

The ARNIC Observer

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

Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC)

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“We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.”

— Jimmy Carter

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The Hub of Manhattan

BY EMILY WIN (MYANMAR)



Photo by Emily

The busy Main Concourse of Grand Central Terminal with the iconic four-faced clock in the middle.

HAVE YOU BEEN TO NEW YORK CITY? If your answer is “Yes,” have you been to Grand Central Terminal? If your answer is “Yes” again, did you know that this imposing structure is one of the most popular destinations and historic attractions in New York City?

As a newcomer to New York City, I passed by Grand Central hundreds of times without noticing its priceless value. Sometimes I didn’t even have a chance to go to the upper level of the station, I just transferred from one subway to another in the lower level. I believe most immigrants may not have time to appreciate it because of their busy schedules and will have the same experience as mine. So I don’t want my friends to miss such an interesting exploration at a location so easily accessible.

Grand Central Terminal occupies an entire block at 42nd Street between Park and Lexington Avenues. It serves commuters traveling on the Metro-North Railroad to Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess counties in New York State and Fairfield and New Haven counties in Connecticut. It connects to MTA New York City subway trains and hosts 44 train platforms, 67 train tracks on two different levels, several great restaurants and features a lot of famous Beaux-Arts architecture. Beaux-Arts relates to an architectural style

originating in France in the late 19th century characterized by classical forms, symmetry, and rich ornamentation on a grand scale.

The original Grand Central Depot began construction in 1869 and was finished in 1871 by railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt. It has undergone a number of renovations and restorations over the years and has been properly called Grand Central Terminal since 1913. In the 1940s, the railroads fell into a major decline and faced bankruptcy. Despite pleas for preservation, Pennsylvania Station, to name only one other magnificent building, had been demolished to make way for an office tower. Consequently, in the 1960s, Grand Central also was nearly torn down. But with the dedicated support of former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission designated it a historic American landmark, which means it cannot be altered without commission approval.

In the Main Concourse of the terminal, you can see the iconic four-faced clock on top of the central information booth. You can look around to the West and East Balconies, where at one end an Apple Store is located, and also enjoy the features of the astronomical ceiling. Arching over the 80,000 square-foot Main Concourse, this extraordinary artwork portrays the Mediterranean sky with October to March zodiac symbols and 2,500 stars. The original ceiling was replaced in the late 1930s; if you would like to see the original color of the ceiling, there is still one tile remaining near the Michael Jordan Steakhouse.

There are other restaurants such as the Oyster Bar, an old-world restaurant with period decor and the original serpentine lunch counter, specializing in seafood, and more casual offerings in the Dining Concourse, which is situated at the lower level. On the exterior of the building, you can explore a lot of sculptures and structures including Hercules, Minerva and Mercury facing 42nd Street, the exterior clock—13 feet in diameter—faced with an enormous piece of Tiffany glass, and the Vanderbilt Eagle perched on the corner of the building. If you want to explore Grand Central in detail, you can take a self-guided audio tour, which will last as little as 30 minutes or just over an hour.

Summer is the right time to go out and explore interesting things. Find the time and enjoy!

New York’s Finest Cheesemonger

BY ALEXEY LEDENEV (RUSSIA)

SOME PEOPLE SAY that New York City is the food capital of the world and it’s hard to argue with them since the city offers an astonishing variety of groceries and restaurants representing ethnic cuisines from literally all over the globe. But even in this ocean of infinite choices there is one food emporium, which in my opinion, has a remarkable heritage and a unique selection of food and makes it very different from all other places.

Zabar’s is a specialty gourmet store located on Broadway and 80th Street in Manhattan and is perhaps one of the most famous on the Upper West Side. The Zabar’s story starts with Louis Zabar who was born in 1901 in the Ukraine and came to the United States through Canada in the early 1920s. Louis first lived in Brooklyn where he rented a stall in a farmer’s market. Later in New York, Louis met and married Lillian who had moved to America by herself and whom he had known from their village in Ukraine.

In 1934, together they opened a 22-foot-wide shop along Broadway, which was on the first floor of the Calvin Apartments Complex and specialized in selling imported coffee and smoked fish. After Louis died in 1950, two of his sons, Stanley and Saul, decided to continue and further develop the gourmet business. Saul said that five decades ago, Zabar’s was selling Brie

and Camembert, “Common now, but unusual then,” and he gradually began to increase the number of imported products and specialty items.

By the 1980s, the brothers bought the entire apartment complex and renovated the building, creating a retail space far larger than the original. Now there is a café on the corner with cheese, fish, produce and prepared and packaged foods in the main store areas, which have been combined into a single space. On the second floor you will find a housewares section replete with every practical and handy gadget you’ll ever need, from fancy coffee makers to all bamboo cutting boards.

Though Zabar’s is renowned for its great selection of freshly baked bagels and bread, coffee and tea, smoked fish such as salmon, sturgeon, and sable, as well as caviar, my personal favorite is the cheese department. In my opinion, it is the best cheesemonger in New York, where you can find more than 600 kinds of cheese from Chilean Havarti to Bulgarian Feta to French Brie and American Sage Blue. Although most of the prices are the best in the city, some of the artisanal cheeses can be pricey, for example, Rogue River Blue, made in Oregon, is almost \$44 a pound.

To truly understand Zabar’s, it must be visited in person. Go to the very casual café and have lunch there. Grab a sandwich or a bagel, try a soup or a dessert with coffee. It is really a one of a kind adventure.



Photo by Alexey

Cheese hounds in front of the extensive, mouth-watering selection at Zabar’s

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Editorial

A Patchwork of Laws

“The U.S. immigration laws are bad—really, really bad. I’d say treatment of immigrants is one of the greatest injustices done in our government’s name.”
— Bill Gates

THE IMMIGRATION NATURALIZATION ACT (INA) constitutes the body of law governing immigration to the United States. Today, there is a worldwide limit of 675,000 permanent resident immigrants per year with some exemptions for close family members and refugee admissions, as determined by the Congress and the President. The stated principles underlying the INA are fourfold: 1) reunification of families, 2) encouraging skilled immigrants of value to the U.S. economy, 3) protecting refugees, and 4) promoting diversity. Family based visas account for 480,000 each year for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens including spouses, minor children and parents. However, the Congress has devised a complicated formula to determine the exact number of visas allowed—subtracting for last year’s quota and the number of “aliens” paroled, adding in any leftover unused employment numbers, etc. Thus the actual figure is subject to great flux. More than 20 types of visas exist for temporary nonimmigrant workers. This notorious alphabet soup of visas range from P visas for athletes, entertainers and skilled performers and R visas for religious workers to A visas for diplomatic employees and O visas for workers of extraordinary ability. These categories also have numerical ceilings. Permanent employment-based immigrants (140,000) come from five categories among them are “persons of exceptional ability,” “special immigrants,” and “persons who will invest \$500,000 to \$1 million in a job creating enterprise that employs at least 10 full-time U.S. workers.” Overall, the categories do sound laudable, encouraging highly skilled people to come here, but again they are ill-defined—special immigrants, for example—while the investment provision has spawned an industry of middlemen. You can buy your way into the U.S. much like you can in many less developed countries of the European Union.

There are several categories for people fleeing from “well-founded fear of persecution” due to their race, membership in a social group, political opinion, religion or national origin. For 2013, the number of refugees was capped, somewhat arbitrarily, at 70,000. Last but not least, under the Diversity Visa Program established in 1990, a total of 55,000 immigrants from six world regions are admitted to the U.S. Eligibility for the famous lottery consists of high school education or a minimum of two years advanced training or experience. Under this program, these Lawful Permanent Residents may obtain U.S. Citizenship after five years, or three years if they obtained admission by being a spouse of a U.S. citizen or were admitted through the Violence Against Women Act. Currently, no group of permanent residents from any one country can exceed seven per-cent of the total number immigrating to the U.S. in a single year. The oddly random numbers, the calculations, the categories, the ways the laws themselves are administered seem unnecessarily complicated and confusing, except perhaps for lawyers and other immigration professionals such as agents and services, who may benefit financially from their complexity. The process for applicants is labor intensive, time-consuming and stressful, with waits of a year or more for bureaucratic decisions that affect one’s life and livelihood. Once here, many immigrants are bewildered by their new status, uninformed as to how the laws apply to them. That the creaky legal system needs updating, simplification and more transparency is apparent. Are immigration policy and law as bad as Bill Gates believes they are? Perhaps for some, perhaps not for others. And that’s the problem. The laws should be consistently applied and understandable by the population they were conceived to serve.

We are on the Web:
www.esu-arnic.org
www.facebook.com/ESU.ARNIC
www.twitter.com/esuarnic
<http://newimmigrantinthecity.wordpress.com>

Falun Gong

BY NOYA TIAN (CHINA)

I CAME TO NEW YORK last September seeking asylum. When I saw a lot of practitioners revealing truth to tourists in the streets and at sightseeing places, I was very excited because we could not do so publicly in China. Since 1999, Falun Gong has been suppressed by the Chinese government because the number of people who practice it has increased tremendously, by 70 million people within three years’ time. Even among the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members, there are a lot of practitioners of Falun Gong. You may wonder why so many in China practice it. For a long time, the Chinese government has tried to control people’s minds. To maintain its regime, the CCP has even lied to the world community, altering facts to suit their own aims. For instance, 40 million people starved to death in the 1959-61 great famine caused by mismanagement, but it was falsely proclaimed the “Three-Year Natural Disaster.” When the Chinese people begged for food at non-resident villages, the military cordoned off the villages, forcing people to starve to death. Later, in the 1970s, they initiated the Cultural Revolution, their purpose being to sow discord and fool people into fighting each other, thus distracting the attention of the Chinese people away from their own grip on power. In the 1980’s, for example, China opened its doors to the outside world to expand its economy. By 1989, young students protested for more than two months in Tianamen Square, having learned that democracy is an agent against corruption and declaring it so. But this protest ended with a bloody massacre and the death of more than 2,000. Since then, the Chinese people rightly fear talking about democracy and freedom of speech. In 1992, the practice of Falun Gong was introduced. It emphasizes the concepts of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance and the morality of the individual. People find this practice of graceful movement, meditation and increased self-awareness wonderful, not only to ensure physical well-being, but also to purify the body and soul.

When people began to practice it and discovered the magical changes in their minds and bodies, it spread from mouth to mouth, heart to heart. They come from all walks of life: ordinary people to high ranking officials and their family members, as well as relatives. However, the CCP doesn’t consider it good for so many people to be kind and self-fulfilled persons. Instead, they take it to be a challenge to their power. In 1999, the CCP launched suppression of Falun Gong intending to eradicate it within three months. It didn’t work. Today, they still arrest, torture and kill practitioners. They even harvest the living organs of those they incarcerate. In 2006, reports began to surface that practitioners were being used as living organ banks to supply organs for an illegal worldwide trade in transplants with estimates that ten thousand organ transplants were being done every year. If these actions, which continue to this day, weren’t gruesome enough, in order to stop persecution and expose the CCP, Falun Gong practitioners have begun to disclose the CCP’s barbaric behavior. “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party,” a book published in 2004, reveals the abhorrent nature of the CCP. Today, Falun Gong has spread all over the world and is practiced in more than 70 countries. It continues to flourish inside China despite suppression. This summer, on July 16, Falun Gong practitioners will assemble and demonstrate in Washington D.C. in recognition of the persecution in China over the past 16 years.



A placid five-year old practicing Falun Gong

Photo by Noya

A Day of Home Health Care

BY SARAN BERETE DOUMBOUYA (GUINEA)

THE FIRST SURVIVAL JOB most immigrant women and some men get is often as a Home Health Aide. Since there is a huge demand for home help, there are many job openings. A prospective aide enters a short, free training program to get certified. Although it is a low-skill, low-paying job—usually between \$8 and \$15 an hour — without much prospect for advancement, it helps a lot of newcomers, even many highly educated immigrants, to start getting some income almost immediately. Unlike in many other countries, taking care of elderly, sick and disabled people is a great value shared in the United States of America. The Home Health aides watch over them every single day helping them get the better life they deserve as a human being. The task is hard, complex and exhausting, but the aides in this field keep going tirelessly. Thereby, once the aide is in the patient’s home, she or he has to follow the A.D.L (activity daily living) learned during the training. The A.D.L can be shared in three steps and a typical day in the life of an immigrant Home Health Aide consists of the following:

First Step: Morning Task

The Home Health Aide, during his or her shift, lives in the patient’s home to implement all kinds of assistance he needs. First of all, the aide has to wake the patient early in the morning. After that, he helps him to take a

shower or bath and perform other hygienic functions. Also, help is usually needed in choosing clothes and dressing. The next step is to set up breakfast and feed him. After a brief break, the aide gives him the opportunity to walk around in or outside

Second Step: Noon Task

At 12 pm it’s time for lunch. This activity is followed by a few minutes of nap. Around 3 pm it is necessary to give him a snack, such as yogurt and cookies. This will be followed two or three hours later by a light dinner.

Final Step or Night Task

The last activity for the aide is to give a snack again, set up the bed, and lead the patient to sleep. What’s more, as the patient sleeps, the Home Health aide has to check he is doing so safely. Home Health Care workers feel compassion for the elderly, ill and disabled people they care for. Still, the job itself can be very taxing and draining because it reminds you, that in time, you will get old, too. This is how life is: be born, grow old for those who get that chance, and pass on. However, for immigrants, there are other compensations to be had. It may help a newcomer reconnect with older family members left behind, improve her language skills by communicating with fluent speakers, and make her feel useful and needed in a new and foreign environment.

New Whitney Museum of American Art

BY MANANA BERDZENISHVILI (GEORGIA)



Drawing by Manana

An impressionistic sketch of the New Whitney

YOU CAN FIND a lot of good museums in New York City and have a look at diverse historical things and enjoy seeing them. Sometimes you need a whole day to look around. One of the newest museums is the Whitney Museum of American Art, designed by Renzo Piano, which opened on May 1, 2015. It is located in downtown Manhattan at Gansevoort and West Streets accessible by the A, C, E and L subway lines. Surrounded by NYC’s oldest buildings, and the newest also, the New Whitney stands out from the narrow streets with small shops, where you can find many restaurants and dine at tables al fresco. But most of all I liked the fact that the museum is located near the Hudson River. You can go to the top floors of the museum and see spectacular views from up there. Before you enter the museum, walk into the artificial park, located next to the building. It’s like a bridge with trees and benches, birds are chirping, and in all, there’s an inviting atmosphere to sit down and relax. After you walk around the park, enter the museum. Start by going to the top, the eighth floor. Go out on the terraces and enjoy Manhattan views, such as The Empire State building, Liberty Tower, and so on. There is a café with a terrace on this floor; it’s delightful to have lunch there. From the terrace, take the stairs down to the lower levels, where you see more terraces as you’re walking down inside the building to exhibition halls with different art works. There are colored

benches on one of the terraces where you can spend some time at peace with the city. Each floor is filled with both modern and unusual works such as the photography of Berenice Abbott and Ansel Adams, oils by George Bellows and Thomas Hart Benton, handmade objects and modern statuary, and even artworks made with dolls. You can see the first TV sets, first vacuum cleaner, and first streetlight. There are interesting wooden human figures in abstractions with dog figures, there is a small room where they show you an old movie about NYC, what it was like before. If you get tired, there are separate rooms on the sixth and seventh floors with sofas, where you can sit down and enjoy the view of New Jersey and the Hudson River. On the first floor, there is a huge lobby, a restaurant, and a retail shop where they sell art and architectural books and souvenirs. Afterwards, as you leave the building, you can take a walk along the Hudson River. I enjoyed spending time in such a wonderful, modern and beautiful place. I would truly recommend everyone go there and have some fun.



Photo by Manana

Fancy folk art statuary at the New Whitney Museum

De Gustibus

Uzbek Cuisine

BY INDIRA LAKTAEVA (UZBEKISTAN)

IN UZBEKISTAN, the country alive with the mysteries of the Silk Road, you can feel the atmosphere of the magical East. Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva are the major cities of this beautiful country rich with nature and kindhearted people. If you want to visit this enchanted place without leaving NYC, have a meal at 1001 Nights, a restaurant in Brooklyn at 35 Neptune Avenue in Sheepshead Bay. The atmosphere is warm, friendly and modern. You can see art and enjoy decor in full Uzbek style with colorful carpets, chandeliers, curtains, dishes, folk musical instruments and miniatures. Friendly staff and an interesting menu with traditional national food will greet you. Most famous is Plov (pilaf), prepared with lamb, rice, onions and carrots flavored with garlic and cumin. This dish is traditional in all Uzbek families for every day, as well as for celebrations on different events from birthdays to weddings with sweet raisins added to symbolize the good life. You can choose and try one of the soups of Uzbek cuisine. They are lagman with homemade noodles, shurpa with vegetables, chuchvara with meat dumplings and mastava with rice. Last time I visited, I ordered shurpa. It was delicious with the tender light taste of a traditional meat soup with

fresh vegetables and young lamb. Shurpa boosts your appetite and gives you energy for the entire day. Shurpa is also served with fresh herbs such as cilantro or dill. We also ordered manti with meat, which are served with sour cream. They are large steamed dumplings that were delicious and melted in the mouth. There are manti with pumpkin if you are a vegan. We also ordered salad with fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, olives and onions dressed with oil and black pepper. It was a very good appetizer. We also had non — specially prepared circle bread. One of the main traditions in Uzbekistan when you have a surprise guest is to honor him at table with hot tea and bread. Non is the main food for a guest and is very nourishing. For drinks at the restaurant, we had black tea with lemon, but stronger libations such as beer and wine, vodka, cognac, and tequila are available. Our total order came to about \$20 for a person. In addition, there are different kinds of shish kebabs: lamb, beef, liver, chicken, salmon and vegetables on skewers. One of the most famous foods is somsa. You have to taste it. It is homemade puffs of baked dough with cubes of lamb. When you have guests in the traditional Uzbek household, and on holidays and for special celebrations, you will serve in a definite order. First, guests are offered tea, non, different kinds of nuts, raisins, seasonal fruits and candies. Next, somsa is offered to guests. After that you may be served shurpa or another soup. For the next dish, guests might have pilaf with fresh salad or it could be manti. You will never go hungry in the Uzbek home. As an evening guest at 1001 Nights you can enjoy Belly dancing, which is simply amazing, or you can listen not only to eastern but also modern and club music with songs in different languages. Do your life different, visit this place, meet Uzbek culture, and revel in the traditions of this ancient, warm, friendly and peaceful country.



Photo by Indira

Shurpa served in traditional dishware

Free Summer Activities for All in NYC!

BY JULIETA DIÁZ (COLOMBIA)

THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF ACTIVITIES to enjoy your summer days and nights in New York City...all of them for free! Activities for kids, teens, adults and seniors. What do you prefer? Museums, entertainment, arts & culture, reading series, summer sports, concerts, movies, beaches, zoos and gardens, theater, music and dance, and sailing boats, the list is endless. Museums have specific days and hours with free admission. Sometimes you may pay what you can, one dollar per person is sufficient. Look on the websites included at the end of this article to be sure. Also check the addresses and maps before visiting them. Some of the less known are: Tenement Museum, International Center for Photography, New York Hall of Science, Museum of the City of New York, Museum of Arts and Design, Museum of the Moving Image, to name only a few. Lincoln Center offers you films, jazz, theater, performing arts, ballet, and chamber music. Many times these activities are free, especially at the Juilliard School. Sometimes you must print out a free ticket from the website or get one at the school. The amazing New York Philharmonic is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its concert series. Started in 1965, more than 14 million New Yorkers have enjoyed free concerts in each of the five boroughs. This year the “New York Philharmonic: Parks 50” began its music festival in June, but will schedule further performances in July and August. For schedules and important details, please find the website below. Remember: “first-come, first-served” so act promptly. You won’t forget this summer’s music... and all absolutely free! Is it time for movies in the parks? With popcorn, hot dogs, and the works... the city offers you different film festivals outdoors in Bryant Park, Central Park, Brooklyn Bridge Park and others. The movies are free, but sometimes you must book ahead. Be also astounded at the huge list of interesting events in all the public libraries. There are outdoor and indoor activities including handicrafts, games, readings, fine arts, sculpture, concert series, screenings, author talks, theater, culture, arts, classes, and workshops to keep you entertained.

(cont’d on page four)

I Love to Ride My Bicycle

BY NIKA TALKACHOVA (BELARUS)

I HAVE RIDDEN A BIKE for my past 13 adult years, so when I moved to New York I was pleased to continue biking in the new unknown and this certainly interesting for observation city. I wanted to ride a bike in NYC, to get a real feel for what it's like. Is it dangerous? Is it a cyclist's paradise?

I decided to start my first biking in Central Park, thinking that would be the easiest way. It is a great place to explore on a bicycle, offering breathtaking views from both flat and hilly scenic terrain. On a bike you can see a lot of the park in a short amount of time. This is all for the good, but I ventured to go further....

My next route was longer and more complicated. I drove along the Hudson River, circled downtown and went across the Brooklyn Bridge to Williamsburg, and then via the Williamsburg Bridge returned to Manhattan. After that I rode along Second Avenue and back to Central Park. After such a long ride that took half of the day, I understood what it means to bike in the city.

It's different from riding in most other places. It is the best combination of rapid and non-aggravating travel, but unfortunately not very secure. NYC, being the huge city it is, simply has more of everything: more people, more bikes, more cars. Riding in the city is not as difficult as I anticipated. There's nothing wrong with riding a bike as long as you do your best to stay safe. It's like driving a car or flying in an airplane, all have dangers. But if you accept them, try to minimize them, stay alert, ride on!

It is very important to obey all traffic laws when



A trio of bikers in Central Park

riding a bicycle. Cyclists must avoid distractions and pay attention to all street and road signs and signals. There are other "rules of the road" which are cycling-specific, like using hand signals. It is important to learn not to get squeezed off the road or onto cars, not pulling up next to cars that are turning right, leaving enough braking distance between you and cars (they can stop a lot faster than you can).

There is a lot of traffic and the cabbies drive rather haphazardly. Not only do you have to contend with being in an unfamiliar city, you have to deal with much more disorderly traffic as well as pedestrian traffic that seems to ignore the protocols of street crossing.

If you want to get at least the minimum initial experience of biking in NYC, Central Park and the bike paths along the Hudson and East Rivers are really great! They are separate from vehicle traffic and designed for bike riding.

There are paths around almost the entire perimeter of Manhattan and you can ride over all the big bridges: Brooklyn, Manhattan, Williamsburg, Queensboro, Triboro and even the George Washington Bridge into New Jersey. However, if you are considering biking on the streets of Manhattan, especially Midtown, I would say think carefully whether you are prepared for this. There is so much crowding with cars, trucks, buses, pushcarts, pedestrians...and besides it's a total hassle!

For me bicycling is fun and great exercise! So decide where you want to begin and search for places in your city! I can understand that people might have reservations. But, hey, get on a bike! The moment you get on a bike it's going to do wonders for you!

Photo by Nika

Gay Life in New York City

BY MAKSIM KHIMCHANKA (BELARUS)



Photo by Tanzilva

A float at the celebratory 2015 Pride March in NYC

NEW YORK CITY is one of the most gay friendly cities in the world. There are certain areas in Manhattan where gay men prefer to live, eat and go out. Those are called gay or gay friendly neighborhoods. These are Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen, East and West Villages. Astoria, Queens and Williamsburg, Brooklyn have recently become gay friendly, too.

During the summer time gay life in the city becomes way more interesting. A lot of new parties and rooftops open. Day parties rocket in popularity during the summer, especially on the weekends. So far, my favorite one happens every Sunday afternoon on the rooftop of the Standard Hotel in the Meatpacking District. It's a perfect time to catch up with friends for a couple of refreshing frozen margaritas on a rooftop with a picturesque view of the neighborhoods and city skyline.

Since New York City never sleeps, gay nightlife in the city never sleeps as well. There are a lot of different parties and events going on at night, especially on Fridays and Saturdays. My favorite one takes place every Saturday night in Hell's Kitchen and is called Viva. The party is held in a huge, three-story warehouse, which gets fully packed every Saturday night with guys from all over the world. The entrance fee may seem a little steep at \$20 to \$30 depending on your time of arrival, but it's definitely worth it. Industry, Therapy and Ritz, which are in Hell's Kitchen, as well as G Lounge, the Boxers and Barracuda, which are in Chelsea, are fun places to go to for free. You can never get bored.

If drinks and parties are not your favorite things, there are places to shop and eat out right here for you. In these neighborhoods, you'll find a lot of gay-owned clothing stores with a clientele of gay men, and gay friendly restaurants, too. My favorite store is Efor, which sells specialty underwear, tank tops and trendy sneakers, located between 18th and 19th streets on Eighth Avenue in Chelsea. My favorite restaurant is Elmo, which serves everything from salads and burgers to fish and pasta, located between 19th and 20th streets on Seventh Avenue in Chelsea.

If sometimes you feel like the city is just getting too much for you, don't worry, that's absolutely fine. Take your swim shorts and go to Fire Island. For decades, Fire Island has been one of the most popular destinations among gay men from New York City because of its beautiful beaches, sense of community and crazy parties.

Free Summer

(Cont'd from page three)

Admire the downtown Manhattan skyline as seen aboard the Staten Island ferry. The boat passes near the Statue of Liberty and from afar the Verrazano Narrows Bridge looks impressive. Similarly, there is a free taxi boat on weekends that sails from downtown to Brooklyn.

On several Web pages you will find a list of events. To check all the programs you could choose, for example, by borough's events, day and/or hour, specific activity, specific place, activities for specific ages.

Here is a short list:

- www.nypl.org/events/calendar
- www.events.juilliard.edu
- www.nycgo.com/summer
- www.nycgovparks.org
- www.nyphil.org/concerts-tickets
- www.anuevayork.com/cine-al-aire-libre-nueva-york/
- www.mommypoppins.com/family/free-in-nyc-kids-guide

Now... It's time to choose among thousands of activities without taking a penny out of your wallet! Welcome Summer!

Inquiring Photographers

What have been the biggest change(s) for you since you move to the United States?

BY NIKA TALKACHOVA (BELARUS) AND INDIRA LAKTAEVA (UZBEKISTAN)

The biggest changes for me are my overnight shift—a survival job not in my field, and meeting and networking with people from all over the world. The other thing is taking classes and training programs for free.

— BOUBACAR DIALLO (GUINEA)



My dream came true, I speak and listen to English everywhere: in stores, with my friends and in the concerts with my band. Also, I can enjoy many music events from jazz in Harlem to world famous bands like the Rolling Stones.

— NIKO ZNAHARCHUK (BELARUS)



The biggest change is adapting to a new culture. In China we always hide our thoughts and opinions. We try very hard to guess what people think or feel. Here people always express themselves directly. In China it would be considered impolite. I like the American way as it saves a lot of time.

— XIAOXI ZHANG (CHINA)



I spend more time with my husband. When I was in Korea, both my husband and I were very busy working, we couldn't even have dinner together. Since I do not work in the US and my husband comes home at 7, we can eat dinner at home and go out on weekends together.

— TAEYEON (KOREA)



I would never imagine how life is interesting and busy here. It is absolutely impossible to get bored. What I like the most is the huge number of various cultural places and events such as museums, galleries, art exhibitions, which you may attend for free.

— ALYONA GLUSHCHENKOVA (UKRAINE)



The biggest change for me is to be the head of a house. In my home country I always depended on my parents, and now I'm the head of the family. Another change is the culture - in Dominican Republic it is really different from the U.S...

— ARIONNYS HONORIO AVILA (DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)