decade helped found the Pattern and Decoration movement, died on Saturday in Hampton Bays, N.Y. She was 91.

Her death was confirmed by Judith K. Brodsky, the executor of her estate.

Ms. Schapiro, who broke through as a second-generation Abstract Expressionist in the late 1950s, embraced feminism in the early 1970s and made it the foundation of her work and career. From that point, she dedicated herself to redefining the role of women in the arts and elevating the status of pattern, craft and the anonymous handiwork of women in the domestic sphere.

“Mimi came to feminism later than most of us, in early middle age,” said Joyce Kozloff, one of Ms. Schapiro’s allies in the Pattern and Decoration movement. “It shook her world, transformed her into a radical thinker. She was a vocal, outspoken presence — a force.”

In 1970, at the newly created California Institute of the Arts, she and Ms. Chicago founded the Feminist Art Program, which quickly became an important center for formulating and disseminating a new understanding of art based on women’s history and social experience.
The next year they enlisted 21 students and several local artists to create "Womanhouse," taking over a decaying Hollywood mansion that made an effective set for dramatizing the American home as a prison for women and their dreams.

One of the seminal events in feminist art history, "Womanhouse," which opened in January 1972, drew thousands of visitors and attracted the attention of the national news media.

Time magazine, in an article headlined "Bad-Dream House," called it "an exhibit that proved to be a mausoleum, in which the images and illusions of generations of women were embalmed along with their old nylons and spike-heeled shoes."

Soon afterward Ms. Schapiro began incorporating decorative scraps of fabric, ribbon and trim, and later entire handkerchiefs, doilies or aprons, in acrylic paintings she called femmages. The intent was to honor the silent centuries-old work of women engaged in humble tasks like sewing and knitting, or, as she put in a 1977 interview, "to choose something considered trivial in the culture and transform it into a heroic form."

In the mid-1970s, she and Robert Zakanitch joined with a group of artists, including Ms. Kozloff, Robert Kushner and Valerie Jaudon, in the movement they called Pattern and Decoration. Rejecting the austerity of Minimalism and Conceptual Art, its members incorporated decorative elements drawn from sources as varied as Amish quilts, Islamic tile work and wallpaper. The goal was provocative: to break down the traditional boundaries between high art and craft and to validate the decorative pattern work that female hands had applied to ceramics and textiles throughout the ages.

Miriam Schapiro, known as Mimi, was born on Nov. 15, 1923, in Toronto and grew up in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn. After graduating from Erasmus Hall High School, she enrolled in Hunter College but transferred to the University of Iowa, where she studied under the printmaker Mauricio Lasansky. She earned a bachelor's degree in graphic art and a master's in printmaking before receiving her master's in fine art in
While at Iowa she married a fellow art student, Paul Brach, and they moved to New York in the early 1950s. There, Ms. Schapiro exhibited her large, exuberant paintings, which included landscape and portrait elements, in the 1957 installment of the “New Talent” shows at the Museum of Modern Art. She received her first solo show at the André Emmerich gallery in 1958.

Soon, her brushy expressionist paintings began admitting windowlike geometric forms and more open spaces on the canvas. Her “Shrine” paintings of the early 1960s presented, on a colored ground, a vertical rectangle divided into four compartments with beveled edges that suggested painting frames, or windows. In all the “Shrine” paintings, the top compartment was gold, like a Byzantine icon, and symbolized aspiration. The bottom was silver, like a mirror, inviting self-reflection. One of the middle compartments included a reference to art-making or art history: two tubes of paint in “Shrine for Two Paint Tubes,” and Mona Lisa’s smile in “Shrine: Homage to M.L.” The other compartment contained an egg, a symbol of female fertility.

Ms. Schapiro expanded the idea of the frame or window in the painting “Sixteen Windows” (1965). As she embraced hard-edged abstraction, the female egg mutated into the vaginal O of “Big Ox” (1968), a severely geometric form with four “limbs” extending powerfully from an open octagon.

In 1967, her husband was hired as chairman of the art department at the University of California, San Diego, where she taught as a lecturer. When he became dean of the art department at CalArts, Ms. Schapiro was hired as a professor and, with Ms. Chicago, taught a course on feminism that led to the creation of the Feminist Art Program. Mr. Brach died in 2007.

Ms. Schapiro, who died at the home of her caregiver, is survived by a son, Peter, who uses the surname von Brandenburg.

For her contribution to “Womanhouse,” Ms. Schapiro and Sherry Brody, her assistant, used old liquor crates to create a dollhouse with a parlor, a kitchen, a movie star’s bedroom, a seraglio, a nursery, an artist’s studio with
a male model made of stuffed fabric, and a miniature version of "Sixteen Windows" on an easel.

The work served as a dress rehearsal for her later explorations of fabric and pattern in works like "Anonymous Was a Woman," an series of etchings in the mid-1970s that showed embroidered antimacassars and doilies; "Souvenirs," a collage of handkerchiefs on a quiltlike grid dripped with paint; and the 10-panel work "Anatomy of a Kimono." Later she produced lavishly decorated valentine hearts and fans.

The new work, which led to a split with her dealer in 1976, was sometimes dismissed as sentimental, a critique she rebutted enthusiastically. "Men think that sentiment is not valid; women think that sentiment is important," she said in a 1977 interview with the art historian Paula Harper. "Some men suppress their feelings. Some women explore theirs. Sentimentality for me is a very powerful idea."

In the 1980s Ms. Schapiro turned to dance as a subject. She later produced a series of paintings that engaged female artists of the past, notably Frida Kahlo, the focus of several works with mythic overtones. The monumental "Diva" (1999), originally intended for the Bellagio hotel in Las Vegas, celebrated the black contralto and civil rights heroine Marian Anderson.

Ms. Schapiro, whose work was the subject of several traveling retrospectives, wrote two books, "Women and the Creative Process" (1974) and "Rondo: An Artist's Book" (1988).

"She had her vision, and it was damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead," Mr. Kushner said. "On the one hand the work was very carefully calibrated, but there was also something spontaneous and a little wacky. She had her own truth."

A version of this article appears in print on June 25, 2015, on page B16 of the New York edition with the headline: Miriam Schapiro, 91, a Feminist Artist Who Harnessed Craft and Pattern, Dies.
Destroying Ivory to Save Elephants: Is it Working?

Our planet is facing unprecedented mass extinctions of species. And we humans are the culprits. A just released study (June 19, 2015) reveals that "477 vertebrates have gone extinct since 1900, rather than the nine that would be expected at natural rates." And the loss of vertebrates "was far higher than in the last five mass extinctions." The current accelerated rate of extinctions is so great that the authors of the study concluded that we are entering the sixth mass extinction.

It's apt that this grim report was released on the day of the Times Square "Ivy crush, a media event to publicize the tragedy of the vanishing elephant population in Africa and Asia. Elephants could be extinct as early as 2025 warns Kenya's Dr. Dame Daphne Sheldrick of the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, if the present rate of poaching for the ivory trade continues. Over the past decade 75 percent of African forest elephants have been slaughtered.

At the Times Square ivory crush speeches by officials of the Department of the Interior, The Fish and Wildlife Service, Customs and Border Protection, Wildlife Conservation Society and several local politicians decried the sad statistics on the rate of elephant kills. All declared their determination to end the poaching of elephants for their marketable ivory tusks. Their war cry has become a mantra to mobilize public and government attention and international action: "In crushing the ivory we are crushing the ivory market." Then to prove that this dramatic event was an attention grabber and crowd pleaser, an enthusiastic cheer went up as the one-ton collection of seized ivory objects was loaded onto a conveyor belt that fed the ivory into a gravel crushing machine. As the pulverized ivory appeared on the exit conveyor belt the cheers and applause escalated to a crescendo.
Caught up in the enthusiasm, I cheered as well. At the same time I could not deny the gnawing feeling that there was something disturbing about this event. I could not shake the thought that destruction to stop destruction is arguable.

But I decided that if the ivory crush would indeed deliver a fatal blow to the ivory trade, or even a significant disruption, then destroying these confiscated objects would be a worthwhile sacrifice.

However, when I examined the effect of earlier crushes, I wondered.

On November 14, 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service crushed six tons of elephant ivory stored at its facility in Denver, Colorado. During that year The Wildlife Conservation Society announced that 25,000 elephants were killed, a rate of 96 every day. Ironically, at the Times Square crush on June 19, 2015 a poster reported the same number still being killed each day.

The U.S. ivory crushes are not the only ones. Six tons of seized ivory was crushed in China on January 6, 2014. Hong Kong began pulverizing twenty-eight tons of ivory figurines, tusks, and other objects, also in 2014. And other crushes of ivory were carried out over the last 24 months in Belgium, Chad, SAR, Czech Republic, Gabon, France and the Philippines, according to the National Geographic. In fact, since
1989 thirteen countries have destroyed 150 tons (three hundred thousand pounds) of ivory. Yet, the high kill rate of elephants continues, as we march ever closer to elephant extinction.

Foschers and unscrupulous marketers and buyers of ivory apparently have not been thwarted by the destruction of ivory, as evidenced by the continuing robust market for ivory after the massive crushes. And why would they be? From the perspective of the buyer, the objects are gone, never to be returned. Why would consumers care if their seized objects, some fine art works, were destroyed, warehoused, or the better pieces given to museums with the proviso that they could never be sold or traded. More importantly, none of those outcomes would likely slow the marketing of ivory.

Is it possible that the crushes might even be counterproductive? The difficulty of arousing public attention to environmental issues in these stressful financial times is well known. One survey reported that “public concern for environmental issues has reached a twenty year low.” In that context, bold pronouncements that a crush will crush the ivory trade could promote even greater complacency: “Well, they solved that one—I don’t have to be concerned anymore.” And the destruction of ivory without stiff enforced sanctions to stop the trade could raise the value of ivory and thus increase the elephant kill rate, as suggested in a 2013 article in Slate: “By destroying the ivory, you create even more ivory scarcity and increase the incentives for future poaching.”

Unfortunately, if there is a buck to be made, no matter what the cost to civilization, there is no shortage of people who will do it. Terrorists, a major source behind the ivory trade (tusks for guns), will not stop poaching regardless of threats, as long as there is a market. The same goes for middle men, except they could be stopped or curtailed if strong sanctions were enforced. Another source of poaching poses a more formidable conundrum. Sanctions will not deter desperate poor people who will continue to poach to stave off hunger and starvation for themselves and their families—yes, poaching is also a poverty issue that governments must address. It also doesn’t help the cause of protecting endangered species when an African leader like President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe celebrates his birthday by serving elephant meat to his guests.

But the most vulnerable to both moral arguments and certainly sanctions, are the ivory buyers. That’s where the buck must stop. With no market, meaning no money, the middle men and terrorists, or any others who are poaching for cash, would have to seek greener pastures.

Consider also, that the bulk of consumers who are sustaining the market for ivory, in contrast to their perversely thrist to possess ivory trinkets for whatever reasons, are otherwise ordinary citizens. Sanctions for these buyers, such as having their names publicly exposed, as well as steep fines, and even token prison terms might work. Whether a sentence was for a day, a month, or years, how many would be willing to risk reputation, employment, or a prison record for trinkets?

Governments are increasingly embracing this approach. In 2012 a Philadelphia dealer in African art was sentenced to 30 months in prison and fined $150,000 for smuggling in more than a ton of African ivory. In a get-tough initiative in 2013 China handed out 2-15 year prison sentences to at least twenty individuals involved in the illegal ivory market. And in 2014 a Chinese antiques dealer was given a seventy month prison sentence for smuggling rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory artifacts into China from the U.S. In its boldest action China sentenced 37 ivory smugglers to life terms.

Back in the U.S., new federal rules, more restrictive than the 1989 prohibitions, went into effect in June 2014. According to the New York Times, these new rules “ban Americans from importing and, with narrow exceptions, exporting any item that contains even a sliver of ivory. The rules do not ban private ownership, but they outlaw interstate sales of ivory items, unless they meet what sellers describe as impossible criteria.” Items like a century-old Steinway piano with ivory keys will be blocked from interstate sales “unless the owner could prove the ivory in the keys had entered the country through one of 13 American ports authorized to sanction ivory goods.”

Even tougher standards have been put on the books in several states. A New York State bill signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo on World Elephant day, August 12, 2014, bans the sale of ivory with few exceptions. Stringent proof will be required for allowing the sale of ivory that is one hundred years old or older. According to one commentary, this is “a difficult standard that excludes almost all ivory objects, including antique American objects from sale.” Since the United States -- and New York in particular -- is the second largest market for ivory after China the new legislation, which also strengthens civil and criminal penalties, is a significant direct assault on the ivory market. Connecticut lawmakers are currently considering a bill to ban the import, sale, and purchase of ivory or rhinoceros horns -- and would make the crime a class B misdemeanor calling for up to six months in prison, a fine, or both.

These actions are encouraging. Hopefully, similar statutes will spread to all the states backed by diligent enforcement that will turn the tide.

I must admit that I had reservations about publishing this article -- and not because of doubts about the expressed position. The men and women who have backed ivory crushes are passionate tireless workers in the front lines fighting selflessly to protect elephants, other species, and insure sustainable life on our planet. Their efforts should be respected and honored.

Nevertheless, I concluded that this critical moment, in the race to stem elephant extinction, demands the concentration of time, energy, and resources on actions that are most likely to achieve positive results. Toward that end an open public debate is warranted.

Bernard Starr is a psychologist, journalist, and professor emeritus at the City University of New York, Brooklyn College. He is also the Main United Nations representative for the Institute of Global Education (IGE) that founded Radio for Peace International and the Muchera Global School in Muchera India. IGE is an NGO with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).
The Anti-Union Bosses’ Group Fighting Fast Food Organizing Is Now Going After Home Care Workers

Can workers centers and unions create a movement strong enough to fight back?

BY Mariya Strauss, Political Research Associates

For-profit home care employers are taking federal dollars and using them to hire workers at subminimum wages—with virtually no public accountability.

The home health aide in scrubs pushing a client's wheelchair up the ramp from street to sidewalk may appear to have little in common with a cashier at McDonalds or Pizza Hut. But chances are, the company that employs the home care attendant is part of the same type of national franchise structure that the burger giant and other fast food companies use. And just as it has for fast food corporations, the industry's lobbying outfit, the International Franchise Association (IFA), is suing on behalf of home health corporations to keep workers' pay low.

The IFA has already emerged as one of the primary opponents of the Fight for 15, the SEIU-backed movement that advocates for a $15-an-hour minimum wage and the unionization of fast food workers. Wherever employers lash back against the Fight for 15, the IFA is there: helping McDonald's argue to the National Labor Relations Board that it is not responsible for franchisees' wage theft and workplace abuses; trying to block a new rule at the NLRB that would speed up the union election process; suing to suppress Seattle's recent minimum wage increase to $15 per hour.
"The [Seattle] ordinance is clearly discriminatory and would harm hard-working small business owners who happen to be franchisees," railed IFA President and CEO Steve Caldeira after the groups' argument failed the first round in court. "Those who have set out to destroy the long-accepted, time-tested and proven franchise business model must be stopped."

And now, the IFA is suing the federal government in an attempt to keep home health aides from earning the minimum wage and overtime pay.

Profiting from care

Instead of selling burgers or pizza, for-profit home care staffing agencies such as BrightStar sell the care, companionship and feeding services that seniors and people with disabilities once typically received in a nursing home. Many people, such as Rosa Hendricks, who was profiled in a 2011 National Public Radio series that examined the benefits of home care versus nursing homes, prefer to live at home. Hendricks put it this way: "It makes you feel so much better and know that you are somebody."

"[Home-based care] is preferable to nursing home care for many reasons. But we have gotten it on the cheap," says Eileen Boris, a women's studies professor at the University of California/Santa Barbara. Taking advantage of a Jim Crow-era loophole in federal labor law known as the "companionship exemption," companies like BrightStar can legally pay the nearly 2 million home care workers in the United States at less than the minimum wage (as little as the market allows), and have the option to not pay overtime.

Like agricultural workers, another then-mostly African-American sector, home care workers were carved out of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) (which set wage and hour protections for nearly all other workers) and again when Congress amended the FLSA in 1974. Home care workers can be paid less than the $7.25 per hour federal minimum wage and rarely get overtime pay.

Such low wages have a profound impact on home care workers. "I'm not able to save anything," says 53-year old Marilyn Blackett, who has been a homecare worker in Brooklyn, New York for the past 14 years. "I try not to ask family members [for money]. You don't let people know what's happening to you."

Since the mid-20th century, Boris says, "the structure of the [home-care] industry was built in part on this exemption." According to an August 2014 study in Health Affairs, the majority—62 percent—of the home care industry consists of for-profit franchises. It's a lucrative model: the industry rakes in $84 billion a year, with median revenue for a single franchise at around $2 million, according to one industry study.

The relatively low start-up cost of home health care franchises (around $150,000 or less, compared with around a half million dollars to start a fast food franchise), combined with the cheap labor, has triggered a home-care boom.

Franchisors such as BrightStar, run by CEO Shelly Sun (who also serves as IFA treasurer), are taking advantage of this burgeoning demand. Sun and her husband and business partner, as Sarah Jaffe wrote recently in Dame magazine, have boasted that they "had no medical, home-care, or health-care experience when they started their business, and that would-be franchisees need none either." Franchisors and franchisees leave such health care expertise to the actual home care attendant—the person who lifts the client, helps her eat, mops up her messes, reminds her to take her medication, reads to her, takes her to the grocery store.

What's more, federal dollars are flowing to these for-profit staffing agencies. In most states, the person receiving care can pay for it out of his or her Social Security check—or have it paid for by Medicare or Medicaid. "It was the availability of hiring people using
In other words, for-profit home care employers are taking federal dollars and using them to hire workers at subminimum wages—with virtually no public accountability.

"For-profit home care agencies are bleeding Medicare," Steffie Woolhandler, a professor at the City University of New York's School of Public Health and senior author of the Health Affairs analysis told Modern Healthcare magazine in August 2014. And lack of regulatory oversight means quality of care also suffers. Woolhandler and her co-authors concluded that, "Overall, it appears that proprietary (for-profit) home-care agencies deliver slightly lower-quality care at a substantially higher cost."

David Weil, head of the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division, recognizes that action is needed to reverse this race to the bottom. In September 2013, his agency issued a final rule to close the companionship loophole. The home care industry promptly sued Weil, with the IFA as one of the lead plaintiffs. The case, Home Care Association of America v. Weil, is now in federal court; the DC Circuit Court of Appeals has expedited the case and could issue a decision at any moment. In the meantime, the exemption remains in place.

With the U.S. senior population projected to reach 88.5 million, or 20 percent of the total population, by 2050, the demand for home care services is on the rise. The job of home health aide is now the third fastest growing occupation in the United States, according to Forbes. If the IFA and home health companies are able to persuade the courts to keep the companionship exemption, CEOs like Sun will see their profits grow while workers remain in poverty.

A common foe

With home care workers and fast food workers facing a common enemy, the question arises: Can they join and create a single movement for workplace justice in the franchised economy?

Two separate, non-traditional worker organizing campaigns are underway in the fast food and home care industries. But the franchised structure of these industries presents unique challenges for workers who may wish to actually form labor unions: it isn't always clear whether the franchisor (the brand) or the franchisee (the storefront owner/operator) is responsible for setting wages and workplace conditions.

What's more, home care workers are in some states explicitly prohibited from forming labor unions—and where they can form unions, the Supreme Court last summer ruled in Harris v. Quinn that the workers cannot be required to join or pay the fees that would keep the union running. Because of these and other challenges, the two campaigns—SEIU's Fight for 15 for the fast food workers and the coalition-based Caring Across Generations for the home care workers—focus more on advocating for worker-friendly policies and regulations than on unionizing these growing workforces.

That said, SEIU is forging ahead with organizing fast food workers through Fight for 15, using short-term strikes to protest and raise awareness about the need for a living wage and the right to unionize. Domestic workers, with their solitary shuttling between clients' homes, have historically been a tough group to bring together. But the National Domestic Workers' Alliance (NDWA) and the SEIU have been organizing them in recent years, with some success. NDWA operates as a workers' center, providing adult continuing education and other services and bringing workers out to lobby state lawmakers, and the SEIU is unionizing home care workers in states that allow it. Ultimately, both campaigns say they hope to raise wages and benefits for the entire industry.

NDWA, for its part, has won legislative victories on a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights in
New York, California, and Hawaii by building common cause with home care clients. With its Caring Across Generations campaign, NDWA has formed regional and state-based coalitions with the families of the elderly people and people with disabilities that home care workers serve.

NDWA founder and director Ai-Jen Poo says that Caring Across Generations is building a counterforce to the franchised home care industry's unscrupulous pursuit of profit over quality care.

"In its own complaint, the IFA said that their mission is to 'protect, enhance and promote franchising.' You have to ask, should a trade association like this be determining the future of home care for millions of workers and consumers?"

As an alternative to the franchise system, workers' organizing efforts are starting to include developing more worker-friendly models of employment, such as worker-owned cooperatives. Jaffe writes that in New York, "worker-owned Cooperative Home Care Associates has more than 2,000 worker-owners who make $16 an hour (more than twice the federal minimum wage) plus benefits and have a guarantee of working hours."

Home care workers are already organizing through Caring Across Generations, and SEIU's participation provides a national infrastructure that could allow Fight for 15 and home care workers to join forces to challenge the IFA. SEIU's own home care and fast food campaigns began in April to link up with a series of teach-ins and protests in SEIU Healthcare's Midwest region, and such solidarity actions could extend to other regions in the future.

But these are only beginnings. As Maria de Fatima Moscani, a Mineola, New York home care worker with 14 years on the job, says: "Something has to be done about low pay, and the money is there. This is not acceptable at a human level. The cost of living is skyrocketing, food is up, and rent is so much. How can we live?" With a juggernaut of major franchised brands moving against home care workers' rights, another question surfaces: Can fast food and home care workers create a movement powerful enough to fight back against the corporate forces up against them both?

Kelsey Howe and Jacey Rubinstein contributed research to this article.
Truman Taylor: Loose nuts in America

By Truman Taylor

Posted Jun. 25, 2015 at 2:01 AM

A few items from the daily news.

At the University of California a group of students voted to remove the American flag from a couple of campus buildings.

They think the flag might upset some students who see it as a symbol of American colonialism and imperialism. Since the flag might do this, displaying it makes the flag a form of "hate speech."

Can you argue with the logic? Would you bother?

At Modesto Junior College, also in California, school officials stopped a student from handing out copies of the U.S. Constitution on campus.

They told him he hadn't reserved a spot in the school's "free speech zone" and couldn't just walk around all over the campus handing out copies of our Constitution.

Because it was Constitution Day, which we celebrate in this country every year -- sort of -- the student thought he was doing a good thing.

The event did generate some talk about the Constitution -- in particular, the First Amendment, the one that guarantees free speech.

It does, of course, but only, at Modesto Junior College, if you first reserve your little spot in the campus "free speech zone."

It may be, as many believe, that at some point in time, God stood on the East Coast of the United States -- maybe around New York, or possibly Boston -- and lifted the whole country up, tilting it toward the west, causing most of the loose nuts to roll out into California.

This has never been proven. In fact, there's evidence it may not be true.

In the East now, the City University of New York won't allow teachers to use Mr. and Ms. anymore when they address students. This is to avoid offending students who identify as neither.

Up in Vermont the other day, the legislature tried to add a Latin phrase to their state seal: "Stella quarta decima fulgeat," which means "The 14th star shines bright."
There was an immediate uproar on the Internet. Protestors, some were Vermonter, some not, took to social media sites to say things like; "Vermont ain't no Latino area." Someone else Tweeted "This is America, not Mexico."

This brought back memories of Bobby Krones. In our 7th grade Latin class, with the teacher out of the room, he wrote on the blackboard, "Latin is a language dead, as dead as it can be, first it killed the Romans off, and now it's killing me."
The Old Answer to Humanity’s Newest Problem: Data

Lev Grossman @lev Grossman | 6:47 AM ET

Inside TIME’s Answers issue

William playfair was born in 1759, the restless fourth son of a Scottish minister. As a young man he worked as personal assistant to the celebrated engineer James Watt—for whom the unit of power is named—then went on to pursue numerous professions, with widely varying degrees of success, among them draftsmanship, accounting, engineering, economics, silversmithing, land speculation, journalism and extortion. He died in poverty.

But along the way, and without much fanfare, he more or less single-handedly founded the field of statistical graphics by inventing the bar chart, line graph and pie chart. In 1786 Playfair published a book titled The Commercial and Political Atlas: Representing, by Means of Stained Copper-Plate Charts, the Progress of the Commerce, Revenues, Expenditure and Debts of England During the Whole of the Eighteenth Century. It leads off with a graph of England’s imports and exports, over time, in millions of pounds, which would not look wildly out of place in the pages of this magazine. Playfair was, in his own words, “the first who applied the principles of geometry to matters of Finance.”

He was born too soon: if he were alive now, Playfair would probably be living high on the hog as chief data officer at a hot Silicon Valley startup. He was among the first to react to an invisible but seismic shift in the world around us, a silent tipping over, from a state of information scarcity to one of information surplus. When humans first evolved, food was scarce; now we’re suffering from an epidemic of obesity. In much the same way, we’ve gone from a world where information was hard to find to one where it’s everywhere, in staggering quantities. Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google, once estimated that every two days humanity creates a quantity
of data equivalent to the entire amount created from the dawn of time up until 2003. And he said that five years ago. Cognitively, we're not evolved to handle this.

Estimating the total size of humanity's data hoard, on which we luxuriate like the dragon Smaug on his gold, is a popular hobby among technologists. The exact numbers vary, but what they have in common is that they're numbingly large. Just think about your smartphone: it's a communications device, yes, but it's also a tool for transmitting the world around you into data. You see something, you take a photo or video of it, then you upload it into the cloud, and it lives there forever as bits and bytes. Every day humanity tweets 500 million times, shares 70 million photos on Instagram and watches 4 billion videos on Facebook. For every minute that passes, we upload 300 hours of new content to YouTube.

And it's not just people. There's a relatively new phenomenon at work known as the Internet of Things, meaning the global network of objects—cars, Coke machines, glasses, pacemakers—outfitted with sensors and transmitters that communicate with the cloud and one another. These objects leave trails in the digital world the same way people do. A 2014 study by the market-research firm IDC estimated that the world of digital data would grow by a factor of 10 from 2013 to 2020, to 44 trillion gigabytes, or 44 zettabytes. At which point our stock of numerical prefixes will have to expand too.

We're rich in data—but the returns are diminishing rapidly, because after a certain point the more information you have, the harder it becomes to extract meaning from it. Ironically, an excess of information resists analysis and comprehension in much the same way a lack of it does. As a result, the more that new technology floods our world with complex information, the more we end up calling on a much older field of human endeavor, one that has always been devoted to making complexity comprehensible and extracting meaning from chaos, namely, art. Particularly the visual arts.

As Playfair discovered, past a certain threshold the best way to extract meaning from data is to make it visible. Consider all the photos on Instagram. Last year CUNY professor Lev Manovich conducted a visual analysis of 120,000 of them drawn from five cities: New York, São Paulo, Berlin, Bangkok and Moscow. He and his team culled all the selfies from the group, then estimated the age and gender of the person in each selfie. Then they ran visual-analysis algorithms on the images and performed statistical analysis on all those data and plotted them on a collection of interactive graphs at selfiocity.net.

The result: those meaningless data now mean something. You can browse by city, gender, mood, head tilt, glasses or no glasses, eyes open or shut. You can ask questions: Who takes more selfies, men or women? (Women.) Where do people smile the most? (Bangkok.) Where are older people taking selfies? (New York.) And so on.

If you think of data visualization as the flood wall that stands between us and the vast ocean of information, the pressure behind that wall is always rising as more and more data accumulate, and as it rises it changes the way visualizations look and act in ways not even Playfair anticipated. Visualizations are evolving from the analysis and representation of static data sets to ever changing images of data that arrive constantly, in real time. At the website Bostonography you can look down from a godlike height and see a map showing the locations of all of Boston's buses, color-coded according to their current speed. CrimeMapping.com shows the locations of crimes as they're reported, in real time, represented by different jelly icons depending on the nature of the crime. At f Bomb you can watch a real-time global map of where, when and how people are saying "f-ck" on Twitter. It's surprisingly relaxing.

For a beautiful, gratuitous demonstration of the sheer richness of the data that now lie under every rock, look up a visualization called NYC Taxis: A Day in the Life. A hacker named Chris Whong took 50 GB of New York City taxi data—obtained under the Freedom
of Information Law from the taxi and limousine commission—and used it to map the movements and earnings of random taxis on a single day in 2013. Choose one: you can watch it in speeded-up time (or in real time, if you have that much of it) as it threads its way through Manhattan streets, leaving a cobalt blue line behind it like a benevolent, hardworking Pac-Man.

They’re not all as frivolous as that. One project launched on April 30 on Kickstarter will pull campaign-finance data from OpenSecrets and automatically graph it multiple ways to show simply and clearly which politicians are getting what money and from whom. It’s the necessary next step beyond transparency: not just releasing information but releasing the meaning of that information. One of the most striking and radical experiments in data graphics this year, by a documentarian and data expert named Neil Hallowen, is called simply “The Fallen of World War II.” It uses charts and graphs to tell a story: it takes us through the war and the Holocaust using almost exclusively abstract visualizations that represent the many millions of deaths they caused.

There’s a moment about six minutes in when the camera pans dramatically up a towering bar that represents Russian military deaths, 8.7 million of them. At first its height appears grotesquely improbable. Then, as the camera pans back, it slowly, inexorably takes its place in the grim landscape of the vast tragedy. The medium’s dispassionate feel, dry to the touch, somehow makes the losses more stark.

In the pages that follow, you’ll see this same magic trick repeated over and over again: abstract data, inert in themselves, are turned into art, and in that form they make us feel things and tell us things: Where’s the safest place to sit on an airplane? Why did frenemy become a word? Are you hurting the planet? We live in a moment when humanity is being exposed to quantities of data that Playfair would have found incomprehensible. We find them incomprehensible too, and they’re in danger of making our own world incomprehensible to us. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Information doesn’t just want to be free. It wants to be visible too.

Graphics by Priyanka Arlind, Emily Barone, Sarah Begley, Tessa Berenson, Eliza Berman, Kelly Comish, Daniel D’Addario, Eliana Dockterman, Allison Duda, Nolan Feaney, Carrie Gee, Martin Gee, Claire Howorth, Dave Johnson, Heather Jones, Chelsea Kardokus, Jacob Koffler, Jack Linshi, Giri Nathan, Mandy Oaklander, Siobhan O’Connor, Katy Osborn, Maya Rhodan, Lily Rothman, Alexandra Sifferlin, Katy Steinmetz, Marie Tobias, Lon Tweeten, Matt Vella, Bryan Walsh, Chris Wilson and Justin Worland
School of Global and International Studies appoints new staff members

By Bailey Moser

The School of Global and International Studies announced three new faculty members who will have key roles in the school’s first year of operation.

Published 14 hours ago
Updated 14 hours ago

The SGIS’s expected completion date was June 1, according to the Building a Stronger IU website. While the building appears to be undergoing the final stages of construction, the school is already appointing a staff dedicated to its growth.

These appointments include an assistant professor, a professor of practice in East Asian studies and diplomacy and its first endowed chair in Korean studies.

The School of Global and International Studies created the chair of Korean studies in order to deepen IU’s longstanding commitment to the study of East Asian and Pacific nations, as the Global and International Studies Building will embody Herman B Wells’ prescient vision that “the campus of Indiana University is not just in Bloomington, or even the state of Indiana; it encompasses the four corners of the globe,” the University Architect’s Office website said.

Seung-kyung Kim will become the founding Korea Foundation Chair in Korean studies and serve as a professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, according to an IU press release.

“I am really excited about the future of Korean studies at Indiana University, which has already established itself as a leader in area studies in the U.S.,” Kim said. “I look forward to this unique opportunity to expand and strengthen Korean studies at Indiana and position the University in the vanguard of Korean studies in the U.S.”

Kim is currently the chair of the Department of Women’s Studies and director of the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Maryland, where she also served as founding director of the Asian American Studies Program, according to the release.

In 2012, IU announced a $1.5 million grant from the Korea Foundation and the three Korean IU alumni would establish the University’s first endowed chair in Korean studies, according to the release. It also is the first endowed chair to be established in the SGIS.

Mark C. Minton will also join the school. He is currently president of the Korea Society in New York City, a former U.S. ambassador to Mongolia and has been a diplomat for more than 30 years. He will become a professor of practice in East Asian studies and diplomacy, according to the release.

Minton also served as the country director for Korea and as deputy country director for Japan at the U.S. Department of State. He served in various diplomatic posts in Japan, as a Pearson Fellow with the U.S. Senate and at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, according to the release. He previously taught for a year at the Diplomatic Residence at the City College of New York. He earned a master’s degree in history from Yale University.

Adam Liff, a post-doctoral fellow in the Princeton-Harvard China and the World Program, will join the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures as an assistant professor, according to the release.

Liff is also a research associate at Harvard University’s Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies and at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, with his primary fields of research being in international relations and security studies, with a focus on contemporary security issues in the Asia-Pacific region, according to the release. He earned his doctorate in politics from Princeton University.

Lee A. Feinstein, dean of the SGIS, stated to the release how these three faculty appointments are only the beginning of an ambitious effort to enhance IU’s traditional strengths while adding new dimensions.

“Deepening IU’s longstanding commitment to the study of Asia is a top priority in light of the growing role of Asia and the Pacific,” Feinstein said. “With these new colleagues, we are significantly expanding the scholarly and career opportunities available to our talented students.”
Could a crime-reporting mobile app be on tap for Pittsburgh?

June 25, 2015 12:00 AM

By Molly Born / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The creator of a mobile app credited with helping to reduce crime in Puerto Rico may come to Pittsburgh this fall to explore the possibility of developing a similar program here, city Councilman Ricky Burgess said.

Mr. Burgess introduced legislation this week that would authorize the city and the police bureau to partner with Puerto Rican telecommunications firm Optivon Inc. to license a crime-reporting app and software for no more than $10,000.

Luis Romero, Optivon's owner, created the program that allows users to anonymously report suspected crimes after the 2011 murder of his 20-year-old son. Users can choose the icon that best represents the crime, including aggravated assault, rape and animal abuse; select the date and time of the incident; write a description; and include video or audio.

Available in Spanish and English, the program touts that the reports sent through the app are managed by actual officers of the Puerto Rico police department.

Mr. Burgess views the app as another step in the city's efforts to improve the relationship between community and police. With the app, "the average citizen would have a gateway directly into the bureau," he said.

The anti-crime organization Mr. Romero founded after his son's death and the app — which has been downloaded on the island about 40,000 times and used to send in more than 4,000 tips — are called "Basta Ya PR," which means "enough is enough, Puerto Rico."

Mainland interest in the app led him to open an office in Florida. So far, the company has developed apps for two cities in Kentucky, with others elsewhere in the works. Mr. Romero said Mr. Burgess called him during a recent trip to the island, and the two met to discuss
bringing the app to Pittsburgh.

John DeCarlo, associate professor and police studies coordinator at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, said it's difficult to know the efficacy of crime-reporting apps.

"We haven't collected enough data yet to determine a return on investment," he said.

But Mr. Romero cited a current murder rate half that of 2011, and an overall reduction in violent crime, and believes the app played a role.

"If you add thousands of police [officers] to the police force, it's still not enough. The community gets together with the police, then the problem is solved," he said.

Mr. Burgess said he's meeting with police Chief Cameron McLay and the bureau's IT team next week to discuss the feasibility of the program.

The police bureau did not respond to requests for comment via a spokeswoman.
The New York Public Library Wars

What went wrong at one of the world's eminent research institutions?

By Scott Sherman

Scholars who use the New York Public Library are boiling with frustration. It wasn't supposed to be this way. In 2014 the library, under pressure from a coalition that included four senior scholars, abandoned its controversial Central Library Plan, which entailed gutting the stacks at the 42nd Street Library and selling the popular Mid-Manhattan Library across the street. But the situation hasn't turned out how many critics had hoped.

Paula Glatzer, an independent Shakespeare scholar, has been engaged in research at the library since 1963 and has recently used the collections for her contribution to the new Variorum Shakespeare editions, published by the Modern Language Association. On January 15 she sent a letter to Anthony W. Marx, the library's president: "Sadly, I have had to tell my Variorum colleagues that the NYPL is over ... for now." Many books are stored off-site, some mislabeled as on-site; others have been lost or discarded, she wrote. "I requested a series. It couldn't be found. I said it was hard to lose 21 volumes. A librarian overheard me and offered to look. He later emailed. All 21 volumes were indeed missing."

What stands revealed is a library that is abandoning its core mission of research.

What went wrong at one of the world's eminent research libraries? NYPL, as it is often known, has been under intermittent financial pressure for most of its history, but in the last few years it has been enveloped by a controversy that has exposed the institution to unprecedented public scrutiny. What stands revealed is a library that is abandoning its core mission of research and is losing its way.
in the digital age.

The Central Library Plan was a quixotic scheme, born in 2007, to sell three libraries in central Manhattan and consolidate services in the main branch, at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue. That building would undergo a radical transformation by the British architect Norman Foster, who called it "the greatest project ever." It wasn't until 2011, when I first reported on the plans in The Nation, that scholars realized the project's full scope and radical nature. Foster's renovation called for the creation of new rooms for children and teenagers, more computer work stations, and the demolition of seven levels of historic book stacks — containing 98,000 adjustable shelves and built by Carrère & Hastings in the first decade of the 20th century. The three million books in the stacks were to be sent to an off-site storage facility near Princeton, N.J. Library officials insisted that the plan would cost $300 million and was essential to the institution's fiscal health.

Three factors gave rise to the central plan: The library was under severe financial pressure, the value of real estate in Manhattan was soaring, and the Board of Trustees was controlled by business leaders at the highest echelons of Manhattan real estate and finance, who believed that the market could ameliorate the complex, longstanding troubles. In 2005 the trustees sold the library's most precious painting, Asher B. Durand's "Kindred Spirits," for a reported $35 million. Critics howled.

By 2007 there were no more valuable paintings left to sell, so the trustees, with the backing of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, decided to put the library's own real estate on the market. The high-wire plan that emerged was a mystifying combination of consolidation and devil-may-care overreach. Foster demanded $9 million for his fee, a huge expenditure for a sprawling urban library system that has difficulty keeping toilet paper, soap, and hand towels in the restrooms of its 88 branches.

A transformation of the library's internal culture made a radical plan possible. A democratic thread runs through NYPL's history. In the 1890s the 42nd Street Library was designed in a strikingly transparent way: The architectural plans for the new building were
given to local newspapers, which sparked an animated public
discussion. Similarly, senior librarians and curators always had a
voice in decision making.

That began to change under the leadership of Paul LeClerc, a
French-literature scholar who headed the City University of New
York's Hunter College and became NYPL's president in 1998. Staff
members gradually found themselves excluded from high-level
strategic discussions; consultants from McKinsey & Company and
Booz Allen Hamilton filled the void. In June 2007 the central plan
was ratified by the trustees behind closed doors. The trustee
meeting's minutes, which I obtained under the Open Meetings Law
in 2013, show that the board chairman, Catherine C. Marron, who
has given some $25 million to NYPL, "reminded all in attendance of
the importance of maintaining confidentiality." Staff members
learned of the plan four months later.

A veteran NYPL librarian told me in 2012: "We were made to feel
old and against change. A few trustees did call for open discussion
at the start, but they were greatly outnumbered. The mission was to
stifle discussion and get this thing done before anyone could stop
them."

The central plan was derailed by the recession of 2008, but was
quietly being revived by 2011. In early 2012, Joan Wallach
Scott, a historian at the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton,
was shaken by what I had reported. My article, she recalled in 2014,
"was an invitation to act" in defense of an institution "that matters
to me more than almost anything else."

In the 1950s the library had helped to ignite Scott's interest in
French history; she would spend her vacations from college at the
42nd Street building, where staff members would allow her to read
newspapers that appeared in Paris during the Revolution of 1848.
Some were in fair condition; others turned to dust in her hands. She
still remembers "the sheer excitement of touching real paper from
ages gone by." Scott went on to become a leader in her field and in
feminist scholarship.

She told me that in 2012 she found herself "feeling angrier and
angrier about — I don’t know what to call it — neoliberal capitalism and feeling powerless to affect it." For decades her activism — building women’s-studies departments, defending academic freedom — had been confined to the university. But as she learned more about the New York Public Library plan, she found herself ready — and eager — to venture off campus.

Scott phoned an old friend, Stanley N. Katz, who was down the road at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School. In the realm of higher education, Katz wears many hats (though he prefers elegant bow ties): elder statesman, power broker, commentator, activist, maverick. A member of Harvard’s Class of 1955 and an ardent old-school liberal, he has numerous friends in the highest echelons of journalism, philanthropy, and politics, and he maintains a punishing schedule that would challenge a person half his age.

Katz is not only an esteemed legal historian but also an expert on the nonprofit sector, and he was curious about NYPL’s trajectory after LeClerc’s departure. Indeed, Katz had known the library’s new president, Tony Marx, who took over in 2011, when the latter was a graduate student at Princeton and had extolled Marx’s accomplishments as president of Amherst College, from 2003 to 2011.

Like Scott, Katz had an emotional attachment to the library at 42nd Street. As a graduate student and young professor, he had relied on its resources — especially the old American History Room, which was abruptly shuttered in 1980 over the objections of scholars like Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who complained about a "rather mysterious" decision-making process at NYPL. The loss of that intimate room, with its open shelving and camaraderie, is still keenly felt by Katz: "It was a refuge, a haven, an incredible resource," he says. "I could be sure that every reference work that existed was there and available."

Scott and Katz decided to write a protest letter: "We are alarmed by the Central Library Plan, which seems to us to be a misplaced use of funds in a time of great scarcity," they said. Scott didn’t know how to create an online petition, so the letter was dispatched from her personal email account.
Uncertainty hangs over the New York Public Library, and discussion about its fate must continue.

A few dozen scholars, she hoped, would sign it. Indeed, the first people to respond were old friends and former students. A week later, the Nobel laureate Mario Vargas Llosa, who had researched several of his novels in the Rose Reading Room at 42nd Street, emailed her from Peru and asked that his name be added. Soon there was another email: "Please add my name to your good letter. Many thanks, Salman Rushdie." Tom Stoppard signed, as did other major writers, including Donna Tartt, Colm Tóibín, Jonathan Lethem, Peter Carey, Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, Ann Patchett, and Amitav Ghosh. Leading historians also joined the protest: Anthony T. Grafton, Jackson Lears, Natalie Zemon Davis, and Ramachandra Guha.

Scott was waking up each morning to hundreds of messages. The protest letter would ultimately generate about 2,000 signatures. The petition was soon covered by the Times. A campaign was born.

For the next two years, Scott and Katz worked closely with a small but indefatigable group of grass-roots activists and historical preservationists in New York City that eventually became the Committee to Save the New York Public Library, led by the architect and writer Charles Warren.

Katz knew NYPL's leaders and in the early days of the controversy urged them to change course. In May 2012 he had lunch in Philadelphia with the board chairman, Neil L. Rudenstine, a former president of Harvard University, who had replaced Marron. Katz and Rudenstine had a warm friendship in the 1950s, when they were both graduate students at Harvard and shared a passion for England in the 16th and 17th centuries. But in 2012 they found themselves on opposing sides. During their lunch, Rudenstine insisted that the central plan was the only way forward for the library.

When the controversy became news, in the spring of 2012, Marx emailed Katz and Scott. "I clearly need more advice," he wrote, "on
how to decide and adjust plans going forward." They met in Marx's office. It was not a productive session, but Scott and Katz did convince the library's president that it should participate in a debate about the central plan, organized by the online magazine *n+1* at the New School. Library officials had initially declined, but thanks to Katz and Scott's prodding, Marx and Robert Darnton agreed to the invitation. Darnton, a longtime NYPL trustee, then director of the Harvard University Library, had just published a defense of the central plan in *The New York Review of Books*.

David Nasaw had been using NYPL for decades and knew that it was the principal research library for faculty members and graduate students at CUNY, where he is a professor of history. Nasaw had written a celebrated biography of Andrew Carnegie, who paid for the construction of 30 NYPL branch libraries in the first decade of the 20th century, and it was his remarks on the panel that would be featured in an account of the debate in the next day's news media.

"We are being told," Nasaw said, "that the only way to save the library is to rip out its innards and transport millions of books to New Jersey." He dismissed Marx's pledge of 24-hour delivery of books from the off-site storage facility. "If for the past 10 years the library has not been able to provide reliable 24-hour service, why are we to believe that with additional books moved there it will be able to do this? Is the traffic on the New Jersey Turnpike going to decrease?"

Nasaw was unsparing: "I'm enough of a New Yorker to understand how the city works, and how decisions are made, and what sort of voices speak loudest when large-scale, multimillion-dollar projects like this are formulated behind closed doors." He went on:

I'm not talking about Tony Marx or Bob Darnton, who were given this plan. But I would not be shocked to learn that among the voices that were heard loudest were the city's real-estate interests, deputy mayors, offices of the New York State Economic Development Corporation; politicians who will be running for office and politicians who want to leave behind legacies; architects who seek out
large-scale campuses for their work, engineers who believe they can do the impossible, planners and number crunchers and traffic consultants and hedge-fund managers and wealthy New Yorkers who want their names on buildings ... and some donors, who, motivated by a 21st-century social Darwinism, believe that having made money or being born with it renders them more fit than the rest of us to make decisions about the urban landscape.

By mid-2012 critics had formulated a list of demands: Preserve and renovate the 42nd Street stacks; cancel Foster’s $300-million renovation and use the money to rebuild the library’s decimated staff of librarians, curators, and archivists; and retain and renovate the decrepit but highly popular Mid-Manhattan Library, on 40th Street and Fifth Avenue, which occupied prime real estate and whose sale was a cornerstone of the central plan.

But Marx continued to insist that the stacks had an outdated climate-control system, jeopardizing three million "rotting" books. A new system, he said, would be too expensive to install.

Demolition of the stacks was the only option. And so he ordered the removal of three million books from the interior of the 42nd Street Library. The public was never told of the decision. By the spring of 2013, the vast heart of the building was empty, and the space emitted a dank stench — the climate-control system was turned off after the last book was sent away to off-site storage.

Staff members reported to me that many books and photographs were damaged when the stacks were emptied. The NYPL spokesman Ken Weine denied those allegations to me.

Another New York-based historian was also livid about what was happening. David Levering Lewis, born in 1936, is grave, formal, carefully spoken, and thoroughly old-fashioned. He’s an enormously productive New York University scholar who has written books about the Dreyfus Affair, Harlem, Martin Luther King Jr., and African resistance to European imperialism. For Parts 1 and 2 of his biography of W.E.B. Du Bois, he was awarded Pulitzer Prizes. By and large, his books were researched and written in the
Library of Congress and the New York Public Library, both of which Lewis cherished.

Lewis and Marx knew each other. Prior to the controversy, their relationship, says Lewis, was "distantly congenial" and "mutually admiring." Indeed, Marx's 2003 book *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* had sparked an intuition that helped Lewis conceptualize his own 2008 *God's Crucible: Islam and the Making of Europe*, 570-1215. When it was published, Lewis sent Marx an inscribed copy; Marx responded from Amherst with a cordial, handwritten letter.

In my 2011 *Nation* story, I quoted Lewis's views about the removal of millions of books from the stacks at 42nd Street: "We would need to review that very carefully, and perhaps resist it." A few hours after Marx read those words, he emailed Lewis: "Hi David. Hope this finds you well. Meanwhile, we are enjoying beautiful bookshelves at home built by the person you suggested ... I was wondering if we might get together at some point to catch up and to talk about the future of the Library (including this building — I heard you!)." But for Lewis, the 42nd Street renovation was a "cultural atrocity." He tartly replied: "Maybe we should confer with Sir Norman about bookshelves."

They soon met for breakfast at the Metro Diner, on 100th Street. Marx told Lewis, as he had recently told others, that the 42nd Street Library was intimidating to much of the public (especially younger people and new immigrants) and had to be transformed and modernized. He then spoke feelingly of his boyhood in the NYPL branch libraries, and his desire to invigorate those facilities, which needed $500 million in renovations. Lewis asked where the money for the branches would come from, if $300 million was about to be spent on an extravagant architectural project at one facility on 42nd Street. "I will raise the money, I can do it," Lewis recalls Marx said. "You are deceiving yourself," Lewis replied.

They stayed in touch. In May 2013, Lewis complained to Marx in an email that scholarly services would erode under the central plan and likened Foster's design to a suburban mall. Marx riposted: "I really object to the notion of a great circulating library as a mall."
That seems rather elitist to me."

Lewis was finished with email; it was time to find a lawyer. Scott, Katz, Nasaw, the historians Edmund Morris and Blanche Wiesen Cook, and several others were about to file a lawsuit in New York state court. But Lewis and several friends wanted their own lawsuit. So in July 2013, there were two well-publicized filings. Katz was pessimistic about the chances in court. But a judge issued a temporary restraining order that read: "NYPL shall not undertake and/or continue any construction work ... relating to the seven stories of iron and steel book stacks ...."

The ruling was a devastating blow to Marx and library trustees, who were ferociously determined to break ground on the renovation while Bloomberg was still in office, because — as Marx had admitted at the New School debate — the next mayor would have the authority to redirect the $150 million in city capital funds allocated to the project. The judge's decision emboldened the critics and gave them time to organize. The election of Bill de Blasio as New York City's mayor, in November 2013, created further headaches for the library, as de Blasio had opposed the central plan when he was campaigning for mayor. A third lawsuit was filed by critics who alleged that the Bloomberg administration had mishandled the environmental-impact assessment for the renovation.

The New York Public Library abandoned the plan on May 7, 2014. The "greatest project ever" never came to fruition. Weeks later, library officials acknowledged that the Foster renovation would have cost $500 million, not $300 million, and that $18 million had already been spent on it. (The actual losses are probably much higher.)

But the finale proved bittersweet for the critics: Marx announced that the stacks would remain empty. "Stacks without books?" Lewis asked in The Wall Street Journal. "Isn't that pretty Kafkaesque?" A few days later, Katz wrote to me: "The empty stacks are the lasting image of the controversy ... 'take that, wise guys' is what I fear they are saying to us."
Staff members tell me that the trustees are fully devoted to the library's special collections — the manuscripts by Beethoven, Joyce, and Whitman, the rare photographs of Jorge Luis Borges, and Virginia Woolf's cane, to name just a few items — but are ambivalent about scholarly research. That fact is plain to see: NYPL intends to sell its Science, Industry, and Business Library, on 34th Street and Madison Avenue; the performing-arts library at Lincoln Center has seen the departure of most of its skilled staff of librarians and curators, and the facility itself has eroded, prompting Edmund Morris to call it a "dump." The staff of librarians, archivists, and curators at 42nd Street has been cut to the bone.

Marx has articulated a populist vision for NYPL. He told me in July 2011, months before the controversy erupted: "In the back quarter of this iconic building are stacks of books that are rarely used. We can store and get access to those books without having to take the prime space in a prime location of New York City. To the degree that we can make that space available, and replace books with people, that's the future of where libraries are going." In 2014, while reporting my book on the NYPL wars, I requested an interview with Marx; he declined.

The role of research has yet to be clearly defined. In 2011 a librarian told me about the experience of a researcher who had come to 42nd Street for scholarly reference books. The books, it turned out, were in the Princeton storage facility. "She didn't want to go to the trouble to call the whole set from off-site, and to renew it every week, and this and that." Columbia University's library had those books on the shelf, so she went there. "I think her experience counts for exactly zero with the current library administration," the librarian said. "That is not the kind of reader they want."

Uncertainty hangs over the New York Public Library, and discussion about its fate must continue. But one thing is clear: A quartet of historians, allied with grass-roots activists, played a very significant role in halting a $500-million construction project in the heart of Manhattan, saving the Mid-Manhattan Library, used by 1.5 million people a year, and preserving the architectural integrity of what is perhaps New York City's finest building.
New York is ‘getting rules right for solar and storage together’

http://www.pv-tech.org/news/40356
By Andy Colthorpe - 24 June 2015

A New York-based project proving the ability of solar paired with storage to provide power in the event of natural disasters and other causes of grid outages is now underway at City University of New York (CUNY).

John Cerveny of New York Battery and Energy Storage Technology Consortium (NY BEST), which is described as part development advisory, part trade advocacy group, told PV Tech Storage that groups collaborating on the NYSolar Smart Distributed Generation (DG) Hub – Resilient Solar Project, have begun their meetings in the past few weeks.

The three-year project is designed to demonstrate how the pairing of solar and storage can give communities a more resilient energy supply. It was first unveiled in January, following the award of US Department of Energy (DoE) funding to a number of projects across the US, under the umbrella of the Solar Market Pathways programme to advance solar deployment.

“A lot of this is the sort of getting the rules right for solar and storage together and then building a roadmap and actually even a website where you could show the places that need resilient power the most,” Cerveny said.

For the full version of this story, visit PV Tech Storage.
EXPERIENCE THE ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY OF THE NEW YORK WORLD’S FAIRS

Text by Stephanie Strasnick | Photography courtesy of the Godwin-Tembach Museum | June 24, 2015

Few examples of the Art Deco, modern, and postmodern architecture erected for the New York World’s Fairs exist today. But the legacy of these structures lives on in photographs of the fairs that are housed in collections around the world. Queens College’s Godwin-Tembach Museum in New York has assembled more than 100 of these pictures for “Persuasive Images: Architecture and the 1939–40 and 1964–5 World’s Fairs,” a tribute to the fairs’ structural achievements.

In addition to the photos—which highlight designs by such luminaries as Alvar Aalto, Philip Johnson, and Oscar Niemeyer—the exhibition will offer visitors who attended the fairs the opportunity to record their memories. A collaboration with the Queens Memory Project, this element of the show will add further context to the images and shed light on the lasting effect the fairs have had on the Queens community.

June 29 through July 27 at the Godwin-Tembach Museum at Queens College, 405 Klapper Hall, 65–30 Kissena Boulevard, Flushing, New York; gtmuseum.org