

# NEW YORK OBSERVER

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## Heaven's Gate? Never Happen Here

You can rest easy. There's no way a group like Heaven's Gale could make it here.

Unlike the rest of the nation, where one out of eight people live in a gated community, New York does not allow its inhabitants to insulate themselves from one another. No one here can avoid harassment from the neighbors, abuse from gangs and noisy demands from street people. Even the wealthiest investment banker has to stumble over the homeless sleeping on Madison Avenue. New York may have gates on its storefronts, but it has only one gated community. Sea Gate, on the edge of Coney Island. Battery Park City, Beckman Place, not even Fieldston in Riverdale have restricted entry.

And there is no way a group of 39 computer programmers led by a music professor could get a lease on a large enough co-op or apartment for \$7,000, the rent they paid on Rancho Santa Fe. The Fifth Avenue mansions that could once accommodate 39 overnight guests have long since been converted into museums.

Unlike California, where there is a genuine glut of computer professionals. New York City has far too few techies. As a result, weird, misanthropic computer programmers are highly sought by banks, media companies and pension fund operators in New York, who must continually upgrade their equipment. Only in Southern California could a group of programmers manage to avoid the cyberspace economy by taking a terminal flight to outer space. Simply put, New York needs geeks too much to allow them to indulge their fantasies, not when you can make \$100,000 a year for fixing logic boards and writing HTML programs.

So you can sleep comfortably, knowing that in California the rich and the middle class are the most emotionally disturbed classes, while in New York, the poor are the ones with the most serious mental disorders. New York has better psychiatrists, more restaurants, more lectures and concert series; this city was built to distract the educated classes from their troubles. Out there, once you get off the beach, you have only the mountains, health food, spas and drugs.

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