



May, 25, 2014

CNG

## Van Nest Library renamed

BY BEN KOCHMAN

Pelham Parkway locals will finally have a library to call their own – sort of.

The president of the New York Public Library, citing “unprecedented” neighborhood support, says he is now willing to acknowledge what for locals has been clear for decades – that the Van Nest Library is in fact in Pelham Parkway.

Pending letters of support from local politicians and community groups, the Van Nest Library will soon be officially renamed the “Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Library.”

### Misnamed for years

The new name will reflect the branch’s location one block from the leafy Pelham Parkway strip, where locals have pushed to forge their own neighborhood identity.

“I believe this name will better reflect the communities who share this location,” Library President Anthony Marx wrote in a May 19 letter to local elected officials.

Neighborhood activists in Pelham Parkway have long charged that the Van Nest Library was not, in fact, in Van Nest at all. The branch moved north from prime Van Nest turf on Rhinelander Avenue to its current Barnes Avenue in 1967.

### Mixing up ‘Pelhams’

Community Board 11, which covers both Pelham Parkway and Van Nest, had been clamoring for the renaming for years to no avail.

Even the Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance, a coalition of Van Nest locals, had signed

*Continued on Page 4*

# SUN SETTING FOR PARKWAY STABLE



Urban cowboy Buster Marengo, with trusted steed Bronco, has held court at his Pelham Parkway stable for over 15 years. But after falling behind on taxes, and with real estate developers snapping up the surrounding properties, the pair could now be galloping off to an uncertain future.

Photo by Ben Kochman

## Host of Memorial Day events

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

With Memorial Day on Monday, May 26, a host of local events are being planned to honor the sacrifices of brave men and women in the military.

One east Bronx veterans group, the Samuel Young American Legion Post #620 in Pelham Bay, got a jump start by placing American flags on the graves of veterans at St. Raymond’s Cemetery on Tuesday, May 13 and on Saturday, May 17. They also flagged the graves of veterans in St. Peter’s Church

cemetery in Westchester Square.

### Ongoing Effort

Paul Golluscio of the Samuel Young Post said that the flag placements was something the post has done at least since he first joined it about 25 years ago.

“We have members who are in St. Raymond’s and St. Peter’s cemeteries,” said Golluscio, who served during the Vietnam-era, and later spent about a quarter-century in the reserves. “We put flags on these graves every year around Memorial Day, and we re-

## End of trail for Buster & Bronco

BY BEN KOCHMAN

The urban cowboy of the east Bronx is on his last legs.

It’s not looking good for Buster Marengo to remain on his patch of land on Pelham Parkway South where he operates his troubled horse stable.

A judge recently threw out the equestrian’s appeal to bar foreclosure on the property, clearing the way for real estate investor Louis Zazzarino, who bought the deed to the land for \$451,000 at public auction in November 2013.

### Building and building

The stable’s departure from 1680 Pelham Parkway South will be the last gasp of the neighborhood’s sleepy,

scenic past. Marengo’s stable – part of a larger set of stables originally built in 1962 – were once a thriving part of the neighborhood.

“When the buses used to pass by, all you used to see was pressed faces of children up against the glass,” said Cookie Giordano, a horse trainer who used to be based out of the stable.

Today, the rundown stable is surrounded by booming real estate development.

The city’s 911 call center under construction in the adjacent Hutch Metro Center now looms over the property, and the state plans to build a new Metro North station just

*Continued on Page 4*



Legion member Ed McCarthy plants flag at a veteran’s grave on Tuesday, May 13

# Cards, care packages for troops

## Two service groups holding collection drive in Westchester Square

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

One Bronxite is doing her part to help our men and women in uniform.

LaVonne Barksdale is collecting cards and goods for service members through her role as New York Branch Leader for Hero Helpers of America.

Barksdale got involved with the Massachusetts-based organization while her son was in boot camp for the Navy last fall. She said she wanted to find a way to help the military community when she got in touch with the founder.

### Collection

Barksdale said she would like to collect 1,500 to 2,000 cards at the the Owen Dolen Recreation Center drop-off location in Westchester Square.

"But the more, the better," she said.

The drive is the first partnership between Hero Helpers of America and Heartillery Group, which also sends cards to active members

In addition to cards, the organizations are collecting items that include new toiletries such as shampoo and hand sanitizer (but no aerosol cans), sealed snacks such as beef jerky and nuts, and books or magazines in good condition.

"Anything that might go into a care package, that you think they'd enjoy," she said.

Donations will be accepted until June 22, so that the organization can try and get the cards and packages to their recipients by the Fourth of July.

Cards can be homemade or store bought, but envelopes should be unaddressed and unsealed.

### Support

Barksdale said she started becoming more aware of various military issues when her son was going through boot camp.

"It means more to me now that it's part of my family."

Since then, she has gotten involved in the military community in ways such as sending letters to recruits going through boot camp,



LaVonne Barksdale, NY branch director of Hero Helpers of America, with a photo of her son Jaeson D. Washington, 25, currently serving in the Navy.

Photo by Aracelis Batista

which she said is an extremely tough process.

She said she feels that sending mail to recruits and active mem-

bers helps because it has the ability to brighten the recipients' day.

"It's a morale booster," Barksdale said. "It shows that people who don't even know them care about them."

### Vision

Barksdale said that working with Hero Helpers of America is just one step in her service to the military community.

"This is a spring board for something I want to do on a larger scale."

She would like to provide support for veterans, she said, in the form of a house that would provide a transition space in addition to other services.

"If they don't have family or a support system, where do they go?" she asked.

She wants to help tackle big issues like unemployment and mental health of veterans, one service member at a time.

But for now, she's focusing on the little things, like cards.

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# Unstable future for horse owner

*From Page 1*  
a few gallops away.

In April, a company with ties to real estate developer Mark Stagg bought the vacant 13,000 square foot lot next door to Marengo's stable, where a plan for a housing project, Pelham Parkway Towers, was proposed but never materialized, at a cost of \$3.3 million.

"This is the last Alamo of the Bronx," said Egidio Sementelli, a longtime Marengo supporter. "Buster has been the only one holding down the fort, saving the community from the future."

## Slams haters

With the stable's days numbered, Marengo has harsh words for the naysayers that he complains have conspired against him over the years.

Developers and politicians have been working together from

the beginning to chip away at my little piece of heaven," he said in a rambling interview alongside his longtime steed Bronco.

Media, for a long-time, had mislabeled the horse Rusty, without the publicity-shy Marengo ever correcting it.

Trouble arrived not long after Marengo took over the stables in 1996. Among the many crushing blows, local authorities removed the bridle path where the horses used to stroll.

"Over the years, little by little, there seemed to be an effort to pull the rug out from under me," Marengo complained. "Because of my location, because of the opportunities that could exist here."

The city finally auctioned off the stables in November 2013 after Marengo fell behind thousands of dollars on

his taxes.

But the sale was put on hold after Marengo filed court papers contesting those payments.

## An every future

The local community board is now wary of what could eventually rise at and around the old stable site. Developer Stagg has a history of building homeless shelters and other types of supportive housing in the area.

"We are very concerned," said Jeremy Warneke, Community Board 11's district manager. "We definitely do not want a homeless shelter here."

As for the future of Marengo and his trusted steed Bronco -well that remains a mystery.

"I will not discuss my private life," said Marengo. "That is between me and my horse."



Marengo, who says he studied piano at The Juilliard School, will soon no longer be able to serenade Pelham Parkway South passersby - and his horse Bronco - with Chopin melodies. The new property owner is slated to take over the deed in June.

Photo by Ben Kochman

# Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Library naming

*From Page 1*  
off on the change.

"This is a no brainer," said Jeremy Warneke, the board's district manager. "They should have changed it when the library moved in the first place."

confusion that may be caused by having two branches in close proximity with Pelham in their name," wrote Marx in his May 19 letter, "and would be grateful for any suggestions to remedy that."

Those suggestions likely won't be coming.

"Anyone who knows the Bronx knows that Pelham Bay and Pelham Parkway are two distinct neighborhoods," said Councilmember Jimmy Vacca, whose district covers both areas.

## More letters needed

Vacca was one of a series of local elected of-

ficials -along with Rep. Joe Crowley and state Sen. Jeff Klein -who sent letters to the NYPL demanding the name change.

The NYPL now says it will begin the approval progress for the new name so long as it receives letters of support from local stakeholders, many of whom have already supported the renaming.

"It's a formality," said Vacca. "All they want is letters of support, and we are all already on record as wanting this."

## Not exactly perfect

Pelham Parkway's

neighborhood activists who originally called for the name change would have liked to see the library renamed the "Pelham Parkway Library", with the "Van Nest" removed entirely.

But after years of fighting to put their name "on the map," they're still claiming victory.

"It's not exactly what we wanted," said Edith Blitzer, president of the Pelham Parkway Neighborhood Association, "But half a loaf is better than nothing."



Branch manager David Nochimson in front of the Van Nest Library, which city library brass have finally agreed to call the "Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Library." No word yet on how they'll get the new name to fit on the sign.

Photo by Aracelis Batista



**PUBLISHER:** Laura Guerriero  
**V.P. OF ADVERTISING:** Ralph D'Onofrio  
**CLASSIFIED DIRECTOR:** Amanda Tarley

**General Phone:** (718) 742-3397  
**By Mail:** Bronx Times Reporter  
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**DEPUTY EDITOR:** Bob Kappstatter

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# Van Nest Park breaks ground

BY BEN KOCHMAN

A new park will soon rise in Van Nest.

Officials broke ground Friday, May 16 on the \$1.3 million playground slated for the center of the east Bronx neighborhood – marking the end of a years-long campaign to get the park built.

"We made a lot of noise, and we want to thank everyone who listened to our noise," said Bernadette Ferrara, vice president of the Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance. "We are so happy to finally get this done."

## Push for \$\$\$

Local Community Board 11 –which covers Van Nest among other neighborhoods– had listed funding for the park as a budget priority for nearly a decade. The former playground at the site was "garbage," Ferrara told the Times-Reporter in March.

After a push from local community activists, elected officials were eventually able

to fund the playground with allocations from Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., as well as City Councilmembers Jimmy Vacca and Joel Rivera, whose seat is now occupied by Ritchie Torres.

With the money in place, the Parks Department then met with community activists to brainstorm the aesthetics.

Renata Sokolowski, the department's borough design director, came up with a train-themed design, honoring the nabe's unique history as a railway hub shuttling visitors to and from the Morris Park Racetrack in the 19th century.

Final schematic designs include a jungle gym modeled after a train, as well as a sprinkler in the shape of an R/R railroad sign.

"If it wasn't for Renata, I don't know how quickly we would have had this," said Ferrara at the groundbreaking. "She worked with our



Bernadette Ferrara, vice president of the Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance, Councilmen Ritchie Torres and Jimmy Vacca, Borough President Ruben Diaz and Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj join students from the Bronx School of Excellence to break ground Friday May 17 on the new Van Nest Park.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

millions of emails, and was a true partner with the community."

The new playground is set to open by next spring at

Van Nest Avenue, Unionport Avenue and White Plains Road.

**Other parks forgotten?**  
But as one Bronx park

celebrated its rebirth, green spaces elsewhere in the borough are still being neglected, according to a prominent advocacy group.

Van Nest's groundbreaking came just a day after New Yorkers for Parks slammed the borough for neglecting its open spaces in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the South Bronx.

The advocacy group's arguments were similar to those made by Van Nest locals when they pushed for their park years ago.

Mott Haven's parks have worn-down equipment, according to the group, as well as a dearth of trees and green landscaping.

But Borough President Diaz refused let the scathing report rain on his parade.

"People want us to be their punching bag, but what people don't talk about is that over the last five or six years we've infused hundreds of millions of dollars into parks," said Diaz.

"Is life perfect? Absolutely not," the Beep added. "But we want to concentrate on the positives."



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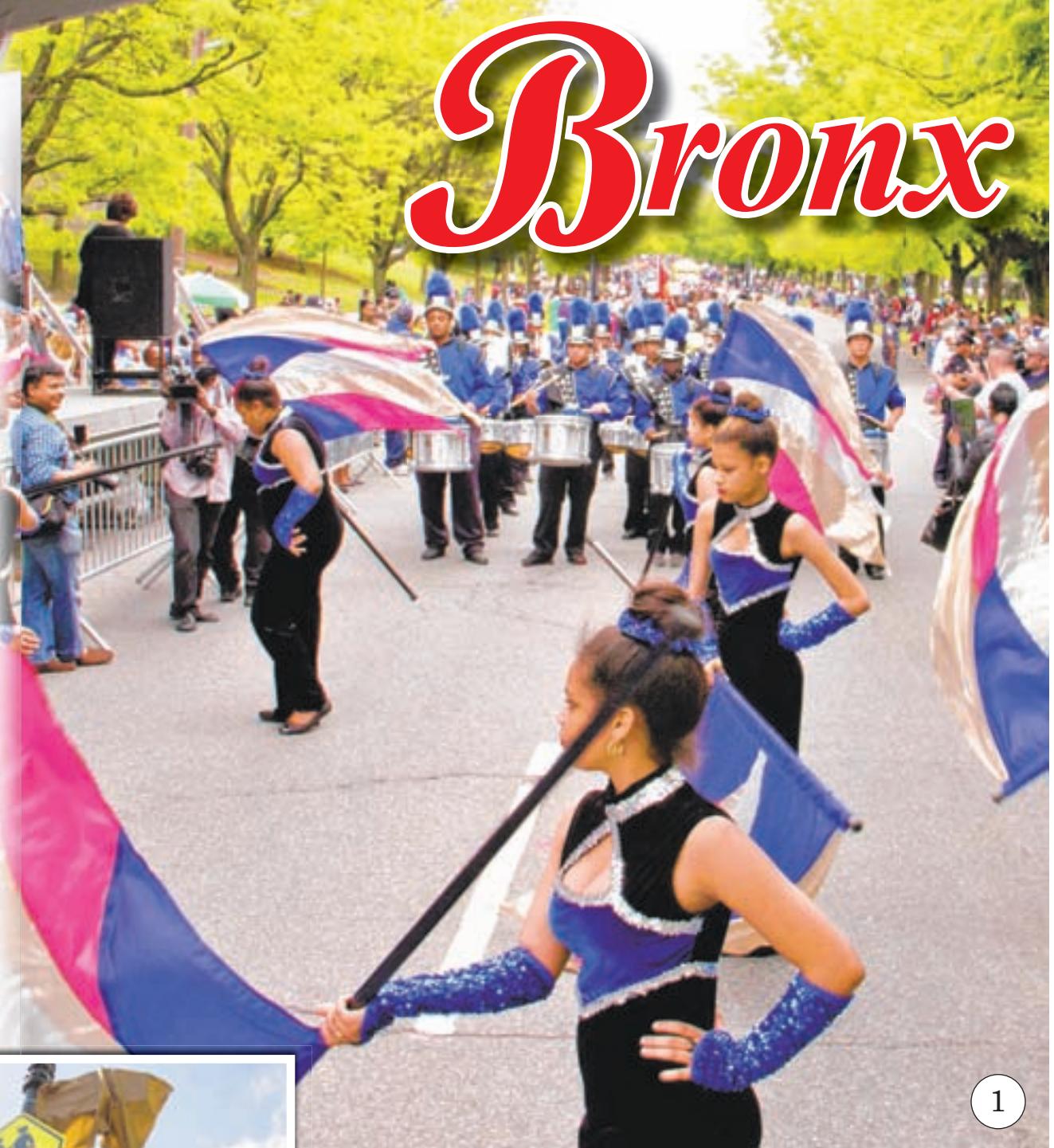
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More than a week of events celebrating Bronx Week 2014 officially came to an end in three large celebrations that honored five Bronx Walk of Fame honorees and heralded the best of the borough. At the black-tie Bronx Ball at Orchard Beach on Saturday, May 17 and once again at the unveiling of street signs on the Grand Concourse near East 161st Street on Sunday, May 18, five outstanding people who hail from the borough were honored. Then at noon on Sunday, the Bronx Week Parade made its way down Mosholu Parkway with festive bands and fanfare. This year's five honorees and inductees to the Bronx Walk of Fame were New York Jet Willie Colon, actress Rachel Ticotin, actor David Zayas, hip-hop recording artist and composer Swizz Beatz, and singer, dancer and actor Priscilla Lopez.



1

(1) C.S. 211 Drum and Bugle Corps performs at the reviewing stand at the Bronx Week Parade on Mosholu Parkway.

Photo by Patricio Robayo

(2) Famous Bronx percussionist Bobby Sanabria performs with his band.

Photo by Walter Pofeldt

(3) Showing off some Bronx Strong poses at the Bronx Ball: are Bronx Week inductees with Borough President Diaz. (L-r) David Zayas, Swizz Beatz, Rachel Ticotin, Diaz, Willie Colon and Priscilla Lopez.

Photo by Walter Pofeldt

(4) Actor David Zayas receives an award and citation from Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

Photo by Alexander Belisle

(5) New York Jet and honoree William Colon III, speaking at the Bronx Ball about his upbringing in the borough.

(6) Pop singer Alicia Keye with her husband and Bronx Week 2014 honoree Swizz Beatz at the Bronx Ball.



3



Willie Colon pulls the cord of his sign at the Bronx Walk of Fame on Sunday, May 18.

Photo by Aracelis Batista

# Week



2



Four Seasons adult social program from Prospect Avenue marches and dances in Bronx Week Parade.  
Photo by Patricio Robayo



4



5



6

# TN Merchants Summer Street Fair



Mount Everest? Nope, it's just the parking lot at CVS on E. Tremont Avenue. But the NYPD 45th Precinct Community Affairs Division was still on hand to ensure that the climbers arrived back to earth safely

Silvio J. Pacifico



45th Precinct Officer Joseph Perez gives Sofia Ortega a hand at climbing wall.

Silvio J. Pacifico



Throggs Neck got a wild ride Saturday May 17, when the Throggs Neck Merchants Association hosted its annual summer street fair. Kids lined up for pony rides and other fun and games, while local shopowners showed off their goods on sunny E. Tremont Avenue between Miles and Lafayette Avenues.

Photos by Silvio Pacifico



Arieo Quiles, atop of Hercules, waits for Stefanie King to lead him on a pony ride.

Silvio J. Pacifico



Natalie Castro gets a whole new fashion look from Sandy Lusk.

Silvio J. Pacifico



# Success onstage and in classroom

## Student musical a hit at Allerton's P.S. 89

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

These students shone onstage at their school play.

Middle schoolers at recently improved P.S. 89 in Allerton sang their hearts out for schoolmates and parents on Tuesday, May 20 at the musical production.

Drama teacher Jennifer Susi said the play, High School Musical, was relatable to her students because it's about finding your niche.

"It's a very tough time in their lives and they're trying to figure out who they are," Susi said.

### Success Onstage

Susi, who has taught drama at the K-8 school at 980 Mace Ave. for seven years, said the play was the talk of the school for the rest of the day, and that her students' confidence on stage was an inspiration to other students.

"The little ones attacked

my actors," she said. "Asking 'Can you sign my playbill?'"

Susi said the 13 students in her after-school drama program started preparing for the musical in December.

"It was an amazing end to an amazing journey," she said. "I'm so proud of them."

The production wouldn't have been possible without some help from community members.

Susi said the school received about \$2,500 total from donors that included Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, Metro Optics Eyewear, D.J. Ambulette Services and Sanitation Salvage, which went towards props and a sound system. Carmela Printing also donated playbills.

Next year, Susi said she plans to try and expand the play's audience beyond the



A group of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at P.S. 89 in Allerton put on "High School Musical" for their schoolmates and parents on Tuesday, May 20.  
Photo by Aracelis Batista

school and make it a community event.

### School Improvement

The play is not the only accomplishment the school has had recently.

After years of being graded with a "C" by the

Department of Education on progress reports, the school received an "A" rating for the 2012-2013 academic year.

"I think a lot of that has to do with the implementation of the academies," said

Susi.

She was referring to the separation of the middle school into two distinct programs three years ago, one for art and one Science Technology Engineering and Math.

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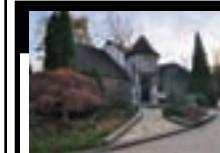
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City Councilman **Fernando Cabrera** has made it official.

He told us he's going after state Senator **Gustavo Rivera**'s northwest Bronx seat.

Part of his campaign, he said, will be to tout the millions he has brought into his Kingsbridge district for programs, while Rivera has produced little, if any funding from Albany.

Rivera responded to the announcement by initially taking the high road, saying "I look forward to having a conversation about my record and asking my neighbors for their support once again."

One potential fallout victim in this hot race could be former Rivera staffer and newbie Assemblyman **Victor Pichardo** in the 86th A.D. in Morris Heights, who won in a special election to replace disgraced former Assembly-

man **Nelson Castro**.

Victor's again being challenged for a full term by former District Leader **Hector Ramirez**, who lost to him by *this much* in what many saw as an election day vote riddled with dirty tricks.

"There's a lot of grumbling over Gustavo, which could drag Victor down, being seen as his puppet," said one local insider, "whether that view's fair or not."

#### JEFF KLEIN

Should he win, Cabrera, according to one published report, has weighed joining Senator Jeff Klein's breakaway Independent Democratic Conference, but Klein's camp isn't saying yes or no yet to helping him. Odds are Jeff might, since there's no love lost between Jeff and Gustavo.

Gustavo's been the regular Democratic Conference's pit bull, attacking Klein for

using his five-member IDC to grab majority control of the Senate away from them by grabbing co-leadership with Senate Republicans.

Jeff has his own challenge on his hands from Riverdale's **Oliver Koppell**.

The former Attorney General/Assemblyman/school board chairman and term-limited City Councilman has charged Jeff with treason by abandoning the regular Senate Democrats to co-lead with (gasp!) Republicans.

Most political insiders see Ollie's challenge as pretty much an uphill, maybe even cliff-climbing, one against the well-heeled, popular Klein. Even Riverdales' top electeds, Assemblyman **Jeff Dinowitz** and Councilman **Andrew Cohen**, who succeeded Koppell, have endorsed Jeff.

The local Ben Franklin

Reform Dems club was set to meet Thursday night - after print deadline, with the best guess that its endorsement will go to Jeff.

#### ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

Look for some new local district leaders coming out of the September primary, though most have been pre-ordained by political clubs

District leaders - one male, one female in each assembly district, are pretty much the top sergeants, dealing with getting the troops out come time for gathering nominating petitions and getting the vote out on election day, as well as voting on party leadership.

**Jeff Lynch**, east Bronx Councilman **Jimmy Vacca**'s long-time chief of staff and political strategist, will be stepping down as male

district leader in the 82nd Assembly District. **Mayor de Blasio** just rewarded Jeff for shepherding the Bronx for him in the general election by making him Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs at the city Department of Transportation, pretty much the only reward the Bronx Democratic Machine has even remotely gotten outta Mayor Bill.

Lynch is being replaced by Bronx Times Reporter founder and former publisher **John Collazzi**.

Longtime female district leader **Fran Mahony's** also stepping down, with her reported replacement Jeff Lynch's wife, **Marjorie Velázquez Lynch**.

Meanwhile, in the 80th A.D. in Morris Park, current DL and Liberty

Dem Club co-founder **Kenny Agosto** is out of the running after being redistricted. With Female District leader **Miriam Schwartz** stepping down, the club is backing club secretary **Andrea Siegel** in the primary. No word yet on Kenny's replacement.

**Bruce Feld**, long-time Democratic district leader in Riverdale's 81st A.D., is stepping down to smell the roses. The Ben Franklin Reformed Dems club chose **Eric Dinowitz**, Assemblyman **Jeff Dinowitz**' son to replace Bruce.

**BRONX BIRTHDAYS**  
 May 25 - Actress **Connie Selleca** (Hotel, Capt America II)

May 27 - Author **Hereman Wouk**

May 30 - **Jeffrey Laufer**, special assistant to Borough President **Ruben Diaz**

## Host of Memorial Day events

From Page 1

said veterans advocate Pat Devine. "It is solemn recognition of the people who put their lives on the line and did not make it home."

Among the events planned:

- Sunday: Silver Beach American Legion Post #1371 will meet at its mansion building at 10 a.m.

- Sunday: the Edgewater Park Volunteer Ambulance Corps., which serves the private complex, will meet at its firehouse, then march to the traffic circle for an 11 a.m. ceremony.

- Sunday: American Legion Post #1871 will host a Memorial Day event at Veterans Park at 1 p.m.

- Monday: A remembrance will be held at the Rudy Macina Peace Memorial Plaza, at Pelham Parkway North and Williamsbridge Road at 11 a.m.

- Monday: The East Bronx History Forum will host its event at Van Nest Memorial Park at White



Veterans Dennis Condon, Ed McCarthy, John Brady, Alonzo Nieves, and John Rutter remembering fallen comrades.

Photos by Alexander Belisle

Plains Road and Van Nest Avenue at noon.

- Monday: Memorial Day at Bicentennial Veterans Memorial Park in Throggs Neck at 10:30 a.m.

- Monday: A remembrance at the Throggs Neck American Legion Post #1456 at 11:30 a.m.

- Monday: City Island's Memorial Day parade, starts at 1:30 p.m.

"On Memorial Day, we must all remember and pay tribute to the heroes whose sacrifices have made America the greatest country in the world," said Councilman Jimmy Vacca. "It is because of them that we are free and able to celebrate today with our friends and families, and they deserve our deepest thanks."

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