

The ARNIC Observer

The English-Speaking Union of the United States (ESU)

Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center

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Two Ethnic Enclaves

BY YOHANNA ACEVEDO (DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)

*If my mind can
conceive it, and my heart
can believe it—
then I can achieve it.*

— *Muhammad Ali*

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WASHINGTON HEIGHTS is a Latin community of many immigrants from the Caribbean island of the Dominican Republic. It’s a very special place where you get to experience many different cultures. Saint Nicholas Avenue and 181st Street lies at the heart of this community, where you’ll experience everything about their work, food, languages and behavior. They are very picturesque people.

Traditional Dominican food can be savored at La Casa Del Mofongo, and you should certainly try the traditional plate of rice and beans with different kinds of meat. Or try the famous mofongo made with mashed plantains, garlic and chicharrones. Everything is then mixed together in a receptacle resembling a vase called a pilón. A giant wooden pilón guards the restaurant entrance paying tribute to the house specialty.

It’s amazing to see how hard these people work outside no matter how cold the weather, especially when you consider that they come from the tropics; it is a brave labor.

You can find trendy restaurants on Dyckman Street, concentrated in an area of just two blocks. These Latin American restaurants such as Mamá Sushi, Papisito, The Park View, and Mamajuana Café are a little bit more expensive and all are owned by Dominicans.

For me, The Cloisters is an earthly paradise. Located in Fort Tryon Park, it was established in 1938 as part of the Metropolitan museum with a collection based on European medieval art. Designed by Charles Collens, the castlelike structure took five years to build.

Wandering the four acres of grounds, you cannot fail to marvel at its spectacular artistic works and delight in the beautiful view overlooking the Hudson River and the George Washington Bridge. The atmosphere is magical and peaceful. Upper Manhattan is a neighborhood enriched by different cultures; once there you will never forget what you have seen and learned.



La Casa Del Mofongo

Photo by Yohanna

LITTLE ITALY IN THE BRONX

I have visited Little Italy in Manhattan and I can tell you that there is a true Italian community in the Bronx, where you feel the energy and humanity that distinguish Italians—sympathy and a good sense of humor. This place is Arthur Avenue, named for its main thoroughfare.

Walking down the avenue near East 187th Street you can see all the restaurants, pizzerias, pasticcerias, salumerias and fish markets, more bakeries, a wine store, and the eponymous Arthur Avenue Retail Market, where you’ll find pristine fruits and

vegetables like deep green basil, lemony white asparagus, crisp beet greens, crunchy finocchio and lush carciofi. Different types of cheese such as Asiago, Ricotta, and Parmigiano look and smell delicious. All the ingredients to make Italian food with real Italian products—even hot peppers and sun dried tomatoes—are on hand. The hand rolling of cigars is demonstrated at the market’s entrance and you can even learn how to do this yourself.

My favorite restaurant, Zero Otto Nove (089) named for the area code of Salerno, Italy where the owner comes from serves several dishes I’ve fallen in love with--the best thin crust mushroom pizza and a supernal, tasty and creamy vegetable risotto.

Another restaurant I truly invite you to try is Mario's, one of the oldest restaurants in the neighborhood. It started out as a pizzeria in 1919 and nearly a hundred years later it’s still going strong with a friendly and welcoming staff that makes you feel at home, and a large dinning room charmingly decorated with artwork and hung with beautiful chandeliers.

Upper Manhattan and the Bronx are truly as diverse as it gets with crowded streets full of merchants loudly proclaiming the freshest fruits and vegetables, trendy restaurants with scrumptious food, family owned Italian markets offering fine cheeses, poultry, and fish, and peaceful cultural areas with exquisite views.

Pride and Purpose at The Marine Corps Marathon

BY LIUDMYLA KHOMCHENKO (UKRAINE)

FOR THE FIRST TIME in the history of the Marine Corps Marathon (MCM), four Ukrainian soldiers took part. These soldiers, who were wounded during the Russian military conflict in Eastern Ukraine from 2014 to 2016, included Vadim Sviridenko, who lost his hands and feet, Vadim Maznichenko, who had one arm and one leg amputated, and Dmitri Fesenko and Pavel Stepanov, who had damage to their spines and legs.

The MCM, one of the largest marathons in the world, doesn't offer prize money, earning its nickname, "The People's Marathon." Running has become a very popular activity worldwide and marathons have become more numerous every year.

Nearly 26,000 runners from all 50 states and more than 50 countries competed on October 30. Ukrainian soldiers were not the only wounded military who took part. Out of 84 injured soldiers from nine countries--the US, the UK, Australia, Lithuania, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Ukraine and Georgia who competed, 20 were women who also saw combat.

The start line lies between the Pentagon and Arlington National Cemetery. The route then passes through the streets of Washington and suburban Arlington, winds past the Pentagon and concludes at the Iwo Jima Memorial, offering a special reminder to runners and spectators that this is not just any

marathon. It symbolically pays tribute to those men and women in active service as well as the fallen heroes who for generations have given their lives for the cause of freedom everywhere.

The wounded Ukrainian soldiers successfully conquered the 10-kilometer (6.2-mile) distance. Fesenko, injured in June 2016, said, "This marathon is not the nature of the competition. It is attended by the military from around the world who want to show that, despite the serious injuries, they are strong people." He also said that the idea to become a

participant of the marathon literally brought him back to life. It was psychologically healing.

Forty representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora offered moral support to the solders. My husband and I came from New York. It had been 18 months since we learned about the fate of Sviridenko and visited him in the hospital in Ukraine.

The last stage of the run was the most difficult--the steep hill leading to the Iwo Jima Memorial. The intense effort showed on the runners’ faces in a mixture of fatigue and elation, as we supported our countrymen with shouts and cheers.

At the finish, indescribable delight shone on the faces of the Ukrainian soldiers. They were able to do it; they were the winners. For these Ukrainian warriors it was not just sport, but a testament to the great fortitude that sustained them through their battle wounds, becoming role models for other soldiers and inspiring them to even greater achievements!



Photo by Liudmyla

Determined runners in the DC Marine Corps Marathon prevail to the finish.

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Editorial

Make America White Again?

“The world of ours must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect.”
— Dwight D. Eisenhower

A Climate of Fear

What has happened? The fear is that a nativist vision will inhabit the White House and regard immigrants as competitors for American workers and treat them as potential terrorists. The fear is that work permits and protection from deportation will be canceled for approximately 800,000 undocumented immigrants. The fear is that a campaign to deport as many as 2 million others will be undertaken and that raids in communities and workplaces will take place and that detention centers along the borders will be expanded.

In addition, the fear is that the arrival of Syrian refugees to the U.S. will be halted and other refugees will be subject to a litmus test of “ideological certification” by which they would be required to demonstrate they share American values.

These actions create fear and anxiety not only among those people whose lives will be upended, but also among the majority of Americans who believe in the constitutional guarantees of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. To make matters worse, the national debate concerning immigrants and immigration has been debased to the point where some good people no longer hesitate to express their most vile and repugnant sentiments.

A Swamp of Hate

My, how times have changed. Sixty years ago people who spouted hate and venom wore white robes and white cone hats and covered their faces with white masks and burned crosses and hanged people under the cover of darkness. Today, white nationalists and neo-Nazis don’t hide their faces; instead, they dress in business suits, salute fascism and rant and rage in public halls, some not more than a few steps from the White House, in stark daylight.

Is America becoming more and more like other countries that have experienced upheavals in their politics and culture and curtailed freedoms? Germany in the late ‘30s persecuted Jews and other so-called undesirables at the same time the Soviet Union was persecuting academics, landowners, scientists and artists. Recently, England voted to distance itself from the European Union in order to decide its own destiny with regard to immigration. In the Middle East, religion divides populations and in Syria, a civil war among many factions has resulted in widespread death and destruction.

Will the dreadful fear and hate Eisenhower speaks of once again result in separate facilities for citizens and non-citizen immigrants? Separate hospitals, schools, theaters, Post Offices and water fountains not only for us and for them but also for whites, African Americans, Muslims, Roman Catholics and Episcopalians? Why stop there? How about separate public swimming pools, bowling alleys and customer service counters at department stores?

A Glimmer of Hope

As Maxine Hong Kingston said, “In time of destruction, create something.” Now is not the time to roll over and play dead. We need our leaders to speak up, and honorable, rational Americans who understand the course of history and have learned from it, to voice strong opposition to absurd proposals that only further divide us.

“America’s greatness comes from recognizing the innate dignity and worth of all our people,” said Michelle Obama in an epic speech in October in New Hampshire. “We can show our children that here in America, we reject hatred and fear in difficult times...we rise up to defend our blessings of liberty. We rise up to embody the values of equality and opportunity and sacrifice that have always made this country the greatest nation on Earth.”

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Opinion

Is the United Nations at War with Itself?

BY AHED FESTUK (SYRIA)

THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) was founded in 1945 and today consists of 193 member states. Its mission is to maintain peace and security, promote democracy and development, provide humanitarian assistance to the needy, and protect human rights. At times, the international organization is successful in achieving its mission; however, at other times it seems to be at war with itself.

Under the leadership of the Secretary-General, the UN serves as a rich source of multinational, international and global collaboration, and a great resource of information, learning and communication. Its agencies focus constructively on issues such as child health, poverty, disabilities, disarmament, development, population and education. There are more than 13,000 nongovernmental organizations currently affiliated with the UN, which work as advocates for human rights, nonviolence and defenders of justice all over the world.

The Security Council was established by the General Assembly to maintain peace and international security. It has the authority to impose sanctions and allow military action and the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers in areas of conflict and aggression. However, its 15 members don’t have equal power, which makes membership in the UN unequal.

After World War II, the five victors—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States—established the weight of permanent power at the UN. They gave themselves veto power over any resolutions with the belief that through the Security Council, they could best prevent conflict and crises. However, as we see today, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, and the U.S. and Russia in particular have abused this power over the past 70 years.

Today, the world is on the brink of a third world war. In the Middle East, which has seen many countries devastated by war, the U.S. and Russia are supplying arms to all parties of the conflicts. The refugee crisis in the region is an unparalleled global catastrophe. While the First World War claimed the lives of more than 17 million people, and the Second World War more than 50 million, the threat of nuclear war may lead to the death of many millions or even billions more.

The UN was established to create peace, but its structure actually has led to war and destabilization. It should be a democratic system and each member state, whether a small or medium sized country, should have the same rights as larger countries. This would help prevent the crises caused by super powers.

Currently, Russia is committing war crimes in Syria by relentlessly bombing the people of Aleppo and other cities, but it cannot be stopped or held accountable as long as it can veto the passing of Security Council resolutions or sanctions against it. As a result, the UN is powerless to stop both the brutal Assad regime and the proxy war in Syria waged by Russia, in support of it.

Today, the UN is not only powerless, but it supports the Assad regime indirectly and the Free Syrian Army at the same time, thus playing both ends against the middle. As a result many sections of major Syrian cities are under siege and death and starvation is rampant. In another egregious instance, the Assad regime has used chemical weapons on civilians, but the UN has done nothing. Human rights organizations continue to report on these war crimes, holding the UN and Security Council complicit, but inaction continues and innocent people suffer.

Prelude to Winter

BY ROSE SAINT-CYR (HAITI)

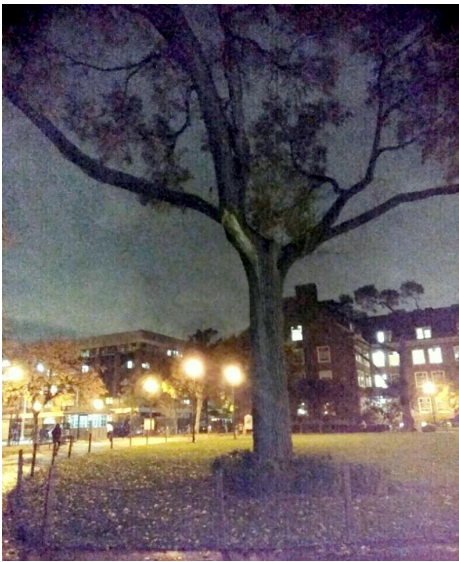
WINTER BRINGS A CHANGE in temperature. What does that mean? It is about many changes in the way of living, in social behavior, in perception and awareness.

Winter is coming! The leaves on the trees are changing colors; golden orange and yellow ones lie on the ground and the tree branches look naked, appearing rigid and solid like there is no life in them.

Oh dear! The temperature is rapidly falling with cold, brisk air and days that grow shorter. How I wish to walk outside again with just trousers and a blouse—but no longer. It’s time to put on boots, jackets, scarves, gloves, hats. No more walking down Fifth Avenue to window shop; it’s too cold. People catch the bus or train to get to their destination as quickly as possible. No one lingers to chat on the street; the temperature discourages that. But despite the drastic changes, the winter brings relief, too, and enjoyment. Winter isn’t all bad.

Restaurants offer “holiday specials” to keep us warm and bring back nostalgic, childhood memories. At Starbucks, I can taste the gingerbread latte and the gingerbread cookies as soon as I walk in the door. The hot drink helps me warm up, as though protecting me from the cold winds that hit my face, making my cheeks and nose get pink.

It’s tourist season—they come from many different countries, filling 42nd



Hazy city lights illuminate the winter landscape.

Photo by Rose

Street with multiple languages. German, French, Italian and Greek flow through the air like musical symbols as tourists stop to take pictures of themselves enjoying the city.

A prelude to winter wakes up good spirits. Thanks-giving brings Americans together. The religious and the humanistic join in spirit of fraternity while Christmas is on the way. Parents look to quality time with their children.

Good manners prevail as courtesy becomes a means of appreciation and a way to sweeten behavior. Serenity becomes contagious.

Decorations cover the city, hiding its faults and emphasizing the best parts, surpassing peoples’ imagination. It is the best time to describe the city—it is truly a city of light, especially during the winter season. The Christmas carols, the fully lit tree at Rockefeller Center, and the dancing Rockettes can be enjoyed by the whole family. It’s time to leave behind difficulties and commit to a better tomorrow.

A prelude to winter announces a time to recall the significance of our presence on earth, a time of self-assessment, a time to find importance, and a time for reflection, contemplation, and reconciliation. It is a time for sharing and giving. The city itself bestows blessings. We readily say, “Bless America,” and why not? Bless the winter! It’s coming, for sure.

Escape to Upstate New York

BY YANA SAMOYLOVA (RUSSIA)

WE ARE ALL PART OF NATURE but in this Big City Life we are going to miss it: Why? Remember your day today. Waking up early, eating in a hurry, drinking coffee on the way to the subway, running through the crowd...what about enjoying the moment? It seems like we all forget about this and the meaning of the word Life, as well. We live in a jungle of skyscrapers, stress out, get to work late, go to parties, suffer from insomnia—is this Life? If we work hard, study hard, we deserve a little break from NYC.

FIVE TIPS FOR ESCAPING THE CITY
It is location. You don't have to take a plane because a lot of amazing places are nearby. Your destination might take two hours by car, for example, the small town of Palenville, NY, a hamlet in Greene County. Population 1,037, this town lies at the foot of Kaaterskill Clove, at the base of the Catskill Mountains.

You have to go there because of wonderful Nature. Near this town you can find plenty of magnificent places like the Lighthouse near the Hudson River, Hunter Mountain, Bear Mountain, and Kaaterskill Falls.

The Lighthouse, known also as the Sauger-ties Lighthouse, is a cylindrical building on the Hudson River. Built in 1869 and replacing an earlier 1838 structure, it now houses a bed and breakfast with public rooms open for tours. If you enjoy the



The two cascades of Kaaterskill Falls total 260 feet in height.

Photo by Yana

silence of beauty and unbelievable and colorful sunsets this is the right place for you!
Hunter Mountain is a ski resort featuring a 1,600 foot (488m) vertical drop. Since the late 1950s, HM has employed extensive snow making facilities. Hunter was the first ski destination in the state of NY to install top to bottom snow-making with 100% coverage of the mountain.
Majestic Kaaterskill Falls is a two-stage water-fall on Kaaterskill Creek. The two cascades total 260 feet (79m) in height, making it one of the highest waterfalls in the state. One of American's oldest tourist attractions, the falls are depicted or described in many books, essays, poems and paintings of the early 19th century. They were painted by Thomas Cole in 1826 and became a recurring motif for painters of the Hudson River School, portraying the wilderness ideal for American landscapes.
It is definitely worthwhile to go to Palenville and stay at the Clark House B&B! Just see and feel the special atmosphere of vintage decorated rooms, the crackle of the fireplace, the piney scent of evergreens, sitting on handmade pillows and following romantic and sophisticated conversation about life, future plans, or just keep silent and listen to the music of birds in the early morning, and after a long walk, sleep like a child.
You can partake of a sporting and healthy life in Palenville. Rent a bike, hike, jog, ski! There's something different to do every season. The long holidays are coming—so go to Greene County and imagine how real a winter fairytale can be!

The Oculus: A New, Exciting Landmark

BY VICTORIA DANILOVICH (BELARUS)

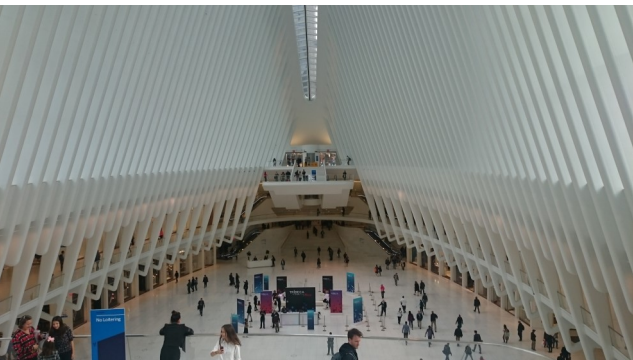


The fantastic, zoomorphic Oculus at the WTC hub resembles "a bird released from a child's hand," according to the architect.

Photo by Victoria

AS THE SOUTHERN TIP OF MANHATTAN rebuilds itself after the collapse of the World Trade Center some 15 years ago, one of the more fascinating constructions is sure to be the \$4 billion World Trade Center Transportation Hub (WTCTH). It incorporates both transportation and commercial spaces into an exciting architectural landmark, and promises to be a major tourist attraction.
After more than a decade of endless negotiations and engineering difficulties, the WTCTH and the Oculus, the birdlike-sculpture that tops it, were opened to the public in March. Designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, it rivals in scope and grandeur his most famous projects including the cultural district called the City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia (Spain), Quadracci Pavilion at Milwaukee Art Museum and the airport in Lyon (France).
The Latin word "oculus" means "eye," and in architecture describes the circular opening (skylight) at the top of a dome; it also could be a glass window. This concept may be summed up by the image of "a bird released from a child's hands," says Calatrava's website. "It will be a lamp of hope in the middle of Lower Manhattan, creating an unbroken line of natural light from the platforms to the sky."
According to Erica Dumas, a spokeswoman for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PA), this "fantastic, zoomorphic, dazzling, 160-foot white

structure with stout ribs" will be open every September 11 for 102 minutes, exactly how long the terrorist attack lasted from 8:46 am until 10:28 am.
It is breathtaking from inside—luminous, intricate, uplifting and tranquil. The 355-foot-long operable skylight uses 224 pieces of blast-resistant glass in 40 panels. The panels, 20 on each side, taper up the surrounding elliptical steel structure to form a seal at the center. Another 772 pieces of glass, made in Austria, are set between the ribs and provide light and visibility. Though the skylight could, in theory, be opened to purge smoke from the Oculus in case of fire, Steven Plate, director of WTC construction for PA, said that exhaust fans built into the roof can do the job.
The mezzanine level serves as the PATH commuter rail terminal, which carries an estimated 100,000 weekday riders heading to and from New Jersey.
Access to the building at street level (between Church and Greenwich Streets) is at both the east and west ends, via stairwells that project into the space high above the floor and act as viewing platforms. Calatrava likened the Oculus to the balconies at Grand Central Terminal, which were a source of inspiration. Escalators take visitors down from street level to the snow-white marble hall with a hotel-like reception and public retail space. The mall can also be reached from the PATH and almost all subway trains that converge there through subterranean tunnels from Fulton Transit Center and concourses that connect the surrounding buildings, 2 World Trade Center (under construction) and 3 World Trade Center (opening 2018).
The interior of the Oculus contains a central oval-shaped area ringed by two levels of shops and restaurants. As Lynne B. Sagalyn wrote in her book *Power at Ground Zero*, "150,000 square feet of additional shopping space [was] created by raising the plaza one level, opening up the concourse with a grand entrance to bring light into the underground areas, and making better connections with ramps and staircases to provide access." Commercial spaces quickly filled with a variety of food, clothes, shoes, beauty and electronic brands such as Apple, Michal Kors, Kate Spade, Reiss, Dior and Tissot.
Today, the soaring Oculus, this audacious, money-chewing and at the same time "awe-inspiring piece of architecture" teems with tourists, businessmen, locals and passengers. It quickly became a new "Instagram-ready" attraction. As Ms. Hughes, Community Board One chairwoman said, "This is another key milestone of the reincorporation of the World Trade Center into the fabric of Lower Manhattan."



The interior of the Oculus

Photo by Victoria

The Bronx Zoo: Animalia's Kingdom

BY MARIAM CESSOUMA (BURKINA FASO)

A *DAILY NEWS* STAFF WRITER on the occasion of the 110-year birthday of the Bronx Zoo said, “When the Bronx Zoo opened its gates to the public in 1899, William McKinley was in the White House, the first city subway line was being dug, and the paper clip had just been patented. So much has changed since, but the Wildlife Conservation Society's Bronx Zoo remains an integral part of New York City's character.”

If you’ve never visited the Bronz Zoo, you really should go. It is the largest urban zoo in the world with more than 4,000 animals. Originally known as the New York Zoological Society, it was renamed the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in 1993. When it opened its gates on November 8, 1899, the zoo counted 843 animals in 22 exhibits on its 265 acres.

The major attractions include: Congo Gorilla Forest, Jungle World, Wild Asia Monorail, Madagascar!, Tiger Mountain, African Plains, Baboon Reserve, Himalayan Highlands, Mouse House, World of Reptiles and World of Birds.

Even with all the animal exhibits, I was attracted to the same ones that kids like best, too. Feeding time is a very popular hour, so at 3 pm I started with the Sea Lions--two babies and 40 adults. One lady tending them, Stephany, said, "I am very happy to be working with the Sea Lions. We are friends, they know me, after feeding I give them massages; they are very sensible and like playing; we formed a strong family. I named one baby, Jojo, and one adult, Clark.”

I next went to the World of Birds, where at 3:30 pm it’s the penguins’ time to eat. The zoo harbors 18 baby penguins: nine females and nine males. Like clock-work, the little penguins started running out from their dens, exhibiting some swimming skills. One man appeared holding a basket of fish. As soon as he came close, the baby penguins started vocalizing, and the man smiled. One by one they tilted their heads upward to catch the fish. Then they screamed and dove under the water.

With feeding time over, it was time for visitor questions. I raised my right hand to attract the man’s attention. He answered my questions with enthusiasm. Mr. Brehemy said, "I started visiting this zoo when I was seven years old with my father. Every Saturday I was here helping the zoo workers clean and feed animals. I have been here for twenty years and my love for the penguins is increasing every day."

I learned a lot from him and only later learned that he was the Executive Director. After questions, he sat in one corner of the penguin pond and the baby penguins formed a circle around him, chattering the whole time. They kept moving, climbing onto his legs and he kept smiling, talking with them. After holding them one by one, they continued to sing and dance, but this daily ritual was their private time, no photos permitted.



Toucans watch the penguins dine on fresh fish.

Photo by Marian

ZOO FACTS

Species:	650
Animals and Fishes:	6,624
Annual visitors:	2.15 million
Employees:	564
Volunteers:	Approximately 210
Among the Zoo workers, the Bronx youth is largely represented	

It was wonderful, and I wish schoolchildren could experience live these special moments. I definitely agree with Imogan Taylor, a naturalist who declared: "I believe that if children fall in love with wildlife, they will grow up wanting to protect



Photo by Marian

An outspoken alpha male sea lion barks for his lunch.

it."

If you are looking for a place where nature, humans and wild animals live in harmony, you need go no farther than the Bronx Zoo. Munia Khan, another naturalist, perhaps said it best: "Wild animals are less wild and more human than many humans of the world."

Directions: The Zoo has two main parking lots, one at Southern Boulevard and the other off the Bronx River Parkway (gate B). Public transportation at the East Tremont Ave. Gate: 2 & 5 train; Southern Boulevard Gate: Bx9, Bx19; Fordham Road Gate: Bx12, Bx22, Bx36, Bx39, & Q44 and Bee-Line Bus BL 60, 61, 62, 90.

A Cast of Characters

BY MAX QUINDE WIESNER (ECUADOR)

I'M JAMAL and I'm about to "poison" myself. Yet again. A double hamburger, big fries, black water with bubbles, and a lot of ketchup. Despite knowing that eating this isn't healthy, "I'm loving it," and well, who cares?

Now I'm Carol, and I'm going to this new place where my BGF Jane told me that you would find the absolute bestest salads in the world, and that they were like super expensive. If they're expensive, they must be good, right? I just have to try them, super healthy. O...M...G...these new shoes are killing me, but damn I look amazing! Every window pane on stores or cars is the perfect mirror to see my reflection. I'm gonna take a selfie. Let's see how many likes I get.

I'm Rubén and I'm about to go to work. Over 10 hours a day, even Saturdays and Sundays, in a restaurant kitchen for \$11 an hour. Every night when I get home my back is sore, my feet are swollen and my heart misses my country, but I see the loving eyes of my wife and my kids sleeping in peace. I know we have a better future here. What better reward than that?

Now I'm Patrick. I'm in the gym and this is my last set of curls today. Afterwards, I'm running five miles and I have to improve yesterday's time, which incidentally was better than the day before. The pills I swallowed have increased my strength and the powder I put in my water energizes me. Speaking of pills...I've got only one of the blue ones left for this weekend,



The many faces of New York

Photo collage by Max

and I have two dates. I definitely need to stop by the pharmacy.

I'm Peter and there's nothing better than walking holding hands with the man I love without being judged.

I'm Jacob and I'm crying because the sound of the fire truck woke me up, I'm wet and I want my mommy to hold me and change me.

Right this second, in the subway, I'm about 5,000 people getting on different lines, more than 550 people reading a book, and more than 2,000 people playing on an app on their cells.

On the streets, I'm more than half a million people eating pizza.

I'm more than a million people dressed in black.

I'm more than five million people wearing jeans.

I'm more than eight million people of all races, religions, cultures, philosophies, predilections, and tendencies, looking for a myriad of things and that throughout their journey feel and live freedom, independence, growth, effort, and success, which translates into self-acceptance and belonging, and without a doubt, are looking for happiness and love.

I've heard that we're called "the melting pot" or "the mosaic." I truly think we should be called "the jigsaw puzzle," since each one of us is a unique piece that fits in a specific spot, with no one else able to replace us to create what we are, a single image, a single painting, a single work of art.

I'm more than eight million people making me what I am, making me New York.

The Tastes of China

BY LIWEN RONG (CHINA)

THE CHINESE HAVE ALWAYS SAID, “Food is the paramount necessity of the people,” and have believed it for centuries. Ancient Chinese records imply that diet goes way beyond satisfying physiological demands and embraces complex cultural meanings. In *The Analects of Confucius* dating from 450 B.C. diet was referred to as a system of cultural symbols.

Historically, certain foods and holidays have been inseparable. For example, the Spring Festival is one of the most important annual festivals and last year travelers logged about 2.9 billion trips to return to their hometown to join their parents and relatives. The reunion dinner on New Year’s Eve is the most important one. Like Thanksgiving in the U.S., the whole family shares traditional food linked with the holiday.

Tofu, for example, has been eaten for thousands of years. During the Spring Festival, a traditional dish of fried tofu signifies abundance and a happy life.

Today, in the more economically developed society, more and more Chinese prefer to go out for dinner, but one thing has never changed—being with family.

The Chinese diet can be divided geographically into southern and northern food. Southerners love rice; northerners love pasta. The southern food culture is more refined, while the northern is straightforward. Although dumplings and wontons look similar, the dumpling is the northern food and the wonton is the southern.



A toothsome array of Chinese specialties

Photo by Liwen

Chinese people excel at making the most of local ingredients. The Sichuan basin in southwest China experiences a damp, rainy climate. The people who live there use hot pepper in abundance to warm up, and chili is a favorite seasoning. People lick their chops over the mere thought of dishes such as mapo tofu (silken tofu flavored with ground pork and crushed red peppercorns), boiled beef (sliced beef in chili oil), and Chong Qing hot pot (a mixture of meat and vegetables cooked together in a pungent and spicy soup).

It is interesting that Chinese foods in America are prepared differently in order to cater to American tastes. For instance, cooks put more sauce and sugar into Chinese dishes to make them more appealing. Some Chinese foods found in America are not really Chinese at all. Take soup dumplings, which Americans love. If you were to ask Chinese people who have never been to America about them, they would likely never have heard of them.

Thus diet is not only material and cultural, but also emotional, moral, aesthetic, and psychological. Certain foods stay in our heart. It isn’t simply the pleasing aroma of food or the flavor on the tongue, it’s intertwined with the scent of history, the essence of human emotion, the spirit of memories, and the flavor of homesickness.

De Gustibus

Street Eats

BY OLGA ZAKHARTSEVA (RUSSIA)

EACH OF US, even the most hypercritical eater, has tried or occasionally eats food from street vendors: either in a hometown or while traveling. Nowadays, street food is one of the most popular food arts providing fodder for food blogs, destinations on tourist itineraries, and listings in travel guides.

Street food in NYC appeared in the 18th century with fresh-baked rye bread, cornbread, apple pie and cookies from colonial-era bakeries. Its rapid development took place in the 19th century as a consequence of industrialization and rise in the number of immigrants. Now it flourishes thanks to the tourist flow and big city vibes.

Some meals have become symbols of the city and must-try picks for visitors. In every tourist guide you’ll find the well-known hotdog that was introduced by German immigrants in the 1860s. Its classic recipe is always the same: mustard, sauerkraut and onions. Another given is pizza; it first appeared in 1905 with the wave of immigrants from southern Italy. It was a simple Margherita with mozzarella, basil and tomatoes. Certainly, yet another outstanding example is the hamburger; its origin is subject to several competing views. However, no doubt it was an American who first put grilled ground beef between two slices of bread.

Globalization has broadened the variety of street food to such once unfamiliar fare as falafel, bagels, Mexican tacos, Greek gyros, and lamb meatballs, to name only a few specialties. Today, vendors offer to us newcomers all manner of cooking and ingredients. Some of the most popular with long lines of fans have become legendary.

Nauti Mobile from Luke’s Lobster was opened by a finance guy who is originally from Maine and savvy about seafood. Nauti Mobile opened right after the success of its restaurant chain “Luke Lobster.” Social media users agree: The company sells the best lobster rolls (\$15), crab rolls (\$12) and shrimp rolls (\$8). Although the menu is a bit pricey, it’s not a deal breaker because you get a large portion, perfect flavor and exquisite taste. In addition, the company assures

that all ingredients are natural, without artificial additives. *Find it: Pier 13 in Hoboken on Thursday and Saturdays or check www.lukeslobster.com/location/nauti.*

Tony Dragon’s Grille veterans have been serving Greek food for over 30 years. The long lunch line is well worth enduring to try one of the best grilled meat platters in town. The grilled chicken (\$8) is the most popular. Plus, the menu also has different types of sandwiches, salads and burgers. All items are tasty and offer good value, topping out at \$11. *Find it: 62nd St. nr. Madison Ave. Open Mon-Fri 10:30 am to 6 pm, Sat 11 am to 5 pm, closed Sunday.*

Hard Times Sundaes always sets records in the media, taking awards like “best cheap eats” or “NY absolute best burgers.” Their signature burgers (single, \$6; triple, \$11) and bacon wrapped hot dogs (from \$3) are crowd pleasers. The owner is well-known in the NY restaurant industry and the menu has fair prices. *Find it: 230 Park Ave., The Helmsley Building. Open Mon-Fri 8 am to 9 pm, Sat-Sun 9 am to 5 pm.*

Cinnamon Snails is a good bet if you are in the mood for vegetarian food. Find one of the two red trucks on NYC streets or visit The Pennsy Foodhall. The menu is gigantic: from cinnamon snails (\$3.50) made of puff pastry with cinnamon and signature vegan donuts (\$2.25) to a wide variety of soups, platters, and burgers (\$11). The sweet selection is gorgeous, with gluten-free options. The proof is the line that never ends! *Find it: Seventh Ave. and 33rd Street (The Pennsy Foodhall) or at different city events. Open Mon-Sun 11 am to 9 pm.*

Hope you find some of these places and enjoy them!



The Cinnamon Snails food truck is aptly painted dark copper.

Photo by Olga

Cartoonish, Cheerful and Political

BY NATALIIA OMELCHENKO (UKRAINE)

NEW YORK IS A CITY where you can find marvels everywhere: the grandeur of skyscrapers and bridges, the beauty of cathedrals and plazas, the tranquility of parks and museums.

New York is also a city rich with surprises. Even when you feel like a tiny grain of sand lost between giant skyscrapers, you may suddenly discover little creatures next to you that make you feel like a giant. They appear everywhere: in parks, in playgrounds, in subway stations, on lampposts and even on the street atop manhole covers. Who are these humpty-dumpties? These bronze-sculpted characters were created by famous American artist Tom Otterness.

He chose bronze because it is an ideal medium for interactivity with the audience. When people touch the sculpted bronze, the color changes and becomes shiny. So the material reflects the love and interest of the viewers.

These sculptures delight people of all ages. For children, especially, it is a fairytale world filled with cheerful humans and fantasy figures. One particularly original and creative vision involves a DNA double-helix that crowns the top of the park, where a couple of sculpted monkeys sit with little people guarding the park's entrance. In another installation, the huge head of a man forms a cavern in which are hidden tiny figures of men and women. It is said that if you whisper your wish into a big ear of the head, it will come true.

Humpty-dumpties do everything everywhere. Some are building and creating things, others are reading or writing books, playing with giant chess

figures, or trying to pick up a huge phone handset. Yet others are feasting, having fun or counting their profits. It's a real world filled with a variety of life situations, and serious thoughts about such things as politics, money, class and gender relations.

The installation *The Real World* was created in 1992. It is located in Rockefeller Park, in the shadow of the Financial Center, because one of the main elements is an enormous coin; it's why this terrace overlooking the Hudson River is also known as Penny Park. The sculptural heroes are animal characters populating a fairytale world of blue collar workers with giant tools, white collar workers, business-suited bankers with moneybag heads, high-heeled society ladies, and radicals. Cartoon characters are the basic formula of Otterness's work. As he explains it, "This was an early piece I did. Its called the rolling penny. It depicts the rich sitting atop the penny and drinking champagne, workers at the bottom pushing the penny over, and they are all about to fall."

The fairytale and real worlds are intertwined in the sculptural installations. The philosophy behind these cheerful caricatures and their actions, according to the artist, is "a map that tells the story of the real world out of a playground. This is



Photo by Natalia

Blue collar workers roll the coin over, toppling the plutocrats in this Otterness installation at Penny Park.

spoon life without added sugar."

Otterness may well be "the world's best public sculptor," as the art critic Ken Johnson opined in the *New York Times*. And the city offers its residents and visitors the unique opportunity of everyday contact with these miraculous installations.

Inquiring Photographers

How have you changed since you came to the U.S.?

BY MARIAM CESSOUMA (BURKINA FASO), VICTORIA DANILOVICH (BELARUS) AND BOB SPEZIALE (USA)

When I arrived I couldn't speak English. I didn't want people to make fun of my accent and pronunciation. Two years ago, I started taking classes at ARNIC and now I feel comfortable speaking English.

—SARAN BERETE DOUMBOUYA (GUINEA)



Now I am working in a chemistry lab and one of my sons is also working and another is starting college in January. For us, this is a big change in our lives.

—EMILIO PEÑA (NICARAGUA)



I haven't changed myself but my life has changed. I have got more opportunities for growth: I have learned to drive the car, I make art with polymer clay, I have traveled around the U.S. I really like it here.

—OKSANA GENKINA (RUSSIA)



The ARNIC had to do a lot with improving my life in USA. I appreciate the support and love I received very much. Classes, sessions with tutor, a lot of beautiful events.....I have just started my new life here and I feel this continuing support.

—IRINA ALEKSEEVA (RUSSIA)



I feel very different—much more social and I enjoy meeting and speaking to new people every day. I feel more positive and empowered to be a woman here.

—ANNE-SOPHIE D'ALTON (FRANCE)



A lot. Thanks to ARNIC, my language skills improved. Then I went to BMCC and just graduated. I'm confident this will help me find opportunities in cybersecurity.

—CHRIS LEWIS (INDIA)

I have been living a new life here and become more hardworking than before... and the way I manage my money has totally changed. I realized the true meaning of "time is money." Finally, my English is getting better all the time.

—DAVID W. PACMOGDA (BURKINA FASO)



I now feel part of American culture. I realize life is challenging and in Moldova I was bored working at the office. Here I really enjoy being with my family and ESU family.

—ALEXANDRU ANATCHII (MOLDOVA)



I opened my mind and have a new perspective on life, on people. Before I held a lot of stereotypes. The city is so cosmopolitan and there's so much to do.

—PAOLA MARTÍNEZ (COLOMBIA)



Every day I learn how to express myself in American society, which helps me to navigate restless NYC. I have absorbed a new culture and traditions and am glad to live here.

—NATALIA BIALEVICH (BELARUS)



I've met people from different countries and cultures who speak different languages. The U.S. is a great country for freedom, and a great country for career building.

—ABDUL QAHER JALIL (AFGHANISTAN)



I can say everything has changed for me. I feel proud today thanks to God and the team of ARNIC and English in Action. When I came to the U.S. I did not speak, write or explain anything in English. Now it is very different for me. I thank all at the ESU for helping immigrants who come from all over the world.

—ALPHA DIALLO (GUINEA)