

## Legionnaires' came from Bx. Psych.

BY ROBERT WIRSING

The cause of a recent Legionnaires' disease cluster that affected the 10461 zip code has been identified.

On Friday, November 20, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene announced it had identified the likely source of the cluster that infected several people this past September.

According to DOHMH, "After extensive sampling of cooling towers and testing of Legionella bacteria, the city's Public Health Laboratory collaborating with the state's Wadsworth Center laboratory identified a cooling tower at the Bronx Psychiatric Center as the likely source of the cluster as the Legionella strain discovered in this particular cooling tower matched samples taken from four patients infected with Legionnaires'."

The department added Bronx Psychiatric Center has been cooperative with all agencies involved in this investigation, has cleaned and disinfected its tower which is currently offline for the winter and is working with DOHMH on a long-term maintenance plan consistent with industry standards.

The psychiatric center's cooling tower was tested on August 5, 2015 in compliance with city and state regulations following this summer's Legionnaires' outbreak in the south Bronx and a test conducted on the cooling tower on August 17, 2015 yielded negative results for Legionella.

Bronx Psychiatric Center have retained maintenance consultants to prevent Legionella growth in their cooling tower and continue working diligently to comply with city and state requirements.

DOHMH added there have not

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# RAINBOW STORES AT MANDEE SITE



## Help From My Friends

Miss Lexi, a two-year old Maltese and Pekingese mix, lets the rims spin as she goes for a roll at this past Saturday's 'Cocktails and Dog Tails Charity Fundraiser', which was held at the Stepping Stone Yacht Club to help Bronx Foxy Pets raise money for pets who have lost their physical mobility.

Photo by Miriam Quin

## Women's apparel retailer opens new clothing store

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A new retailer is coming to the Bronx.

Rainbow, a national apparel chain whose clothing primarily targets teens and young women, has officially opened a new store in a large vacant space on 3860 E. Tremont Avenue.

Rainbow, which began moving merchandise into the location on Thursday, November 19 held its grand opening a few days later on Tuesday, November 24.

The retailer will offer shop-

pers a new, affordable option when it comes to apparel and clothing.

Rainbow's newest location was previously occupied by Mande, which operated at the site for nearly 30 years before closing down in February.

The building contains 15,000 square feet of retail space as well as ample off-street parking.

In the coming months, Rainbow will make various renovations to the building, including

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## Nightclub brawl ends with 3 stabbed

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A series of stabbings on East Tremont Avenue has left residents shaken.

On Sunday, November 22, just before 4 a.m., an incident took place just outside of Casa Restaurant and Lounge, located at 3607 East Tremont Avenue, following a verbal dispute that erupted earlier inside the recently opened restaurant.

The altercation began when two males, 46 and 38-years-old, began arguing over a woman at about

3:30 a.m.

After words were exchanged between the two, the dispute turned physical and the melee spilled onto the street in front of the restaurant, according to witnesses.

The argument, police claim, between the two men escalated to a knife fight and continued north to Sullivan Place and eventually to Lafayette Avenue.

It is unknown if the woman was romantically involved with either

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# Diaz, Borough Board reject zoning plan

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

The borough president and local community boards dealt a blow to housing proposals put forth by Mayor de Blasio.

Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and the Bronx Borough Board voiced their strong opposition to the administration's affordable housing mandate—known as Zoning for Quality and Affordability and Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning – at a board meeting on Thursday, November 19.

The Borough Board, made up of the county's 12 community boards and its elected officials, weighed in against the measures, which are controversial changes to the citywide Zoning Resolution that governs all zoning, as part of the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure.

"It is clear today that the Bronx stands united in one voice in opposition to these two proposals," said the borough president in his

remarks, adding "So many different communities have different reasons to be opposed to this 'one size fits all' approach to the future development of our borough and our city."

Community boards throughout the borough by-and-large opposed the plans for a variety of reasons when they gave advisory opinions, citing everything from concerns about gentrification to expected overdevelopment.

Diaz added his voice to this chorus of concerns, saying that the administration had failed to address physical and social infrastructure necessary to accommodate new development.

"The 'neighborhood by neighborhood' approach to planning has been very successful in the Bronx," said Borough President Diaz. "The borough has adopted no less than 14 rezonings since 2009. These proposed text amendments go against the grain of this successful



Borough President Diaz speaks to the Borough Board on Thursday, November 19. Photo courtesy of Borough President Diaz's office

approach to community-based planning, and must be rejected; one size does not fit all."

The controversial changes to the zoning resolution, which call for waivers of certain height and parking requirements in order to encourage new affordable and senior housing developments, are drawing opposition from local com-

munities not in the least because they would limit or eliminate the need for developers to seek local input, according to some community leaders.

The chairman of Community Board 12, Father Richard Gorman, said that the board does not see the need for the administration's mandate.

Gorman said the pro-

posed zoning changes was a "pro-developer plan" because in some cases builders would not have to seek variances at the Board of Standards and Appeals, community boards and borough boards. This provides an advantage in time and money for developers, he said.

"We are turning around and changing the zoning ordinance, which is a very important document – it is like the constitution almost," he said of the administration's proposal, adding that such changes should not be made lightly.

Councilman James Vacca, representing a swath of the east Bronx, said that the mayor's mandate would negate many hard-fought downzoning changes, including height restrictions.

"It would mean out of context development," he said, adding he concurs with the borough president's remarks.

It does not address two central reasons middle class

people leave the city: lack of parking and school quality, said Mary Jane Musano, Waterbury-LaSalle Community Association board member.

She lauded the borough president's response.

While the mayor should be commended for the goal of building affordable housing, removing certain parking requirements in the processes is incredibly shortsighted, said John Doyle of the East Bronx Traffic Coalition.

Community Action for Safe Apartments, CASA, a west Bronx coalition that opposes gentrification, applauded the borough president as well.

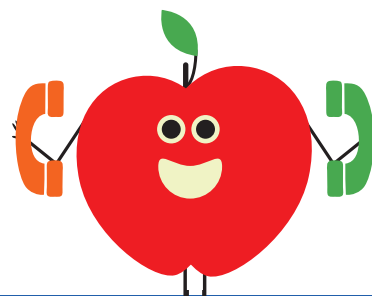
CASA believes the 'affordable' rents outlined in the mayor's plan were too high for many Bronxites to afford and urged City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, who abstained at the Borough Board, to vote "no" when it comes before the council.

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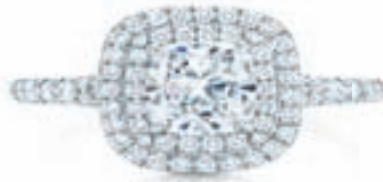
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(Right) Clothing inside Rainbow's new Bronx location.

Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

# Rainbow Stores leases former Mandeel location

from Page 1

the removal of the iconic 'Mandeel' logo, the outline of another logo, as well as restructured fitting rooms.

The retailer will occupy the entire building

"It's good that the neighborhood will offer another outlet and that the community will have another shopping alternative available to them," said Martin Prince, chairman of Community Board 10. "I hope they have success in this area, I hope that they are a good neighbor and I hope they will work with

the board as well as the Throggs Neck Merchants Association once they begin operating at the location."

"It's very exciting for this neighborhood to have a new affordable retailer come to the area," said John Marano, a local resident and member of CB10.

Rainbow, which was founded in Brooklyn in 1935, had grown to 82 stores before founder Irving Arthur Swarzman and his four brothers, Herman, Oscar, Ira and Nat sold the business in the 1970s.

Now owned by the Chehab family, Rainbow Shops currently operate over 1,300 stores in the United States along with sister brands 5-7-9 and Marianne.

Rainbow's store hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Private real estate firm Ashkenazy Acquisition Corporation, which purchased the property for \$5.1 million in April, could not be reached for comment.

# Legionnaires' came from Bronx Psychiatric Center

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been any further cluster-related cases of Legionnaires' disease with illness onset after September 28.

"Using the expertise and resources of the city and state's laboratories we were able to identify the DNA fingerprint of the outbreak strain and match it to samples linked to the outbreak," said NYC Commissioner of Health Dr. Mary Bassett. "The Psychiatric Center worked diligently to clean and disinfect the cooling tower as soon as it tested positive for the disease causing Legionella and all cooling towers across the affected area were evaluated and disinfected as needed."

Jeremy Warneke, Community Board 11 district manager, spoke with DOHMH over the phone last Friday about this discovery which came ten days after DOHMH spoke at

CB 11's Health Committee meeting regarding the Legionnaires' cluster.

"The Health Department was able to establish a radius of these cases and kept the public notified," he said. "Hopefully, another Legionnaires' cluster will never happen again, but at least we are now more aware of this disease."

"People will now have a sense of closure knowing this was where it originated from, but there is always that possibility of this happening again," said Al D'Angelo, Morris Park Community Association vice president. "Hopefully, we have all learned our lesson and there will be more done to prevent a reoccurrence."

As previously reported by the Bronx Times, the Legionnaires' cluster discovered in the 10461 zip code resulted in 13 people infected and one reported

death.

All 13 cases were diagnosed with underlying health conditions including three individuals between ages 25 to 44 with multiple medical problems, eight individuals ages 45 to 64 and two individuals more than age 65, according to DOHMH.

Five of these individuals are residents of the 10461 zip code while the eight either worked or visited the infected area.

No patients have been diagnosed with Legionnaires' since September 21 and the 15 infected cooling towers were immediately disinfected.

Legionnaires' is only contracted by breathing Legionella contaminated mist from cooling towers, whirlpool spas, showers and faucets harboring Legionella and is treatable with antibiotics.



New York City's Public Health Laboratory and the state's Wadsworth Center Laboratory have identified a cooling tower at Bronx Psychiatric Center as the likely source of this September's Legionnaires' cluster affecting the 10461 zip code.

Photo by Walter Pofeldt



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# Local residents react to Piano District

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

An upcoming high-end residential project in the south Bronx has garnered mixed reactions from the borough's residents.

The planned project, the Piano District, will consist of two 25-story residential towers that will include fashion, art and ground-floor retail, in Mott Haven.

Many residents of the area and nearby areas have expressed concern with the project, which will be built on two Harlem River waterfront properties, stating that the Chetrit Group and Somerset Partners' vision of 'luxury living' and 'world class dining' will not take their needs into consideration, such as housing affordability and community involvement. Could this be an example of gentrification?

"We as residents - we need to have a say and input on redevelopment in our neighborhood and nearby areas or else developers will build what they feel is appropriate without any community opinion," said Fitzroy Christian, a Community Action for Safe



101 Lincoln Avenue will be one of the two properties used to build the Piano District. Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

Apartments leader who has been active in CASA's forums which highlight resident displacement, exploitation, gentrification and/or harassment, particularly on Jerome Avenue's rezoning pro-

cess.

"I am not in support of this project because I don't believe the project is taking the residents' needs and opinions into account."

"It's not just about one block or one neighborhood - it is about the Bronx as a whole - because redevelopment eventually affects the entire borough."

On the contrary, there are

also individuals who believe the project will be a good fit for the borough as well as the neighborhood.

"Any development that brings new employment and better housing to the area is a good investment," said Lou Harris, a lifelong Bronx resident whose father owned the the Prospect Restaurant on Prospect and Westchester avenues near 160th Street for 30 years. "Parts of Brooklyn and Manhattan have experienced spurts of revitalization - why can't the Bronx?"

"Hopefully, with this project, the area can be revitalized without being gentrified."

"It's is a good sign for the neighborhood," said Sid Miller, a real estate broker and owner of the Haven Heights Group, a real estate company that has specialized in south Bronx real estate for over 25 years. "My wish for this project is that the economic level of the area rises significantly so there is no more poverty among residents. I believe it will bring money and new merchants to the area and put this neighborhood in the right direction."



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# CB 10 votes “no” on P.S. 71 annex

BY ROBERT WIRSING

Community Board 10 has voted its disapproval of the proposed P.S. 71 annex.

On Thursday, November 19, Community Board 10 held its monthly board meeting at Villa Barone Restaurant to vote on the proposal.

Stemming from a floor resolution from Thursday, November 12's public hearing at P.S. 71 which did not reach quorum, the full board voted against having the proposed site, formerly a parking lot for the defunct Pelham Bay General Hospital, for an approximately \$30 million 270-seat early childhood education center annex at Continental Avenue, East 197th Street and Hutchinson River Parkway Service Road and for notification of their decision to be sent to the New York City School Construction Authority and the New York City Department of Education.

The reasons presented by the board included the

belief that the proposed annex wasn't large enough to accommodate the projected increase in student population by the year 2018, the high traffic location would create a major issue for the children's safety and the site placing an undue pressure on the surrounding community.

“The board felt that the school was too close to Hutchinson Riverway Parkway Service Road and that speeding motorists and traffic on that road posed a threat to student safety,” said Ken Kearns, Community Board 10 district manager. “The majority of the board opposed this proposal and we have wrote a letter to School Construction Authority to take into consideration our concerns and alternative sites for the proposed school.”

Kearns confirmed that the board mailed the letter to SCA on Monday, November 23 and awaits their re-



A site plan for the proposed P.S. 71 annex located at Continental Avenue, East 197th Street and Hutchinson River Parkway Service Road. Photo courtesy of New York City School Construction Authority

sponse.

Bob Beider, CB 10 Youth Services and Education Committee chairman, felt the board made the right decision in voting against the proposal.

“The site itself really didn't seem right for pre-k and kindergarten students especially since its

in a high traffic area and it didn't make a lot of sense from a fiscal standpoint either,” said Beider adding. “It doesn't make any sense for the School Construction Authority and Department of Education to spend \$30 million on building a small school for 270 students when the student population is

expected to significantly increase in the next few years. The community as a whole is against it as it would only create more traffic and parking issues on top of safety concerns.”

Eduardo Hernandez, Community Education Council District 8 president, said the current stage of this proposal does not require an approval vote by CEC.

“There are further studies that need to be completed prior to the actual construction of the facility at which point we will fully address and work to remediate the concerns of the local community,” said Hernandez, adding. “Our CEC will vote on the product proposals once the impact study and construction design gets going and we conduct other community hearings.”

Hernandez said an approval vote from CB 10 would have simply gave the go ahead to Councilman James Vacca and DOE to present to

the City Council a request for a transfer of the land from New York City Department of Transportation to DOE which would allow the latter to start the building process.

He added had CB 10 approved the proposal, there are no guarantees this transfer would be approved or the project would be completed.

Rosa Fella, a parent of a P.S. 71 student, is against the idea of the proposed early childhood facility and explained another building is needed for all P.S. 71 students.

“My son right now is in a classroom of 25 children,” said Fella adding. “The school is overcrowded and what we need instead of a pre-k and kindergarten facility is another building to make it ten or 15 students in a classroom instead. As it is now, the teachers are literally in a two-by-four classroom with 25 to 30 students; that's ridiculous and unacceptable.”

## Throggs Neck Tree Lighting December 6

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Yuletide cheer returns once again.

Throggs Neck's annual Christmas Tree Lighting and Toy Giveaway, hosted by Assemblyman Michael Benedetto and the Throggs Neck Merchants Association, will take place from 5 to 8 p.m. on Sunday, December 6.

As is a Holiday tradition, the event will be held at DeRosa O'Boyle Triangle at the Cross Bronx Expressway and East Tremont Avenue, directly across from the Throggs Neck Library.

During the ceremony, the St. Benedict's chorus will sing Christmas carols, there will be a visit from the North Pole from Saint Nick and Santa will give out gifts to the children. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served too.

This year's ceremony holds special meaning, said Assemblyman Benedetto, who is working with the Parks Department to have a permanent memorial Christmas tree planted in the park and dedicated to his former chief-of-staff Ben Randazzo.



Student volunteers enjoy hot chocolate at last year's Christmas Tree Lighting and Toy Giveaway in Throggs Neck.

hoto by Laura Stone

Randazzo, who passed in early November, was instrumental in planning and coordinating the tree lighting and toy giveaway for years.

The assemblyman said that the yearly event, which he has been involved in during his 11 years in office, usually draws several hundred families.

“Since the Throggs Neck Mer-

chants Association got involved with this, they have put together a really nice effort, and I guess word got around that some of the gifts they give are really nice,” he said.

Steven Kaufman, TNBA president, spoke of the importance of having a Christmas tree for the community, adding that purchasing the gifts is costly, but very worthwhile.

“A neighborhood that is not celebrating the holiday and helping children out, giving them gifts that they might not be able to get from anyone else, is not a neighborhood,” said Kaufman. “So we in our community are reaching out our hearts to all the kids who for some reason or another are not getting any gifts. We want to give them a gift.”

Events like the tree lighting are what make the Throggs Neck community special.

The merchant's association president said that he feels that it is very important to have events like this because it shows that we want to bring warmth and happiness to children in the community.

“What is Christmas without a Christmas tree?” Kaufman asked, adding that the merchants are also raising funds for holiday lights along East Tremont Avenue to the tune of about \$24,000.

Around the same time as the Throggs Neck event, the Waterbury-LaSalle Community Association will host its own tree lighting at Schneider-Sampson Square on Sunday, December 6.

Association board member Mary Jane Musano said that Santa Claus will ride into the park on a horse drawn carriage sponsored by Chateau Stables.

Once Santa arrives, the Christmas tree in the park will be lit and Santa will distribute stockings stuffed with presents to all the children, she said.



# Three overpass renovations near completion

BY ROBERT WIRSING

An ambitious renovation project on three overpasses will be finished ahead of schedule.

According to Diane Park, New York State Department of Transportation Region 11 public information officer, the NYS DOT's \$12.5 million three-bridge rehabilitation project for the Castle Hill Avenue, Lafayette Avenue and Pennyfield Avenue bridges was specifically designed for work to progress on these individual bridges simultaneously.

In doing so, this enabled the contractor group, DeFoe Corp of Mount Vernon, NY to achieve economies of scale and resulted in more efficient and more cost effective construction than if each bridge were accomplished individually, she said.

By working on all three bridges simultaneously, NYS DOT was able to reduce construction time by approximately by one and a half years which translates to a 25% cost reduction for the project.

This project included major structural improvements on the Pennyfield Avenue Bridge overlooking the Throgs Neck Expressway, the Lafayette Avenue Bridge over the Throgs Neck Expressway and



Recently opened to traffic, the Lafayette Avenue Bridge's renovation is slated for full completion by the end of this year.

Photo courtesy of New York State Department of Transportation

the Castle Hill Avenue Bridge over the Bruckner Expressway such as replacing the existing concrete decks of all three bridges, resurfacing the pavement at the approaches to the bridges up to and including the intersections at either end of the overpasses, installing new lighting above and below the decks.

In addition to these reconstruction efforts, a new traffic signal adjacent to Prentiss Avenue was

installed at the north side intersection of Pennyfield and Prentiss avenues and the replacement of an existing traffic signal located at the south side of the Pennyfield Avenue Bridge.

"These projects are now open to traffic and we're very delighted to have brought these improvements to the community on such an accelerated schedule and this demonstrates how efficient this process

was," said Park.

Originally slated for a spring 2016 completion date, DeFoe Corp was able to accelerate the project.

According to NYS DOT, the Castle Hill Avenue bridge was officially opened to traffic on Friday, October 16 and both the Lafayette and Pennyfield Avenue bridges opened to traffic on Friday, November 2 with finishing work expected for completion by the end of 2015.

Park explained this finishing work entails trenching at Castle Hill Avenue bridge which is needed for installing traffic signal conduits; milling and paving of intersections at all three overpasses to be performed over the next three weeks, weather permitting; substructure work such as removing temporary shielding, under-deck lighting following shield removal, substructure sealing, block pavers and brick rehabilitation and permanent striping.

"We commend the New York State Department of Transportation and its contractors for their quality work and for finishing these three renovations well before their originally scheduled completion," said Ken Kearns, Community Board 10 district manager.

"We're absolutely delighted these projects are coming to completion especially Pennyfield and Lafayette avenues which were a hassle to travel on because they only had a single lane in each direction," said Assemblyman Michael Benedetto. "The work is being done very well and it's an early holiday present for the community."



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# CICA, Vacca call for deer signage

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

After several accidents and years of advocacy, it appears that the city Department of Transportation is now seriously considering the installation of deer crossing signs in Pelham Bay Park.

According to City Island Civic Association board members, DOT has informed them that it may be dropping its opposition to deer signs and is reviewing Pelham Bay Park sign locations.

This comes on the heels of at least three accidents between motorists and deer this year on roads traversing the park, said John Doyle, CICA corresponding secretary.

There has been a history of advocacy by the civic group, as well as Senator Jeff Klein on behalf of the CICA, going back to at least 2007, he said.

Councilman James Vacca, who sits on the City Council's transportation committee, wrote on Monday, November 16 to DOT urging the agency to install signs in and around the park after the implementation of deer corridor signs on Staten Island.

The councilman would like to see the deer signage program effected in several proposed locations, including Shore Road, City Island Road in the park; Middletown Road and Watt Avenue in Spencer Estate, and Park Drive, which borders Pelham, NY.

"Residents and motorists in this area have come into close proximity with the White Tailed deer, especially those who frequent City Island via Shore Road," stated Vacca.

The councilman strongly chastised DOT in the letter because while they have agreed to install deer corridor signage on Staten Island, they have not yet agreed to permanent signs in his district, which contains the largest park in New York City.

The Parks Department conducted a wildlife study of Pelham Bay Park in December 2014 that concluded that the deer population in Pelham Bay Park has increased.

CICA board members said that DOT officials contacted their organization and seemed to indicate that they would be open to

the possibility of at least some deer signs, especially temporary ones.

"This seems to be connected to everything that is going on Staten Island," said Doyle of the apparent change of position by DOT. "This has been an issue of importance to the civic association for some time."

He said that the CICA restarted the process when the new mayoral administration took office because they seemed sensitive to both animal rights and traffic safety issues.

He said that the CICA appreciates the de Blasio administration approaching the issue with a fresh perspective.

Barbara Dolensek, CICA vice president also lauded what she believes is an apparent change in the DOT's stance on deer crossing signs in Pelham Bay Park, calling the 'change of heart' good for the community.

Signs in the area would especially help motorists in Pelham Bay Park who are not familiar with their surroundings, especially at night, added Doyle.



This deer was struck by a motorist on City Island Road in early 2015.

Photo courtesy of the City Island Civic Association

A spokeswoman for DOT confirmed that they have been in touch with local stakeholders in the Bronx and are in the process of reevaluating their criteria for signage and examining options.

## Bronx businessman, family host Turkey Giveaway

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

An annual partnership is feeding thousands in Mott Haven during the Thanksgiving weekend.

On Monday, November 23, real estate businessman Joel Fishman, in collaboration with the Dominican Sisters Family Health Service, hosted their 32nd annual Turkey Giveaway to distribute the plump birds to needy local residents.

The Turkey Giveaway, which was held in front of the Dominican Sisters Family Health Service facility on 279 Alexander Avenue, distributed over 2,000 turkeys to Mott Haven's neediest residents, some of whom had been waiting on line since 5 a.m. that morning.

The line started on 139th Street and Alexander Avenue and snaked its way around the block on 140th Street toward Willis Avenue Playground.

Fishman, who was born in Brooklyn, spent the first 14 years of his life at Kings County Hospital due to a condition called Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome which greatly affected one of his legs.

After his recovery, he pursued a career in real estate.

Eventhough he is in semi-re-



(l-r) Mary Zagajeski, president and CEO of the Dominican Sisters Family Health Service, Dena Roth, Joel Fishman's daughter, Mark Fishman, Joel's son, gather with Joel's grandsons, Matthew and Alex Roth.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

tirement, he still finds the time to give back to the Bronx, in the poorest congressional district in the United States.

"This has always been a great opportunity for us (our family)

to get involved in the community and help out those who are hungry during a time of year when giving is second nature," said Joel's son Mark, speaking on behalf of his father, who could not attend the

giveaway because of a cancelled flight. "My father loves to help people and he loves giving back - and that's what makes this event so important and special to us."

Mark added that planning this year's giveaway was particularly difficult, due the poultry shortages caused by the Avian flu and other outbreaks.

"This has always been a very meaningful event that always hits home," said Mary Zagajeski, president and CEO of Dominican Sisters Family Health Services, which has been involved in the giveaway since its inception. "The Fishmans have been true friends of our agency for a long time, and it's a wonderful experience every time we partner with them for this giveaway to help an area in need."

"A distribution of 2000 turkeys? Now that's a lot of food that can feed a lot of people," Zagajeski added.

Joel's grandson, Matthew Roth, looks forward to carrying on his grandfather's and family's tradition of giving.

"My goal for this year's giveaway is to accomplish more than I did last year," said Matthew, who attended the event for the second consecutive year. "This giveaway is a mitzvah to the community - and it feels great to be a part of it."





# NYBG HOLIDAY

# TRAIN SHOW

All aboard! The New York Botanical Garden hosted a special Monday, November 16 media preview for its classic 'Holiday Train Show' featuring enchanting model trains zipping through a display composed of 150 New York landmarks expertly recreated by designer Paul Busse's team at Applied Imagination using bark, leaves and other natural materials all underneath the twinkling glow of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory.

This year's exhibition includes 3,000 square feet of additional exhibition space for dozens of new trains, bridges and tracks; a captivating short film detailing the show's behind-the-scenes magic and a stunning multisensory finale of light and sound. The Holiday Train Show opened to the public this past Saturday, November 21 and will keep on chugging along until Monday, January 18. For more information, visit [www.nybg.org/htsl5](http://www.nybg.org/htsl5). (Above right) Karen Gaubmann, New York Botanical Garden assistant vice president of exhibitions, was on-site to answer questions from awe-inspired guests. (Above left) Applied Imagination's Craig Ramano makes sure the trains run smoothly.



Keshma James (l) and Luisel Marina welcomed everyone to the show.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



A G-scale model locomotive makes its trek through a tunnel underneath a remarkable recreation of Penn Station.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



A model train passes by a building constructed from bark, leaves and other natural materials.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



A train emerges from a lush yet urban backdrop during its extensive trip.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



Legions of model trains rode both high and low throughout the exhibit.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



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# Greek American Institute holds Reader's Day

BY ROBERT WIRSING

The Greek American Institute has penned another successful chapter in their school's annual Reader's Day.

The Pelham Bay-based pre-k to 8th grade school dedicated to the principles of Hellenism hosted its 12th Annual Reader's Day on Friday, November 20 whose readers included local elected officials Senator Jeff Klein, Councilman James Vacca and Assemblyman Michael Benedetto; Queens Councilman Costa Constantinides; authors Nick Katsoris, Effie Kammenou, Gus Constantine and Yvette Manessis Corporon; Miracle Foundation co-founder Patti Tenaglia; NYC DOE Division of Non-Public Schools executive director Caren Zayde-Moncher; NYC DOE director for funded programs and policy for non-public schools Ruth Abrams; FBI agent Doug Vetranio; friends of the

GAI community Matt Goldstein and Steven George and GAI Class of 2008 alum Dennis Katechis.

Famous journalist and news anchor, Katie Couric, was scheduled for last Friday's Reader's Day, but had to reschedule for Tuesday, November 24.

An opening ceremony at the school's gym began with GAI's color guard reciting the Pledge of Alliance and the GAI After School Chorus singing the American and Greek national anthems.

Principal Anne Prokop then introduced Katsoris as the event's featured speaker who proceeded to read from his inspirational children's book, 'Growing up with Loukoumi' detailing its title character's struggle to decide what she wants to be when she grows up.

Katsoris explained its central message is to "believe in yourself and what you want to do" and had students ac-



Councilman Vacca reads 'The Cat in the Hat' to 1st graders.

Community News Group / Robert Wirsing

tively reciting the recurring mantra in the story, "believe in yourself and dreams come true" during his reading.

After the ceremony, the readers made their way to individual classrooms where they read to GAI students.

Councilman Vacca read the Dr. Seuss classic 'The Cat in the Hat' to many bright-eyed 1st graders who clung to every word.

Assemblyman Benedetto,



Assemblyman Benedetto speaks with 4th graders after reading from Edith Pattou's 'Mrs. Spitzer's Garden'. Photo by Alexandra Lacas

who served as a teacher for 35 years prior to elected office, relished being back in the classroom which was evident in his selection of Edith Pattou's 'Mrs. Spitzer's Garden'.

He explained the story's analogy tendering to a garden reflects how teachers 'tend' to their students to help them grow. "Reading is very important and is the

foundation of everything we do," said Prokop. "I'm a big believer in reading in not only enhancing someone's vocabulary, but also enhance different perspectives of the world as you see it."

Constantine, a Lehman High School Class of 1974 alum and former truck driver, read from his historical non-fiction novel 'Escaping Cyprus' where 12-year old Haji witnesses the brutal atrocities committed by Turkish soldiers invading his Cypriot village in 1974 and struggles to survive as he and his 27-year old school teacher Rebecca flee their village.

"I spoke with the 8th graders today and what I emphasized more than anything else was that the biggest negativity I experienced was when I told people I was writing a book," he said adding. "I told them 'don't let anyone tell you that you can't do anything' whether it's academi-

cally or professionally."

Kammenou, author of 'Evanthia's Gift', read from Louis Lowry's 'The Giver' and discussed with 6th graders its premise of living in a world devoid of emotion.

"I wanted to get their take on how they would feel if they didn't have to deal with any pain or suffering especially with what's going on in the world today and if that was a good trade off; not having any joy and not having any pain or suffering either," she said adding. "I did a little reading, but did more discussion with them which I felt was much better for them because it was more of a give and take."

Katechis, a GAI alum and Iona College senior, visited his alma mater to read to eager 6th, 7th and 8th graders some hauntingly thought-provoking tales from Gothic fiction legend Edgar Allan Poe such as 'The Tell Tale Heart' and 'The Cask of Amontillado'.

## Nightclub brawl ends with 3 stabbed

from Page 1

or both of the individuals.

At about 3:40 a.m., two ambulances responded to the front of Casa's location to treat both men, who sustained significant injuries.

The 38-year old sustained lacerations to both of his arms, his neck and the back of his head, while the 46-year old had stab wounds to his back and the right side of his head.

Both were taken to Jacobi Hospital. A third victim was treated for a laceration to his right hand and was removed to Weiler Hospital.

According to multiple sources, a trail of blood stains, believed to be from the incident, started from the outside of the restaurant and continued as far as Schuyler Hill Funeral Home, located at 3535 E. Tremont Avenue.

However, it has not yet been confirmed if the trail of blood stains have a direct correlation with Sunday morning's melee.

"This is a very upsetting and unfortunate incident," said Martin Prince, chairman of Community Board

10, who said that he plans to work the 45th Precinct on initiatives and solutions to increase safety and security among nighttime businesses in the area. "Maybe this couldn't have been completely avoided, but it probably could have been handled better - and both the board and the precinct will make sure we keep an eye on night businesses and how they operate."

"It was like a Hollywood movie set - like a war zone," recalled a local resident who wished to remain anonymous for the story, referring to the trail of blood. "My belief is that the problem could have stemmed from having too many bars in one circumference - and Casa is more of a night club than it is a bar. Having the (Throggs Neck) Clipper and the Alley Cat Cafe is enough for one area when it comes to nightlife spots."

"When you have too many nightlife spots in one area, it can be a recipe for disaster - because anything can happen at any time of night."

As of 9 a.m. on Tuesday

morning, the DCPI confirmed that the search is ongoing and that no arrests have been made.

Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, whose office is across the street from Casa, was critical of the new business in the aftermath of the violence.

"Casa, which only opened ten days ago, is already causing a disturbance in the neighborhood. They have to do a better job of monitoring their clientele and they should do it quickly," he said.

CB10 called the State Liquor Authority back in February to deny Casa its liquor license because it was located on the same block as another bar, the Throggs Neck Clipper.

This violated the '500-foot rule', an alcoholic beverage control law that restricts multiple alcohol vendors to be within 500 feet or less of each other, as Casa is located only 23 feet from the Clipper.

However, Casa eventually received their license, even after CB10 notified the SLA that Casa should be de-



Sunday morning's incident took place in front of Casa, and continued north on East Tremont Avenue towards Sullivan and Lafayette avenues.

Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

nied.

Following Sunday morning's incident, Senator Jeff Klein wrote a letter to the SLA to investigate why Casa's liquor license was approved, and to have it revoked immediately, after his office spoke with the CB10.

Klein strongly believes

that Casa is a night club disguised as a restaurant.

He criticized the SLA's policy of ignoring the community's judgment when issuing licenses.

Klein requested that Casa's license be revoked on the recommendation of the community board.

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