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West and East Village, Chelsea, Soho, Noho, Little Italy, Chinatown and Lower East Side, Since 1933
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Historic reversal: After waffling for weeks, saying it didn't support the full South Village Historic District as it's being proposed, New York University has come out in support of the district boundaries as endorsed by the South Village Landmark Association (SoVilLa) and Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. On June 11, Alicia Hurley, N.Y.U. associate vice president for government and community affairs, wrote Robert Tierney, chairperson of the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission, a short letter stating: "I would like, on behalf of New York University, to clearly state that we fully support designation of the proposed South Village Historic District as currently submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission. We are in favor of this proposal as it would truly protect the historic architecture and cultural identity of our great neighborhood." "I'm elated," said David Gruber, president of SoVilLa. "I'm beyond happy about it. I think that we are going to move quickly to landmark now." Andrew Berman, director of G.V.S.H.P., said, "I'm glad to see that N.Y.U. has finally decided to live up to its commitment made four years ago to support this proposal, and to live up to its commitment to the community of which it is a part, at least in this one respect, to be a good neighbor. N.Y.U. still has a very long way to go, but I will be gracious and say that I hope this is the beginning of a positive trend. If so, they have a lot more work to do." Berman was eager to know if Hurley had said anything else beyond her terse letter. As a matter of fact, she did, adding the following in a follow-up e-mail to us: "This is the latest in our ongoing effort to demonstrate that we are supportive of this important effort and wanted to be a part of the process. This most recent letter is meant to pierce through the fog that was generated when I wrote a letter that was requesting a seat at the table. This was never a fight, it was a misunderstanding." Gruber added that the reopening of Father Demo Square — which is in the proposed South Village Historic District — is all set for this Friday at 11 a.m. Council Speaker Christine Quinn will be speaking, a band will be playing (not all at the same time) and the new fountain will be on.

Latin Kings libre! Councilmember Rosie Mendez is steamed over the police arrests of more than 200 persons at the Puerto Rican Day Parade whom the police say were Latin Kings who were trying to march in the parade. She's calling for the arrests to be voided. "You can't arrest them just because they're Latin Kings," Mendez said, noting that people have a constitutional right to affiliate in groups — and also to wear any color clothing, even yellow and gold, as the Latin Kings do. "Do you remember McCarthyism?" Mendez asked. "They went after people because of their affiliation with the Communist Party." Mendez said while some of the arrestees may have had weapons or even "assaulted some young women or so forth," most were charged with unlawful assembly. "Charging someone with unlawful assembly at a parade is unlawful," she said. Mendez said the Latin Kings are a mixed bag — that there are some good members, as well as some "who have committed serious crimes against humanity." Mendez said she believed the Latin Kings weren't in the parade because they applied to the organizers too late. Ultimately, she said, "I believe they should be allowed to march."

No Boricua blockade: Closer to home, Boricua flags fluttered proudly from cars, bicycles and strollers in the East Village over the recent Puerto Rican Day weekend, but the celebration was more subdued than in years past. The police presence was normal, however, nothing like the much-criticized lockdown that happened last year when police blocked off streets in Alphabet City to prevent car "caravanning." Neighbor John Penley thought people may have reined in their merrymaking out of fears of a repeat of last year. Councilmember Mendez said she opposes the street closures, feeling they cause more traffic problems than they solve. "I'm assuming they feel it wasn't necessary" to close the side streets, Mendez said of the Ninth Precinct. "I didn't get any notice that that wasn't going to happen. Then again," she added, "I didn't get any notice when they cut the locks on the bikes on Sixth St." We didn't get an answer from the Ninth Precinct by press



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Committee's and E. 12th St. neighbors' challenge of the Department of Buildings' approval of an air-rights transfer from the Cooper Station Post Office to the new 26-story dorm project being built for New York University on E. 12th St. at the site of the former St. Ann's Church. The plaintiffs had argued that because federal properties are not regulated by D.O.B., the post office has infinite air rights, and thus the city cannot "take away" any air rights from the site to transfer to the dorm project. The neighbors were supported in their lawsuit by Berman, of G.V.S.H.P, though neither was a plaintiff. David Kramer, principal of the Hudson Companies, which is developing the dorm for N.Y.U., crowed over the victory. "Andrew and his anti-N.Y.U. squad really need to move on. The only reason we're still talking about this is because the United Auto Workers — motivated by a desire to harass N.Y.U. — is funding this absurd challenge. I think we need to change the topic from air-rights transfers to clogging our courts with unnecessary litigation." Unfortunately for Kramer, the unclogging, in this case, will have to wait: Berman said the B.S.A.'s decision simply clears the way for the plaintiffs to file an Article 78 lawsuit challenging Buildings' approval of the air-rights transfer. The U.A.W. — which supported N.Y.U. graduate student teaching assistants' efforts to unionize — funded an earlier legal challenge by the E. 12th St. dorm plaintiffs.

Movin' on up: Everyone suspected Madelyn Wils, former chairperson of Lower Manhattan's Community Board 1, would end up with a high-powered job somewhere in the Bloomberg administration. Last week, it was announced she is now executive vice president for planning and development at the city's Economic Development Corporation.

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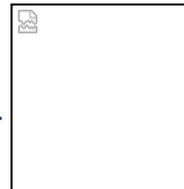
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