

WESTBETH VIEW

Vol. 2 No. 2 Summer 2016

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ✓ Our New Ramp
- ✓ Meet Board Member Ken Tabachnick
- ✓ The Music Cave is Open at Westbeth
- ✓ Sweet Readers Program
- ✓ Best Wishes to David Levin on his Retirement

follow us on



Our New Ramp

IT SEEMS LIFE IS EASIER FOR ANYONE WITH A WHEELED CONTRAPTION, be it a grocery cart, bicycle or wheelchair, now that the Bethune Street ramp is in place and the automatic doors are working. Therefore, we want you to know that the government process isn't finished, and we are pursuing final approvals diligently. To get the ramp started as soon as we could (that is, right after the sidewalk bridge came down after our façade and roof project), we submitted our plans to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for approval under their temporary structures procedures. This allows projects to be approved by LPC staff, rather than by the full commission, and expedites matters considerably. Of course, we told the commission that was our plan, and that we would be applying to make the ramp permanent as soon as all the paperwork required by the buildings department was complete. We are approaching that moment, and will soon be completing our application to the LPC to make the ramp permanent. This will require a hearing at the landmarks commission, but only after Community Board 2 (CB2) has had a chance to review the project too. We'll keep you posted as things progress, but you can be certain Westbeth is committed to completing the process as quickly as it can. And of course we hope you will come out and support the ramp at both CB2 and the landmarks commission. /



Meet Board Member Ken Tabachnick



I THINK PUTTING
TOGETHER SOLUTIONS
TO COMPLEX
PROBLEMS IS WHAT
MAKES ME TICK.

1. You've had an extremely rich, diverse career. What makes you tick?

I follow my interests. I was a lighting designer for 20 years, an attorney, the general manager of the New York City Ballet and an academic dean. I think putting together solutions to complex problems is what makes me tick.

2. How did you become a lighting designer?

I started working on lighting in high school. Actually, I grew up around the film and television industry -- my father was a sound recording engineer -- so I was very comfortable in the industry. I worked with him a little bit early on, but I wanted to prove my own worth.

3. As a lighting designer, you've worked with many

distinguished producers, directors and dance companies.

Yes, I worked the Royal Shakespeare Company repertory season on Broadway, and with others as an assistant lighting designer. I've worked with the Kirov and Bolshoi ballet and opera companies at the Met, with Bob Wilson on some of his productions, including "Einstein on the Beach," and with many dance, theater, and opera companies and artists. I've worked all over the world, though mostly not on Broadway. I was never very interested in Broadway.

4. You've traveled the world. Where have you worked?

All over. I've traveled to Paris, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Israel, Holland, spent many months in London, France, and Sydney, not to mention to 49 of our 50 states.

5. Why leave lighting design to become a lawyer?

Looking ahead I didn't see a path to continue to develop as a lighting designer that was challenging enough, and you only go through life once. I just didn't need to stick to the same thing.

6. Why law?

Because there was much more opportunity to learn about something different. Since 1991 I could see computers were exploding and Intellectual Property law was going to become very important. I wanted to learn the language of business, finance and law. I wanted to communicate in non-literal ways. Lighting design was a very one-sided brain activity. It was completely removed from vast portions of society -- writers, lawyers, bankers. I wanted to expand my opportunities and be able to choose where I wanted to go.

I immersed myself in law and passed the bar the first time

7. Why choose private practice?

I was in my 40's and I knew I didn't want to work 80 hours a week with a family at home and I was also pretty sure a law firm wasn't going to invest in me, so I hung out my own shingle and went into private practice.

8. After about eight years in private practice, you became the general manager of the New York City Ballet. How did that happen?

I was referred by a friend to the City Ballet, where I had previously consulted, and after a number of conversations was hired as the general manager in 2004. I became responsible for more than 100 dancers, 65 musicians, and many stage hands, as well as administrators and operations at the company. It was a chal-

lenging and exciting time. I found myself in a highly unionized situation in which we created great art. The company was affected by the recession, though it was lucky to have the resources to weather that period. Before departing, though, I was able to give them a strong strategic plan, which I believe they are currently still implementing.

9. What are your thoughts about the City Ballet?

They are one of the most talented and dedicated ballet companies in America. Peter [Martins] has accomplished more during his tenure than most people accomplish or could accomplish in their lifetime.

10. You've also worked in universities.

Yes, I worked at SUNY Purchase as the dean of their School of the Arts. It was a great experience working with young art students. I delved deeply into changing the training of young artists to be more

relevant to today as opposed to 50 years ago. Purchase was a special place with more than 50% of the students, I believe, being first-generation college students, which was very rewarding. I have very good memories of being there. Most recently, I was deputy dean at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where I oversaw large institutional issues and then oversaw the winding down of the NYU Tisch Singapore graduate film and animation program.

11. How did you get to the Westbeth board?

I've known people living at Westbeth for the past 35 years. Recently, one friend suggested I join the board, and I've been a board member for the past year.

12. Any further thoughts?

Affordable housing for artists is critical. This was the first of its kind in the City, and it must continue. I'm honored to be able to contribute to the Westbeth community. ✓

The Music Cave is Open at Westbeth

THE "WESTBETH MUSIC CAVE" – A/K/A THE REHEARSAL ROOM – is open and ready to rock, or to host a classical wind quartet, jazz trio or polka band. In fact, the room is available for just about any musical purpose you can think of, for no charge. Located in the basement of the "I" building and made available by Westbeth, it is far from any residence and for the use of any Westbeth resident, 8 a.m. to midnight, any day of the week. To schedule a time slot, come to the Bethune Street desk and ask for the sign-up sheet, which also has a full set of guidelines for the use of the space. ✓





Best Wishes to David Levin on his Retirement

David Levin, Westbeth's long-time plumber, retired on June 30 after 19 years of service. We all wish David much happiness. ✓



Sweet Readers Volunteer Program

Sometimes it's hard to tell who benefits the most from volunteering, the volunteer or the person the volunteer works with. The Sweet Readers program is a case in point. The program aims to train middle-school students to visit and help adults with early to mid-stage Alzheimer's disease by providing social and creative stimulation. A group of young volunteers has been visiting some Westbeth residents in the Community Room, and it was sometimes difficult to tell who was helping whom in their collage-creation projects. If you know someone who might like to participate in the next Sweet Readers program, contact Margaret Lee at her office or by phone, **(212) 691-1500, ext. 6590.** ✓



WESTBETH CORP.

463 West Street, New York NY 10014
(212) 691-1500

Exhibitors Wanted

Leave a note with the Westbeth office to sign up for the Project Room, Hallway Gallery, and entrance display.