

Information that may be of interest...

February 10, 2020

This information is provided by The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association. We are sharing it as a service to our members. If this notice does not interest you, please disregard it.

You can also find these weekly newsletters online in PDF (printable) format at www.murrayhillnyc.org in the News section, look for Weekly Eblasts 2020.

Please share this email with a friend, neighbor or colleague. You can sign up for these emails at www.murrayhillnyc.org, scroll down the Also Happening column.

The MHNA Discount Program

Please be prepared to show proof of membership when you ask for a discount.

Full list of discounts offered to MHNA members:

[Restaurant and Food Discounts](#)

[General Discounts](#)

Upcoming events

Thursday, February 13 1-3pm

East Midtown Public Realm Governing Group Meeting

The agenda will include a presentation on the proposed design of a privately owned public space at 270 Park Avenue (a/k/a JPMorgan Chase Headquarters), and a discussion about public realm improvement projects funded by the Governing Group.

at 120 Broadway (Concourse Level)

New York, NY, 10271

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES: Deadline to Change Your Party for the Primary Elections is February 14

In New York State, you must be registered with a party to vote in the Primary Elections. Deadline to register to vote if you want to *change your party* when you vote in the NY State Primary Elections in April. You can register online at <https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingDeadlines.html>. **Important Election Dates:** <https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingRegister.html>

CHANGE OF ENROLLMENT: An application to change one's party enrollment for any primary election in 2020 must be received by the board of elections no later than **February 14, 2020**.

MAIL REGISTRATION: Application must be postmarked no later than April 3, 2020 and received by a board of elections no later than April 8, 2020 to be eligible to vote in the Primary.

IN PERSON REGISTRATION: You may register at your local board of elections or any state agency

participating in the National Voter Registration Act, on any business day throughout the year but, to be eligible to vote in the State and Local Primary, your application must be received no later than April 3, 2020.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Notices of change of address from registered voters received by April 8, 2020 by a county board of elections must be processed and entered in the records in time for the Primary. [Voter Registration and Poll Site Search](#)

Tax Prep Assistance

FREE at SIBL (Science, Industry and Business Library). First come, first served. AARP TaxAide Tax Assistance, Thursdays 10am-2pm. Food Bank's E-file Tax Assistance, **Mondays** and **Wednesdays 1-6pm** and **Fridays** and **Saturdays 1-5pm**. Learn more <https://www.nypl.org/help/community-outreach/income-tax-information>. Telephone 212-592-7380.

at SIBL (Science, Industry and Business Library)- Classroom 1
The New York Public Library
188 Madison Avenue

Community Board application deadline has been extended to February 14

New Yorkers who are dedicated to making a difference in their neighborhoods have until February 14 to apply to become a Community Board member. If you live, work or go to school in one of Manhattan's 12 community districts, you're eligible! [Apply online](#) or [complete a paper application](#).

The online application must be completed in one sitting, so read the paper application first and prepare your answers offline. All applications are due by 5pm on Friday, February 14, 2020.

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer's office will contact you about next steps in the screening and interview process. Appointments will be announced this spring.

Kudos!

Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney receives the 2020 Hero Award

This award was presented by the Trucking Cares Foundation, the charitable arm of the American Trucking Association, for her work in Congress to combat human trafficking. The trucking industry is taking a stand against trafficking to save lives. In recent years, thanks to calls made to the national anti-trafficking hotline by the industry, more than 1,240 victims were identified and rescued. Human trafficking happens here in the United States and all over the world, but if we all come together to stop it, we can finally eradicate slavery in all its forms.



MHNA P&D Committee is nominated for an Apple Award by the GANyc

The Guides Association of New York City nominated The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association Preservation & Design Committee for Outstanding Achievement in Support of NYC Preservation. The winner will be announced and will be presented with the award at the 2020 GANyc Apple Awards event on Monday, March 2, 6:30pm (cocktails), 8pm (ceremony). This event will be hosted by the Bowery Boys and is open to the public. An after-party will also be held for all nominees and attendees. Tickets can be purchased at <https://www.ganyc.org/2020-ganyc-apple-awards>. The awards ceremony will also recognize outstanding

achievement in support of NYC Culture, Tourism, Preservation, Outstanding NYC Website, Photography, Radio Program or Podcast, Book Writing (Fiction & Non-Fiction), Essay/Article/Series Writing, Food, Museum Exhibitions. The event will be held at The SVA Theatre, 333 West 23rd Street. [Flyer](#).

Congratulations to Councilmember Keith Powers for being #1 on City & State's list of [The Best New York City Lawmakers](#)

January 26, 2020, cityandstateny.com, by City & State

#1 (tie). **Keith Powers**. CRITERIA: Laws enacted: 7, #9 (tie). Bills introduced: 14, #16 (tie). Attendance: 98.21%, #4. Constituent response: Yes. Communications response: Yes.

Powers, a first-term lawmaker from Manhattan, chairs the Criminal Justice Committee, which has played a key role in the debate over closing Rikers Island and replacing the complex with borough-based jails. He also spearheaded a new 2019 law limiting the operation of horse carriages on hot days and pushed for an expanded inmate bill of rights.



[MHNA Tree Guard Repair and Replacement Program](#)

The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association Green and Clean Committee is pleased to announce a program designed to help individual homeowners and residential buildings in Murray Hill repair or replace broken tree guards on their property. Tree guards (hoops) have proven very helpful in protecting our trees. Any resident wishing to have the Association help out with a project of this type

should contact Tom Horan at horan.tc@gmail.com. [Read more about the program](#).

Plastic bag ban begins on March 1

If you need reusable bags, Senator Liz Krueger's office is distributing free bags made of 90% recycled material that fold into a built-in pouch with a carabiner clip. Call 212-490-9535 or email liz@lizkrueger.com to request bags. Please indicate how many bags you would like.

Pre-K enrollment is now open

All NYC families with children born in 2016 can now apply to *Pre-K for All* between **February 5 and March 16, 2020**. Right now you can: Explore current pre-K programs and apply with [MySchools](#) (Open external link). Sign up for the [pre-K email list](#) today to get admissions tips and updates. Learn more at <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enroll-grade-by-grade/pre-k>. [2020 NYC Pre-K Admissions guide](#).

Deadline for applications - February 14

Excelsior Conservation Corps Employment Opportunities

Source: Senator Krueger's Community Bulletin - February 2020, email of February 6, 2020

ECC is a ten month residential AmeriCorps program, run by the Student Conservation Association, a multi-agency partnership, and is designed to address the environmental and conservation needs of our state while providing leadership opportunities, employment training and college scholarships. The program, which begins in late February, will include up to 40 full-time service positions available for young adults age 18-25 and Veterans up to age 28.

Members work with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to complete environmental stewardship projects on state lands. The AmeriCorps members serve in teams of 10 on projects that improve the infrastructure of buildings and improve sustainability (including solar array installation); invasive species removal, trail construction, and erosion control; surveying for invasive species or habitat types & assessing culverts; and outreach at fairs & festivals as well as running interpretive & educational programming.

Members of the program will be provided with: \$180/week living allowance, housing and meals, no cost health insurance, a \$6,190 AmeriCorps Education Award upon completion. Interested individuals should apply at www.ny.gov/ECC. The deadline for application is Friday, February 14, 2020.

Participate in a Survey: 2020 Age-friendly Manhattan Survey

Last fall, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer's office launched "Making Manhattan Mine," an initiative to make the borough a better place to age. The MBP's office partnered with The New York Academy of Medicine to prepare a survey about the nature and quality of resources and amenities available to older people—things like transportation, technology, healthy living, advance-care planning, and the arts. They need your input on how to shape the initiative's roadmap ahead. To participate in the short survey online visit bit.ly/AgeFriendlyMBPO or to request a printed copy of the survey, send your address to Shula Warren at swarren@manhattanbp.nyc.gov or call 212-669-2392.

The survey is available online and in print in English, Spanish and Chinese, and responses are anonymous and confidential.

Murray Hill in the news

[Cuomo leaves an outsized mark on de Blasio's New York City](#)

January 21, 2020, *politico.com*, by Dana Rubinstein

The Cuomo administration may let two of New York City's biggest real estate concerns tear down Donald Trump's first significant Manhattan project, and build a skyscraper next to Grand Central Terminal. Though the development will, with at least 2 million square feet, rival the Chrysler Building in size, New York City itself will have little formal involvement in the project. That the Cuomo administration is considering letting TF Cornerstone and RXR Realty's Scott Rechler (a major Cuomo donor) bypass New York City's onerous review process in favor of the state's, speaks to one of the more striking aspects of development in New York City over much of the past decade...To the extent he has shaped the built environment, de Blasio has done so by unleashing private development — in Midtown East, where developers like Rechler can now build taller skyscrapers.

[City Council preps oversight of 'ghost kitchens'](#)

January 23, 2020, *nypost.com*, by Lisa Fickenscher

The New York City Council has scheduled a Feb. 6 oversight hearing on the recent growth of commercial kitchens that crank out food for delivery only — avoiding the costs of operating storefronts...Ghost kitchens typically operate out of lower-cost industrial spaces that can house multiple brands at once. Key players in the fledgling niche — including Doordash and Cloud Kitchens, a deep-pocketed startup founded by ex-Uber CEO Travis Kalanick — have been invited to the hearing...“The hearing will focus on the impact [these kitchens] have on the entire restaurant industry and how they work,” [Bronx Councilman Mark] Gjonaj said. “We want to get ahead of this to shape the industry fairly.”...Sarge's, which has a brick-and-mortar restaurant in Midtown, has meanwhile rented a space at Zuul, a ghost-kitchen commissary at 30 Van Dam St. in lower Manhattan.



[Circular Economy Russell Piccione's brownstone in Murray Hill is full of the orphaned and particular.](#)

February 6, 2020, *thecut.com*, by Wendy Goodman, Photographs by Jason Schmidt

Interior designer Russell Piccione has an eclectic eye. Six years ago, he spied a massive concave mirror in the window of the Chloé boutique...Now it's the unavoidable glittery thing in the sitting room of the Murray Hill

brownstone he rents with his partner, Antonio Haslauer...This five-story, 25-room house from the 1890s "has a lot of souvenirs of hard times," Piccione says. But it was its tattered beauty — and the space it provided for his nearly 9,000 books — that drew him in with its possibilities...Why aren't they in the market to buy? "I mean, renting allows you to live much beyond your means," he says, laughing. "I fear maybe a little less now, but New York is really a renter city. It always has been." [Editor's note: And be sure to look at all of the photos!]

[Possible case of coronavirus being tested at NYC hospital](#)

February 1, 2020, *nypost.com*, by Eileen AJ Connelly

The first person in New York City to undergo testing for the novel coronavirus is being treated in Bellevue Hospital, the city's health commissioner [Dr. Oxiris Barbot] said Saturday. The person, who is under 40, fell ill with a fever, cough and shortness of breath — telltale signs of the illness — after returning from China and went to see a doctor.

Related article: [Coronavirus Suspected In Another 2 NYC Patients](#)

February 5, 2020, *patch.com*, by Adam Nichols

The [patient] whose test results came back negative was being treated in Bellevue.

Related article: [No Match For NYC, Health Commissioner Says](#)

January 28, 2020, *patch.com*, by Kathleen Culliton

[Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot] gather[ed] reporters at the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center in Chinatown to assuage the public's fears over a rapidly spreading virus...[Barbot said] Coronavirus appears to have a 14 day incubation period with symptoms surfacing on the fifth or sixth day...Only New Yorkers with flu-like symptoms who have traveled within the past two weeks to the Wuhan area of China, where coronavirus first began its spread earlier this month, should contact their doctors...all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration or insurance status, should feel welcome in New York City's public hospitals and community health centers.

New York State's new coronavirus website:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

[Fairway Files For Bankruptcy And Starts Selling Its Stores](#)

January 23, 2020, *patch.com*, by Kathleen Culliton

Fairway will begin selling off its grocery stores after declaring bankruptcy Thursday, court records show. Shoprite's parent company Village Super Market is preparing to buy five Fairway Markets — the Upper West Side flagship, Harlem, Chelsea, Kips Bay and Upper East Side — for \$70 million, according to the Bankruptcy Court declarations...Thursday's declaration was Fairway's second Chapter 11 filed in four years. The company dug itself out of Chapter 11 proceedings in 2016 by borrowing money and shifting ownership from Sterling Investment Partners to a consortium led by Blackstone's GSO Capital Partners. The iconic market has been providing New Yorkers groceries since the mid-1930s and has since expanded to 21 locations across the tri-state area.

Related article: [Papyrus Stationery Closes All Stores, Including 22 In NYC](#)

January 21, 2020, *patch.com*, by Anna Quinn

Another national retail chain is shutting down, along with its two dozen locations in New York City. The well-known stationary store Papyrus is reportedly closing all of its stores across the country, according to Fortune. For New York City, that means 22 Papyrus stores in Manhattan will shut down. Most of the locations are found in Midtown, including outposts at Penn Station and Grand Central... [And the Bolton's in Grand Central and Port Authority have also closed recently.]

Related article: [Center for an Urban Future Report: State of the Chains, 2019](#)

December 2019, *nycfuture.org*, by Marco Torres and Charles Shaviro

The number of chain stores in New York City declined by 3.7 percent over the past year, marking the largest year-over-year drop in national retail locations since the Center for an Urban Future began our annual analysis of the city's chain retailers more than a decade ago.



[Subway Protest Takes Over Grand Central, Midtown Streets](#)

January 31, 2020, *patch.com*, by Kathleen Culliton
Hundreds of protesters [The Decolonize This Place organized action] flocked to Grand Central Terminal Friday to protest increased policing and rising fares in New York City's subways...The protest started calmly around 5 p.m. Friday with attendees walking through the terminal and yelling chants including "From the A to the C, public transit should be free" and "How do you spell racist? NYPD. Then, around 5:30 p.m., the crowd flowed out of the terminal and

onto the street, swarming down West 42nd Street where it was met by hundreds of cops carrying plastic handcuffs...Several social media showed dozens of people jumping turnstiles and running into stations in the area...Police reported acts of vandalism across the city. In one, somebody used a chain to smash the screen of an OMNY machine...The NYPD responded with a highly visible presence at stations throughout the city.

For Murray Hill street closures, see Traffic Updates on www.murrayhillnyc.org.

Traffic and transportation

[Bus lane camera enforcement begins along M15 bus route in Manhattan](#)

December 6, 2019, *abc7ny.com*

The MTA launched the next phase of its bus lane camera enforcement...ticketing drivers who illegally blocked the lane and slowed down traffic along the M15 Select Bus line.

[The M15 runs on 1st & 2nd Avenue.]

[MTA Reveals Renderings For Renovated 42nd Street Shuttle](#)

January 17, 2020, *patch.com*, by Brendan Krisel

The MTA assigned eight renovation projects for the corridor between Times Square and Grand Central Station — including the rebuild of the 42nd Street Shuttle line — to one project CEO, resulting in \$10 million in savings...Other improvements coming to 42nd Street include a new entrance, redesigned passageways and ADA-accessibility...More than 1.1 million passengers use the 42nd Street Corridor on a daily basis. The comprehensive plan is expected to be complete by 2025 and costs and estimated \$750 million in total.

[De Blasio nominates new Taxi & Limousine Commission head](#)

January 16, 2020, *nypost.com*, by Vincent Barone

The mayor Thursday nominated Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk, a City Hall staffer, as the chair and commissioner of the city agency tasked with regulating e-hail companies like Uber and Lyft and guiding the taxi industry through a financial crisis.

[MTA Plan To Subsidize Late-Night Uber Rides Gets One Star From Transit Advocates](#)

February 4, 2020, *gothamist.com*, by Jake Offenhartz

The MTA knows that unreliable overnight subway and bus service is failing New Yorkers with late-shift jobs. To fix the problem, the agency wants to partner with its arch-rivals in the ride-sharing business. On Tuesday, newly-appointed Chief Innovation Officer Mark Dowd announced that he's seeking proposals from companies offering "shared-mobility services" (read: Uber and Lyft) to partner on a new "Late-Shift" pilot...But elected officials and transit advocates raised immediate concerns about the proposal, calling it a misguided attempt to address a real problem. Several noted that the plan will ultimately profit the very companies explicitly aiming to take down public transportation, and questioned why the money wouldn't be better spent directly on late-night transit.

[The funding would come from the congestion pricing surcharge on for-hire vehicle trips in Manhattan.]

[Surge Pricing Could Be Way To Save Yellow Cabs, Council Plan Says](#)

January 31, 2020, *patch.com*, by Adam Nichols

Uber-like surge pricing is being suggested for NYC's yellow cabs.

The struggling yellow cab industry could introduce surge pricing similar to that used by Uber in an effort to survive, according to a [77 page report](#) expected to be delivered to the City Council Friday.

Related article: [Will the taxi task force's report do anything to help medallion owners?](#)

February 6, 2020, *cityandstateny.com*, by Annie McDonough

Experts weigh in on whether an app, surge pricing or a bailout can stop the industry's implosion.

[MTA to Link Bryant Park and Times Square Subway Stations](#)

January 28, 2020, *Bryant Park blog*

[T]he MTA announced plans to connect the Bryant Park subway station to the Times Square station. The plan, a component of the MTA's 42nd Street Connection Project, will link the 1/2/3/A/C/E/N/Q/R/W lines with the B/D/F/M lines, making it possible for commuters to access all combinations of these lines for one fare. The plan also includes a series of underground tunnels stretching along 42nd Street from Fifth Avenue to Eighth Avenue.

[Lawmakers want to shake up MTA board by granting appointments to borough presidents \(pending\)](#)

January 29, 2020, *nydailynews.com*, by Denis Slattery

A new bill being introduced...would give each borough president a voting appointee on the decision-making body that oversees the city's transit system.

Affordability & homelessness

[Comptroller Stringer Proposes Sweeping 'Universal Affordable Housing' Requirement for All New Construction in the City](#)

January 29, 2020, Press Release

New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer today announced 'Housing We Need,' a five-borough housing strategy to fundamentally realign New York City's failed approach to our housing crisis – including a universal requirement for 25% permanently low-income affordable housing in all new as-of-right development with ten or more units. Comptroller Stringer also proposed an end to the longstanding 421-a tax subsidy program for developers, which...has proven highly inefficient in its production of affordable housing. Comptroller Stringer's plan further calls for the expansion of affordable homeownership programs, the redirection of existing capital dollars to extremely and very low-income housing construction, and the creation of a New York City land bank that would facilitate the transformation of vacant city-owned properties into affordable housing.

Related article: [Comptroller Scott Stringer released a new affordable housing plan](#)

[Johnson Unveils 'Holistic, Long-Term' Plan to Tackle City Homelessness Crisis](#)

January 30, 2020, *gothamgazette.com*, by Samar Khurshid

New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson...released a plan that he said takes a "smarter, more strategic, holistic, long-term" approach to addressing the city's homelessness crisis... While the administration has been successful in slowing the growth of homelessness...it has not been able to reduce the city's homeless population...The plan is extensive, with 90 policy recommendations under six umbrellas – preventing homelessness, increasing access to permanent affordable housing, increasing support for unsheltered homeless people, improving services for the sheltered population, consolidating housing and homelessness policy, and creating a long-term approach to the issue instead of "lurching from crisis to crisis," Johnson said.

[Press release](#)

Report: [The State of Homelessness in NYC](#)

[NYC's Homeless Hotel Population Surges as City Grapples with Housing Crisis](#)

January 29, 2020, *citylimits.org*, by David Brand

[T]he surging number of New Yorkers staying in hotel rooms paid for by the city comes at a major cost — to city finances, and to the emotional and physical wellbeing of occupants, particularly thousands of children...A severe lack of affordable housing drives the city's unprecedented family homelessness crisis...Councilmember Stephen Levin is pushing a measure to increase the value of housing vouchers for homeless New Yorkers. The city's voucher program, known as CityFHEPS, covers the cost of rent up to a certain monthly amount, depending on household size. The maximum amounts pale in comparison to market rates in most neighborhoods.

Related article: [Homeless families to be matched with affordable apartments under NYC program](#)

February 4, 2020, *nypost.com*, by Lois Weiss, Nolan Hicks and Aaron Feis

After Feb. 14, City Hall will match shelter residents to affordable units that go unclaimed in the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's lottery...The city will pick up the tab — an estimated \$2.5 to \$3 million in rent annually — for approximately 200 units, many of them in luxe, highly desirable buildings.

Budget & taxes

[Warning of State Threats, De Blasio Presents \\$95.3 Billion Preliminary Budget for 2021 Fiscal Year](#)

January 16, 2020, *gothamgazette.com*, by Samar Khurshid

Mayor Bill de Blasio on Thursday released a \$95.3 billion preliminary budget proposal for the 2021 fiscal year, which begins July 1, increasing planned spending by about \$2.5 billion or 2.7% over the city budget that was adopted last year...Release of the mayor's preliminary budget will set off initial reactions from the City Council, advocates, and interest groups, and lead to a month-long round of Council budget hearings...City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and budget committee chairs said ..."We will work with the Administration to find savings in the budget while continuing to grow our priorities like Fair Fares, criminal justice reform, education, affordable housing, homelessness and transportation.

[Cuomo Proposes \\$178 Billion Budget, Closing \\$6.1 Billion Gap and Funding Top Priorities](#)

January 21, 2020, *gothamgazette.com*, by Samar Khurshid

The governor proposed...a radical rethinking of education aid to localities...The governor promoted tax cuts for the middle class that are continuing to go into effect and proposed a new tax cut for small businesses...Both the State Senate and Assembly will release their own one-house budget resolutions that detail each chamber's budget and policy priorities. The three sides have just over two months to come to an agreement before the April 1 start of the 2021 fiscal year.

Legislators Are in Albany Working on the State Budget

Source: Senator Krueger's Community Bulletin - February 2020, email of February 6, 2020

Legislators have to find ways to close the budget gap. Some non-budget items that were included in the budget are: expanded gun safety proposals, legalization of cannabis, legalization of e-scooters and

e-bikes, statewide ban on polystyrene, new prevailing wage requirements. Some of these can have budget effects, such as taxes on cannabis, savings on waste processing, etc.

[#OscarsSoNewYork, but should they be?](#)

February 7, 2020, *cityandstateny.com*, by Annie McDonough

Seven Academy Award-nominated films qualified for a controversial tax credit that Cuomo wants to extend...Those in the industry point to New York's film production tax credit – a 30 cent credit for every dollar spent on qualifying below-the-line production costs for movies and television in New York City, plus an extra 10% credit on qualifying labor costs in the suburbs and upstate – as the reason for the growth in film and TV productions shooting in New York...Despite broadsides against the incentives for filming movies and TV shows in New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo's proposed budget would extend the credit for another year, through 2025...In addition to reducing the production tax credit to 25%, Cuomo's budget proposal would reduce the post-production tax credit to 25% in New York City and to 30% in the suburbs and upstate...Sen. Liz Krueger...praised the program in the past but recently acknowledged that a closer look needs to be taken at whether New York is getting bang for its buck...Ultimately, the debate over the film tax credits boils down to film industry executives and labor unions saying that they would likely have to move productions away from New York if the credit went away, and fiscal policy experts and academics raising their eyebrows at that notion.

[Long-Awaited Report Seeks To Remedy NYC's Unequal Property Tax Burden](#)

January 31, 2020, *gothamist.com*, by Elizabeth Kim

[A] commission tasked with reforming New York City's antiquated and unequal property tax system has issued its preliminary report outlining a list of recommendations that would force wealthier homeowners to pay more while allowing their lower-income counterparts to pay less. The plan's biggest game-changing proposal would be to tax most residential properties, including co-ops and condos, at their full market value...The report also seeks to do away with a roughly 40-year practice of valuing co-ops and condos as if they were rental properties...the recommendations face a lengthy approval process, from the mayor and City council to the state legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo.

[Editor's note: Taxing co-ops and condos at full market value may result in higher property taxes for Murray Hill apartment owners.]

Elections

[Federal Judge Orders Names Of 'Inactive' New York Voters To Be At Poll Sites](#)

January 12, 2020, *gothamist.com*, by Brigid Bergin, WNYC

The New York State Board of Elections is violating the Constitution and federal election law when it designates certain registered voters as "inactive" and keeps those names out of its poll books during elections, according to a decision issued in federal court.

[The FBI will brief state officials in future election hacks](#)

January 16, 2020, *theverge.com*, by Makena Kelly

Senator Liz Krueger's bill to ban using schools as early voting sites was passed by the State Senate

Source: Senator Krueger's Community Bulletin - February 2020, email of February 6, 2020
This bill still needs to be passed by the Assembly and signed by Gov. Cuomo. The lengthy periods of early voting were found to be disruptive to students and their activities. There are other accessible sites that can be used.

[State senator calls for public hearing on new voting machines](#)

February 4, 2020, *timesunion.com*, by Cayla Harris

ALBANY – As the state Board of Elections continues its certification process to adopt controversial touch-screen voting machines, the head of the Senate elections committee is urging the board's commissioners to hit pause while lawmakers gather feedback about the new technology.

Government, legislation, rules, policies (including pending)

[De Blasio goes local in State of the City address](#)

February 6, 2020, *cityandstateny.com*, by Jeff Coltin

“This is a plan to save our city,” [Mayor De Blasio] said...The mayor...propos[ed] a host of policies aimed at increasing the city’s affordability for residents and small business owners...he signed three executive orders to tackle “the existential threat” of climate change that endangers the city. Immediately, he said, the city would stop the use of plastic bottles on city property, stop building all new fossil fuel infrastructure and move towards making all city vehicles run on electric power by 2040. [The theme – and accompanying hashtag #SaveOurCity]

[Related article: In State of the City, De Blasio Outlines Agenda to 'Save Our City' from Unaffordability, Underperforming Schools, Unsafe Streets, Unlivable Climate](#)

February 6, 2020, *gothamgazette.com*, by Samar Khurshid

Plastic bag ban takes effect March 1

Source: Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer’s February 2020 e-news

Starting March 1, 2020, single-use plastic bags will be banned in New York City and throughout New York State. In New York City, businesses will sell paper bags for a five-cent fee as an alternative (the paper bag fee will not apply to SNAP or WIC recipients)...For more information about the ban and how to get a free reusable bag at a DSNY bag distribution event, visit nyc.gov/bags or call 311. Learn more about the bag law at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/117781.html>.

[Visit nyc.gov for resources related to other commercial waste rules, including commercial recycling, commercial organics, and the NYC foam ban.]

New Law Allows Adoptees to Access Their Birth Records

Source: Senator Krueger's Community Bulletin - February 2020, email of February 6, 2020

Under a new state law passed in 2019, adoptees and relatives can now request a copy of a pre-adoption long-form birth certificate. You can request the certificate if: (1) You are the adopted person and are 18 years of age or older. (2) You are the adopted person’s direct line descendant, if

the adopted person is deceased. A direct line descendant is the child, grandchild or great-grandchild of the adopted person. (3) You are a lawful representative for the adopted person. A lawful representative may include the attorney of the adopted person or direct line descendant. (4) You are a lawful representative for a direct line descendant, if the adopted person is deceased. Forms for individuals born in New York City: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/services/birth-certificates.page> For individuals born elsewhere in New York state visit: <https://www.ny.gov/services/get-copy-birth-certificate>.

[Broker Fees Are Now Illegal—Here's How To Claw Yours Back](#)

February 6, 2020, *gothamist.com*, by Jake Offenhartz

Through a legal clarification of last summer's rent reforms, the Department of State effectively abolished one of the most reviled aspects of apartment hunting: an arrangement, basically unique to NYC, in which landlord-hired middle-men can charge exorbitant upfront costs to prospective tenants...UPDATE 2/6/20: The Department of State believes that the ban on broker fees should apply as of January 31st, 2020, and not when the legislation was passed.

Banning Cashless Establishments, Strengthening the City's Lead Laws, & Other Important News

Source: Speaker Corey Johnson's email of 2/7/2020

[T]he New York City Council passed [Introduction 1281-A] legislation prohibiting food stores and retail establishments in New York City from refusing to accept cash transactions, a practice that discriminates against individuals without credit cards or bank accounts...In addition to requiring establishments to accept cash transactions, Introduction 1281-A also prohibits businesses from charging cash-paying customers a higher price than those who pay using a cashless method.

[Related article: City Council Passes Bill Requiring Restaurants & Other Retail Businesses To Accept Cash](#)

January 23, 2020, *gothamist.com*, by Sophia Chang

[\(Judge's order appealed\) NY vaping: AG appeals judge's order that struck down emergency e-cigarette flavor ban](#)

February 3, 2020, *lohud.com*, by David Robinson

Attorney General Letitia James late Friday appealed a judge's order that struck down New York's emergency ban on flavored e-cigarettes...The judge asserted the ban fell under lawmaking and policy actions reserved to the state Legislature...Vape shops and Vapor Technology Association, a national trade group, filed the lawsuit challenging New York's emergency ban...Meanwhile, state lawmakers are debating various legislation that would permanently ban flavors in vaping and tobacco products...Federal regulators last month moved to ban fruit- and mint-flavored products used in e-cigarettes and vaping products while allowing vape shops to sell flavors from tank-based systems...At the same time, state health officials on Jan. 17 confirmed more deaths in New York due to vaping-related illness, bringing the total to four.

[\(Proposed legislation\) Cuomo gives a shot to an alcohol-friendly agenda](#)

January 28, 2020, *cityandstateny.com*, by Zach Williams

Cuomo hopes alcohol sales can lure customers, especially millennials, to help resuscitate struggling movie theaters rather than staying at home to watch streaming services like Netflix, which have contributed to an industry-wide decline in public cinemas...State law currently requires movie theaters to have a restaurant license if they want to serve alcohol...[A] proposal from Assemblyman Dan Quart of Manhattan would leave it to the State Liquor Authority to decide whether a theater would be allowed to sell liquor as well...Another proposal supported by the governor would overturn a 1933 law that restricts alcohol manufacturers from selling directly to consumers.

(opinion) [Treat Medicaid with care](#)

January 27, 2020, *timesunion.com*, the Times Union editorial board

The state supposedly faces a \$2 billion to \$4 billion budget gap in Medicaid...A series of audits by state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli's office has turned up close to \$800 million in potential savings in the state's Medicaid program...What needs to be addressed for the long term is the structural deficit in Medicaid — the difference between how much the state allocates for the program and how much it actually spends annually. The budget numbers suggest the real figure is closer to \$2 billion...savings need not be done on the backs of Medicaid clients, nor by further cutting reimbursements to health care providers (lest they decide to simply stop accepting Medicaid patients).

Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights and Assistance

Source: Senator Krueger's Community Bulletin - February 2020, email of February 6, 2020

Student loan servicers are often the most important points of contact for student loan borrowers. They send your monthly bills and process your loan payments, and they are also supposed to answer your questions and help you figure out the best way to repay your loans.

In 2019, New York passed the Student Loan Servicing Act, which gave the State Department of Financial Services authority to license and regulate student loan servicers and to ensure that they treat borrowers with the respect and professionalism they deserve. The law also created new protections for borrowers and their co-signors. These rights are described in the New York Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights as follows:

Every Student Loan Borrower In New York Has The Right To:

1. Detailed financial aid award letters from schools in New York.
2. Clear, accurate, and complete information about your loan terms.
3. Information about any available loan repayment plans and options.
4. Information about any available discharge, forgiveness, and cancellation options.
5. Loan payments applied to your account in ways that most benefit you.
6. Knowledgeable customer service representatives who treat you respectfully and fairly.
7. Detailed loan account histories that are easily and securely accessible online.
8. Seamless transfers if your loan is serviced by a new company.
9. Accurate payment history reporting to credit agencies.
10. Responses to complaints you make to your servicer.

The Community Service Society also offers an Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program that can offer assistance with student loan debt issues. If you would like their assistance, visit their website at www.edcapny.org or call their helpline at 888-614-5004.

Public service notices

Census

[Children Under 5 Among Most Undercounted in Last Census](#)

November 13, 2019, *census.gov*, America Counts Staff

Knowing how many children live in a community is the foundation of many important municipal decisions. For example, should a community build a new library? A new school? A new hospital? Should Head Start for pre-K children be expanded?

[In Student Housing, Off Campus or With Parents, College Students Count in 2020 Census.](#)

Even though many residents of a typical American college town might move away after they graduate, they have to be counted while they live there.

IRS IMPOSTER SCAMS



The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the government agency that collects federal taxes.

Scammers pretend to be IRS officials to get you to send them money.

How the scam works

You get a call.

- IRS** Your caller ID might show it's the IRS calling.
- The caller might give a badge number and know the last four digits of your Social Security number.

You are told:

- "You owe money."
- "You better pay now or you'll be arrested."
- "Put money on a prepaid debit card or wire it to us."



If you pay...

- You find out it wasn't the IRS. It was a scam. → The money is gone.

Warning signs

How will the IRS first contact you?	How will the IRS ask you to pay?
Phone call NO	With a prepaid debit card NO
Email NO	With a money transfer NO
Mail YES	Won't require a specific type of payment YES

Got a call?

- Don't give the caller information** such as your financial or other personal information.
- Write down details** such as the number and name of the caller.
- Hang up**
- Contact the IRS directly** If you think you may owe back taxes, call the IRS at **800-829-1040** or visit [irs.gov/balancedue](https://www.irs.gov/balancedue).
- Report the call** File a complaint with:
 - the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) at [tigta.gov](https://www.tigta.gov) or **800-366-4484**.
 - the FTC at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint) or **877-FTC-HELP**.
- Warn friends and family** Tell people you know that these calls are scams.

[ftc.gov/imposters](https://www.ftc.gov/imposters)
Federal Trade Commission
January 2020



Tax Identity Theft Awareness

Source: Federal Trade Commission

- Protect your SSN throughout the year. Don't give it out unless there's a good reason and you're sure who you're giving it to.
- File your tax return as early in the tax season as you can.
- Use a secure internet connection if you file electronically, or mail your tax return directly from the post office.
- Research a tax preparer thoroughly before you hand over personal information.
- Check your credit report at least once a year for free at annualcreditreport.com. Make sure no one has opened a new account in your name.

The top frauds of 2019

January 23, 2020, *consumer.ftc.gov*, by Monica Vaca, Associate Director, Division of Consumer Response and Operations

Imposter scams was the number one fraud reported. People reported losing more than \$667 million to imposters, who often pretended to be calling from the government or a well-known business, a romantic interest, or a family member with an emergency. When people lost money, they most frequently reported paying scammers with a gift card. Phone calls were the number one way people reported being contacted by scammers. If you've spotted a scam, report it to ftc.gov/complaint. If you need more information about these top frauds, visit ftc.gov/imposters, and ftc.gov/giftcards.

Stories we are following

New York Among Most Polluted Cities In the U.S., Analysis Shows

January 27, 2020, *patch.com*, by Kathleen Culliton

New York had more than 200 days in 2018 when air quality was unhealthy for children, the elderly and sick, an analysis of EPA data shows...The most common pollutant in New York is the fine particulate matter PM2.5, which comes from cars, power plants, wood burning and forest fires, the study found.

Report by buyautoinsurance.com: <https://www.buyautoinsurance.com/air-pollution-worst-cities/#15> New York-Newark-Jersey City NY-NJ-PA

Manufacturing is Alive and Well in New York City, But It Looks A Lot Different Than It Used To

January 16, 2020, *gothamgazette.com*, by Thomas George, Vice President of Technology at Quadlogic & AI Mangels, President of Lee Spring Company and a member of the Executive Board of the NYC Manufacturing and Industrial Innovation Council

[M]anufacturing has not left New York—it's evolved and grown...But education and training have not caught up to the new manufacturing age in New York, and now there is a skills – and, frankly, perception – gap when it comes to attracting new workers to growing industries that desperately need to fill well-paying jobs. These jobs include interesting careers in green manufacturing, marrying tech with manufacturing, and local projects related to smart city upgrades.



Work Nears Completion At 10 East 30th Street In NoMad

January 27, 2020, *newyorkyimby.com*, by Michael Young
Exterior work is nearing completion at 10 East 30th Street in NoMad, where the final glass panels are being installed on the 20-story hotel. Located between Madison Avenue and Fifth Avenue, the 200-foot-tall project is designed by Brooklyn-based firm Baobab Architects...A opening date for the hotel has not been released, though sometime later this year seems likely.



30 East 31st Street's Terracotta Cladding Reaches Lattice Crown In NoMad

January 26, 2020, *newyorkyimby.com*, by Michael Young

Located between Park Avenue South and Madison Avenue, the 39-story, 479-foot-tall residential tower is designed by Morris Adjmi Architects and is being developed by Ekstein Development and Pinnacle Real Estate. Reuveni Real Estate is marketing the building's 42 units, which will be spread across just over 70,000 square feet for an average of

1,700 square feet apiece. Prices range from \$1.65 to \$12 million...30 East 31st street should likely be finished sometime by the end of the year. 30 East 31st Street, photo by Michael Young.



[Rose Hill's Curtain Wall Continues To Rise At 30 East 29th Street In NoMad](#)

January 28, 2020, *newyorkyimby.com*, by Michael Young

Only the upper floors, crown, and ground floor have yet to be enclosed in the tower's signature Art Deco-inspired finish. Located at 30 East 29th Street between Madison Avenue and Park Avenue, Rose Hill stands 639 feet tall and will yield 123 condominiums marketed by CORE Real Estate. The 45-story building is designed by CetraRuddy Architecture for Rockefeller Group...The building is the latest addition to the booming skyline of NoMad, joining other recent residential projects like 277 Fifth Avenue, 45 East 22nd Street, and Madison House...Rose Hill is slated to be finished in January 2021, as indicated on the construction fence.

Rendering of the northern elevation. Courtesy of Rockefeller Group.

(opinion) [The Shaky Future of .org Domains](#)

January 27, 2020, *nytimes.com*, by Dr. Josephine Wolff

The sale of the nonprofit domains to a private equity firm threatens the integrity of the open internet. ICANN should investigate...ICANN should publicly investigate this sale so that all of its stakeholders can see exactly which safeguards will be put in place to protect .org customers. [www.icann.org]

Related article: [Tech Giants' New Appeal to Governments: Please Regulate Us](#)

January 27, 2020, *wsj.com*, by Sebastian Herrera

Facing probes and growing public backlash, top leaders at Microsoft, Apple, Google and Facebook call publicly for new laws

Related article: [Please Stop Big Tech, Small Rivals Tell Lawmakers](#)

January 17, 2020, *nytimes.com*, by Cecilia Kang

Until Friday, few executives had complained in public about how Google, Apple, Amazon and Facebook hurt their businesses...For all the criticisms directed at the largest tech companies in the last couple of years, few smaller rivals have been willing to speak up publicly. That changed for a couple of hours on Friday, as executives at four businesses pleaded with federal lawmakers to rein in Google, Facebook, Apple and Amazon.

[Governor Cuomo Announces Intent to Sue Federal Government Following Department of Homeland Security's Decision to Ban New Yorkers from Trusted Traveler Program](#)

February 7, 2020, Press Release

Trusted Traveler Programs, including Global Entry, SENTRI, NEXUS, and FAST, facilitate the entry of pre-approved travelers into the United States using expedited lanes at airports and international borders. Under the Department of Homeland Security's ban, residents of the State of New York will no longer be eligible to apply for or renew membership in U.S. Customs and Border Protection Trusted Traveler Programs. Such programs are operated by the Department of Homeland Security who independently verifies identity and citizenship, and DMV data and information is not necessary for such programs.

[U.S. Justice Department going after robocallers](#)

January 28, 2020, nydailynews.com, by Leonard Greene

[F]ederal authorities are going after robocallers in a big way, launching landmark lawsuits against five companies and three people behind hundreds of millions of annoying interruptions. Not only are the calls a nuisance, but they are mostly fraudulent money-making schemes targeting gullible consumers, including elderly victims who have been scammed out of millions of dollars...The Justice Department is seeking temporary restraining orders to force the companies to heed the government warnings and stop making calls.

Our government representatives

When contacting your representative, be sure to state your address so that they know that you are a constituent. You can see the District maps and sign up for their emails on their websites.

Manhattan Community Board 5: www.cb5.org, 212-465-0907, office@cb5.org

Manhattan Community Board 6: cbsix.org, 212-319-3750, office@cbsix.org

NYC Councilwoman Carlina Rivera, Council District 2: council.nyc.gov/carlina-rivera, 212-677-1077, District2@council.nyc.gov

NYC Council Speaker, Corey Johnson, Council District 3: council.nyc.gov/district-3, 212-564-7757, SpeakerJohnson@council.nyc.gov

NYC Council Member Keith Powers, Council District 4: council.nyc.gov/keith-powers, 212-818-0580, KPowers@council.nyc.gov

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer: manhattanbp.nyc.gov, 212-669-8300, info@manhattanbp.nyc.gov

Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, #GetHelp, The Office of the Public Advocate assists with complaints and inquiries involving government-related services and regulations. Telephone Hotline: 212-669-7250, email: GetHelp@advocate.nyc.gov

Mayor Bill de Blasio: www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor, 311, online message: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/mayor-contact.page>

Landmarks Preservation Commission: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/lpc/about/contact-us.page>

NY State Senator Liz Krueger, 28th Senate District: www.nysenate.gov/senators/liz-krueger, 212-490-9535, lkrueger@nysenate.gov

NY State Senator Brad Hoylman, 27th Senate District: <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/brad-hoylman>, 212-633-8052, hoylman@nysenate.gov

NY State Assembly Member Dan Quart, Assembly District 73, www.nyassembly.gov/mem/Dan-Quart, 212-605-0937, quartd@nyassembly.gov

NY State Assembly Member Harvey Epstein, Assembly District 74, www.nyassembly.gov/mem/Harvey-Epstein, 212-979-9696, epsteinh@nyassembly.gov

NY Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried, Assembly District 75, www.nyassembly.gov/mem/Richard-N-Gottfried, 212-807-7900, GottfriedR@nyassembly.gov

U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney, New York's 12th Congressional District:
<https://maloney.house.gov>, 212-860-0606, website contact form:
<https://maloney.house.gov/contact-carolyn/email-me>

U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer: www.schumer.senate.gov, 212-486-4430, website contact form:
<https://www.schumer.senate.gov/contact/email-chuck>

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand: www.gillibrand.senate.gov, 212-688-6262, website contact form:
www.gillibrand.senate.gov/contact/email-me

U.S. President Donald Trump: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/people/donald-j-trump> website contact form:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

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