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Wednesday, May 30, 2018

Movin' Out: UCB Heads to Hell's Kitchen, Kennel Club Shuttters After Scandal

Added by **Scott Stiffler** on November 21, 2017.

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Long lines for shows at the UCB Theatre on W. 26th St. were commonplace, and sightings of cofounder Amy Poehler in the nearby Gristedes were not unheard of. File photo by Andrew Bisdale via facebook.com/ucbtny.

BY WINNIE McCROY | After nearly 15 years at its 152-seat Chelsea location (307 W. 26th St., btw. Eighth & Ninth Aves.), the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre is moving to Hell's Kitchen. The iconic comedy training and performance mecca will take over the 160-seat theater at 555 W. 42nd St. (btw. 10th & 11th Aves), previous home to the Pearl Theatre Company, which closed earlier this year after filing for bankruptcy.

Sketch and improv **artists who called the W. 26th St. facility home** are currently celebrating the move with a special series of shows "saying farewell to Chelsea and hello to Hell's Kitchen," according to a press statement. The Hell's Kitchen location will open in December.

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"The big amenity change is an ADA-compliant venue that will better serve the diverse group of performers, students, and patrons that make up the UCB community," said Chelsea's UCB Theatre director Shannon O'Neill, referencing the new venue's accessibility according to the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

THE VILLAGER

The move to Hell's Kitchen will have no impact on the East Village outpost of East: 153 E. Third St., btw. Aves. A & B). Srinivasan was not sure what would happen to that club. It rained on their parade, but they danced on

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sight lines. Photo by Francine Daveta.

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While leaving 26th Street will be emotional with 14 and a half years of memories, our writers and performers are excited about pushing their work in new directions with the new space," O'Neill said.

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Chelsea Kennel Club has closed. Photo by Scott Stiffler.

The Chelsea Kennel Club, the high-end pet boutique that was the subject of an undercover animal abuse investigation by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), closed its doors two months ago. And at this point, it doesn't appear that it will reopen. Former owner Dana Derragh told Patch.com in late September that the investigation "helped close it earlier, but it was something I was planning to do anyway." Workers were seen packing

up merchandise at 213 Seventh Ave. (btw. W. 22nd & 23rd Sts.), after Derragh shuttered operations.

In an Aug. 3 Chelsea Now article ("[Exposé Puts Chelsea Kennel Club in the Doghouse; Owner Calls Investigation a 'Hatchet Job'](#)"), Derragh denied the allegations, saying she was a longtime vegetarian and animal lover. But the undercover HSUS video (youtu.be/7ipozK27wSU) told another story entirely. It showed workers smacking crying pups and banging on cages, as well as images of sick animals limping and shaking — animals that were later sold for thousands of dollars.

After multiple protests outside her pet stores, Derragh [told the New York Daily News](#) that she "decided to retire," saying that she "didn't want to stick around for the political witch hunt."

John Goodwin, Senior Director of the Stop Puppy Mills Campaign at HSUS found this ironic, saying, "When I hear her referring to people exercising their First Amendment rights as 'harassment' after all she did to those animals, I can't help but think she's throwing stones in a glass house."

Goodwin said that HSUS has no evidence that Derragh is back in business, but admits that the owner has functioned under an alias in the past.

"When we were researching her, we believe she had gone under the name Yarden Rich to open a pet shop in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, called Le Petit Puppy," Goodwin noted. "But I have no reason to believe she's back in business now. She has had other businesses in the past, but she's older now, and hopefully she'll choose to find income through more humane means than selling sick puppies to unsuspecting customers."

Goodwin said the HSUS continues to fight the Trump Administration's move to shield puppy mill owners from penalties. A 2015 New York City ordinance prevents pet stores from purchasing animals from puppy mills with severe animal welfare violations — the so-called "[Horrible Hundred](#)" list.



At a July 27 rally organized by NY Animal Defenders in protest of conditions at Chelsea Kennel Club, Brianna Bryan (right) marched while holding a sign referring to the undercover video in which her bulldog was featured. File photo by Scott Stiffler.

Earlier this year, the USDA removed this list from the Internet, suggesting individuals submit a FOIA request if they wanted to learn if their future pet was bred at a puppy mill. Now, that list has been restored — but with all names, addresses and license numbers redacted.

"So you can see all the horrible things that went on, but you can't see who did it," Goodwin said. "That way they can say they took a step, but still protect people who abused animals."

Goodwin said he felt the USDA would not make any significant changes without pressure from constituents to their Congress member, asking them to reverse this data purge and put these animal inspection reports back online. He said that this kind of grassroots advocacy has worked in the past, noting that the undercover video footage they published got more than five million views on Facebook, and "New Yorkers took it upon themselves to make sure the video spread and that neighbors knew what was happening at that pet store."

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