

W. Bronx assembly recount

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A recount is now underway in a razor-thin close primary election for a west Bronx assembly district.

With unofficial primary night results showing a margin of just 11 votes separating challenger Hector Ramirez and incumbent Assemblyman Victor Pichardo in the 86th Assembly District, the New York City Board of Elections began a recount of paper ballots on Wednesday, September 17 after the appropriate amount of time elapsed under state election law.

"The bi-partisan team will begin opening all the paper ballots, meaning affidavits, military, absentees," said Valerie Vasquez, a spokeswoman for the New York City Board of Elections. "By election law, we have to wait a certain number of days so we have ample time to receive absentee ballots that were postmarked by the deadline. Then the staff has to do their due diligence verifying that they are in fact registered voters in the correct district."

The process is open to the candidates and the public, she explained.

The counting of paper ballots is necessary because of the very close margin, with Ramirez gaining 1764 votes and Pichardo with 1753 votes, with 95% reported, according to Board of Elections unofficial primary night results. The primary election was held on Tuesday, September 12.

This is a particularly charged recount because of allegations of fraud against Pichardo by Ramirez in a close race between the two candidates in 2013. These charges included allegations of missing levers on machines for certain candidates, including

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HOMELESS AT CAPRI MOTEL



Photo courtesy of NYPD

Villa Maria Sends 9-11 Gift

First graders at Villa Maria Academy prepared a tray of cookies and a card for Police Commissioner William Bratton and the NYPD on the morning of Thursday, September 11 to commemorate the 9/11 terror attacks. The cookie tray was presented to Assistant Chief Edward Delatorre at the school after the students sang a rendition of God Bless America. The children were assisted by first-grade teachers Ann Marie Marino and Sophie D'Ambrosio. Bratton tweeted his thanks which can be found at <https://twitter.com/commissbratton/status/510154586410471425>. See page 6 for more photos on other borough 9-11 memorials.

Community reacts to city's plan

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

There's collective concern among residents and elected officials grappling with the opening of a homeless shelter at a recently shuttered motel near Ferry Point Park.

The city Department of Homeless Services confirmed that it began moving in families to the Capri Whitestone Motel this week. The closed "hot-sheet" motel allegedly used to charge hourly rates and was known for a rumored bed bug infestation, said neighbors.

The Capri, at the Hutchinson River Parkway service road near the approach to the Bronx Whit-

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New art sculptures on the Square

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

Westchester Square is home to new pieces of public art.

Two sculpture pieces from Bronx-based artist Linda Cunningham have been installed in the neighborhood as part of the NYC Department of Transportation's art initiative, in partnership with the Westchester Square Business Improvement District.

One piece, installed at the corner of Westchester and East Tremont avenues, will officially

be unveiled on October 1, at 11 a.m. A second piece has been installed in front of the nearby DOT office on Williamsbridge Road.

Bringing the public art pieces to Westchester Square is part of a larger mission to make the neighborhood a cultural destination, said Westchester Square BID director Lisa Sorin.

The BID has brought arts programming to the square and has plans for murals to beautify the area, said Sorin, and the neigh-

borhood will be the new home of the Bronx Council on the Arts in 2015.

"It's the start of kicking off something really exciting in the area," said Sorin about the art installation, which will last through July 2015.

The goal of the cultural offerings are to draw more foot traffic, and in turn more businesses to the area, said Sorin, which is ripe with potential thanks to abundance of transportation op-

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The sculpture, Urban Regeneration 2 by Linda Cunningham, will be present in Westchester Square through July 2015 as part of NYC Department of Transportation's Art Program, in partnership with the Westchester Square Business Improvement District. Photo courtesy of the Westchester Square BID

Pesky scaffolding grows in Pelham Parkway garden

BY BEN KOCHMAN

They said “tear down that scaffold” — not expand it!

Tenants at one Pelham Parkway apartment complex where construction has been going on for half a decade are griping again, now that new management has only expanded a series of pesky scaffolding into the courtyard.

Residents at 2100 Bronx Park East have endured a dark green wooden scaffold around the perimeter of their building since 2009. Tenants have complained that the so-called “sidewalk sheds” attract vagrants and drug dealers to their property, and have long pushed for them to be removed.

But now, with the building under new management, the sidewalk sheds have been expanded. The building’s once bucolic

courtyard is now mostly shrouded in darkness, with the dark sheds crisscrossing the garden.

Shrouded in dark

The darkness has some long-time tenants feeling trapped in an unsafe situation.

“I’m afraid for my own safety, because I know that there are drug deals going on,” said Elaine Feder, a long time resident and co-president of the Pelham Parkway Neighborhood Association.

Construction has been underway for years on the series of six-story apartment building’s facade and parapet. Long time residents like Feder remember growing up in a nice building, with a doorman and a lush green courtyard, before the building started to deteriorate and the repairs

started.

Glimmer of hope?

But Feder said there may be a glimmer of hope with a new property manager that came in earlier this year.

New building manager Simply Better took over from SW Management, a company run by real estate mogul Stanley Wasserman. And though new management has only increased the sidewalk sheds, they are at least open to dialogue, said Feder.

“They are a hell of lot more responsive than the other landlords, who never responded to my letters,” she said.

Building management told Feder recently that management was “working with their engineering team” to see if they could provide “enhanced lighting” in the courtyard,



Tear it down! After five years, Elaine Feder is still waiting for her landlord to complete repairs on her Bronx Park East apartment. And now the scaffolding has expanded into the courtyard.

Ben Kochman / Community News Group

according to an email reviewed by the Bronx Times Reporter.

Management also said they would “look at the feasibility” of installing se-

curity cameras at the complex.

Any sort of help could not come soon enough for residents looking for a way out of the dark.

“This courtyard is a death trap,” said resident Eve Demian. “I have never seen such an unbelievable disregard for human safety,”

Illegal park barbequers hit with summonses

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

Grilling season ended early this year for those barbecuing illegally in two Bronx parks.

Thanks to efforts from residents and a local councilmember, Parks Enforcement Patrol officers cracked down on the issue in Bronx Park East and on the Pelham Parkway greenways.

After repeated concerns from locals and members of Community Board 11 about the presences of dangerous barbecues in the parks on summer weekends, Councilman Ritchie Torres’s office organized a meeting between the residents, Bronx Borough Parks Commissioner Hector Aponte and Parks Enforcement officials in early July.

At the meeting, Parks Enforcement Patrol agreed to send officers to the parks.

“Illegal barbecuing has posed an ongoing nuisance and fire hazard for park-goers in Bronx Park East and



A group grilling in the grass area of Bronx Park East in June.

File photo

Pelham Parkway. After considerable pressure from my office, and the office of Council Member Vacca, the Parks Department has followed through with their commitment to ramp up enforcement,” said Councilman Torres. “I will con-

tinue to monitor the progress of this effort so Bronx families can safely enjoy their public parks.”

A spokesman from the Parks Department said that after the meeting, four officers were assigned to the areas each weekend through

Labor Day. Throughout the summer, officers issued 29 summonses, according to the Parks Department.

The difference between the number of barbecuers in the park between the beginning of the summer and the end was significant,

said Edith Blitzer of the Pelham Parkway Neighborhood Association, and the officers maintained a visible presence in the parks each weekend.

“I guess the message got across,” said Blitzer. “It was very effective.”

The Parks and Recreation committee of Community Board 11 was surprised and pleased by the quick response to the meeting, said Committee chair Joanne Rubino. And although the barbecuing dramatically decreased by the end of the summer, Rubino said the committee is planning to continue to push the issue next spring.

“This year they’ll know from the get-go this won’t be tolerated,” said Rubino.

People who want to barbecue should go to dedicated sites, like the ones in Pelham Bay Park, she said.

“These parks are not meant for that,” said Rubino.

It’s important for both the safety of the residents and the preservation of the park that illegal barbecuing be eradicated, said Blitzer.

“We want people to enjoy the park,” said Blitzer. “We don’t want it abused,”

Castle Hill group fights Days Inn

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

With construction moving along on a new Days Inn in Castle Hill, local residents are concerned about the motel being so close to their homes - in one case, right next door.

Lingering concerns expressed by a newly formed group about problems that other motel sites have presented, including loitering and prostitution, have come to the forefront as the developer has begun work on the project. The franchisee expects to have the Days Inn franchise signed by September 2015.

The community group, calling themselves the Castle Hill Neighborhood Betterment Association (CNBA), held a town-hall style meeting at Holy Family Church on Saturday, September 13 to gather feedback, and review possible building-code violations in the plans for the new structure, according to attendees.

They have also reached out to elected officials, including Senator Jeff Klein

and Councilwoman Annabel Palma, who have expressed concern about the project.

"At last Saturday's meeting, which I attended, serious concern was expressed over the development of a Days Inn motel that would provide day rates, essentially creating the potential for a hot sheet motel at 2338 Bruckner Boulevard," said Senator Klein. "We know from multiple instances of previous experience that these types of establishments breed not only illegal activity, but become headaches for otherwise strong communities. I stand 100% with the residents of Castle Hill to stop it from happening."

Councilwoman Annabel Palma's chief of staff, Mariela Salazar, said that the main concerns remained the same after the meeting, and that they would try to work with the developer and the franchiser, Days Inn, to address community concern.

"From the meeting on

Saturday, the community has been very clear that they do not want the Days Inn in their community," she said, adding those attending the meeting were adamantly opposed.

She said that one of the CNBA board members apparently is an architect and that the group looked at specific parts of the plan that they feel should not have been approved by the Department of Buildings.

"They were really organized and well prepared," she said. "Our office is waiting for them to send us those points from the presentation so that we can reach out to the appropriate agencies and find out what is going on."

One of the unfortunate aspects of the motel from the CNBA perspective, according to sources, is it is an as-of-right project, meaning that it is allowed under the current zoning.

Sylvia Rodriguez, a CNBA member who reached out to the Bronx Times, said that she was also concerned



Community Board 9 district manager Francisco Gonzalez speaks to the large crowd about the planned hotel at the town hall meeting on Saturday, September 13.
Photo by Walter Pofeldt

that the new motel, which sits on Bruckner Expressway's eastbound service road just blocks from the Capri Whitestone Motel in Ferry Point, could be turned into a homeless shelter as happened at the Capri.

The developer, Manny Kumar, 42, said that he has no plans to turn the 60-unit hotel into a homeless shelter or charge

hourly rates for rooms. He also called it a "hotel," however, the activists continued to refer to it as a "motel."

He said that the new motel will have amenities, including a business center, meeting space, rooftop bar and terrace, cigar lounge, laundry room and sundry room.

He feels that people looking to visit Man-

hattan but in need of a cheaper room would use his Days Inn, which is just three express train stops from 59th Street on the Lexington Avenue Number 6 IRT line.

"The concern should be none," said Kumar. "We are positive that this hotel will do great. This won't be an eyesore to the neighborhood, this will appreciate property values."



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Homeless sheltered at Capri Motel

Continued from Page 1

estone Bridge Toll Plaza, is to house about 95 homeless families, according to sources.

Even though the city faces a record high homeless census of 55,768, elected officials and community leaders say that the location is far from supermarkets and lacks public transportation. It is also near a new municipal golf course and shopping center, along with about 60 homes in Ferry Point.

"This area has recently seen long-awaited positive economic investments including the development of the Trump Golf Course, Target and other businesses, so it is disheartening that the city would make a decision to open a homeless shelter without giving any concern to the residents of the area or issuing an impact statement," said Klein. "This trend has to stop. Projects

like these significantly change the make-up of a neighborhood and local residents and business owners must have an opportunity to weigh-in."

He added: "While I recognize that we all must do our fair share to ensure that every New Yorker is safe and cared for and we understand the need to shelter those without homes, the solution on the best locations to do so needs to include community input."

Councilman Jimmy Vacca repeatedly said in an interview that the DHS plan did not make sense "on so many levels," and thinks the city's siting is flawed.

Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. sent a letter to Deputy Mayor Lilliam Barrio-Paoli concerning the lack of community notification and input on the siting of a homeless shelter, specifically mentioning the property at 555

Hutchinson River Parkway, which was recently put up for sale.

Dotti Poggi, leader of advocacy group Ferry Point Community Activists, said that after meeting with her neighbors in the close knit community, that some feel bullied into accepting the shelter and the lack of notification of the community and input could lead residents to shun the shelter.

"We are concerned about our quality of life and safety," she said. "The success of this shelter does not seem probable with limited transportation and access to services."

But the DHS also has its own mandate.

"Sheltering New York's families with children is a collective responsibility to be shouldered by all," stated a DHS spokesman in an e-mail. "We hope that the community is compassionate and sup-



The Capri Whitestone Motel will become a homeless shelter this week.

Community Newspaper Group/ Photo By Parick Rocchio

portive as these families work toward rebuilding their lives as we continue to work with partners and elected officials to address concerns."

When news of the motel's availability became public, many people in

the community expressed optimism that new condos or a high-end hotel might be in the works. Now Community Board 10 vice-chairman John Marano said, "They want us to be sympathetic to the homeless which we

are, but we feel that communication in advance would be better," he said. "Educate us on how the process goes and at least we can speak to our community and provide them with the proper information."

West Bronx assembly primary recount - 11 votes separating winner

Continued from Page 1

Ramirez.

The Bronx Democratic Party machine and all of the union support went for Pichardo, said Ramirez, who also said he is confident that he will be declared the winner.

"He had the support of other elected officials, the political machinery in the Bronx, union support and had all the money, and I am ahead," said Ramirez, adding "already, we have won this election."

He said his opponent does not want to accept the results. Ramirez said

he had the support of the community, and community-based organizations.

"For me, the most important thing for me was the support of the community," said Ramirez. "I did not pay anybody, everyone worked as a volunteer. And I made it with the community. I don't want to owe my soul to any powerful interests."

Pichardo said, in a statement, that he was very thankful to have had the opportunity to serve the residents of the 86th Assembly District, which includes Univer-

sity Heights, and parts of Fordham and Kingsbridge Heights. He too was confident of his victory.

During the past eight months, he said that he had been able to accomplish a "great deal," including "expanding early education programs for our children and fighting to improve our City's affordable housing."

"I am confident that my neighbors have again chosen me as their representative in Assembly and I am energized by the support I have received from our community, elected officials, unions

and my family," said Pichardo. "While the election, at the moment, is too close to call, I am optimistic that I will be declared the winner of this race and that the Board of Election will work diligently to sort through all the dirty tactics my opponent deployed to intimidate voters on Election Day to accurately determine who the voters have chosen to represent them. In the mean time, I will continue to serve my community, focus on the issues that matter most, and be committed to building a better and stronger Bronx."



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Environmental groups team up to clean up

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

The Bronx River Alliance is continuing to clean up the parks of the Bronx by teaming up with other environmental groups and volunteers, making them more pedestrian friendly and improving wildlife.

International Coastal Cleanups have become a weekly event for the Bronx River Alliance, previously hosting the event this past Saturday, September 13 at Concrete Plant Park and are hosting another event this Saturday, at Soundview Park.

The International Coastal Cleanup on Saturday, September 13 was presented by the Bronx River Alliance, G.I.V.E. (Getting Involved, Virginia Ave Efforts), Leadership Team 105 and American Rivers and was sponsored by Keurig.

The shoreline cleanup at Concrete Plant Park gave volunteers an opportunity to “come clean and go green” on the Bronx

River, providing trash bags and gloves to all who were involved.

The cleanup was followed by fun activities for all who attended, including yoga, music, face painting, refreshments and kids fitness, giving them a chance to enjoy the park that they worked to improve.

The Bronx River Alliance and friends are hosting another cleanup, this coming Saturday, September 20 at Soundview Park to improve the Long Island Sound and remove debris from the waterfront.

“This will be a fun and exciting day for the Bronx River Alliance, its friends and those who attend,” said outreach manager Joseph Sanchez, who put these park and coastal cleanups together.

“It’s a great way to spend an end-of-summer, beginning of fall day in an improving environment where everybody is working towards a good cause.”

The day will begin at 8:30 a.m., where a light breakfast will be provided courtesy of Cabot Creamery Cooperative and the Farmers’ Gratitude Grille.

Attendees also have the opportunity to take part in a paddle boating, coastal cleanup adventure. The paddle boating will venture from Concrete Plant Park to Soundview Park, also beginning at 8:30 a.m.. Those interested can register at <http://bit.ly/paddlesept20> and will receive additional information on this part of the cleanup. Registration for this event is required.

Cleanup will begin at 9 a.m., after all volunteers have checked in, filled out waivers and retrieved supplies and directions for what the Bronx River Alliance calls “the largest cleanup of the year.”

Whole Foods will provide a lunch at 11:30 a.m. after the cleanup, followed by an afternoon of fun activities put together by Recre-

ation Equipment Inc.

“We want to reward the people who have rewarded us and our parks,” said Joseph Sanchez.

“We want to show them that we appreciate their hard work towards improving our parks, and what better way to do that then providing meals, transportation and fun activities kindly contributed by our friends and sponsors.”

Shuttle service will be provided, taking volunteers from the Morrison Ave./Soundview Ave Station of the 6 IRT to Soundview Park from 8:00 to 9:00 A.m., and bring them back to the station after the cleanup.

Registration is required for those who plan to volunteer at the cleanup. Those who are interested in helping out can register at <http://bit.ly.soundviewpark2014>. For more information, contact Joseph.Sanchez@parks.nyc.gov.



Volunteers taking part in the 2012 International Coastal Cleanup at Soundview Park
Photo courtesy of the Bronx River Alliance

Male breast cancer survivor aims to spread awareness

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A fellow Bronx native, a lifelong resident of Throggs Neck and breast cancer survivor has one goal – to spread awareness on breast cancer – male breast cancer.

Michael Singer, who has been a male breast cancer survivor for almost four years, hopes to inform other men who don’t know that they can get breast cancer, just as he didn’t know until he was diagnosed in 2010.

In this attempt to spread awareness through organizations such as the Male Breast Cancer Coalition, Breast Cancer Brothers and the Bret Miller IT Check Them Foundation, Michael is helping further education amongst men about male breast cancer.

“Men need to have a conversation with their medical providers,” said Michael Singer. “This will help promote awareness

and possibly save someone’s life.”

Michael’s story of male breast cancer started back in December of 2010, when he saw his general practitioner, Dr. Joseph Bonanno, for a general fitness evaluation for work. During the examination, Singer mentioned to the doctor that he had felt a cyst under his left nipple that had been causing him discomfort over the last few months.

He figured it was just a fatty deposit, similar to the one he had removed several years earlier with no complications.

After the doctor felt the cyst and expressed his concern, Singer was referred to a local surgeon for a nipple biopsy. Michael brought his wife Patty with him to give him strength for facing his fears of needles and potentially being diagnosed.

Surgeon Anibal Puente wasn’t even able to get



Michael Singer, second person from the right, takes part in a topless photo shoot to raise male breast cancer awareness
Photo courtesy of Tops Off NY

enough fluid through the needle, so Michael was scheduled for a surgical biopsy the following day at Westchester Square Hospital.

After waking up groggy in the recovery room following the procedure,

Puente stated that he didn’t like what he saw. Singer informed his wife that night, still unaware that male breast cancer was the culprit.

Michael and his wife went back to the doctor’s office the following week. He

met with Puente’s associate Dr. Reynolds, the same doctor who removed his fatty cyst eight years earlier. Reynolds’ demeanor was much different after coming back with Singer’s file.

It was then that Dr. Reynolds gave Singer the

news that a 2.2 cm tumor was discovered under his left nipple and the doctor diagnosed Michael Singer with breast cancer.

“As the doctor was explaining, I was floored and didn’t understand what he was talking about, as I had never heard of men getting breast cancer,” said Michael. I had been diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer.”

Michael was scheduled for surgery.

Now that he’s healthy again, Michael’s aim is to spread male breast cancer awareness to other men, especially since Male Breast Cancer Week, the third week in October, is approaching.

“The ultimate goal is to spread the word that men can get breast cancer too. Men should check themselves routinely, as well as be aware that early detection is a key to surviving this deadly disease.

The Bronx remembered the tragic events of Thursday, September 11, 2001 with ceremonies throughout the borough on the 13th anniversary of the terrorist attacks, and also on the following day. The annual memorial at Jacobi Medical Center, which included placing roses at a permanent monument that lists the names of all of the borough's victims, was held the morning of Thursday, September 11. Then at sunset, a memorial in Throggs Neck remembered the borough's fallen, as well as those specifically, from the east Bronx community, who perished. The next day, Friday, September 12, Borough President Diaz and the Bronx courts system held their ceremony at Lou Gehrig Plaza at East 161st Street and the Grand Concourse.

(Right) New York City Transit Fife and Drum Corps. perform during a Throggs Neck sunset 9/11 memorial ceremony.

Photo by Alexander Belisle



The Bronx Remembers 9/11



Firefighters remember some of their fallen 'brothers' during the 9/11 remembrance at Lou Gehrig Plaza hosted by Borough President Diaz and the New York State courts on Friday, September 12.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



Community leader Kenny Agosto touches the memorial listing the names of all Bronxites who perished on 9/11 during the Jacobi Medical Center remembrance ceremony on Thursday, September 11.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



Assemblyman Michael Benedetto lights a candle in remembrance of the victims at Jacobi Medical Center's ceremony. Joe Menta is holding the candle.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



Bronx Y Bon Appétit Fundraiser

The Bronx YMCA held its eighth annual Bon Appétit Fundraiser on Wednesday, September 10, featuring tasting and networking opportunities from all over the Bronx. The event, attended by about 200 people, raised more than \$12,000 for the Annual Campaign. The Annual Campaign is a YMCA initiative to raise money to help families and individuals participate in the many programs offered at the facility. The initiative has allowed low-income individuals to open up memberships, has helped adults and children learn to swim, and has helped send hundreds of kids to summer day camp and after school programs. (Above) Bronx YMCA Board of Managers.

Photo by Aracelis Batista



(l-r) Executive director of the Bronx YMCA, Sharlene Brown; president and CEO of the YMCA of Greater New York, Jack Lund; and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.

Photo courtesy of Bronx YMCA



Denise Hunt and Barbara Wallace enjoy some of the desserts. Photo by Aracelis Batista

No parking zone generates confusion

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

There is a restricted parking zone that has caused and is continuing to cause confusion and unfair ticketing amongst drivers in the Bronx.

The restricted parking zone, located where Colden Avenue meets Radcliff Avenue is only partially painted, creating a deceiving parking space for cars and has become a problem for many of those who live and park in the vicinity.

The issue stems back to as far as 20 years ago, when local drivers began complaining about how they were being ticketed for parking in what they believed to be a valid parking space.

It's no surprise when one looks at the restricted parking zone, a semi-painted area with lines that end rather symmetrical. This has created the illusion that it is not against the law to park within its lines – its

unfinished lines that have generated over 150 complaints in total.

"People have been complaining about being ticketed in that spot ever since they began attempting to repaint the lines," said Alfred Pappalardi.

"When I first lived in this neighborhood, this was an issue concerning parking and ticketing. Now that I've moved back, it's apparent that this has become a safety issue as well."

Pappalardi is no stranger to this neighborhood or the restricted parking zone, having lived in the neighborhood of Morris Park for over 30 years in total and having just moved back two years ago.

He constantly ponders why these lines have yet to be painted properly and why drivers who park there are consistently being taken advantage of by law enforcement.

"The traffic agents and patrol will drive by the zone

at night and ticket people at night because they know that people park there," said Pappalardi.

In a sense, this restricted parking zone is a paradox, barely attempting to deter cars from parking in its partially painted lines with a sharp left turn/U-turn onto Ratcliff just ahead of it, making this portion of the road both confusing and unsafe.

"There's a lot of problems like this going on in neighborhoods like this one," said Jeremy Warneke, district manager of Community Board 11, who sees these issue all over Morris Park and Pelham Parkway.

"Unpainted and faded lines, bleached street signs, unpaved walkways and confusing restricted parking zones only contribute to more confusion and less safety. These may seem like small issues, but when they add up they start to become big inconveniences."

Currently, the city



A partially painted restricted parking zone on Colden Avenue has generated confusion and unfair ticketing.
Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

agency responsible for the lines only paints at night, when cars are usually already parked within the restriction lines until the next morning. A paintjob

during the day would more than likely send a clear "no parking" message to drivers while increasing driving safety.

This zone being painted

thoroughly and fully will be a big benefit not only to the drivers who have been ticketed, but also for the safety of the drivers when they need to make this left turn.

Library seeks stories from East of Bronx Park

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

Local residents will soon have the opportunity to have their stories recorded and saved for posterity.

The New York Public Library's Oral History Project is coming to the Allerton, Pelham Parkway-Van Nest, and Morris Park library branches this year.

The oral history initiative, which has previously visited Greenwich Village and Harlem, seeks to archive stories of the three Bronx neighborhoods. The branch manager at the Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Library, David Nochimson, initially wanted to bring the project to his library, and found that the neighboring branches were interested in the idea as well.

"With the way these neighborhoods interact and overlap with each other, it seemed to make sense," said Nochimson.

Looking for a concise



At the Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Library: (l-r) staff member Jhenelle Robinson, branch manager David Nochimson, and NYPL Outreach Services coordinator Alexandra Kelly.

Community News Group / Jaime Williams

way to describe the relationship of the neighborhoods, they settled on a name for the project: "Voices from east of Bronx Park." Residents of the neighborhoods will be involved on both sides of the oral history project, as interviewers and as story tellers.

"Ultimately, this is a community project," said Alexandra Kelly, outreach services coordinator for the NYPL.

Kelly will host two-hour interviewer training sessions at the branches as an orientation for those who want to get involved. At the

sessions, interviewers will learn how to use the recording equipment, learn about goals of the project, and learn how to ask the right type of questions to elicit good stories. But conducting a good interview is mostly about putting the agency in the storyteller's hands.

"Just remember to step back, trust your curiosity, and leave space for the storytellers to tell their stories," said Kelly.

The phase of collecting interviews will run from November through May, and the branches will host related programming at the branches throughout the project. The final collection of stories will be put online alongside the other projects at oralhistory.nypl.org, archived as part of the 42nd Street library's research collection, and will be available as part of the branches circulating collections.

The project is the first of its kind in the area, said Nochimson, and he's looking forward to hearing how the stories illuminate changes and constants in the neighborhoods over the years.

"It's uncovering something that's every bit as rich as Greenwich Village or Harlem, but entirely unex-

amined," he said.

The collection of oral histories is about filling in the gaps of written history, said Kelly, and it creates potential for future research.

"I can only imagine hundreds of years from now how valuable that information will be," said Kelly.

Interview trainings will take place at the Morris Park Library on Saturday, October 4 at 2:30 p.m. and Wednesday, October 15 at 4:30 p.m.; at the Allerton Library on Wednesday, October 22 at 4:30 p.m. and Saturday, November 1 at 2:30 p.m.; and at the Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Library on Saturday, October 25 at 2:30 p.m. and Thursday, October 30 at 4:30 p.m.

To sign up for the interviewer training or for more information about the project, visit your local branch or contact Alexandra Kelly at 212-621-0552 or AlexandraKelly@nypl.org.

Former ballroom to host first art exhibit

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

The first exhibit at Little Italy's new arts center will open this October.

Sculpture and Mixed-Media exhibit "Ego versus Soul" will be presented by artist Jeanine Alfieri as the maiden exhibit at Rex Hall on 187th Street.

The space is an old ballroom that has been converted into an art center by the non-profit group the Belmont Society of Arts and Culture.

Alfieri, a long-time New York artist, moved her studio to the Bronx about five years ago, and said she loves it here.

"When I got here the Bronx art community welcomed me with open arms," she said.

She's had a residency at in Rex Hall throughout the summer since June, working on October's exhibit, which will feature 12

pieces, all but two of which are new.

Alfieri, who works primarily as a sculpture artist, said she has been working within the theme of "ego versus soul" for years, creating art inspired by observations of the separation of mind and spirit.

"I find it fascinating what our egos tell us to do," she said.

Her new pieces include a "Facebook" series, which she said is an observation of how social media feeds our egos.

Despite the ideas behind her pieces, Alfieri said her work is accessible. She said she feels people can experience art no matter their level of education or previous exposure to art.

"Everyone can enjoy it, and everyone should be exposed to it regardless of financial situations or place in society," she said.

They just need a place to go in order to experience it, she said, which is where alternative art spaces like Rex Hall can help.

"I think every neighborhood needs something like this," Alfieri said.

The Belmont Society of Arts and Culture has plans to host a wide variety of cultural events in the coming months and years. In November, the traveling art gallery that Alfieri founded, the Fountainhead Gallery, will be featured at Rex Hall.

Alfieri said she founded the gallery in order to meet new artists and bring them together in collaboration, as well as establish a non-elitist space for viewing art.

"It's a place where everyone is welcome," said Alfieri.

The opening reception for "Ego versus Soul" will



Artist Jeanine Alfieri with her sculpture piece Sirena at Rex Hall, the site of her upcoming art exhibit.

Community News Group / Jaime Williams

be held Saturday, October 4, at 7 p.m., at Rex Hall 602 E. 187th Street. The reception will feature music by the Monticello Trio, a per-

formance by Autumn Kioti, and food by Woopies Miniature Dessert Co.

The exhibit runs October 1 through October 29

and will be open Wednesdays through Fridays from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 6 p.m.

John Gilder fundraiser keeps area youth active

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Young people in their 20s from City Island and beyond are remembering their deceased friend while encouraging local youth to excel in school and sports.

For nearly the past five years, Jack Jokinen, 29, and several of the friends he grew up with, have helped organize a memorial fundraiser in honor of their deceased friend John Gilder at the Morris Yacht Club on City Island. Their most recent lawn party took place in August.

The lawn party is just one of several ongoing fundraisers for the John Gilder Memorial Scholarship Fund, which sponsors two City Island Little League teams. The fund also gives partial scholarships to students who attend Fordham University and who graduate high school at John's second hometown in Greenwich, CT.

The Gilder Fund has raised over \$100,000 in its four-and-a-half year existence.

It's generosity honors John Gilder, a City Island native who passed away in August 2009 at the age of 23 from a undiagnosed heart condition.

"I grew up with John on City Island," said Jokinen. "He was just a regular guy who loved everything about growing up on City Island: fishing, being outdoors, being on boats, and swimming."

After living in Connecticut from the fifth grade through high school, and visiting City Island frequently to see his grandfather, he moved back to the island after graduating with a business degree from Fordham University. He became a production assistant on several films, including *City Island*, filmed on the island and starring Andy Garcia.

After going through the grieving process after John Gilder's passing in August 2009, the scholarship fund was organized to help youth in both City



This year's annual fundraiser at the Morris Yacht Club on City Island, pictured, was another success.

Photo courtesy of Gilder Scholarship

Island and Greenwich, CT succeed, said Jokinen, who runs the scholarship along with John's father Mark Gilder.

The City Island part of the charity helps sponsor a City Island Little League team, and also a traveling summer team for the best players that takes on teams from other little leagues.

"Obviously there are issues on the island in terms of keeping youth active, getting them out of the house, and keeping them away from the streets," said Jason Briens, another volunteer for the memorial fund who lives on the island. "You figure with both the little league and the summer league, there is an ex-

citing activity and you have good role models with parent coaches. It keeps the youth involved and gets them into the community."

Briens believes that involvement in associations like the little league gradually leads to involvement in civic life as the young people grow up.

Concurring is John

Doyle, a 20-something board member of the City Island Civic Association who attends the annual lawn parties at the Morris Yacht Club and makes donations.

"It shows that young people can accomplish great things in the community," he said. "Most of the attendees and the coordinators are in their 20s."

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Craig 'muMs' Grant dazzles in Bronx-based show

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

The Labyrinth Theater Company has just kicked off another season of shows for the Bank Street Theater and their off-Broadway audiences.

One of these highly anticipated shows includes A Sucker Emcee, which opened at the Bank Street Theater on Wednesday, September 10. A Sucker Emcee show that tells the life story of Craig 'muMs' Grant - a Hip Hop artist, a slam poet, an actor and a fellow native of the Bronx.

Craig 'muMs' Grant was born and raised in arguably the most influenced locations during Hip Hop's formation - the south Bronx. In this show, muMs takes Hip Hop's birthplace of the south Bronx with him to the Bank Street Theater, where audiences can get a first hand look at his life experiences, from childhood to present day.

As an experienced ac-

tor and slam poet, muMs is perfect for this one-man show role that portrays an aspiring artist coming from the borough of the Bronx and trying to make it in the world of music.

"This show will definitely be an inspiration to audiences because he is making his dream come true and finding his spotlight," said Labyrinth Theater Company member Marco Greco. "When audiences see muMs perform his life story in a show, by himself, they will be amazed at his talent and his artistry."

Although extremely appealing to all audience in the greater New York area, this show has a unique opportunity to connect with the Bronx, given all the history of Hip Hop in the Bronx and the fact that muMs has always resided in the borough.

"The Bronx needs to know about this," said Marco Greco. "There is so much influence that

the Bronx has on muMs and on this show, and it's a great reason for Bronx-ites, both old and young, to venture to the village to see one man bring the Bronx to Manhattan and beyond."

Marco Greco also went on to mention that he hopes to see the show make its way to the Bronx at some point, citing potential theaters at the Bronx Museum of Art or Botanical Gardens.

Those who are preparing to see this show will not be disappointed. They will see one artist - one actor - one man move an entire crowd, thus proving to all of the Hip Hop critics that, ironically, he is far from "A Sucker Emcee."

Audiences are encouraged to not only see the show but also to stay afterwards on selective days to get even closer to muMs and the production team. Talkback Tuesdays will occur on September 16 and

September 30 for audience members who would like to ask questions. Shows on Thursday, September 25 and Thursday, October 2 will include special post-show events featuring spoken word artists, poets and musicians.

A Sucker Emcee is currently running at the Bank Street Theater on 155 Bank Street from Tuesdays to Saturdays at 8 p.m. and on Sundays at 7 p.m., with tickets pricing at \$25. Those travelling to the theater by subway can connect to or take 2 Train to 14th Street. The show is expected to run until Sunday, October 5 unless extended.



Craig 'muMs' Grant takes to the stage with DJ Rich Medina in the new show "A Sucker Emcee."

Photo courtesy of the Labyrinth Theater Company

Male breast cancer survivor aims to spread awareness

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A fellow Bronx native, a lifelong resident of Throggs Neck and breast cancer survivor has one goal - to spread awareness on breast cancer - male breast cancer.

Michael Singer, who has been a male breast cancer survivor for almost four years, hopes to inform other men who don't know that they can get breast cancer, just as he didn't know until he was diagnosed in 2010.

In this attempt to spread awareness through organizations such as the Male Breast Cancer Coalition, Breast Cancer Brothers and the Bret Miller 1T Check Them Foundation, Michael is helping further education amongst men about male breast cancer.

"Men need to have a conversation with their medical providers," said Michael Singer. "This will help promote awareness and possibly save someone's life."

Michael's story of male breast cancer started back in December of 2010, when he saw his general practitioner, Dr. Joseph Bonanno, for a general fitness evaluation for work. During the examination, Singer men-

tioned to the doctor that he had felt a cyst under his left nipple that had been causing him discomfort over the last few months.

He figured it was just a fatty deposit, similar to the one he had removed several years earlier with no complications.

After the doctor felt the cyst and expressed his concern, Singer was referred to a local surgeon for a nipple biopsy. Michael brought his wife Patty with him to give him strength for facing his fears of needles and potentially being diagnosed.

Surgeon Anibal Puente wasn't even able to get enough fluid through the needle, so Michael was scheduled for a surgical biopsy the following day at Westchester Square Hospital.

After waking up groggy in the recovery room following the procedure, Puente stated that he didn't like what he saw. Singer informed his wife that night, still unaware that male breast cancer was the culprit.

Michael and his wife went back to the doctor's office the following week. He met with Puente's associate

Dr. Reynolds, the same doctor who removed his fatty cyst eight years earlier. Reynolds' demeanor was much different after coming back with Singer's file.

It was then that Dr. Reynolds gave Singer the news that a 2.2 cm tumor was discovered under his left nipple and the doctor diagnosed Michael Singer with breast cancer.

"As the doctor was explaining, I was floored and didn't understand what he was talking about, as I had never heard of men getting breast cancer," said Michael. I had been diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer."

Michael was scheduled for surgery.

Now that he's healthy again, Michael's aim is to spread male breast cancer awareness to other men, especially since Male Breast Cancer Week, the third week in October, is approaching.

"The ultimate goal is to spread the word that men can get breast cancer too. Men should check themselves routinely, as well as be aware that early detection is a key to surviving this deadly disease."

New art sculptures on the Square

From Page 1
tions.

"It's a marketable asset for those businesses thinking of coming to the area," said Sorin about the arts presence.

The addition of art is also about giving something to community that's already there, said Sorin.

The sculpture of steel and rocks, called "Urban Regeneration 2," is already drawing eyes and questions.

"We've been getting a lot of people stop-

ping and looking," said Sorin. "And that's what we want."

The Westchester Square sculptures are not the only DOT artworks in the borough.

Other projects have included sculptures at East Tremont and Boston Road in collaboration with the Bronx River Art Center, as well as a sculpture on Fordham Road called "Tomorrow," presented through a partnership with the Fordham Road Business Improvement

District in April.

"The installation is a great example of art creating great streets for passersby within their community," said a DOT spokesperson about the Westchester Square pieces. "DOT's commitment to bringing art installations to neighborhoods throughout the city activates public space, beautifies and creates attractive corridors and establishes valuable community-based partnerships."

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