



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: [Communications@cchsny.org](mailto:Communications@cchsny.org)

## **CCHS Announces Virtual Book Talk: "It's a Helluva Town" Tuesday, April 20**

Featuring author Roberta Brandes Gratz, J. Winthrop "Wint" Aldrich  
and Peter Paden in conversation

---

**(COLUMBIA COUNTY, NY) March 30, 2021** -- The Columbia County Historical Society (CCHS) will present "It's a Helluva Town," a virtual book talk on Tuesday, April 20th, at 6:00 p.m. Registration is free and open to the public at [www.cchsny.org/helluva-town](http://www.cchsny.org/helluva-town).

The talk features award-winning author and urban critic **Roberta Brandes Gratz**, who will discuss her new book, *It's a Helluva Town: Joan K. Davidson, the J.M. Kaplan Fund, and the Fight for a Better New York*. Released by Bold Type Books, *It's a Helluva Town* looks at the positive impacts of philanthropist Joan K. Davidson on the historic, environmental and civic character of New York City and the Hudson Valley.

A longtime resident and champion of Columbia County, Davidson is the second-generation leader of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, which has been hailed as one of New York's "hidden benefactors." Under Davidson's leadership, the Fund has worked to preserve historic landmarks, clean up New York State's waterways and improve legal access for at-risk New Yorkers, among many other initiatives.

For the talk, Gratz will be joined by **Peter Paden**, former executive director of the Columbia Land Conservancy from 2007 until 2020. The discussion will be moderated by longtime conservationist **J. Winthrop "Wint" Aldrich**, a former deputy commissioner for historic preservation for the State of New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

"Both the J.M. Kaplan Fund and Joan K. Davidson's early support of the environmental movement, and their enthusiasm in promoting Columbia County's distinct heritage and culture as an economic contributor in the Hudson Valley, comprises an unmatched legacy for all of us, whether resident, weekender or visitor," said CCHS Executive Director Lori Yarotsky.

*It's a Helluva Town: Joan K. Davidson, the J.M. Kaplan Fund, and the Fight for a Better New York* is available for purchase online at the [CCHS museum shop & book store](http://www.cchsny.org/museum-shop).

---

**WHAT:** "It's a Helluva Town" Virtual Book Talk, presented by Columbia County Historical

Society and the J.M. Kaplan Fund

**WHEN:** Tuesday, April 20 at 6:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Zoom

**WHO:** Roberta Brandes Gratz, Peter Paden and J. Winthrop "Wint" Aldrich

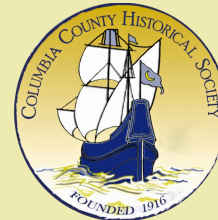
**HOW:** [www.cchsny.org/helluva-town](http://www.cchsny.org/helluva-town)

**For further information, please contact:**

Carrie Rodgers, [Communications@cchsny.org](mailto:Communications@cchsny.org)

## ABOUT CCHS

Columbia County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) cultural education organization founded in 1916 and chartered by the NYS Department of Education Board of Regents to collect, preserve, interpret and present the history, heritage and culture of Columbia County, New York, for its residents and visitors. CCHS serves residents of all eighteen towns and the City of Hudson. In addition to a research library and a permanent collection of more than 15,000 objects, CCHS owns and maintains the Columbia County Historical Society Museum & Library and three additional historic properties: the National Historic Landmark Luykas Van Alen House (1737); James Vanderpoel 'House of History' (c.1820); and Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse (c.1850).



Roberta Brandes Gratz, author of *It's a Helluva Town: Joan K. Davidson, the J.M. Kaplan Fund, and the Fight for a Better New York*.



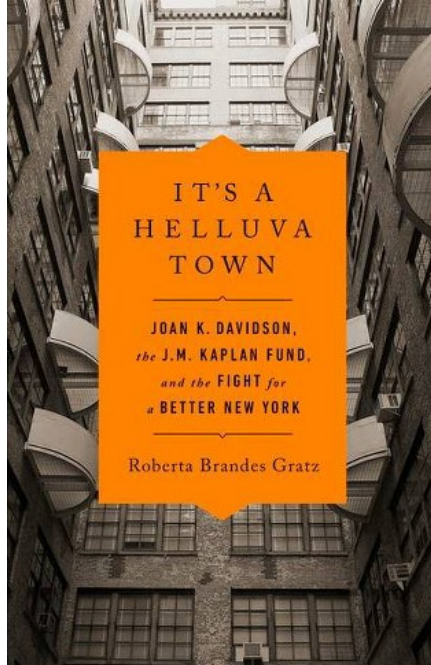
Peter Paden, former executive director (2007-2020) of the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC).

---



J. Winthrop "Wint" Aldrich, former deputy commissioner for historic preservation for the State of New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

---



IT'S A  
HELLUVA  
TOWN

JOAN K. DAVIDSON,  
*the J.M. KAPLAN FUND,*  
*and the FIGHT for*  
*a BETTER NEW YORK*

Roberta Brandes Gratz

*It's a Helluva Town: Joan K. Davidson, the J.M. Kaplan Fund, and the Fight for a Better New York*  
(Bold Type Books, 2020).

###

[www.cchsny.org](http://www.cchsny.org)

CONNECT WITH US

