

Buhre & Zerega stations resume service

BY ROBERT WIRSING

Despite facing many setbacks and delays, the renovated Buhre and Zerega avenue IRT 6 stations are now open for service.

The MTA has completed the Buhre and Zerega stations' rehabilitation which was part of a five station renovation project on the Pelham Bay Line.

On Monday, April 27 at 5 a.m., both stations officially reopened service in both directions following a closure lasting nearly nine months.

The revitalization started last July and included the installation of new structural steel replacing the severely deteriorated original structures.

Slated for a February 16 completion, this discovery reset the deadline for mid-May, but the MTA has completed the project two weeks ahead of this time table.

The renovations included repairing mezzanine, street and platform stairs; replacing platform and street canopy roofs and track beds; installing bird deterrent systems and ADA equipment like new platform edges, tactile warning strips and boarding areas; painting; and amenities such as MTA Arts & Design commissioned artwork installations.

"The Zerega and Buhre Avenue stations are on elevated tracks and have open-air platforms that have been exposed to the weather every day, every hour, for nearly 100 years," New York City Transit president Carmen Bianco said. "The renewal work at these stations is necessary to improve our customers' experience and help us better serve them, and we hope that our customers enjoy these new upgrades."

Buhre Avenue Station's installation, a glass mosaic portraying geometric shapes animates

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'ZOMBIE HOMES' SUCK NABES DRY

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

State leaders are trying to halt the rise of 'zombie homes' through the recently proposed Abandoned Property Neighborhood Relief Act.

Senator Jeff Klein, state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein announced the introduction of legislation which, if passed, would reduce the problem of abandoned foreclosed homes across the state.

The effects of the housing crisis are still lingering in the form of a rising number of unmaintained, foreclosed homes across the state and city, the officials said, and the pending bill would require that banks and mortgage services maintain vacant and

abandoned homes throughout the foreclosure process, a responsibility they say banks often neglect.

"We're making a demand on the banks that they need to do something," Klein said at the announcement on April 27.

While there is currently a law requiring banks to managed foreclosed properties, the process often drags on for years, and the banks are unwilling to manage the properties.

"They need to maintain it as soon as they know it's abandoned," said Klein.

To that end, the bill also includes a provision to create a statewide registry of vacant and abandoned properties through

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Firefighters Battle Blaze On East Tremont Avenue

A fire tore through 3550 E. Tremont Avenue on Sunday, April 26, damaging a store and the apartment above, leaving Rebecca Borrero, her son Dylan and their dog in need. Local activist Bailey Provetto started a 'GoFundMe' campaign on Facebook and is collecting donations and gift cards. Donations can be dropped off at St. Benedict's Church at 2926 Otis Avenue. If you have any questions, call (917) 693-1133.

(Above) Firefighters pour water on the blaze.

Photo by Edwin Soto

2015 Bronx Week honorees

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Four outstanding individuals that are among the borough's finest will be enshrined on the Bronx Walk of Fame as part of the Bronx Week 2015 festivities.

Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. has announced that actress and television commentator Stacey Dash, early National Basketball Association star Dolph Schayes, longtime business leader and philanthropist Alfredo Thiebaud and actor and activist Malik Yoba will be honored during Bronx Week 2015, and have their names

immortalized on the Bronx Walk of Fame, on the Grand Concourse near East 161st Street.

Bronx Week 2015, the 44th annual, will include more than a week of events from Friday, May 8 to Sunday, May 17. Many are free, and almost all do not require any ticket, with the notable exception of a star-studded gala called the Bronx Ball.

"Bronx Week is always a great time to honor the famous men and women who grew up in our borough and welcome them back home to

Continued on Page 11



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Proposed plan for redesigning the Sheridan Expressway at-grade sections.

Photo courtesy of New York City Department of City Planning

Proposed HP expressway project seeks gov's support

BY ROBERT WIRSING

Change may soon be on the way for two of the borough's most travelled expressways.

On Tuesday, April 14, the Bronx delegation of elected officials wrote Governor Cuomo for his support this upcoming state fiscal year to initiate an Environmental Impact Statement to study the construction and implementation of four-way ramps from the Bruckner to the Hunts Point peninsula and requested that city and state transportation agencies reclassify the Sheridan's at-grade portion following the Sheridan Hunts Point Land Use and Transportation Study recommendations.

Completed in late 2013, the SEHP study recommends removing barriers to link the Sheridan's northern section with existing services roads, building three traffic signal controlled crosswalks along the expressway for pedestrian crossing and rezonings to nurture a mix of uses along the waterfront while promoting growth and job opportunities around the community's transit rich corridors.

Aided by the food industry and community stakeholders, the delegation has united in favoring Oak Point Avenue ramps into the peninsula and creating a narrow boulevard on the Sheridan's at-grade half-mile portion.

The proposal will yield major economic developments benefitting Hunts Point's industrial core, while significantly improving residents' quality of life and health.

Lacking a direct link onto the peninsula causes 55,000 truck trips per week onto local streets whose emissions add to high asthma and related illnesses levels.

The EIS for the Oak Point ramps will aid significant joint public-private investment into Hunts Point's industrial section which include the \$30 million Regional Economic Development Council investment to upgrade and renovate the Hunts Point Produce Market and the

\$20 million federally funded Rebuild by Design resiliency project will safeguard this region's primary food supply center.

Combining the Sheridan with the adjacent West Farms Road into a boulevard would establish 326,000 square feet of developable land near the Bronx River.

On March 25, 2014, the City Council approved Resolution 15 calling for access ramps from the Bruckner at Oak Point and retiring the Sheridan's at-grade portion.

In his 2015 State of the Borough address, Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. called for advancing the Bruckner and Sheridan expressway's redevelopment.

With state legislative elected officials' support, Assemblyman Marcos Crespos established an advocacy campaign rallying for this proposal.

On March 5, Mayor de Blasio revealed over the next 12 years, his administration will invest \$150 million into the Hunts Point food distribution center and its nearby neighborhood's fortification and revitalization.

"In its current condition, the Sheridan and the surrounding community suffer from traffic congestions, unsafe and confusing pedestrian walkways and lack of accessibility to our local parks. Our residents deserve a safe and vibrant community with access to their local parks and waterfronts which they can enjoy with their families," Councilwoman Annabel Palma said.

"The southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance have been working together on this Bruckner and Sheridan redevelopment vision for 15 years and we feel the need for this project is really long overdue," Elena Conte, Pratt Center for Community Development senior organizer stated.

On April 15, SBRWA wrote NYSDOT Commissioner Joan McDonald requesting \$5 million in funding an EIS for the Oak Point ramps in the 45-Day List and to start identifying funds to pay for their construction.

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'Zombie homes' suck nabes dry

from Page 1

the attorney general's office, supplemented by a toll-free hot line that residents can use to report suspected abandoned properties and receive information about the status of registered properties.

Another provision requires that homeowners are notified of their right to remain in the house until a judge declares the foreclosure complete, since many abandon the property as soon as they fall too far behind on mortgage payments.

Officials hope the bill will slow the rise in the number of these homes, which saw a 45 percent increase in the Bronx last year, because the people suffering from the phenomenon are the neighbors.

"Your entire community is damaged—property values go down; crime, arson and vandalism go up,"

said Schneiderman, "It's a huge burden on the community."

Community leaders showed up to the announcement at the Bronx County Building in support of the bill, echoing the official's message.

In Harding Park, a handful of abandoned homes is having a big impact on the small community, said homeowners association president Elbin Mena. One property on Harding Park Avenue has been empty for almost five years, to the dismay of neighbors, who's property values have been affected.

"You see a house like this, are you going to buy a house next to it?" Mena asked. "No way."

An empty house on Neill Avenue has attracted squatters, said Al D'Angelo, from Community Board 11.

"It's a quality of life issue," said Al D'Angelo.

"When you have abandoned properties, it hurts everyone in the community."

Another property on Waring Avenue has been a concern of board members for years, said CB 11 district manager Jeremy Warneke.

CB 10 deals with a range of complaints about zombie homes in Throggs Neck from graffiti, rat infestations, and the accumulation of garbage, said vice-chair John Marano.

"The neighbors are calling all the time," he said.

And on City Island, the 'zombies' are the bane of neighbors who take pride in their homes and streets, said vice president of the civic association Fred Ramfl.

"We can't keep the community looking nice when there's a derelict property, an eyesore, on the block," he said.



'Garden of Earthly Delights,' by James Arredondo is the newly reopened Zerega Avenue's #6 IRT Station's art installation.
Photo by Rob Wilson, MTA

Buhre and Zerega resume train service

from Page 1

Buhre's platform level by taking advantage of bright natural light offered by the open-air station platform.

The piece, 'Have a Happy Day,' by Soonae Tark clashes rigid lines and squares with other shapes formed by curves and circular motifs.

Zerega Avenue Station's artwork is a large colorful glass mosaic with hand-formed porcelain panels installed on the platform level.

'Garden of Earthly Delights,' by James Arredondo, illustrates the four seasons in images of crocuses, marigolds, daisies, pansies, morning glories, and roses.

Arredondo's desire was to bring a pastoral element to the urban Bronx environment through his floral mosaics' colors and fanciful imagery.

Some minor work remains in the stations' electrical rooms and staff quarters and Help Point Intercoms are slated for installation in the upcoming weeks.

Once completed, MTA personnel, elected officials and stakeholders will



Soonae Tark's 'Have a Happy Day' is the fully restored Buhre Avenue Station's art installation.
Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

unite for a ribbon cutting ceremony commemorating Buhre and Zerega's reopening.

"This is such a welcomed relief for our community and we are very glad the MTA has finally completed this project. The results look excellent and the MTA should be highly praised for how well they

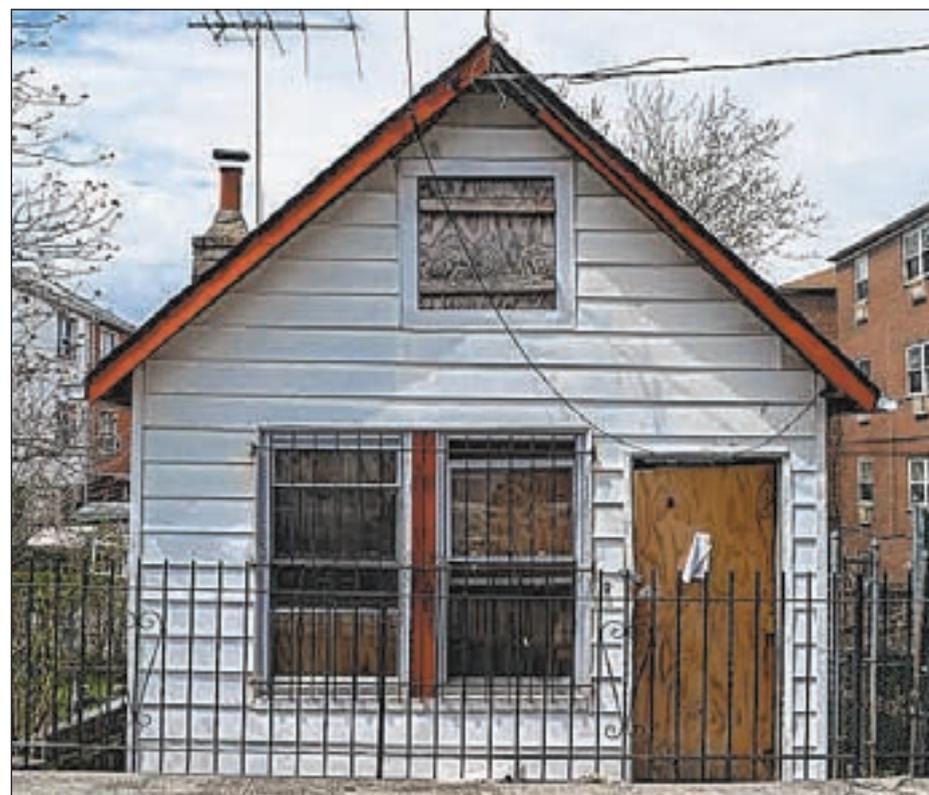
worked together with our community throughout the project's duration," Assemblyman Michael Benedetto expressed.

"It's great news for all of us that these two very important neighborhood stations are now open. It's a huge relief it didn't take any longer than it already has," Councilman James Vacca said.

"As the closure of the Buhre and Zerega Avenue stops posed an inconvenience for many, I'm happy to hear the MTA reopened these stops this week without further delay. I applaud the MTA for their continued work to both improve service and provide a safe, secure ride for all New Yorkers," said Senator Jeff Klein.

"I take the train from the Buhre Avenue station in the morning and this morning was my first time. It looks great with the new artwork and it is also very clean. I hope they continue to maintain this station for many more years to come," Nicole Luciano, a Pelham Bay resident, said.

Additional reporting contributed by Steven Goodstein.



A 'zombie house' in Throggs Neck.

Photo courtesy of Senator Jeff Klein's office



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Bronx postmaster set to face challenges

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

The borough's new postmaster was officially sworn in during an installation ceremony at the Pregones Theater on April 24.

United States Postal Service officials, local electeds, friends and family gathered to congratulate Lilliam Rodriguez on her appointment and witness her take the oath of office.

Rodriguez started her 35-year career with the postal service as a distribution clerk in Puerto Rico, and climbed the ladder as a manager before reaching her most recent position as postmaster of San Juan.

She arrived to lead the Bronx as 'officer-in-charge' in December 2013 before being named postmaster in September.

As postmaster, Rodriguez oversees 1513 employees at 45 stations and branches throughout the borough.

The position has seen a fair number of turnovers in recent years—Rodriguez is the fifth postal chief of the Bronx since 2009.

But the newest postmaster said she has no intentions of leaving soon, and would love to finish out

her career in the Bronx.

"I plan to stick around," she said.

There are a number of challenges facing the post office today, and Rodriguez acknowledged that there are issues with service in the Bronx that need to be addressed—chief among them long lines at branches and delayed delivery.

She said she has several ideas to reduce waits at the post offices through adjusting the flow of services.

For example, the lines at the Southern Boulevard location near Hunts Point had been plagued with wait times that could be hours long, Community Board 2 told the Bronx Times earlier this month.

But after meeting with elected officials and the postmaster, the post office recently installed a navigator to resolve the issue.

Rodriguez said she's been making an effort to meet with community leaders to listen to their complaints.

"I want to engage so that I can address all their concerns," she said. "I want to provide the best services, which the customer deserves."



At the installation ceremony for Bronx Postmaster Lilliam Rodriguez, (l to r:) Richard Uluski, Northeast Area vice president; Richard Fedderman, representing Congressman Eliot Engel; Thomas Messina, representing Congressman Joseph Crowley; Congressman Jose Serrano; Rodriguez; William Schnaars, district manager-NY; Juan Paz, finance manager, Caribbean District and Elvin Mercado, Postmaster, NY. Photo courtesy of the USPS

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Zeppieri & Sons wins WABC pastry contest

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

A local bakery recently won the title of 'Best Pastries' in the tri-state area during WABC radio's annual contest.

Zeppieri & Sons Italian Bakery, a Pelham Bay institution, received the most votes in the online contest this spring.

"It was a really good feeling," said owner Carmine Zeppieri Jr. about the win.

They celebrated the contest at an event in Manhattan, where they handed out samples. Watching people enjoy the pastries and hearing their feedback was really rewarding, said Carmine Zeppieri III, who works in the bakery with his father.

"It was great to see and hear that people felt that way," said Zeppieri III.

The family business has a long history in Pelham Bay, beginning when Carmine Zeppieri Sr. bought the bakery in 1968, after working at the location, previously called Al & Dom's, for 10 years, his son said.

The business started as a bread bakery, and although over the years they expanded into



Owner Carmine Zeppieri Jr. (l) with Carmine Zeppieri III at Zeppieri and Sons Italian Bakery in Pelham Bay. The bakery recently won WABC radio's annual 'Best of' contest for their pastries. Community News Group / Jaime Williams

cakes, cookies and pastries, Zeppieri Jr. said they're still best known for the bread.

"So it's a big accomplishment to get recognized for our pas-

tries," he said.

They work hard to keep up with the times, now offering trendier items like red velvet cake.

"Over the years we've kept growing and changing, adding new things while we keep it traditional," said Zeppieri Jr. Tradition means the baked

goods are all still made from

scratch with fresh ingredients, like the old-fashioned custard they use.

And Italian classics, such as sfogiatelli, a fan-shaped pastry with a cheese filling, are still churned out despite the fact that they're labor intensive and take days to make.

Tradition is important to the family, who have become a permanent part of the neighborhood over the more than 50 years they've been baking.

"There's a sense of pride," said Zeppieri Jr. about the place.

The bakery was a second home to all the Zeppieri kids growing up, he said. At one point both his brothers worked there with him, and his daughter is now involved in the marketing of the business, in addition to his son working at his side.

And the shop is where not just the family business, but the family, began—Zeppieri Sr. met the family's matriarch when she was a sales girl at the bakery, and his sons have had similar fortune.

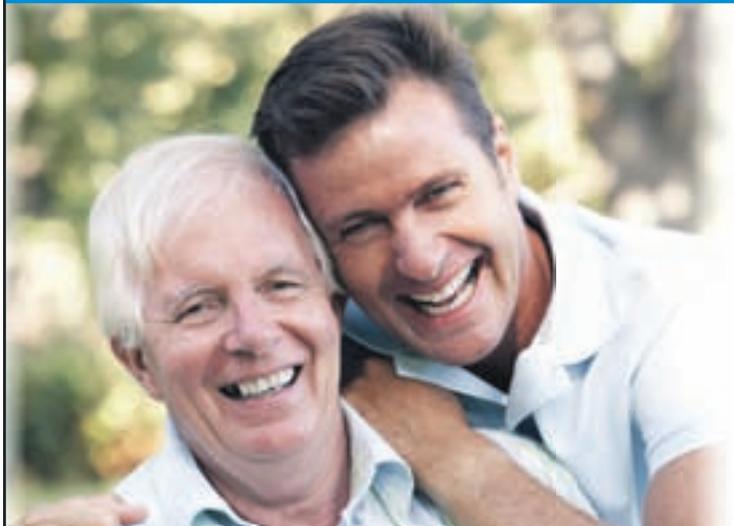
"It's more than just a bakery to us," said Zeppieri III.

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Albanians' wartime heroism recognized in Albany

BY ROBERT WIRSING

An untold story of World War II heroism will soon be shared just in time for the war's soon approaching 70th anniversary.

On Tuesday, May 5 from noon to 3 p.m., Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj and Senator Jeff Klein will commemorate the 70th anniversary of WWII's end as well as the heroic actions of Albanians safeguarding the Jewish population.

All are invited to attend the Albany-based event being held inside the Assembly Parlor's Room 306 located on the New York State Capitol Building's 3rd floor.

Limited transportation to this event will be provided and veterans from all eras, especially WWII, are invited to attend this prestigious event.

To RSVP, contact Nathalia Fernandez at (646) 966-3537, Ilirjan Fundo at

(917) 459-8912, Sebastian Levenson at (212) 239-7323 or email assemblymangjonajevents@gmail.com.

The event's reception will feature a trailer for the documentary, 'BESA the Promise,' in addition to the traveling exhibition, 'BESA: Albanians that saved Jews during WWII,' a display of photographs and stories depicting the real life compassion and altruism exhibited by ordinary citizens saving others from tyranny.

The 86-minute documentary follows Rexhep Hoxha, Muslim Albanian toy maker who sets off 60 years after the war to fulfil a 'besa' made to the Jewish family his father rescued during the Holocaust by returning three precious books to the family's last surviving member.

Assemblyman Gjonaj explained 'besa' is a code of honor deeply rooted in Albanian customs where



'BESA: The Promise' is a documentary detailing the never-before-told story of Albanians harboring and protecting Jews during WWII
Photo courtesy of Eye Contact Foundation

one takes responsibility for helping those in need and being hospitable regardless of a person's personal or religious beliefs.

During WWII, Albanians, a majority of whom were Muslim, harbored and protected Jews who lived among them as part of their family.

"Albania was one of the few countries to have more Jews after the Second World War ended than before it started. The reason was because over 2,000 Jews fled the Nazi regime's persecution and entered Albania which was a safe haven during the war," he revealed.

During WWII the country offered Jewish refugees shelter, but after the war, the Communist regime demanded Albanians sever all ties with their Jewish compatriots.

The upcoming historical reception will feature Albanian president H.E. Bujar Nishani as its keynote speaker; photographer Norman Gershman as guest of honor; and special guest Professor Mordecai Paldiel, Ph.D., the Department of the Righteous at Yad Vashem's former director.

Klein and Gjonaj will read a proclamation honoring Gershman and at 3 p.m. both NYS legislative houses will read resolutions commemorating Albanians for aiding the Jews during the Holocaust as well as WWII's 70th anniversary.

"I'm proud we're having this event at the state capital to honor our veterans and their families

as well as having this untold story of heroism shared during today's uncertain climate and worldwide tensions," Gjonaj expressed. "These incredible stories of compassion and courage help reaffirm the goodness in humanity."

"As the grandson of Holocaust survivors, I am especially moved by and thankful to those who risked their lives to shelter and protect millions of Jewish refugees during one of the darkest chapters in human history," Senator Klein shared.

"The 70th anniversary of the end of World War II marks a time of deep reflection for us all. I am humbled by the remarkable efforts of the Albanians to help the Jewish population during this tragic period and also the work of the photographer Norman Gershman who was able to document this story."

7th Annual Fair @ The Square set

BY ROBERT WIRSING

After a harsh winter and unseasonably cold spring, Westchester Square's 'Fair @ The Square' is bringing some much needed summertime fun to our borough.

The 7th Annual Fair @ The Square is set for Saturday, June 20 from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. and will occupy Westchester Square's streets between St. Raymond and Westchester avenues.

This free annual event presented by the Westchester Square Business Improvement District and Image Marketing promotes Westchester Square's diverse and thriving community.

The Westchester Square Merchants Association, in partnership with the Bronx Council on the Arts and NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, invites all to attend this event.

For more information, call (718) 395-1932.

According to Lisa Sorin, WSBID executive director,

approximately 6,000 people are expected to attend this yearly event which will feature a full array of live musical performances, family fun, vendors, food, jewelry crafting, beauty products, coupons and raffles, donated books from the Huntington Free Library and Metro Optics vision screenings.

"This is only my third Fair @ The Square as Westchester Square BID's executive director and I have seen this event grow from a block party to a full-blown fair complete with live performances and family friendly entertainment.

"We are very particular in selecting our musical acts which span all genres and generations and as the community has grown, so, too has the fair," she said.

The multicultural event attracts thousands of fairgoers throughout the day and boasts an all day concert series hosted by Dennis 'Dion' Nardone of WVOX 1460AM Radio; Valerie

Smaldone, New York's 106.7 Lite FM's former #1 radio host and five-time Billboard Magazine Awards winner, and Artie Rodriguez of the Diamante Show.

According to Sorin, this series will feature approximately 15 such popular area artists as Just Nuts, New York's premier party band; the King, an Elvis impersonator; Gene DiNapoli; FDR Drive; Matt Violinist; Brenda K. Starr, and many more with the best contemporary Latin and Hip Hop scenes taking the stage.

She added there will be around 10 to 12 acts headlining the youth and community performances at Owen Dolen Park featuring kid DJ Alden, local community singers and dancers, and even a 'little king' kid Elvis!

Further, this year's edition will feature the Bronx Council on the Arts' artisans showcasing local artists' works, a MTA antique bus, and a kid's activity area which includes face

painting and arts and crafts by the Westchester Square-Zerega Improvement Organization.

A FDNY Smoke House and antique fire engine, a rock wall, various games, exhibits and other fun family activities as well as a parade of merchants and vendors displaying their products, services, and wares will be prominent.

"The Fair @ The Square is part of a longstanding tradition and vision of making Westchester Square the premier place to shop and and visit. This is a day of music, entertainment, and family fun and is the perfect opportunity for everyone to visit, sit back and enjoy as well as celebrate the life that is all around us," Sorin expressed.

Sorin would like to thank the organizations, elected officials, sponsors, performers, and WSBID board of directors for their help in making 2015's Fair @ The Square possible.



Part of a musical performance from last year's Fair @ the Square.

File Photo

Old courthouse reopens to art displays

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

After almost four decades of inactivity, a landmarked courthouse has re-opened to the public - with multiple purposes.

On Thursday, April 23, No Longer Empty, an organization that has been instrumental in revitalizing the Old Bronx Borough Courthouse, held an opening reception for their new art exhibit 'When You Cut into the Present the Future Leaks Out' at the courthouse's location on 878 Brook Avenue at the intersection of East 161st Street and Third Avenue.

For the exhibit, 27 New York artists were invited to use the courthouse as a creative production site, a character in a film, a sculptural form, a setting for dance performers and a locale for community gatherings. Selected artwork and site-specific installations in sculpture, fresco painting, sound and video are installed throughout the lower level, ground floor and first floor.

The art exhibition will run from Thursday, April 23 to Sunday, July 19, giving all partici-

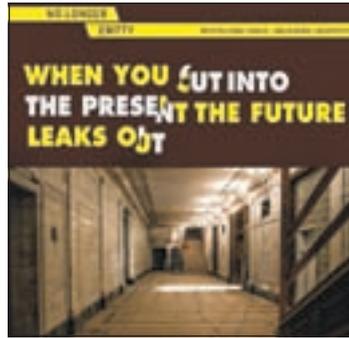
pating artists a chance to display their projects inside the renovated, but historic landmark.

Along with the exhibit, No Longer Empty will also host public programs and activities, adding up to an estimated 20 events in the three-month span.

Some of these events will include Bronx Fashion Week on Saturday, May 9 (time TBA) and the Teens Curate Teens exhibition opening and Teen Day from 1 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 16. An Urban Gardening Workshop was held on Saturday, April 25. All events are free and open to the public.

The courthouse will also host other events, including the New York Public Library Community Oral History Project, which will be an evening of dance and performance with the Bronx Academy of Arts, as well as walking tours by Ed Garcia Conde, founder and editor of Welcome2TheBronx. The dates and times of these two events have yet to be announced.

In collaboration with the



No Longer Empty's new art exhibition, 'When You Cut into the Present the Future Leaks Out', runs from now until Sunday, July 19, and kicks off the reopening of the Old Bronx Borough Courthouse to the public.

Photo courtesy of Whitney Browne Photography

South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation and the Bronx Music Heritage Center, along with other community partners, No Longer Empty has successfully reopened and restored the courthouse after its doors and windows were sealed 37 years ago.

In February, the organization received a Neighborhood Challenge Initiative grant of \$60,000 to put towards the courthouse.

"The process of putting up this show, as always with our projects, is one of collaboration - with the artists, with the site and with local, cultural and community organizations as well as educators," said Naomi Hersson Ringskog, executive director of No Longer Empty.

"For the residents of the neighborhood, this building is a very familiar landmark they have passed by daily for years without entering and we (No Longer Empty), along with our collaborators, are excited to give them an opportunity to see the interior of the (Old Bronx Borough) courthouse that has been closed to the public for so long," she added.

The four-story, Beaux-Arts style courthouse was constructed between 1905 and 1914 by architects Michael John Garvin and Oscar Florianus Bluemner.

However, after the popula-

tion of the Bronx nearly doubled between 1920 and 1930, the courthouse was deemed inadequate for the increase in court cases due to the growing population, as it was originally intended to house just the Supreme Court.

The Surrogate's Court was moved to the Bronx Supreme Courthouse, located at 851 Grand Concourse and East 161st Street, shortly after it was completed in 1934, which left only the Criminal Court in the Old Bronx Borough Courthouse. It housed the Criminal Court until the early 1970's, when the building went into decline.

Its doors and windows were officially sealed in 1977. In 1981 it was landmarked and eventually become storage space for public art.

Thanks to No Longer Empty and other community partners, artwork in the Old Bronx Borough Courthouse will not be stored away. Instead, the courthouse will proudly display the artwork from some of New York's best artists in a historic setting.

After weeks, DEP repairs leaking hydrant

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A broken fire hydrant that was running water for weeks was finally fixed.

According to neighborhood residents, a fire hydrant located on the corner of Randall and Calhoun avenues that had been uncontrollably gushing water for about three weeks has finally been repaired.

The problem began at the beginning of the month, when local residents called 311 repeatedly in attempts to fix the broken hydrant but were not initially responded to.

Some residents even filed complaints with the Department of Environmental Protection and the FDNY, but no action resulted.

"I filed numerous complaints with 311, the DEP, as well as the fire department, which were not responded to for weeks," said Evan Wilder, a Throggs Neck resident. "All that was accomplished in that two-week period was that a cone was put next to and on top of the fire hydrant while it continued to gush water."

A two-liter plastic container was also placed under the running water to contain the excess spillage, which

accomplished little, considering the fact that fire hydrants with red tops run hundreds of gallons of water per minute and fire hydrants with orange tops run between 501-1000 gallons per minute. The type of fire hydrant has not been confirmed.

Concerned residents, began to worry about low water pressure and high water bills, as well as the environment as a whole.

"Given the drought in California and elsewhere in the southwest part of the United States, I find it absolutely deplorable that such a simple problem was allowed to persist for so long - it's city negligence," said Wilder.

Finally, about two weeks after the fire hydrant problem began, the Department of Environmental Protection went to the location to attempt a repair, but to no avail after three tries.

The following week, however the fire hydrant was finally repaired by the DEP, who had to open up the concrete sidewalk to get to the problem.

They determined that the cause of the water leak was a broken valve in the hydrant.



A fire hydrant located on Randall and Calhoun avenues was running water non-stop for about three weeks before it was fixed by the DEP.

Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

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NYPL expands Wi-Fi lending program

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

The New York Public Library is getting hotter - for Internet users.

The second round of the NYPL's Wi-Fi hotspot lending program was announced by NYPL officials and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito on April 23 at the Mott Haven Library.

The program, first introduced in December, allows library patrons who cannot afford Internet at home to borrow the devices for up to a year.

"The goal simply is to provide more Internet access to those that don't have it," said Mark-Viverito of the initiative, calling the Internet a necessity in this day and age.

NYPL president Tony Marx said there are an estimated 2 million New Yorkers who cannot afford the Internet, despite the fact that connectivity is required more and more often for ordinary tasks such as doing homework or applying for jobs.

People rely on the libraries for Internet, said Marx, and branches regularly see patrons sitting outside before or after the library opens, trying to use the signal during the off-hours.

"We can't be having our fellow



A library patron and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito check out a Wi-Fi hotspot at the Mott Haven Library on April 23. Photo courtesy of the NYPL

citizens picking up crumbs of Internet that bleed through closed doors," said Marx.

The Library HotSpot program aims to help close the 'digital divide' between those who can afford Internet and those who can't.

The first round of lending was reserved for patrons who either themselves or their children were

enrolled in one of the library's educational program, but now eligibility to borrow a device has been expanded to anyone over 18 with a fine-free library card.

The hotspots will be available during lending events at 11 NYPL branches in high-need neighborhoods throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island from now

through May 5. Bronx locations include Hunts Point, Melrose, Edenwald and the Bronx Library Center. The library plans to increase the number of sites offering the program over the summer.

The initiative was funded by a partnership between the city, the NYPL, Google, the Knight Foundation, the Robin Hood Foundation,

and the Open Society Foundation.

"The library and Google, we share a mission," said William Floyd, head of external affairs for Google New York. "We're both dedicated to making the world's information universally accessible to everyone."

At the announcement, program participant Olivia Tecualt, translated by Mark-Viverito, said that having Internet at home has helped her to be a more engaged parent. Her kids are now able to complete their assignments at home, where she can help, and when she has trouble understanding instructions in English, the Internet can help provide her with translations.

Mott Haven resident, Maria Garcia, was excited to pick up her Wi-Fi hot spot at the lending event after the announcement.

She's involved in a college prep program with a lot of homework that requires the Internet, and said she'd been using the Internet at her boyfriend's home to complete her work. She's looking forward to being able to do her assignments at home now.

"It'll benefit me so much," said Garcia.

2015 Bronx Week honorees

from Page 1

The Bronx," said Diaz. "Great things are happening in our borough, and I urge our borough's residents and visitors alike to spend the week celebrating the contributions of our Bronx businesses, veterans, seniors, youth, volunteers and our hometown greats."

The honorees will have street signs dedicated in their honor on the walk of fame. All have roots in the Bronx, and Thiebaud was a fixture in the borough's business community as the founder of Delicioso Coco Helado before his untimely accidental death.

Dash may be best known for her role in the 1995 film 'Clueless' and as a contributor to Fox News, where she is a commentator on culture.

"I am very grateful to have been chosen to be a part of such an important and significant event in the borough of my birth, a place that left an impact in my life and made me who I am - Bronx Strong," said Dash, who has appeared in numerous television and film roles.

NBA all-star Dolph Schayes grew up in University Heights and led the Dewitt Clinton High School basketball team to a borough championship

in the 1940.

He played in 12 NBA All Star Games and six All-NBA first teams.

"Growing up in the Bronx made a huge impact on my life and made me who I am," said Schayes. "This borough is very special to me and I am very grateful to be recognized by Borough President Diaz."

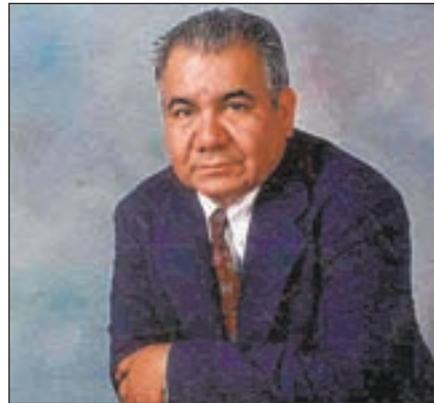
Thiebaud helped create work for borough residents and brighten the spirits of those who enjoyed and continue to enjoy his flavored ice in summer.

"Alfredo was a friend, and he was someone the people of the Bronx could always count on for support. He created thousands of jobs during his career, and his business has become synonymous with summer in New York City," said Diaz.

Yoba is an actor in Fox's, Empire, a hip-hop drama that centers on a music industry heavyweight who is about to take his company public.

"This is an honor to be inducted into the Bronx Walk of Fame, a borough that taught me the values of life and giving back to the community," said Yoba.

Diaz will be announcing more about Bronx Week 2015 at a press conference scheduled for Sunday, May 3.



Alfredo Thiebaud

Photos courtesy of the Borough President Diaz's office



Dolph Schayes



Stacey Dash



Malik Yoba

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