

## Mall at Bay Plaza's anniversary

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

The Mall at Bay Plaza celebrated its first birthday last week.

Prestige Properties, elected officials and shoppers gathered on Friday, August 14 to mark the anniversary of the mall's opening.

The 780,000 square foot mall opened to great fanfare last year, and is now home to over a hundred stores and numerous restaurants.

"It's a big day for us and the Bronx," said Sam Shalem, chairman and CEO of Prestige Properties and Development Co. Inc., the mall's owner and developer.

Elected officials touted the mall, which was the first enclosed shopping center built in the city in about 40 years, as a major achievement for the Bronx.

"Where they said it couldn't be done, it was done, and it was done in spades," said Assemblyman Michael Benedetto. "It's wonderful when a dream comes through."

The mall has created about 1,700 permanent jobs, said Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation president Marlene Cintron, many of whom were hired at the Department of Labor's job fair at the site, which was attended by more than 3,000 people.

"It's projects like this that make such a difference for Bronx residents," said Cintron.

The mall has also brought the state \$12 million in tax revenue so far, which more than covered what the state invested in associated highway improvements, she said.

Attendees at the ceremony also applauded the arrival of a convenient shopping center with a multitude of upscale stores in one place.

"I don't have to go to Westchester county anymore, I don't have to go to the palisades, I can stay here in my home borough of the Bronx," said Jamaal Bailey, a representative for Assembly Speaker Carl

*Continued on Page 4*

# PB BUILDING SWEATS OUT ELEVATOR REPAIRS



## Picture Perfect!

Bryce Quinones, 2, paints at the Police Athletic League's Bronx Borough Celebration Day on Saturday, August 15. Children enjoyed a tug-of-war competition, carnival games, inflatable obstacle courses, jumbo-sized board games, face painting and basketball.

## Tenants endure stair-climbing summer for past 2 months

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

It's been a long hot and frustrating summer for the 50 families living in a Pelham Bay building.

With the thermometer hitting near-record breaking temperatures, the residents of 1650 Hutchinson River Parkway have had to endure a non-working elevator for the past two months.

The situation is not new for this six-story building and continues a trend of elevator issues that have plagued the tenants for years.

The building's lone elevator has been experiencing problems for

easily over a decade, according to the building's residents.

To make matters worse, residents were told by the landlord that it won't be working again until the middle of September.

"This has been a consistent problem for at least ten years," said resident Ann Colucci, who has lived in the building for 37 years. "Sometimes the elevator is out for a day, sometimes a week and now it's not working at all. This has left many residents feeling helpless and making us wonder what we

*Continued on Page 4*

## Housing boom in Pelham Bay

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A building trend that many leaders in Pelham Bay and other Bronx neighborhoods found troublesome looks like it is back.

The rapid development of multiple-family dwellings in east Bronx areas where there is currently a mix of apartment buildings and private homes seems to be increasing dramatically after the 2008-09 recession brought many of these projects to a standstill.

Councilman James Vacca has noticed a massive uptick in Department of Buildings filings for new construction of multiple-family dwellings in Pelham Bay and Pelham Parkway, recently.

The councilman has recently located DOB documents pertain-

ing to new projects at 3066 Buhre Avenue, 1701 Parkview Avenue and 3109 Buhre Avenue, among others in community boards 10 and 11.

Another building was recently completed at 3064 Buhre Avenue.

"The building boom is back," said Vacca. "People are going to be seeing a lot of new construction and it is going to be significant."

In some cases, smaller homes are being torn down to make way for 18- to 25-unit buildings in locations where the zoning permits it, like Pelham Bay, which has a stock of older apartment buildings constructed before World War II.

This is a problematic trend  
*Continued on Page 11*

# Documenting 311 complaints can be difficult

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

What started with great fanfare and expectations is today a mere shadow of its earlier self, claim many disgruntled users.

New York City's 311 complaint line has residents frustrated on how to properly file a report.

The phone operator's insistence of an exact address location when reporting a pothole or requesting a street light repair has many caring citizens wondering why isn't the agency being more user-friendly.

Other complaints made by residents, noted Community Board 11 district manager Jeremy Warneke, include the lack of follow up on their complaints.

According to Bronx residents, attempts to file a complaint using cross streets or street corners instead of an actual address number are

The service was great when it was first started, but now they transfer you around the department and nothing ever results from it. Something needs to be done.

Linda Fishman

rejected by the service.

However, there are many properties in the Bronx that don't post an address such as 2443 Poplar Street, 1750 Melville Street, 843 and 845 Morris Park Avenue as well as 1665 Yates Avenue, said Warneke.

This makes it difficult to identify the exact location, he pointed out.

As a result, 311 has refused to file these complaints.

"I stopped calling 311 after a while because

it was becoming such a waste of time," said Linda Fishman, who has been without elevator service in her building for over two months, and has filed multiple complaints with the 311 and the Department of Buildings with an address number but, still, has not yet been responded to.

"The service was great when it was first started, but now they transfer you around the department and nothing ever results from it. Something needs to be done - especially regarding local complaints that aren't connected to the number of a building - because an address can't always be found."

In other cases, when residents call 311 to place a complaint, the 311 operator refers the call to the Department of Buildings.

However, according a 311 caller who wished to remain anonymous, DOB

will not respond to the complaints because they have not been issued a 311 complaint number.

Because of this policy, the city agency is unable to act on the complaint

The portion of the Hutchinson River Parkway service road that

travels underneath the Whitestone Bridge, 'The Ring Road', has, for years, been the subject of complaints that usually can't be documented or filed with 311 due to the lack of address information.

Warneke advised resi-

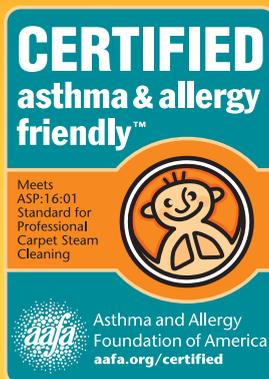
dents to document their complaints with 311 again and again and obtain a 311 complaint number so it can be tracked.

If not responded to, Warneke encourages residents to call Bronx Customer Service at (718) 960-4710.



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# Pelham Bay tenants forced to endure an elevator-less summer

from Page 1  
can do about it."

This scenario has been especially difficult for Mel Fishman, who has lived in the building with his wife, Linda, for almost 20 years.

On June 19, Mel returned from the hospital after undergoing open heart and triple bypass surgery as well as a heart valve replacement.

When he arrived home, he was approached by an elevator repair service employee who told him there was an elevator problem.

Mel had to endure a five-hour wait before the elevator was ready to manually take him to his fifth floor apartment.

"That situation was a true horror," said Mel's wife, Linda. "My husband needs to see his doctor, cardiologist and heart surgeon, and he can't leave the apartment unless the elevator is working again. In reality, the landlord needs to stop repairing the elevator and replace it with a new elevator altogether."

"We have 80-year old residents and parents carrying strollers in this building - how are they supposed to get up and down the stairs safely?"

"Although the elevator has had a chronic break down history over the last 10-12 years, this particular situation is the worst that it has ever been since I've lived here," said Mel. "(The landlord) says that the elevator won't be fixed until mid-September, but after the elevator is repaired, it has to be inspected, which could take at least two to three more weeks, so (residents) will not see a working elevator until the end of September at the earliest. After all these issues, how does the landlord not understand that we need a new elevator?" he added.

Both Mel and Linda filed multiple complaints with 311 and the Department of Buildings throughout the summer but have not yet been responded to.

According to the DOB website, this building has received over a dozen elevator violations since 2002.

"There are residents in this building suffering without a working elevator while the landlord and superintendent are on vacation - they could care less," Mel added.

According to residents, landlord Amanda Jankovic of Rok Realty Corp has hired at least six different repair companies in the last decade.

Residents believe she switches repair firms when she is told that she needs to re-

place the entire elevator - which she is not willing to do.

She then proceeds to hire a new elevator company altogether, someone that will comply to her wishes.

The elevator was previously out of order for nearly a month, along with the gas service, in 2012.

During the past year, residents claim the elevator has been out at least one day per week.

Senator Jeff Klein has been working with DOB to ensure timely completion of repairs, while also working with the Division of Housing & Community Renewal to receive rent reductions for tenants who have lacked elevator service in the past months.

Councilman James Vacca is also involved and currently has legislation pending that would make the landlord economically responsible for the installation of new elevators as well as entitle residents to rent reductions.

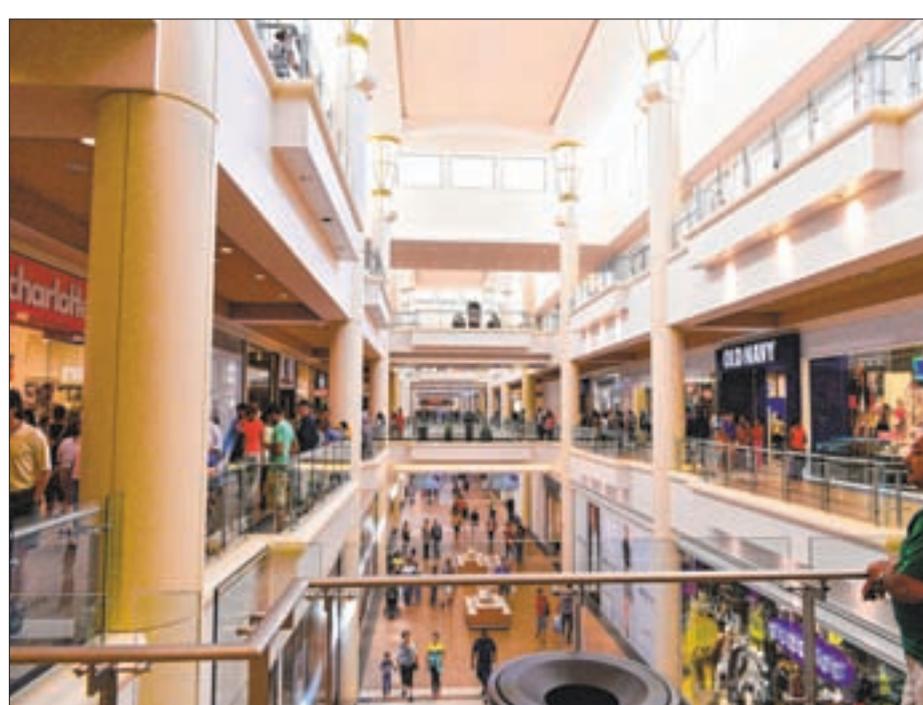
"A situation that has senior citizens and disabled individuals climbing steps with no option for an elevator is absolutely unacceptable," Vacca said.

Jankovic could not be reached for comment.



(Right) Residents in 1650 Hutchinson River Parkway have been without their only elevator for over two months. The inconvenience is expected to continue for at least another month.

Steven Goodstein / Community News Group



The Mall at Bay Plaza on opening day, August 14, 2014.

File photo

## Mall at Bay Plaza celebrates its first anniversary

from Page 1

Heastie.

"You don't have to go outside our neighborhood anymore to hit big name stores," said John Marano, vice chair of Community Board 10.

The board has also been pleased that Prestige Properties has been receptive to concerns, especially about

traffic, said Marano.

"Their doors are always open for us," he said.

And those major traffic concerns have gone largely unrealized, said Benedetto, thanks to the city and state Department of Transportation's attention to the issue.

"It's no where near the problem people said it was

going to be," said Benedetto.

Nevertheless, city and state officials are still looking for ways to better the situation, he said.

"We are continuing to work on transportation improvements to get people in and out of Co-op City and the Bay Plaza Mall in a speedy efficient way."



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# More funding ends BCA headquarters delay

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

The total renovation of the future Bronx Council on the Arts headquarters in Westchester Square has been on hold for the past four years due to inadequate city funding.

The process began back in 2011, when Chase donated the former Washington Mutual Branch at 2700 E. Tremont Avenue to the BCA.

Councilman James Vacca, who has twice allocated money for the project along with Borough President Diaz, said the project is now expected to be completed over the next 18 to 24 months.

"This whole process has taken much too long," said Vacca.

The long wait time has been very disappointing for the neighborhood, said Lisa Sorin, director of the Westchester Square Business Improvement District.

The NYC Department of Design and Construction initially solicited bids for the project last year, but the bids came in above budget and an additional \$1.3 million had to be requested and allocated in the next fiscal year's budget, according to a spokeswoman for the department.

A total of \$5.1 million has now been earmarked towards the gut renova-

tion.

That second round of bids opened on August 14 and the city is currently at the beginning of the pre-award process, according to the DDC, and construction is estimated to begin in the spring of 2016.

Now that all the money is there, the city needs to move swiftly and spend it, said Vacca.

In the meantime, the Bronx Council on the Arts continues to offer programming in Westchester Square and at other locations.

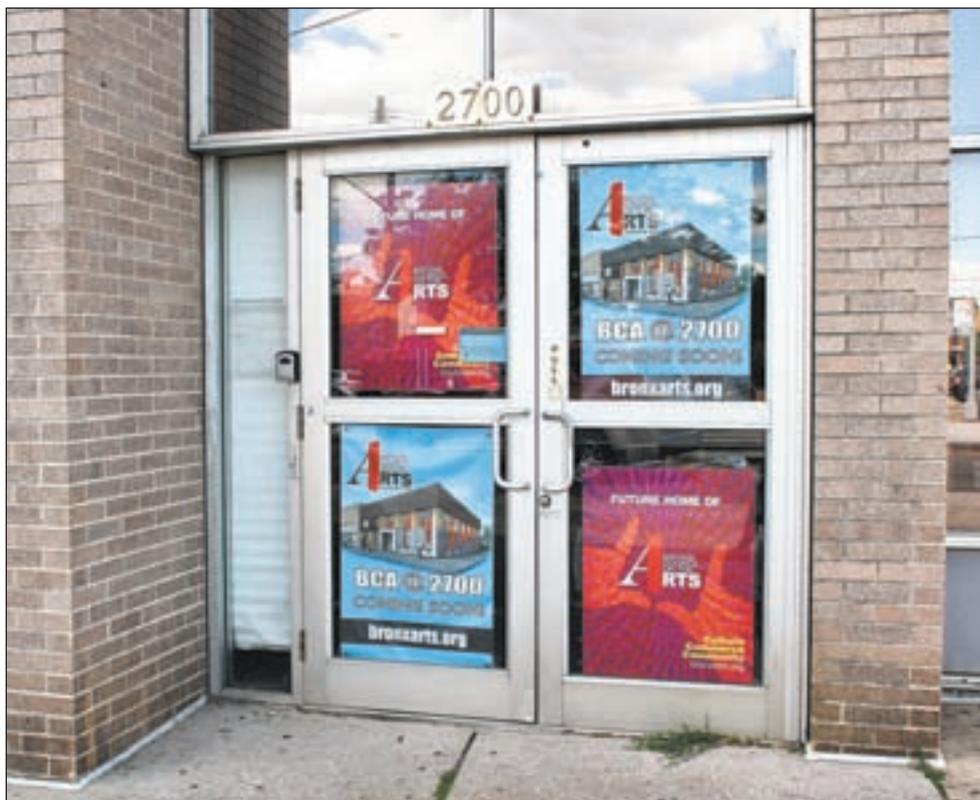
"While we're waiting for the brick and mortar location, the relationship continues to grow," said Sorin.

But the BID is extremely eager for the addition of more arts and culture to the neighborhood that will come with the new headquarters.

"I know that once it's up and running in the district, it will shed a whole new light on the area," said Sorin.

BCA will be an important element of the overall revitalization of Westchester Square, said Vacca, which has included other projects he's funded like the renovation of Owen Dolen Park, and he's eager as well for its arrival.

"I'm looking forward to the city moving on this," said Vacca.



(Right) The former Washington Mutual branch at 2700 E. Tremont Avenue was donated to the Bronx Council on the Arts in 2011 to be the site of their future headquarters. Community News Group / Jaime Williams

## Demand for crackdown on synthetic marijuana

BY ROBERT WIRSING

Bronx elected officials, community leaders and health officials are looking to finally 'snub out' synthetic marijuana sales.

At a Wednesday, August 12 press conference at Jacobi Hospital's Trauma Center, Senator Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, Director of Behavioral Health Services at North Bronx Healthcare Network Dr. Maryann Popiel, Director of the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program at Jacobi Hospital Dr. Benjamin Raatjes, community leaders and health officials demanded a crackdown on synthetic marijuana sales.

Working with community leaders and health officials, Klein's office has identified 24 Bronx stores allegedly selling vibrant, cleverly named packets of synthetic marijuana and staff at the senator's office had purchased K2 at



'Mardi Gras Premium Natural Blend' is one example of K2 synthetic marijuana purchased during an undercover operation recently conducted by Senator Klein's office. Photos courtesy of Senator Jeff Klein's Office

EZ-Pass Gourmet Deli and Hairth Deli Grocery Corp in the past week.

"Synthetic marijuana is dangerous and poses a very real public health threat to New Yorkers, their families and children as at least ten patients a week are rushed

through the emergency room at Jacobi Hospital displaying frightening, erratic behavior associated with K2 use," said Senator Klein.

To combat "spice" sales resulting in nearly 700 emergency room visits at three Bronx hospitals in recent months, the senator has introduced new legislation to fortify criminal and civil penalties to keep ahead of the synthetic drug trade.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, "spice" refers to a wide range of herbal mixtures producing similar effects as marijuana and are marketed as a 'safe,' legal alternative under such names as 'K2', 'fake weed', 'Yucatan Fire', 'Skunk' and 'Moon Rocks'.

These products are labeled "not for human consumption" as they contain dried, shredded plant material and chemical additives

resulting in their mind-altering effects.

Synthetic marijuana is known to cause 'Excited Delirium Syndrome,' a state of extreme mental and physiological excitement associated with violent behavior, seizures, high blood pressure and elevated body temperature among many other symptoms.

"The biggest misconception about synthetic marijuana is that it's anything like actual cannabis," said Dr. Raatjes. "These are dangerous chemicals sprayed onto plant matter that can be overwhelming to those using these drugs."

The K2 epidemic is prolific due to how easy chemists are able to continually tweak their formulas to subvert existing laws and regulations.

In an undercover purchase made by member of Klein's staff, a Bronx bodega owner retrieved 'Smacked' along with other K2 brands



'Black Giant', like many brands of K2 synthetic marijuana, is being marketed as "herbal potpourri" to the public.

hidden beneath the counter when requested by the customer and only charged \$5 for each five gram bag.

"These drugs are easily accessible and are being marketed to children right in our backyard," said Assemblyman Gjonaj. "We must prevent the sale of these dangerous and life-threatening products."

Senator Klein will introduce new legislation adding 'synthetic cannabinoids' to the pre-existing crimes of selling marijuana under New York State's penal law.

His legislation provides five degrees of criminal sale, ranging from class B misdemeanor to a class C felony dependent on the weight of synthetic cannabinoid sold.

Klein also introduced legislation banning the sale of synthetic marijuana under general business law and will increase penalties bringing the first violation to \$2,000, the second to \$5,000 and third violation resulting in the loss of a store owner's liquor, tobacco and lottery license.

The senator will host a Friday, October 9 summit on synthetic cannabinoids at Jacobi Hospital with legislators, law enforcement and the medical community.

# Ghetto Film School in contention for award

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

One Bronx-based organization is being recognized for its work educating the next generation of filmmakers.

The Ghetto Film School was recently named a semifinalist in the 9th annual New York Community Trust Nonprofit Excellence Awards.

The film school is one of ten semifinalists across the five boroughs, Westchester and Long Island who are in the running to win \$60,000 in prizes as well as tuition scholarships for the Columbia Business School Executive Education Programs in Social Enterprise.

Six finalists and then three winners will be announced later this year.

The Ghetto Film School was founded by president Joe Hall and started as a summer program out of a store front in Hunts Point almost 15 years ago.

It transitioned into a full-time program in 2004 in Mott Haven and later opened the nation's first public film school with the Department of Education in 2009 called The Cinema School.

The idea rose out of Hall's experience at film school at University of Southern California, where he realized there was a lack of diversity in film making, said GFS artistic director Derrick Cameron.

So he returned to the Bronx, where he had roots as a community organizer, and started teaching high school students film.

In addition to providing programming for The Cinema School's film curriculum, GFS also offers an intensive fellowship for a select group of the Cinema School's junior and seniors with after-school and Saturday programming. They also run the Digital Bodega, a professional produc-

tion company that gives alumni paid opportunities to grow their film reel and supports GFS with additional revenue.

GFS also provides instruction for students about professional skills like networking, and helps them establish contacts in the business, said Cameron, and a recently established outpost in L.A. will support students if they move west to pursue the craft.

"We're the Coppola family for students that don't have connections in the industry," said Cameron.

In addition to teaching teens how to write scripts, work a camera, and use editing programs, a film-making education also provides lessons about collaboration, problem solving, and empathy, said Cameron, which are valuable whether or not they decide to pursue careers in the field.

"Storytelling in general lends itself to trans-

ferable skills," said Cameron.

A recent graduate of the Cinema School and participant in the fellowship, Natalie Popoter, said GFS helped her grow and gave her real-world skills.

"This program really helps you see things, and not just from the filmmaker perspective," she said.

Popoter recently traveled with a small group of students to produce a film in Spain based on a script she wrote, which she called a life-changing experience, thanks to GFS.

Being part of the NYCT's ongoing awards process has given GFS a chance to evaluate the many things they're doing, said Cameron.

"It really allows you to reflect as an organization," he said.

The 10-month process involves application workshops and multiple rounds of interviews that



Students from The Ghetto Film School shoot a film in Spain during a recent trip. Photo courtesy of Ghetto Film School

act as a kind of group training and coaching for the more than 50 nonprofits who participate, said Michael Clark, president of the Nonprofit Coordinating Committee, which created the Nonprofit Excellence Awards in collaboration with NYCT and Philanthropy New York.

"It's a lot of work,

but people keep coming back," said Clark. "It amounts to expert consulting."

The awards are sponsored by WNYC as well as supported by The Clark Foundation, Ford Foundation, McGladrey LLP, and Columbia Business School Executive Education Programs in Social Enterprise.

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# City Island Civic prez co-writes crime novel

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A local civic association president, who is a private sector security expert, has written a novel with a former journalist about two characters in search of justice in a world inhabited by corrupt politicians and police officials.

The fictional piece by past New York Magazine journalist Craig Horowitz and Bill Stanton, City Island Civic Association president, is called *Badge of Evil*.

The book's plot centers around two characters: an investigative reporter named A.J. Ross, and a freewheeling private investigator, Frank Bishop, as they try to bring down power hungry New York City Police Commissioner Lawrence Brock.

The story hinges on Brock's take down of an alleged terrorist cell.

The flamboyant Stanton and the more reserved Horowitz both believe that their decades of knowledge of how the inner circle of New York City politics and policing works provides the novel a believable plot.

"The novel basically is a thriller that has international and homegrown terrorism, corrupt out of control cops, rap stars, drug dealers, and this kind of inside look at the corridors of power that we are able to provide because of our experiences," said Horowitz.

Stanton was once a business partner with a NYPD assistant commissioner Jack Maple, who is credited with developing the CompStat crime track-

ing system.

Horowitz penned stories about major New York crime cases, including one of the worst cases of police brutality in NYPD history: Abner Louima in 1997.

The men met while Horowitz was working on story about the Louima torture controversy. He needed a police perspective and interviewed Stanton, a former cop in the south Bronx.

The book is for adults, indicated Stanton, and it is not for the faint of heart.

A quick scan of the first few pages of a draft version of the book includes characters engaged in intravenous drug use, prostitution, stripping, sadism and masochism.

Stanton and Horowitz have a three-book deal

with publisher Regan Arts.

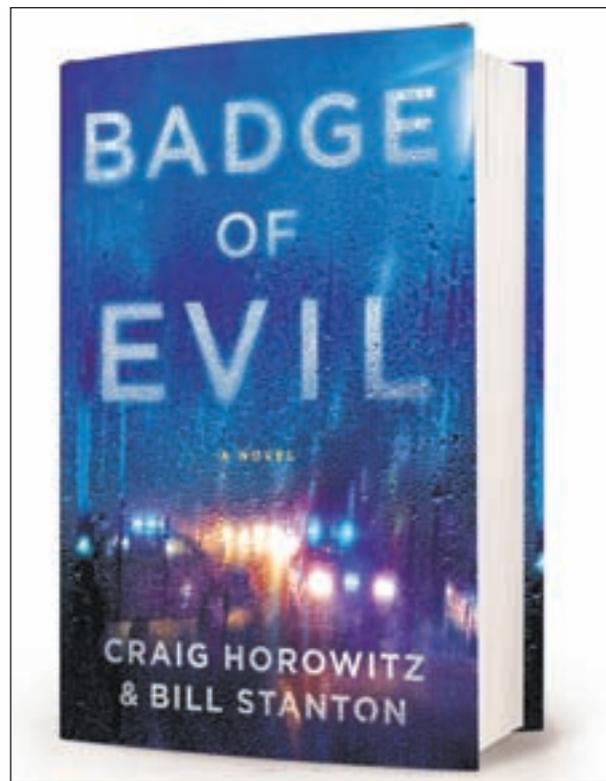
The writing process is collaborative, said Stanton, with the former private investigator coming up with general ideas for the book and then collaborating with Horowitz, a professional writer, to flush out the details.

"Everyone who knows me can say they hear my voice," said Stanton. "The irony here is that I could not articulate that voice myself. I needed my partner to capture that."

Stanton says he is more of a visual-oriented thinker, having grown up watching television.

He said that the book would not have been possible without the collaboration with Horowitz.

Stanton is also an ac-



Craig Horowitz and Bill Stanton wrote *Badge of Evil*, a new police thriller. Photo courtesy of Bill Stanton

claimed television producer and has appeared on several network specials regarding personal safety and security issues.

After 20 years in New

York City's media, covering numerous mayoral administrations and police commissioners, Horowitz now has a corporate communications career.

## Schools can breathe better in asthma battle

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

In the midst of the Legionnaires' disease outbreak, borough and state politicians recently held a press conference to discuss solutions to another important Bronx health risk.

On Wednesday, August 12, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, along with Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblyman Michael Blake, among other politicians, hosted a press conference at the Children's Aid Society to discuss the US senator's fight for new measures to ensure that New York public schools prepare for and prevent asthma attacks in the future.

During the press conference, Gillibrand introduced the School Asthma Management Plan Act, a bill to ensure that schools are equipped to prevent

and respond to students' asthma attacks.

The bill would provide funding for schools to train staff so that they are able to identify these potentially dangerous scenarios and properly respond.

Funding would also purchase medication and equipment for schools to improve classroom air quality.

According to the New York State Department of Health, approximately 34,000 children in the state were hospitalized for asthma attacks between 2011-13.

In addition, asthma causes students across the country to miss a total of 10.5 million school days.

In the borough, an estimated 9,320 children were hospitalized between 2011-13 in an area that struggles with one of the highest asthma



(l-r) Diaz, Jr., Gillibrand and Rivera take questions from the audience following the press conference.

Photo courtesy of Senator Gillibrand's office

rates in the country.

Children in schools suffering from asthma

attacks can pose as a burden for entire families, as parents are of-

ten forced to miss work and travel to accompany their children.

Asthmatic students face challenges such as staying current in classes amidst absences and participating in sport-related activities.

There have also been instances of students falling asleep in class due to having trouble breathing and sleeping the night before.

Gillibrand is now working to ensure that the bill, which was passed by state Senate last month, will be passed by the U.S. House of Representatives.

"As asthma rates across New York and the country rise due to pollutants and smog, we have to make sure our schools have the resources to prepare for and prevent asthma attacks," said Gillibrand, whose son, Theo, suffers

from asthma.

"More than 30,000 Bronx children suffer from this chronic disease, so the place where they spend so much of their time, our schools, must be ready. This legislation will make sure our schools have the resources to meet our students' health needs."

"The Bronx is grateful to Senator Gillibrand for her ongoing commitment to the health of New Yorkers and to my borough as well as for her School Asthma Management Plan Act," said Diaz, Jr., whose wife is a chronic asthmatic. "This law will provide students suffering from asthma proper help by improving the communication between their schools and physicians, and will help improve the quality of lives of those suffering, and their families, from asthma."

# Wine and dine at Bronx' food festival

BY ROBERT WIRSING

Bronxites looking to wine, dine and have a great time need only look to next month's fun-filled Bronx Food and Wine Festival.

In collaboration with Bronx Fashion Week, the first-ever 'Eat nYc the Bronx Food and Wine Festival' is set for Thursday, September 17 from 4 to 9 p.m. at the Mall at Bay Plaza.

Sponsored by Pandora Jewelry Store and Pretzelmaker, the charitable event will help the Food Bank for New York City feed 25,000 hungry men, women and children while raising public awareness about this pressing issue.

Check-in for the festival begins at 4 p.m. leading into a special performance at 4:30 p.m. to welcome the evening's guests.

Attendees will then be treated to a V.I.P. Runway Fashion Show at 5 p.m. presented by Bronx Fashion Week and the New York Fashion Chamber of Commerce showcasing the very best in avant

garde and couture hosted by the borough's own Caridad de la Luz, a.k.a. 'La Bruja'.

From 6 until 9 p.m., guests will be guided upstairs where they can sample food and beverages from some of the best local chefs and restaurants, wineries, distilleries, breweries and local craftsman of gourmet treats at a grand tasting event hosted by the Culinary Ambassador of the Bronx, 'Baron Ambrosia'.

Eat nYc ticket holders will be treated to local and celebrity chefs performing on stage live cooking demos followed by a diverse set of musical guests.

Live musical performances by QNA, a five-piece Jazz ensemble, R&B singer Kathryn F. Hoxie showcasing some of her sultry hits from her new upcoming album, 'Journey of a GemInEye', and hip hop artist Twan Da Dude performing his hit single 'Star' and 'I Run NY' are set for that evening.

On-site hand rolled Cuban cigar rollers by La Rosa Cigars will be there also.



The first-ever 'Eat nYc-The Bronx Food and Wine Festival', a collaboration between Eat nYc and Bronx Fashion Week, is set for next month at the Mall at Bay Plaza.

Photo courtesy of Eat nYc

Raffle prizes as well as 'swag bags' stuffed with giveaways and discounts from local and borough wide vendors will be available for each guest.

"This event is a culmination of fine dining and spirites provided by eateries and artisanal beverage manufac-

turers from our home town," said John Denizard, Eat nYc president and co-founder. "Celebrating the diversity, hard work and craftsmanship with flavor only the Bronx can offer."

He noted that the upcoming Bronx Food and Wine Festival is the first of its kind to incorporate all of these elements into one event.

This unique Bronx event will feature nearly 30 vendors including Havana Cafe, Don Coqui, Whoopies Miniature Dessert Co., Coqui the Chef, Limation, Crude Food, Heineken, Tabo Bakery Bar, Cafe Colonial, Enzo's Restaurant, DIG Farm, Euro Products, Arthur Avenue Italian Deli, Lady O's Coquito, Flaco Coquito, Zero Otto Nove, Da Giorgio Restaurant and many others.

"We'll have two live cooking demos for general admission guests and V.I.P.s," said Tania Lopez, Coqui the Chef founder and chief executive officer. "We're super excited for this festival and it's the

perfect opportunity to show people what we're about."

The event ends at 9 p.m. and according to Denizard, discounted local car services will be provided in front of the mall to help guests return home safely.

The Bronx Opera House Hotel will offer Eat nYc ticket holders, with proof of purchase, to book one of their remaining available rooms for the evening at a 15% discount.

To purchase tickets, visit [www.eatnycfoodandwinefest.com](http://www.eatnycfoodandwinefest.com) or visit [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com) searching for "Eat nYc The Bronx Food And Wine Festival" and enter the promo code ChefsTable for a 50% discount at checkout while limited amount of discount tickets are still available.

General admission tickets will be available for sale at the door the night of the event.

For more information about this event, contact Denizard at either (347) 621-4365 or [eatnyc2015@gmail.com](mailto:eatnyc2015@gmail.com).

## Jonathan Soto to guide CAC

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Mayor de Blasio has appointed a community organizer who got his start working with clergy in the Bronx to lead a new citywide Clergy Advisory Council.

Jonathan Soto, 30, a senior community liaison in the mayor's Community Affairs Unit, will be guiding the new citywide clergy coalition.

This comes after working extensively in the borough as policy director with the Bronx Clergy Roundtable and as the leader of Bronx Long Term Recovery Group, an organization seeking to empower affected communities to recover from Hurricane Sandy.

The Civil Rights Movement and the philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr. informs his social justice philosophy, he said, adding that he believes this new position is an oppor-

tunity to address the specific needs of individual New Yorkers, as well as systemic issues through shaping public policy.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to work with diverse faith leaders and communities, as well as partners citywide on crucial issues for our city," he said. "I look forward to working with the new Clergy Advisory Council to build an important and effective bridge between city government and residents."

Soto noted that CAC, comprised of 53 members from pretty much every faith and ethnic group that comprises the city, would seek to reach out to the outer boroughs.

"This administration has been very explicit about reaching out to the outer boroughs and traditionally underrepresented communities," he said. "So, that is going to be one

of my main tasks; and my social justice theology really kind of frames that constituent driven approach we have taken."

The CAC seeks to establish a direct line of communication between local faith leaders in all boroughs and City Hall.

One of the first conditions the coalition will address is that of homelessness, said Soto.

Soto spoke of the way he sees clergy help homeless people and those in need, providing a window into his ideas about the work of religious leaders.

"What has always caught my eye is when they approach somebody in need they don't just give them a solution for the afterlife," he said. "Their concern is (also) about their present circumstances: whether they are sick, hungry or in need of shelter."

Allfaithleadersaddress

the spiritual and earthly needs of their congregations, he said. His parents were ministers and missionaries, he also said.

When he was at the Bronx Clergy Roundtable, he worked to establish a mentoring program for young people and improve community and police relations through programming, he said.

He assisted BCR on various organizing programs.

Soto said he discovered the BCR while working for a healthcare company shortly after his graduation from Fordham University, when he attended a forum on police and community relations.

In a statement, Mayor de Blasio said that Soto had been brought on as senior liaison to facilitate the administration's engagement with religious communities.

"A seasoned and inspired community leader



Jonathan Soto Photo courtesy of New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's Office

and activist, I'm confident that Jonathan will bring us closer to communities of faith to ensure that New Yorkers can provide essential feedback and

benefit from what our city has to offer," stated the mayor.

Soto is expected to graduate from Brooklyn Law School in 2016.

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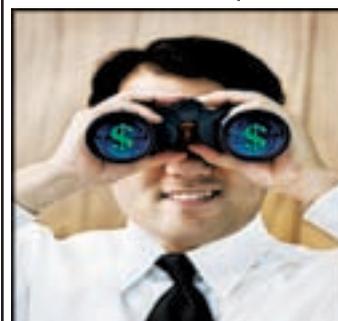
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# Furniture lottery held at Crawford Houses

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A unique lottery drawing saw one lucky new tenant get \$5,000 in apartment furnishings for free.

MacQuesten Development, the developer and contractor of the new 84-unit, eight-story Mother Arnetta Crawford Houses in Crotona Park East, held the drawing on Tuesday, August 18 for a fully-furnished apartment decorated free-of-charge by the head of the company.

Rella Fogliano, MacQuesten president, sticking to a budget of about \$5,000, chose the apartment's furnishings to showcase what could be done in 800-square-feet. The apartment's furnishings had to be functional and attractive, she said.

The drawing in the furnished apartment brought together tenants and those who plan on moving into the 100% affordable housing building.

The winner, selected at random, was Gloria Velez, who will be living in the furnished-for-free digs with her daughter Nicole Fino.

Velez said she might have had to buy all new furniture because of the configuration of her previous



The contestants, just before the drawing, stand with Rella Fogliano, president of The MacQuesten Companies.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

apartment, and that having a fully-furnished start in the building was a big help.

"I did not expect (to win)," she said. "It was God's plan."

Velez let out a large, jubilant cheer when she was announced the

winner.

Fino said that she and her mother did not expect to win the drawing, held inside unit 3G.

"This year has been very rough for us," said Fino, citing financial difficulties, and adding that the

win was a blessing.

The selection of the furniture was done over a weekend, said Fogliano, who added that even for the tenants who did not win, the new building pushes the envelope in terms of building materials that

blur the line between luxury and affordable housing.

"We used extraordinary materials," said Fogliano, who went on to explain that the materials used are sustainable and may soon be LEED Silver-certified, a certification from the Green Building Council.

For tenants in the all-rental building, there will be bamboo flooring, anti-microbial Flexco® corridors and also Italian-made kitchen cabinets and fixtures with high quality wood and hardware like those that are usually found in more expensive, upscale apartments.

"We went a little bit above and beyond because I do believe in not only sustainability, but also beauty," she said.

Fogliano added: "My hope is that everyone who moves into our newest affordable housing building will find a happier life here."

According to MacQuesten, 80% of the building, located at 1500 Hoe Avenue, is already leased.

The 78,000 square-foot building includes two recreation areas, an outdoor play area, a ground-floor parking garage, and views of the Manhattan skyline.

## Housing boom in Pelham Bay

from Page 1

when it comes to parking and infrastructure, said the councilman, adding that much of the downzoning in last decade does not apply to areas where larger buildings already exist.

"Most people who live in the immediate vicinity of this new construction are not happy," the councilman said. "People are saying we don't have the infrastructure and parking, and that overdevelopment is a quality-of-life issue."

Many of the new and proposed Pelham Bay projects have plans that comply with parking rules calling for spaces for 50% of the units, said Vacca.

For example, the building proposed at 1701 Parkview has 22 units with 11 on-site parking spaces, and the one at 3109 Buhre has 18 units and nine spots.

Community leaders and one local real estate bro-

ker seemed to concur with Vacca.

"I feel that Pelham Bay is starting to be overrun by these large developments," stated Michele Torrioni, Pelham Bay Taxpayers president. "I'd like to see some sort of law implemented (stating) that if you purchase a one- or two-family home, you have to build the same back."

Irene Guanill, owner of Meet the Sellers realty on Middletown Road in the community, said that many of the new apartments could be rented to social service providers, but also that it is not clear who the investors who build each project are targeting as prospective tenants.

"I have noticed the same trend, and it is still not clear who the units are going to be rented to," said Guanill, who added that tax abatements like the 421-a program and others are encouraging develop-

ers to demolish one-and two-family homes and replacing them with larger dwellings.

She believes this trend could have negative implications for the area.

Waterbury LaSalle Community Association board member Andrew Chirico added that local schools like P.S. 71 and P.S. 14 are already fully utilized and that more classroom space needs to be built before more housing is developed.

"We are going to need more than 50% parking; we are going to need 100%," said Chirico. "This is just ridiculous; I cannot say this enough times."

The developer of the recently completed building at Buhre and Jarvis avenue, Pualin Lumaj, said that the building is fully rented and was receiving the rents that he expected.

His latest project, next door at 3066 Buhre Avenue,



More developments like this one, at 1701 Parkview, appear to be on the horizon for Pelham Bay. Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

should be completed in a year, he added.

Patty Justiniano, a local Pelham Bay activist, said that in the case of 1701 Parkview Avenue, the rest

of this block, running from the corner lot where the project is, contains small homes and she feels that what is proposed does not fit with this surrounding

context.

This is the same concern expressed when the project was first proposed, as the Bronx Times reported in 2009.

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