

## Kicking soccer concerns

BY BEN KOCHMAN

Hundreds of locals packed a South Bronx basement room Jan. 15 to sound off on the proposal to bring a 30,000-seat soccer arena to just south of Yankee Stadium.

Community members wondered what they would get out of the deal, which would bring a stadium to E. 157th Street and River Avenue, while a key elected official blasted the city using public funds to finance the project.

Reports leaked in December that the Bloomberg administration was rushing to close a stadium deal with the New York City Football Club (NYCFC), a franchise backed by an oil-rich Abu Dhabi sheik and the New York Yankees.

Under the terms of the proposal, the city would dole out millions of dollars in city funds to entice the franchise to move in a mere goal kick away from the new Yankee Stadium.

### SKEPTICAL ON \$

Naysayers at Wednesday's meeting at the Grand Concourse and E. 161st Street questioned why the city would use public funds to support a stadium owned by one of the wealthiest men in the world.

NYCFC's majority owner, Shiek Mansour bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, is worth billions of dollars, according to the most conservative estimates.

"If they want to build it, fine," said local resident Jackson Strong. "But they should use their own money."

Congressman Jose Serrano, whose district includes the

*Continued on Page 4*

# THREE-ALARM FIRE HITS SCANLAN H.S.

## Blaze injures five

BY BOB KAPPSTATTER  
AND PATRICK ROCCHIO

Officials were moving quickly to restore order and routine at Monsignor Scanlan High School, hit by a raging fire.

Students were moved to another school to take their mid-terms this week after being forced out by the three-alarm fire that severely damaged the school's boiler room and some other facilities on Friday evening, Jan. 17.

By Tuesday, the 448 students at the Throggs Neck school were taking mid-term examinations at nearby St. Helena Parish Elementary School on

Benedict Avenue.

School officials and faculty were to hold a parent information session Tuesday evening in Scanlan's gym.

The blaze injured five firefighters and was mostly confined to a two-story brick building housing the boiler. The fire also managed to break through into the main building, damaging two labs, an office and a chapel altar and sacristy.

It was first reported with a 911 call at 6:10 p.m. Friday evening, with 33 units and 138 firefighters responding to the school on Lafayette and Brush

*Continued on Page 4*



## Cop crackdown at death corner

BY BEN KOCHMAN

Motorists speeding through Morris Park: you've been warned.

The 49th Precinct says they are ramping up efforts to enforce traffic safety at a residential corner within the nabe where two Bronxites were killed within a month in late 2013 after being struck by traffic.

Since last summer, cops patrolling the site in marked and unmarked cars have doled out

300 summonses for speeding, moving violations and using a cell phone while driving near Williamsbridge Road and Neill Avenue, according to NYPD statistics.

### SPIKE IN CRASHES

Two deaths at the corner within a month have locals searching for answers.

On Dec. 22, 40-year-old Bronxite Albert Marku was struck by a car and killed at the corner while riding his motorcycle. A month earlier, on

Thanksgiving Eve, 55-year-old Maria Lucaj was struck at the same corner and died days later at Jacobi Hospital.

In total, the intersection accounted for a whopping 18 collisions in 2013, said the Four-Nine's commanding officer, Inspector Lorenzo Johnson. Besides the two deaths, five people were seriously injured there.

A collision occurred as recently as Jan. 8, when three cars crashed at around 8 a.m.,

*Continued on Page 11*



A memorial at the corner where Bronxite Albert Marku was killed after being struck by a car while on his motorcycle. Photo courtesy Rosanna Delgado



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CB 10 district manager Kenneth Kearns addresses the crowd on Wednesday, Jan. 15.

Photo by Alexander Belisle

## Whoops! CI bridge setback

### Back to square one after city goof

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

It's back to square one for the proposed City Island Bridge project.

While islanders and local electeds have been fighting the proposal for a modernistic bridge for the laid-back island, a city bureaucrat suddenly discovered the whole process left out the adjoining community board.

While the project is in Community Board 10, the footprint of the proposed 164-foot-tall modern-looking span, will be in Pelham Bay Park, touching Community Board 12.

The issue came out at a Board 10 meeting on Thursday, Jan. 16, with District Manager Ken Kearns announcing the city Department of City Planning and the Department of Design and Construction had just discovered the blooper after years of proceeding with the bridge project.

His announcement came one night after a board hearing where the City Island Civic Association and island's Chamber of Commerce vented their anger over the bridge and lack of consultation by the city.

Under the city's Uni-

form Land Use Review Procedure, such projects require advisory votes by the local community boards, the borough president and their borough board of community board chairmen and councilmembers, and the City Planning Commission before an ultimate full deciding vote by the City Council.

"The bridge and park are considered a joint interest area between Community Boards 10 and 12," said Kearns. "So there will be a new ULURP issued in a month or less, and that usually necessitates another hearing."

#### Community Uproar

"The more local input the better," said Councilman Jimmy Vacca, adding he will meet with the new city Department of Transportation commissioner to discuss the bridge issue. "Anyone who sees the plans for this bridge knows that it is not in keeping with the nautical character of City Island."

At the Jan. 15 ULURP hearing on the island at P.S. 175 that doubled as Board 10's Housing and Zoning committee meeting, CICA members ar-

gued that the size of the proposed bridge is both too large and modernist for the island. The hearing was viewed by many as the last chance for islanders to comment on the record about the bridge design.

"This is the first time the community had the opportunity to comment before the community board on the project," said CICA President Bill Stanton.

He and fellow community association board members called DOT claims of community input into the design of the bridge exaggerated. It also brought into question the validity of approvals from the various levels of government for the new \$102 million bridge project, which has been contracted to Tutor Perini.

The Jan. 15 hearing, however, was not so much on the bridge design as on easements and use of parkland related to the reconstruction project.

Senator Jeff Klein, who attended the hearing, called the battle one that keeps "going and going and going."

"The monstrosity that is being proposed really has no place in the City Island community," he said.

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# Surgery on City Island assisted living plan

New plans call for 54-units, down from over 200

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

The Italian Hospital Society has performed some drastic surgery on its plans to build an assisted living/senior housing facility on City Island.

After major protests from islanders over the facility's size and a re-do request from the city's Board of Standards and Appeals, the group has come back with new plans that chop the facility by 75 percent.

It had sought a zoning variance with its original proposal, viewed by island opponents as about three to four times more dense than the typical residential building on City Island.

The original plan by the group, also known as Heritage Housing LLC, called for a 214-room facility at the now vacant corner of City Island Avenue and Schofield Street, all to be in one building with a floor area ratio of 2.38 compared to a typical island residential building with a FAR of about 0.5, accord-

ing to documents from an earlier BSA filing.

## NEW PLAN

New documents show a plan for 54-units spread out over 3 residential wings, 116 parking spaces (including 54 surface spaces for the seniors), a "community wing," and 44,410 total square feet, all bound together by a ribbon of connecting enclosed hallways on landscaped grounds.

The floor area ratio has dropped to about 0.8 according to most recent estimates.

Whether the shrinkage can be cost effective for the developers after their original proposed size remains to be seen.

## CICA FIGHT

Community Board 10 district manager Kenneth Kearns said that he plans to meet with the City Island Civic Association, which has hired a lawyer to fight the issuance of variances for the project.

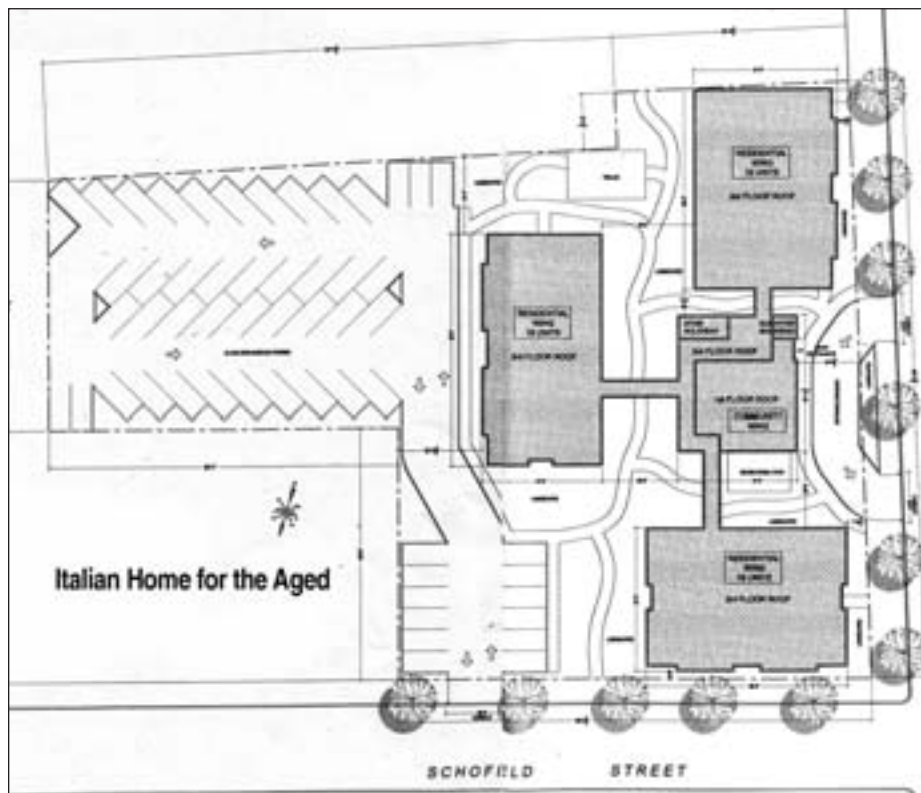
"We would like to consult with City Island resi-

dents to see how they feel about it, and then we will form a course of action," he said. "Our position on this issue is that we have always consulted the CICA, and we have not gotten a chance to do that yet."

At a Wednesday, January 15 meeting on City Island that served as a joint public hearing on the new City Island Bridge and of the board's housing and zoning committee, Kearns said that the documents from the filing had arrived at the board at about 5pm that day, and of course, they had not had a chance to "digest" its findings.

City Island Civic Association vice-president Barbara Dolensek said that the group was to meet on Monday, January 20 to discuss the most recent filing.

In the coming days and weeks, she said, it would develop a course of action or a position on the new filing.



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# 3-alarm fire hits Scanlan H.S.

From page 1

avenues just next to the Hutchinson River Parkway.

FDNY spokesman Khalid Baylor said that there "with no injuries to any civilians that were in the building."

Baylor said the fire extended into "a small part of the working school," but there was "no fire damage to the classrooms." It quickly spread to the cockpit of the brick extension attached to the 65-year-old school's main classroom and administrative building, he said.

The fire was declared under control by 8:10 p.m. and was not declared suspicious, though the cause is still under investigation.

Ashley Torres, a 16-year-old 11th grader at the school who showed up at the fire with her father David, said she was worried about the coming week.

"We're in the middle of mid-terms now," said Torres, one of 448 students

at the ninth-12th grade school, who lives a few blocks away.

"I'm in shock," she said as she stood at the corner as fire units and ambulances gathered up equipment under the glare of floodlights. "My friends are in shock."

"At least there was no one hurt inside the building," added her father.

## School life goes on

Scanlan principal Dr. Patrick McGuire and Timothy McNiff, superintendent of schools for the archdiocese, toured the school the next day to examine the damage and make plans for a safe return to scholastic and extracurricular life.

According a WABC-TV news report, Dr. McGuire was the one who made the 911 call.

"We thank the NYFD and other agencies that were present Friday night," McGuire said in a statement, "and, we thank God for His protection of our beloved school."

The damaged areas were sealed off, and a school maintenance worker said on Tuesday that the school was in the "process" of making repairs.

The archdiocese said a temporary boiler was brought in Sunday, Jan. 19.

The school said that parents will receive periodic updates via the IRIS Emergency Alert System, with updates also posted at [www.scanlanhs.edu](http://www.scanlanhs.edu).

Among the events already planned to go on as scheduled are a school-wide Right to Life March in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, Jan. 22 and an open house for prospective students slated for Thursday, Jan. 23.

Scanlan's sports teams practiced as planned in the gym, according to the archdiocese.

"It's important that Thursday night's Open House happens," said diocesan schools spokeswoman Fran Davies. "They want to demonstrate they are alive and well and open."



Fire rages through Monsignor Scanlan High School on January 17.

## Residents voice concerns over proposed soccer arena

From page 1

proposed site, charged through a representative that doling out public funds to such a wealthy tycoon is a bad deal.

"The Congressman will not support a stadium deal that includes any public subsidies whatsoever," said his local district director, Javier Lopez.

Serrano's support is crucial because he would need to approve a change to a ramp on the Major Deegan Expressway in order for the plan to work.

### SPLIT ON YANKS

Community groups at the meeting who receive funding from the Yankees urged locals to support the project, arguing that the franchise has been a good neighbor.

"A lot of what we've been able to do for our kids would not be possible without the Yankees," said Johnny Rivera of Harlem RBI, which runs an afterschool program at P.S 18 on Morris Avenue.

Others are still sour from the deal on the new Yankee Stadium, which opened in 2009. Naysayers have long criticized

the stadium for catering to outsiders while keeping the community out.

"If this stadium gets built the way projects are passed in this city, most of the residents surrounding the project would be spending most of their lives enriching someone else," said Yorman Nunez, a community organizer.

### COMMUNITY PERKS

Locals seemed in agreement Wednesday night that they would only support a plan that provided the community —the poorest urban area in the nation —with real

benefits.

"We need viable jobs, and we need to be in on the decisions," said Carol Boykins, who lives on nearby Jerome Avenue and who supports the new stadium.

Many in the neighborhood are soccer fans, but would like access inside any new arena.

"Our kids don't need a soccer stadium," charged Leo Glickman, who serves on the board of the youth soccer organization Uptown Soccer Academy. "They need soccer fields to play on."



Hundreds of residents attended a community meeting regarding the proposed soccer arena.



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# Throggs Neck drug bust a gas

## Revere Ave. raiders break walls - and gas line

BY BOB KAPPSTATTER

Cops not only busted two east Bronx residents involved in a major drug ring, they also busted the gas line connected to the next door neighbor's while looking for hidden drugs and loot in the walls.

Eleven persons, five of them from the Bronx, were arrested in a heroin and cocaine trafficking organization after a year-long investigation, said Bridget Brennan, the city's Special Narcotics Prosecutor.

A search of what Brennan called a stash house at 228 Revere Ave. in Throggs Neck on Thursday, Jan. 16 turned up two loaded .38 caliber revolvers, 3 kilograms of cocaine (nearly 7 lbs.) and a half-kilogram of heroin (more than 1 lb.).

One of the revolvers, the heroin and 2 1/2 kilograms of cocaine were found inside a hidden trap in a Jacuzzi. The remaining half-kilogram of cocaine was near a



House at 228 Revere Avenue, with white iron fence, where raiders recovered drugs and weapons - and busted gas line sledge hammering walls to find them. Photo by Walter Pofeldt

pigeon coop on the roof, hidden amidst pigeon supplies. The second revolver was found in a nightstand in the bedroom. Police also seized a money-counter, a kilopress and other paraphernalia from the location.

They arrested Manuel Ortiz and another person living at the house, near Harding Avenue.

### 'Banging away'

In their search for the drugs, a local source said, the raiders "were banging away at the walls with sledgehammers all over the place."

Unfortunately, in their enthusiasm, one of the sledgehammers went through a wall right into a gas pipeline.

"It's going to cost me a couple of hundred dollars probably," said the neighbor, who asked that her name not be used.

Con Edison crews were working outside the attached townhouses on Monday, digging up the sidewalk to fix the line, but an interior pipe inside her wall will also have to be replaced by a private plumber - at her expense, she said.

But fixing pipes were the least of their worries for Manuel Ortiz, 53, and Kar-

ina Vargas, 41, of the house next door, who were both charged with felony criminal possession of controlled substances, weapons and drug paraphernalia, swept up in a yearlong wiretap investigation dubbed "Operation Rebound" involving local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

### Big fish

Brennan said the big fish caught in the operation was Carlos Medina, 60, of Yonkers, owner of Excellent Watches & Jewelry at 37 West 47th St., charged with catering to drug customers in Manhattan, Queens, the Bronx and Connecticut.

Medina, said Brennan, maintained stash locations for drugs and money at a hire in the Kips Bay section of Manhattan and at 228 Revere. She said Medina, on federal parole stemming from a 1986 conviction on federal conspiracy, drug and firearm charges, "routinely drove a circuit from



Drugs, guns, money and weighing scales seized in breakup of major drug ring with stash house in Throggs Neck.

Credit NYC Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office.

his then-home in Queens to the Bronx, Manhattan, and back through the Bronx on his return trip to Queens" picking up drugs and money, and meeting with customers along the way.

Members of the organization used coded language to refer to drugs, such as "letters" for narcotics,

"girl" for cocaine, and "the boy" for heroin.

Also arrested in the Bronx were Socorro Vivas, 57, of 920 Prospect Ave., Longwood; Radames Copin, 69, of 3764 Barnes Ave., Wakefield, and Alex Cruz, 60, of

1820 Victor St., Van Nest.



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# MILK Remembered



1



2



3



4



5

1. A dance performance celebrates MLK at Immaculate Conception.

Photo by Alexander Belisle

2. Students at Immaculate Conception perform in the church's MLK celebration.

Photo by Alexander Belisle

3. Calvary Hospital remembered Martin Luther King Jr.

Photo courtesy of Calvary Hospital

4. Tiffany Blake being hugged by Paula Gillisslee, president of St. Martin de Porres League, after her heartfelt talk at the Immaculate Conception MLK celebration.

Photo by Alexander Belisle

5. Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. speaks at the Trinity Baptist Church MLK remembrance.

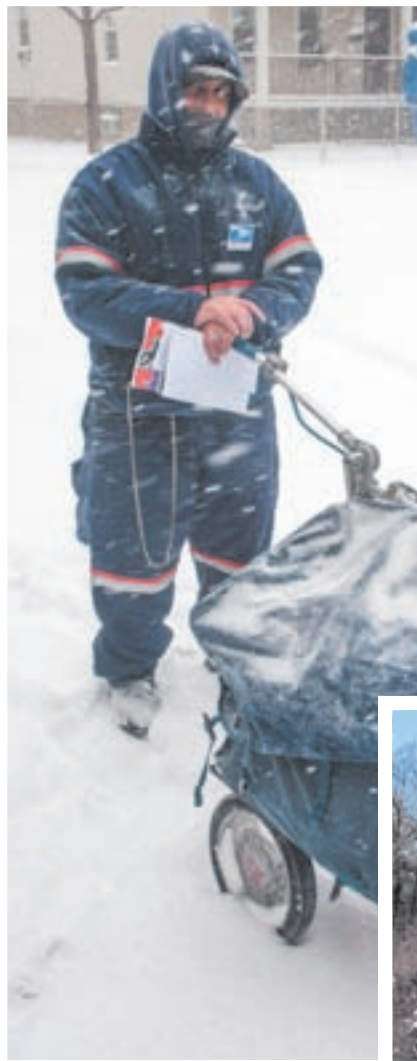
Photo courtesy of Borough President Diaz Jr.



# What, Again?

## Polar Vortex belts borough

Yet another wintry blast took the Bronx by storm Tuesday morning and lasted until late Tuesday night. Bronxites took cover as the storm blanketed the borough with 8-12 inches of snow, according to the National Weather Service. But that didn't stop our team of intrepid photographers from braving the subfreezing temps to deliver you, fair reader, this winter roundup. Stay warm, Bronxites!



1. Postal Service worker Jose Serpa braves the cold in Waterbury/Lasalle. "Neither rain, snow or dark of night will stop us from completing our rounds," he said. Photo by Walter Pofeldt

2. The snow came down so hard we could barely see Antonio Petrado, who stocked up during the storm at Foodtown on Crosby Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard. Photo by Walter Pofeldt

3. This canopy on Orchard Beach won't be used anytime soon. Photo by Alex Belisle

4. A pastoral scene along the cottages of Silver Beach overlooking the East River and Throgs Neck Bridge. Photo by Eugene Tighe

5. The sun does little to stop the chill on a bridge overlooking Co-op City. Photo by Alex Belisle



# Historic skylight at Preston HS in need of fix

## Fundraising underway for stained glass marvel

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Preston High School is reaching out to help fix a historic stained-glass skylight.

The all-girl's Throggs Neck high school is embarking on a crowd-funding campaign on Crowdrise.com to help raise \$30,000 for its Mercedes Hall Stained Glass Restoration Project.

The skylight, which may be as much as 150 years old, is in a part of Preston called the "mansion", where about 40% of the school's classes are held.

"It really is a technical marvel," said Principal Jane Grendell. "There are some cracks in the glass. There is some evidence that it was patched at some point, but not really well. It is starting to sag a bit, so it is a safety concern."

The school believes the skylight may be original

to the building, added Advancement Director Gianna Dell'Olio, but there will be no way to tell for sure until it is taken down and repaired.

### Fundraising goal

The goal is to use crowd-funding - made popular through websites like Crowdrise.com and also by Kickstarter.com - where individuals and organizations can raise money for worthwhile projects and goals.

"As the borough kicks off its centennial celebration, we feel that the timing was perfect to begin this campaign," said Dell'Olio. "Preston High School is an iconic Bronx institution and a living piece of local history. We hope that many of our friends, alumnae and neighbors will feel as passionate about restoring this skylight as we do."

Grendell said the goal is also to engage the local

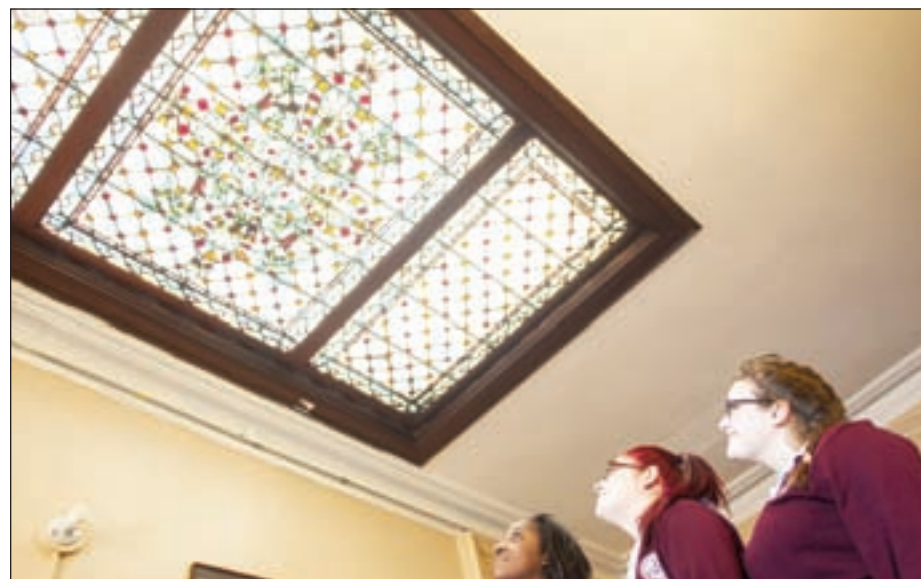
community and hopefully raise money from their Bronx neighbors.

"We are turning to a crowd-funding site because we are an all-girls private high school, and the needs of a school like this are very many," she said. "We have wonderful alumnae and donors, but we are hoping that we can attract the interest of the Bronx community. Because aside from this being a wonderful high school, this building has a tremendous story to it and historical value."

### Historic mansion

Formerly known as The Huntington Mansion, it is a former estate built in the mid-19th century that served as home to the Huntington and Have-meyer families.

It was bought by the Sisters of Devine Compassion, the sponsors of Preston High School, in the 1920s, according to the



Looking up at the window are Preston students (l-r) Shadeka Martin, Josette Cappucci and AnnaRose Fragau.

Photo by Walter Pofeldt

school.

It is on a Parks Department walking tour of local mansions that includes the Bartow-Pell Mansion in Pelham Bay Park, said the principal.

The school plans to

hire Rohlf's Stained and Leaded Glass Studio in Mount Vernon, a well-known and respected contractor, and hopes to complete work during this year's summer recess, the principal said.

To learn more about the campaign, contact Preston's Advancement Office at (718) 863-9134 ext. 195.

The Crowdrise.com site is at [www.crowdrise.com/PHSMHallStainedGlassRestore](http://www.crowdrise.com/PHSMHallStainedGlassRestore)

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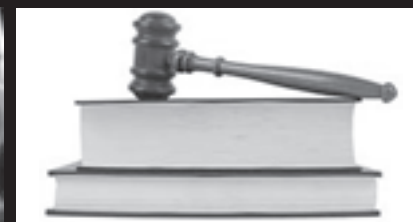


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# City napping on mapping program

## City way behind on borough street info guide

BY BEN KOCHMAN

The Bronx is set to get some handy street maps—but something was lost in translation.

Local leaders say they are still waiting to be consulted about where and how the city's Department of Transportation (DOT) will install its popular WalkNYC "Wayfinding" program in the borough this summer.

"Why weren't we made aware of this earlier?" asked Jose Rodriguez, district manager of Community Board 4, which covers much of the area where the maps are slated to come in.

Congressman Jose Serrano announced Jan. 13 that his office had netted \$750,000 in federal funding for the free-standing glass-

enclosed maps on the Grand Concourse between E. 138th and E. 170th Streets.

The snazzy maps orient pedestrians with a "heads-up" design, listing where "you" are and providing directions to nearby train stations, shops and landmarks.

### OTHER BOROS FIRST

DOT debuted around 100 wayfinders last summer in areas of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

But the Bronx versions of the maps were almost lost entirely, according to a Daily News report on Jan. 9 that revealed that DOT had missed a September 2013 funding application deadline with the Federal Transportation Administration.

A DOT spokesman told the Bronx Times

that the popular maps would still reach the borough by this summer. Department representatives are expected to reach out to local leaders in the coming weeks.

Cary Goodman, executive director of the 161st Street Business Improvement District, said he's been ready and waiting for DOT for months now.

"We've already created a visible schematic they can use," he said. "But they have yet to raise the question with me."

Goodman said he wasn't surprised to hear that DOT had nearly blundered away the Bronx maps. As with many city projects, the Bronx again trailed behind the other boroughs, he said.

### CITIBIKE EXAMPLE

DOT also had as of last November no immediate plans to install its popular Citibike program anywhere in the Bronx.

"It's a typical example of when it comes to the Bronx, things either happen much later or they don't happen it all," Goodman told the Times-Reporter.

Rodriguez, of CB4, said he'd be thrilled to see the maps in the Boogie Down—whenever they do arrive.

The wayfinders are meant to encourage walking and boost foot traffic for local businesses.

"It would help change the character of the neighborhood," he said. "The commercial corridors could really benefit."



The city debuted its "Wayfinding" stations—like this one in Manhattan—last summer. The Bronx is still waiting for their versions of the maps.  
Photo courtesy DOT



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While new Council Speaker **Melissa Mark-Viverito** tried to be a tiny bit kinder, gentler with the borough's council delegation on Wednesday, the Bronx Democratic Party was weighing its own revenge on her borough supporters.

Initial reports had Party Boss **Carl Heastie** wanting to primary Senator **Gustavo Rivera** and other Melissa supporters. It now looks as if Carl will simply hold back any party support and let Gustavo and the others sink or swim on their own against challengers this election season.

"There was a meeting this weekend (Jan. 18-19), and we're NOT primarizing any of these idiots – the (Luis) Sepulvedas, the Gustavos, the (Jose and Jose M.) Serranos," said one party insider. "But they might not get any party help either."

Heastie is reported *verrrrry* ticked over Gustavo sticking his nose into the Speaker's race so enthusiastically (is there any other way for Gustavo?).

Lack of active party backing could be a serious problem for Gustavo, who had to call on the party to gather petitions for protege **Victor Pichardo** in that tight race to fill the seat of disgraced west Bronx Assemblyman **Nelson Castro**.

Thanks to redistricting, Gustavo also lost the heavy white vote that helped him clobber

**Pedro (The Wascally Wabbit) Espada** the first time. He could now wind up with a Latino free-for-all brawl with a number of challengers.

That could very well include Councilman **Fernando Cabrera**, but we hear it's too early for him to make a serious decision. Meanwhile, a number of other wannabes are reporting circling like sharks for Gustavo's seat.

## GUS AND JEFF

The beneficiary of that redistricting that hurt Gustavo was Senator **Jeff Klein**, who gained Riverdale, Kingsbridge and surrounding heavily white nabes.

We now would not rule out Jeff backing a strong Gustavo challenger.

The two are like oil and water in Albany, with Gustavo the Democratic Conference's pit bull when it comes to attacking Jeff and his four-member Independent Democratic Conference, which snatched majority rule away from the regular Dems by conferencing with the Senate Republicans – and reaping the rewards.

Klein has some hot pockets – as in *mucho* campaign bux to throw a heavy challenger's way.

Sources close to Jeff tell us he's already been approached by a number of wannabe Gustavo challengers.

## BRONX MASSACRE???

Well, we would argue it was not *quite* the bloodbath a lotta folks were expecting for the City Council's Bronx delegation when committee assignments were handed out Wednesday.

Insiders say Heastie and Queens Boss **Joe Crowley** messed up by not moving fast enough to pull votes from the Council's progressive wing for Manhattan's **Dan Garodnick**. Brooklyn Boss **Frank (Judas) Seddio** pulling out of their cabal to go with Melissa was the death knell. On Wednesday, it was Viverito's turn to smack Carl and the Bronx, but it wasn't too painful.

As Bronx Party consigliere **Stanley Schlein** told us, "They (the Bronx delegation) were much respected in the process. It's a case of moving on and wanting to work together." Losing chairmanships and gaining new ones:

•**Maria del Carmen Arroyo** from Health to Community Development.

•**Jimmy Vacca**, from Transportation into the leadership circle and chair of the Technology Committee.

•**Fernando Cabrera** got Juvenile Justice.

•**Newbie Ritchie Torres** into the leadership circle and Public Housing.

•**Newbie Andy Cohen** got term-limited Ollie Koppell's Mental Health, Alcoholism and Disability Services.

•**Newbie Vanessa Gibson** scored with Public Safety.

We're told **Annabel Palma**, who was challenging Melissa for the job, and **Andy King** both asked to take a pass on any chairmanships.

## LIBERTY DEMS

It's election time at the Liberty Democratic Club in the 80th Assembly District, but no outsiders welcome.

The Sunday, Jan. 26 vote at Janel Towers on Neill Ave. for a new president to replace newly-elected City Councilman **Ritchie Torres** will be strictly limited to club members in good standing for at least three months.

The last time there was a potential coup was when then Assemblywoman Naomi (Snooki) Rivera tried to walk in with her own supportive slate, but was stymied by the three-month rule. We don't see new Assemblyman **Mark Gjonaj** trying any moves there, since he doesn't have any members there. There were some rumors when he was first elected after the club supported Snooki that he might form his own club, but that hasn't come to pass – yet.

## EXCUUSE US

Right church, wrong pew. We goofed last week. **Bernadette Ferrara**, who's complaining the proposed Metro-North Parkchester station should be the VAN NEST/ Parkchester station, is VP of the Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance.

## COP CORNER

**Making nice.** Wanna make a critic a friend? Kill 'em with kindness. **Lenny Levitt**, who used to cover Bronx D.A. **Mario Merola** for Newsday, has been **Ray Kelly's** biggest media critic with his 1 Police Plaza blog. But new PC **Bill Bratton** made Lenny's day at a recent press conference (that Lenny missed!) by announcing "Is Lenny Levitt here? He's now welcome in the building."

**Condolences.** To Detective **Vic DiPierro**, the longtime, hardworking community affairs officer at the 49th Precinct in Morris Park on the loss of his father Frank. Sorry for your loss, Vic.

## BRONX BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 7 - Bronx Dem Party consigliere and degenerate Hearts player **Stanley Schlein**.

Jan. 19 - **Annie Boller**, east Bronx activist (and fun gal).

Jan. 21 - U.S. Attorney General **Eric Holder**.

## Cop crackdown at death corner

From page 1

causing drivers to be transported to a nearby hospital with minor injuries.

### A SPEEDING HUB

Drivers blaze through Neill Avenue, using the strip as "an expressway" to get from highway to highway, charged Joe Reda, a Morris Park local who for over two decades has chaired local Community Board 11's public safety committee.

"They speed, they cut people off, they race to the red light," he said. "Sometimes they don't even look when they make turns."

The strip has fewer traffic lights than nearby Morris Park Avenue, making it more attractive for speeders, Reda said.

Another cause of concern is a gas station at the corner that boasts some of the cheapest prices in town. Cars line up outside the station, backing up traffic and prompting some drivers to take aggressive turns, locals said.

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The carnage has prompted the community board to ask the city's Department of Transportation to conduct a traffic study there, assessing the need for a left-turn only signal, said District Manager Jeremy Warneke.

Morris Park's push for traffic safety comes as new Mayor de Blasio, citing 286 traffic deaths in 2013, has vowed to bring traffic deaths to a screeching halt.

He labeled the deaths

an "epidemic" at a Jan. 15 press conference and announced that he was embracing "Vision Zero," the idea of eliminating all traffic deaths in the city.

De Blasio said the NYPD's Highway Division, which investigates traffic deaths, would be increased 50% in manpower to a total of 270 officers.

He ordered a slew of city agencies, including the NYPD, DOT, Department of Health and the Taxi Commission, to present detailed plans to him by Feb. 15.



18 traffic collisions happened at this Morris Park corner in 2013.

Photo by Ben Kochman

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