

GANYC Candidate Statement – Christina Hansen, at-large board member

Hi, my name is Christina Hansen, and I'm a carriage driver. The horse thing is a bit of an addiction.

Anyway, if you haven't seen me at a GANYC meeting or FAM tour yet, you've probably seen me clip-clopping through Central Park or on TV with choice words for one or many of our elected officials. Hopefully, I will spend less time on TV come January.

By way of biography, I grew up in Lexington, KY, "Horse Capital of the World." I earned a BA/BS in History and Biological Anthropology from Emory University in Atlanta, GA. (Not unrelatedly, I named my most recently acquired horse "Sherman.") I went to graduate school at UNC-Chapel Hill, got a Master's degree in French history and was working on my dissertation, when I decided I didn't want to be a history professor, after all.

I moved to Philadelphia in 2006, where my husband was starting graduate school at Penn (he's an architectural historian), and I needed a job. I figured there was plenty of history in Philadelphia, so I could be a tour guide. The big tour company in Philadelphia – that runs the Big Bus Company – was owned by the carriage company, 76 Carriage. They had an ad: "Do you love history? Do you love horses? Have we got the job for you!" And they did. I finally figured out what I wanted to be when I grew up.

While working for 76 Carriage, not only did the company expect us to give a good tour, I prided myself on giving a good one. At this time, the City Council was considering licensing tour guides, and proposed a tremendously terrible bill. The response from the tour guides was to organize, to form an association to demonstrate to the City that we had standards and there were good informative guides. We were inspired by the venerable, long-established GANYC, and in 2009, I was one of the Association of Philadelphia Tourguides (APT) foundation members and our first Secretary.

While in Philadelphia, I also conducted walking tours and did bus step-on tours for school groups, on a fill-in basis for my colleagues at APT, so I am familiar with guiding without the help of a horse.

I moved to NYC to drive a carriage in 2012, because not only is the business better in NYC year-round, but also because I deeply consider myself to be a working horse advocate, and I knew that the fight was going to be here (with our good friend Bill de Blasio). I have been driving a carriage in Central Park now for 13 years. I've been doing PR and spokesperson work for the carriage industry since 2011, and I've been the TWU Local 100 Chief Shop Steward – Central Park Horse Carriage Division for 5 years.

I hold other board positions – Secretary of the Carriage Operators of North America (CONA) and Secretary of the New York State Horse Council. (Daria, I am grateful you volunteered for that then un-nominated Secretary position!) I've had my NYC Sightseeing Guide License since 2022 with a score of 143, and I am a member of the Equine History Collective and NY Farm Bureau. I've given a "400 Years of NYC Horsepower" webinar for NYC Adventure Club.

To that end, what can a girl who loves horses and knows every pothole and utility cover on the lower loop of the Central Park carriage drive offer to GANYC? I have extensive experience with public relations and the media. I also have been involved in lobbying for or against (mostly against, let's face it) various bills downtown at City Hall. I'd be happy to contribute to the Public Relations and Governmental Affairs committees at GANYC.

I finally joined GANYC this past spring. Whether or not I end up elected to the Board at Large,

I'm so very grateful in the couple of years or so that I've been coming to meetings and now attending FAMs to have found this community, that loves New York City as much as I do. Who love history (whether or not you love horses). And I'm so glad to know you all.

--

Christina Hansen

cleristina@gmail.com

(267) 909-5844

NYC Carriage Driver, Carriage Industry Spokesperson and Media Liaison

"Human history is written in hoof prints."