

‘Pipe Dreams’ columnist dead at 73

BY ROBERT WIRSING

An insightful sports writer with a fighter’s spirit continues to inspire hope after his recent passing.

Long time ‘Pipe Dreams’ sports columnist, Bob Connolly, 73, died on Wednesday, December 23 due to complications from post-polio syndrome.

Born in Parkchester on October 28, 1942, Connolly was an avid sports fan whose passion for writing helped him overcome his physical disability.

Coincidentally born on the feast day of St. Jude, the patron saint of desperate situations and lost causes, Connolly’s unshakable faith and hope would help him achieve his goals despite the many challenges he faced.

Diagnosed at age 12 with polio, Connolly underwent physical and occupational therapy to rebuild his strength after leaving the hospital.

However he had lost motor function in his left arm due to the spinal chord disease. Naturally left handed, Connolly learned to use his right hand instead.

Connolly attended school at St. Helena Elementary School and St. Helena High School before enrolling at St. John’s University in the 1960s.

He married his wife, Carol, on June 11, 1966 at St. Frances de Chantal.

The happy couple had four children, Sean, Erin, Jean and Judy who all became involved in sports, a passion held near and dear to Connolly who unfortunately could not actively participate due to his condition.

“He believed sports programs were very beneficial to helping us all learn about the importance of teamwork, problem solving, building self-confidence and

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STUDENT CAUGHT ‘BLUE HANDED’

Lehman teen nabbed for pulling alarm

BY ROBERT WIRSING

A Lehman Educational Campus student was nabbed ‘blue handed’ after allegedly pulling a fire alarm last week.

According to a NYPD spokesman, a 14-year old male Lehman Educational Campus student was arrested by police after pulling the fire alarm at the first floor exit resulting in the evacuation of the entire school.

Police from the 45th Precinct and fire fighters were dispatched to the scene at around 2 p.m. where they discovered the suspect with blue colored fire alarm tamper dye staining his hand.

The teenager was arrested and charged with reckless endanger-

ment and filing a false report of a fire following the incident.

This most recent stunt occurred on the last day of school before mid-winter recess and is part of a growing trend of false fire alarms happening at the educational institution.

As previously reported by the Bronx Times, Lehman Educational Campus experienced a nearly week-long spree of fights and false fire alarms from Monday, November 30 to Thursday, December 3 which witnessed thousands of students fleeing into the streets, most of whom never returned to school.

It is widely believed the street

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Foxy Pets Meet Santa

Bronx Foxy Pets hosted their first Annual Santa Paws Christmas Party for dog owners and their pets in Throggs Neck on Saturday, December 19. The holiday party with Santa Claus at the Ice House Cafe was a benefit for a fund that will help in animal emergency situations in the borough

(Above) Chrys Napolitano poses with her dog, Mini and Cooper, along with Santa Claus during the Santa Paws Christmas Party. See story on page 8.

Photo courtesy of Bronx Foxy Pets

Bruckner Boulevard safer to cross

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Pedestrian safety improvements have been completed at one of the borough’s busiest intersections.

Renovations of crosswalks and traffic calming devices for pedestrians and cyclists at Hunts Point Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard, under the Bruckner Expressway overhead highway, were celebrated at the intersection on Wednesday, December 23.

Improvements were made at others nearby intersections as well.

NYC Department of Transportation commissioner Polly Trottenberg was joined at the busy

location by Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, Community Board 2, the Point Community Development Corporation and the Hunts Point Advisory Board at a press conference called to discuss the changes.

“By listening to and engaging with a local community deeply concerned about collisions here, we together have created a much safer Bruckner Boulevard (and) Hunts Point Avenue interchange that extends sidewalks, adds pedestrian islands and calms traffic,” said Trottenberg.

One of the more challenging parts of the intersection is the

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Calls to preserve City Island Bridge artifacts

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Historical preservationists on and off City Island are interested in preserving some artifacts from the island's soon-to-be demolished bridge.

The East Bronx History Forum and residents on City Island are advocating for the city to save pieces of City Island's once iconic green bridge dating to the turn of the 20th Century.

A new crossing is about to be constructed to replace the old one.

The NYC Department of Transportation, which received high marks from the community for working with local leaders on an acceptable design, appear supportive in securing the historical pieces.

Richard Vitacco, EBHF president, said that the organization is eyeing the four finials, or pinnacle caps from the top of the structure, as well as six 'spanners', rods measuring a foot and a half long, and three gears from the pedestal of the bridge, used decades ago when the bridge actually opened to allow boats to pass through.

"It is just an important his-



The East Bronx History Forum has joined a group advocating for saving pieces of the now-closed City Island Bridge dating back to 1901 for history and posterity. NYC DOT said that the tops of the old bridge and plaques would be saved.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

torical artifact – artifacts tell stories and the history of a people and a community," said Vitacco, when asked about why he would like to see some of the old span preserved, adding "We are a borough of stories and the City Island Bridge is part of that story."

EBHF sent a letter to DOT in October 2015 requesting to dis-

play these materials at the Huntington Free Library and Reading Room in Westchester Square, where the organization meets monthly.

Vitacco said that the organization had not heard back as of press time.

From the City Island community's perspective, there is also a large amount of nostalgia and

interest in preserving pieces of the closed circa 1901 City Island Bridge, said John Doyle, City Island Civic Association.

A joint City Island community and DOT bridge design group, that has not meet in about a year, had been discussing how to save pieces of the old bridge, and is likely to resume talks along these lines when it meets again,

Doyle said.

"They are supposed to come back to us with some sort of preservation plan," he said.

"We do want to preserve these pieces of our history," he added.

A DOT spokeswoman stated that the city's contract for bridge replacement requires the removal and storage of the four pinnacles and any plaques on the existing bridge.

"Every effort will be made by the contractor to remove these items with all due care and store them until the end of the contract," a DOT spokeswoman stated.

"Use of these materials would be under the direction of a loan agreement between a qualified not-for-profit and the City of New York," she said

Vitacco believes preservation is a worthy cause in the case of the bridge.

"Anything over 100 years old has stood the test of numerous generations and is worthy of preserving," he said, adding "There is a huge amount of metal there. We are asking for maybe a tenth of one percent."

Free tow offered to tipsy New Year's Eve drivers

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

New Year's Eve is one of the biggest partying nights of the year. It also has very high statistics for drunk driving.

That's why Five J's Automotive Limited is offering free towing

We're happy to accommodate people, we do this with no strings attached as a goodwill service to mitigate drunk driving and the possibility of loss of life.

Noah George

car in here that was really wrecked up and the person had died. It's a family time, and we don't want to see any family split up especially during the holidays...so after that we decided this was a nice thing to do and started to provide this service," said Noah George, an owner of Automotive Limited.

The company will pick up a vehicle from any Bronx location and tow it to any Bronx destination.

"We're happy to accommodate people, we do this with no strings attached as a goodwill service to mitigate drunk driving and the possibility of loss of life," said George.

Five J's has provided this service to Bronxites on New Year's Eve every year since 1991. "We just want to let people know that we wish them a happy and healthy New Year," George added.

Five J's Automotive Limited deals directly with insurance companies and is a full service auto body shop. They also tow 24/7.

The shop is located at 809 Zerega Avenue. The free towing service can be contacted at (718) 792-0300 for those who have been drinking on New Year's Eve and need to be towed.



Five J's tow truck hauls van.

Photo Courtesy of Five J's Automotive Limited

on New Year's Eve from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning for drivers that feel tipsy.

"One New Year's Eve we got a

‘PS Recycle It’ tackles styrofoam packaging

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

Pro-recycling group, ‘PS Recycle It’ is putting together a five borough styrofoam recycling day on Saturday, January 9.

The group consists of a coalition of restaurant owners, pro recycling groups, and small corporations.

foam, boxes, TVs and radio packaging, cups, and anything else made of styrofoam that would otherwise be thrown out.

New York City council members from each borough are sponsoring foam pickup locations in their respective neighbor-

hoods, which will be open from 9 a.m. to noon.

at 10 W. 195th Street (corner of Reservoir Avenue).
“PS Recycle It is proud to join Council Member Cabrera in a citywide styrofoam recycling event.. the foam packaging that kept gifts protected during the holidays and the foam cups and containers we use

Gould has been extremely involved in the organization since its fruition in early 2015. “This is an opportunity for the public to make a huge impact and truly help the environment,” she said.

The City of New York does not currently recycle styrofoam, although the group suggests that a proposal which would allow one hundred percent of all NYC foam to be recycled at no extra cost to taxpayers is in the works and will hopefully be attended to soon.

“The previous administration took the position that styrofoam could not be recycled and evidence suggests that it can be. This is another way to demonstrate that styrofoam can be recycled and has the potential to create jobs, and create products,” said Greg Faulkner, Councilman Cabrera’s chief of staff.

“A lot of the environmental community has come on board with this,” said Faulkner. “We helped to locate a facility so that people can drop off their styrofoam from the holidays. This is all preliminary around whether styrofoam should be legal, and support of legislation that would prevent the elimination of styrofoam.”

Other councilmembers taking part in this recycling day include Inez Dickens of Manhattan, Alan Maisel of Brooklyn, Ruben Willis of Queens and Deborah Rose of Staten Island.

PS Recycle It is proud to join Council Member Cabrera in a citywide styrofoam recycling event...the foam packaging that they kept gifts protected during the holidays and the foam cups and containers we use every day are 100 percent recyclable and can be turned into a variety of items we use in our homes every day

Sarah Gould



COUNCILMAN FERNANDO CABRERA

They are asking that people save their foam packaging from Christmas and the holidays and bring it in to be recycled rather than add the material to landfills. Recyclables to be collected include

hoods, which will be open from 9 a.m. to noon.

The Bronx location is being sponsored by Councilman Fernando Cabrera and will be held at the Kingsbridge Armory

every day are 100 percent recyclable and can be turned into a variety of items we use in our homes every day, “said Sarah Gould, the spokeswoman for PS Recycle It.

Mother pens books about child’s disabilities

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

As society makes strides for inclusivity we have seen Disney princesses of every race, films featuring gay parents, and wheelchair-bound kids in catalogs.

But when is the last time you saw a children’s book featuring a main character with a severe mental disability?

Gwendolyn Boyd Moss, a Bronx-born and bred mother of three, real estate agent, and mental health advocate couldn’t find any, so she wrote one herself.

After her son Justin (aka Jo Jo), was diagnosed with autism at age 3, and later schizophrenia at 14, Moss saw that he struggled to build relationships with other children, and was often the victim of bullying.

The Soundview mom wanted to develop a teachable tool that could be used to start a conversation with youngsters about their peer’s suffering from mental disorders.

“It’s a fun descriptive tool, parents can sit down and talk about the characteristics, and this way if a child throws a chair in the middle of class, or doesn’t look others in the eye, the other kids

can know that it is because of a disability, and they can embrace their peer and prevent bullying when they get older,” said Moss.

She mentions that one out of every 68 children is being diagnosed with autism today, and called it “an epidemic”.

“We need to stop sugar coating it and really embrace what’s going on,” says Moss.

Moss’ book ‘My Big Brother Jo Jo & His Friend Schizophrenia’ is written from the point of view of Jo Jo’s younger brother, and is the first text of her four-part ‘My Special Friend’ series.

Other titles include ‘Mr. Autism’, ‘The Bipolar Bandit’, and ‘Angela and the ADHD Fairy’ which all delicately break down the characteristics of each disability for small kids to understand.

On a larger scale Moss believes that society needs to do more for the mentally disabled.

“We talk about it taking a village to raise a child but to me that village is our nation,” said Moss. “We can’t wait until we have a situation where kids are shooting up a theater and then ask ‘where are the parents?’ when the fact is

there are few services.

“We talk about it when it’s in the public eye, or when something is in the news, or during election time, but then it’s disregarded. It’s important that people educate themselves, there’s a lot of judgement out there,” she said.

Moss says creating funding and services for afflicted children is vital so that they can access early intervention resources as well as facilities if need be.

“Some facilities only take private insurances and that leads to a child being in and out of facilities so then they regress,” said Moss.

Jo Jo spent three years in facilities on and off, although it was not what Moss wanted at the time.

Jo Jo turned 21 on December 27. It’s been a long journey, but today Jo Jo functions at a third grade level.

He’s very sociable (an unexpected trait for his diagnosis), he loves to dance, and he manages his basketball team. He’s well known and well loved by those around him - his school even had a parade for him after he returned from post-brain surgery.



Gwendolyn Boyd Moss holding her book ‘My Big Brother Jo Jo & His Friend Schizophrenia’ a children’s book which aims to promote understanding about mental disability.

Photo Courtesy of Gwen Moss

Moss appears on the new show, ‘Selling It: In the ATL’, a WeTV show based in Atlanta which

shows her juggle life as a single mom, career woman, and mental health advocate.

Lehman High School student nabbed for pulling fire alarm

From page 1

brawls which occurred in Westchester Square during the original string of false fire alarm incidents were allegedly arranged by students who sent text messages to each other during class time, according to Councilman James Vacca.

Returning students were subjected to hour long waits at metal detectors to re-enter Lehman High School resulting in the loss of valuable class time.

According to the Westchester Business Improvement District, local merchants were forced to close their doors and turn away customers and Owen Dolen Park was under lockdown until police arrived during these original incidents.

Since then, there have not been any more fights occurring at Westchester Square, said a spokesperson for the WSBID.

A DOE spokesman said in regards to last week's incident at Lehman Educational Campus, each DOE school has individualized procedures in place to respond to emergencies and ensure student safety.

Additionally, the Lehman campus principals have been working closely with the FDNY, NYPD and the DOE's office of Safety and Youth Development to address and prevent alarm incidents and ensure safety on and around the campus.

The DOE spokesman further stated the FDNY, NYPD and DOE are continuing to provide additional support to Lehman

High School during this time.

New methods have been established by Vacca, the New York City Schools Chancellor's Office and local merchants to help rectify the situation.

The councilman elaborated by saying DOE has assured him new measures are being put in place to address concerns at Lehman Educational Campus which include installing fire alarm tamper dye, a new cell phone policy for students to surrender their mobile devices upon entering school and retrieving them at the end of the day and re-evaluating the school's fire drill protocol by having half of the campus file into the football field to have them re-enter the school in a much more time-efficient manner.



Police have been stationed outside of Lehman High School to keep a close eye on the school following incidents of false fire alarms and fights involving students occurring around Westchester Square.

Photo by Walter Pofeldt

Vacca added the school's remaining students would continue lining up outside of the school, but not past the White Castle.

Though pleased with some of the measures taken by DOE, the councilman be-

lieves DOE should consider appointing one of the school campus' six principals as a lead principal in light of recent events.

Despite suggesting this to DOE, Vacca said the department does not pres-

ently intend to enact this concept.

"Last week's arrest is significant because it sends a message that the games are over and this type of behavior will not be tolerated," said Vacca.

Pedestrian safety improvements on Bruckner Boulevard

From page 1

traffic weaving on Bruckner Boulevard's main service road as it approaches an on ramp to the Sheridan Expressway, she said.

Crespo recalled what the intersection was like before DOT implemented the changes.

"This crossing was like a crap shoot every day," said Crespo, adding "You did not know if you would make it to the other side."

The improvements may seem subtle, but they make a world of difference to the people of Hunts Point, said the assemblyman.

He added at the press conference that the location serves as a transportation hub connecting residents to shopping and employment on either side of the overhead expressway, with the Hunts Point Industrial Business Zone nearby.

Community Board 2 voted in support of the bevy of changes, which are part of the city's Vision Zero initiative, an effort to reduce traffic deaths and injuries, in 2015.

In his remarks, CB2's district manager Rafael Salamanca recalled that at a Vision Zero town hall meeting, Hunts Point residents said that something needed to be done at the location.

"Today Bruckner Boulevard is much safer to cross than it was a year ago," said Salamanca, who also thanked DOT for meeting with CB 2 and taking their input.

Judith Raphael, a member of the Hunts Point Advisory Board, said that the complex traffic interchange, and its gridlock conditions, make it difficult for pedestrians to cross.

Traffic conditions along

Bruckner Boulevard sometimes can feel so treacherous it can feel safer to take a bus across from the residential portion of the community east of the Bruckner and the commercial area in Longwood, she said.

She believes that DOT's changes will help to slow down traffic at the location, she said.

The improvements include new pedestrian crosswalk markings and curb extensions across the wide expanse of Bruckner Boulevard and Hunts Point Avenue; a new pedestrian safety island between the Sheridan Expressway on-ramp near the same intersection; new slip lanes between the service and main roadways between East 156th Street and Leggett Avenue and Tiffany and Baretto streets; new pedestrian safety island and painted sidewalk extensions



Polly Trottenberg, NYC Department of Transportation commissioner; Assemblyman Marcos Crespo; Rafael Salamanca, CB 2 district manager and representatives from both the Hunts Point Advisory Board and The Point Community Development Corporation celebrate the improvements for pedestrians and cyclists at Bruckner Boulevard and Hunts Point Avenue on Wednesday, December 23.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

at Hunts Point and Garrison avenues; realigned and new crosswalks on Bruckner Boulevard at Lafayette Avenue and median enlarge-

ments along Bruckner Boulevard in Longwood and Hunts Point.

The DOT began the improvements in September.

They were all completed in the fall, except for a bike path still to be installed under the Bruckner Expressway, according to DOT.



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NYPD Inspector Fausto Pichardo stands in front of two cases containing his coin collection in the commanding officer's office at the 43rd Precinct. Inspector Pichardo had the cases made to look like the United States and police department flags.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

43rd Pct. commander promoted to inspector

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

The commanding officer of the 43rd Precinct received a new rank during a recent round of department promotions.

Inspector Fausto Pichardo was promoted to deputy inspector, just in time for the Christmas holiday, along with dozens of other NYPD officers and traffic agents.

He said that it was his second promotion during the holidays, with his promotion to deputy inspector coming at the same time in 2013 when he was the commanding officer of the 33rd Precinct in northern Manhattan.

The inspector, who is a prodigious collector of coins from different department units, said that while the promotion was a tremendous feat, and he is grateful for a little bit of extra status and pay, he is most happy to be a precinct commander.

His enthusiasm was evident in a recent interview with the Bronx Times.

"I think that the greatest job in the police department is being a precinct commander," he said. "This is the one position where you are in tune with the people and the community...and the cops."

He said that the communities that the precinct serves and the officers on the beat in the command work well together.

"What is great and what drives me is seeing that mesh of the police and the community," he said.

The police department does not get everything right all of the time, and perhaps sometimes certain people may think situations should be handled a different way, but despite all of this, the police are usually correct, and the community appreciates the work that they do, he said.

As an example he cited the fact that churches had sent meals to the precinct for officers working during the Christmas holiday so that others can get to where they

are going safely.

He said that the active command, is at times the second busiest in the city in terms of total numbers of crime, is currently in the process of creating a precinct clergy coalition.

"We are in the early stages of forming a solid clergy council in the precinct," he said, adding that it was a great way to reach a large number of people, and also, it's good for the department because of the sheer amount of information and feedback that would result.

The officers in the precinct also took time this year to hold a barbecue for children living in homeless shelters within blocks of the station on Fteley Avenue.

"For four or five hours this summer these kids, who may not have everything... had a good interaction early on with police officers."

Initiatives like this are something Inspector Pichardo would like see replicated, perhaps on a larger scale.

"The greatest thing about (being a commanding officer) is the impact you can have on people's lives, including the police officers," he said, adding that leading the 43rd Precinct epitomizes of what you want as a precinct commander.

He said he was grateful that the police commissioner and the department have trusted him with the leadership of the precinct.

Pichardo arrived at the 43rd Precinct about six months ago, and before that served as the commanding officer or executive officer (second in command) at two Manhattan precincts. His career reaches back to 1997.

He graduated from the police academy in 1999, made sergeant in 2005, lieutenant in 2008 and captain in 2010.



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BRONX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HOSTS HOLIDAY PARTY, TOY DRIVE



Joe Kelleher, chamber chairman (l), and Nunzio Del Greco, chamber president, gather during the Chamber holiday party.



On Monday, December 14, the Bronx Chamber of Commerce hosted its Holiday Party and Toy Drive at Tosca Marquee. The holiday party included a buffet, wine, beer, live entertainment, dancing and a cash bar. The toys donated for the toy drive were distributed to organizations that assist abused and neglected children.

(Above, l-r) Sal Marante, Celinette Rodriquez, Alexza Santiago, Kelly Rosati and Laura Nguyen enjoying the festivities.

Photos by Miriam Quin



The members brought toys to the holiday party for needy Bronx families.

Photo by Miriam Quin

NYISE STUDENTS PERFORM JOLLY TUNES



On Thursday, December 17, the New York Institute for Special Education hosted a holiday show at 999 Pelham Parkway South. The show included a variety of jolly tunes performed by 125 students with visual impairments and emotional needs for their families and the school's faculty. Students showcased their piano, drums, flute, guitar and bells skills during the presentation.

(Above, l-r) Ethan Arias, Taylor McCaffrey, Naum Shulman and Jazzmarie Arsenec perform a holiday song.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



KINGS HARBOR HOLDS ADOPT-A-PLATOON

Last month, Kings Harbor Multicare Center adopted an Army platoon, after the facility's Therapeutic Recreation department and five residents, all of whom are veterans, collaborated in a fundraising effort. The fundraising effort, which included the residents/veterans manning tables to sell raffles and share stories of their experiences, resulted in the vets meeting their fundraising goal of \$1,240, which will be sent to Adopt-A-Platoon, an organization that sends care packages to a military platoon overseas.

(Above) Residents and veterans (l-r) Carl Small, William Naughton, John Hayes, Peter Giannitrapani and Winfield Oston participated in the adopt-a-platoon fundraising effort.

Photo courtesy of Kings Harbor Multicare Center / Lisa Post

OLA PARENTING CENTER DONATES TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN NEED

The OLA Parenting Center continued their tradition of providing Christmas gifts for the women and children residing at the Good Counsel Home, a residence which provides a home for pregnant women and children in need. The gifts will be distributed to 14 women and 16 children on Christmas Eve.

(Right) OLA Parenting Center poses for a photo with the gifts they collected to be distributed on Christmas Eve.

Photo Courtesy of OLA Parenting Center



Assemblyman Gjonaj hosts Holiday Party at Don Coqui

Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj hosted a holiday party for his staff, friends and family, community and organization leaders and constituents on Wednesday, December 23. The holiday festivities took place at Don Coqui Restaurant on City Island. Photos by Silvio Pacifico



(l-r) Tom Messina, from Congressman Joe Crowley's office; Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj and Roberta Gjonaj, the assemblyman's wife.



(l-r) Tony Signorile, Tom Messina, John Livingston and Tony Vitaliano enjoy the holiday party.



(l-r) John Marano, Community Board 10 vice chairman; Laura Guerriero, Bronx Times Reporter publisher; Tony Vitaliano, Community Board 11 chairman; Tony Signorile, Morris Park Community Association president; Rosemary DeLuca, Wildlife Conservation Society, assistant director of city and state affairs and Elizabeth Figueroa, NY Botanical Gardens director of community relations.



Tom Messina, from Congressman Joe Crowley's office; Sonny Vataj, from Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj's office, Aleksander Nilaj, from the Albanian Open Hand Association, and John Marano, Community Board 10 vice chairman.



(l-r) Renne O'Dwyer, Sonny Vataj, Will Madonna, Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, Natalia Fernandez, the assemblyman's wife Roberta Gjonaj and Denis Walcot.



Eric Henry, New York Botanical Garden director of community relations (l) and Joe McManus, New York State Democratic Committee, 80th Assembly District.

Bronx Foxy Pets hosts Santa Paws Party

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A non-profit community service project helping Bronx pets recently hosted its very first Christmas fundraiser.

On Saturday, December 19, Bronx Foxy Pets hosted Santa Paws Christmas party for dogs and owners from the Bronx to fund the organization.

For a \$10 donation, the pooches in attendance, many of which were dressed in Christmas outfits, had their picture taken with Santa Claus and received goodie bags filled with doggie cookies and a toy.

The event, which was held at the Icehouse Cafe, drew over 50 dogs and dog owners.

Icehouse Cafe owner Terry Dambrowski provided chicken wings along with other appetizers as well as mimosas for the owners as part of her contribution towards the event.

The Christmas party also included an appearance by organization chairwomen Bailey Provetto's dog Bebe, a Morkie (Yorkshire terrier and Maltese mix) who performed tricks for an audience.

According to Provetto, Bebe



Dogs and their owners gather with Bronx Foxy Pets founder Evelyn Torres and chairwoman Bailey Provetto during the Santa Paws Christmas Party.

Photo courtesy of Bronx Foxy Pets

is currently training to be a therapy dog at Jacobi Hospital to work with patients and knows over 40 stunts.

The main purpose of the event, aside from spreading holiday cheer, was to acquire charity donations to set up a veterinar-

ian care and an emergency fund for Bronx pets in need, as well as lost pets.

"This event was a great way to

celebrate the holidays while raising funds for a great cause," said Provetto. "What happens when these animals are sick and need care?"

"Now, because everybody in attendance donated \$10 or more to the event and our organization, we are one step closer to providing pets with the ability to receive help when they need it. It was great to see so many dog owners support us," Bailey said.

"It was a totally fun day - every dog and dog owner had a ball," said Chrys Napolitano, who brought her two dogs, Mini (a Poodle mix) and Cooper (a Chihuahua mix) to the event, both of whom she adopted from New Beginning Animal Shelter. "What especially made it a great time was that every dog could roam freely in the room in their Christmas outfits."

The event also celebrated the rescue of Zucchini, a terrier who had been lost, but was found near the Throggs Neck Shopping Center and returned to his family last month.

During the search, Bronx Foxy Pets posted alerts on Facebook and throughout the area.

Organization facilitates child's learning efforts

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A non-profit organization that provides support and assistance to individuals with developmental and related disabilities - is doing just that for a Bronx mother and son during the holiday.

The Center for Family Services, which supports over 1,500 individuals in both the New York City Metropolitan area and New Jersey, has been providing home services for the Highbridge family for over a decade, and hopes to provide the son with an academically-friendly environment at home.

Sharon and Tony Johnson, the mother-son tandem who both suffer from intellectual disabilities, have received countless assistance from CFS, who has provided both of them with the support they need to build confidence to eventually live independent and successful lives.

Sharon, who has been a part of CFS for the last 18 years, receives help from a staff member, who is present at her home eight hours a day on Mondays through Fridays and assists her with money budgeting and making life choices.

After six years of being a part of the organization, Sharone gave birth to her first and only child, Tony, and stopped working to take care of him.

Now that Tony is receiving support from CFS, Sharon plans to go back to work serving breakfast and lunch at a school cafeteria.

Tony, now 11, and in the sixth grade, has been a part of CFS since birth, and receives help from the agency six hours a day on Mondays through Fridays.

Tony's mom, who also suffered from significant health issues during Tony's childhood, made it difficult to provide a environment which supported his educational needs when he was home from school.

Despite efforts by CFS to support him, Tony has had a difficult transition from elementary school to middle school, as reflected by his grades and interactions with other students.

Tony's intellectual disabilities have made it difficult for him to control his emotions and has limited his social relationships.

Currently, CFS is hoping to

continue to help Tony create an environment which reinforces learning at home and provide a place where he can complete his school assignments in a special area complete with a desk, a desk-top computer (or laptop) with software and a small bookcase with books to help him excel in the school classroom.

"Despite his challenges, Tony has been through a lot - but he has also accomplished a lot," said Sharon. "He may need some help with his communication and writing, but he loves to read, he's a good speller and he knows the multiplication tables like the back of his hand - so it's clear that he has the drive to learn."

Sharon also added that Tony is very skilled with electronics, has the ability to count money and has a strong passion for wrestling, a venue that she hopes, one day, she will be able to take him to.

"Since he started taking Karate two months ago, Tony has shown major improvements in his academics and behavior," said Diana Collins, director of Medicaid service coordination. "It shows in his school work and in his new in-



Tony and his mother, Sharon, enjoy a day at Coney Island, compliments of CFS.

Photo courtesy of the Center for Family Services

teractions and in his connections with other students."

"We (CFS) have supported Tony and his mom to live together in an apartment in the Bronx," said Linda Schellenberg, director of Community Services for CFS.

"The supports provided by

CFS have truly enriched Tony's life," said Barbara Greenwald associate executive director for CFS.

For more information about the Center for Family Support, visit their website at www.cfsny.org

FAMOUS SHAMOUS RAISES FUNDS FOR SOLDIER'S ANGELS AT SPOTO'S RESTAURANT



(l-r) Andy Romeo, Vincenzo Altieri, Marianne Spoto, Paul McIlroy, Pete Spoto, John Jitto and Carmine Sarno gather after the show.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



On Saturday, December 19, Bronx-based cover band Famous Shamus played a Christmas Show at Spoto's Restaurant. The show raised funds for Soldier's Angels, an organization that provides aid and comfort to the men and women of the United States Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, their families and the overall veteran population.

Above, (l-r) Paulette Goldsmith, Donna Borges and Dawn Cocharelli Almodovar enjoy the show.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

MACINA PEACE PLAZA TREE LIGHTING



On Thursday, December 10, Senator Jeff Klein and Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj hosted a Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Rudy Macina Peace Plaza. The tree lighting included an appearance by Santa and his helpers. Klein and Gjonaj were joined by Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, the Morris Park Community Association, Community Board 11 and members of the P.S. 83 holiday choir.

(Above) Santa (Evan Di Battista from Senator Klein's office), with members of the P.S. 83 holiday choir; (l-r) Isabel Vilapol, Gresa Raci, Paige Martinez and Maria Turmalaj during the tree lighting ceremony.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, Senator Jeff Klein and Santa with the P.S. 83 holiday choir.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico



On Saturday, December 19, Baldor Specialty Foods, in collaboration with Community Board 2 and the Point Community Development Center, distributed 2,000 packaged holiday dinner meals to south Bronx residents and families at the Point.Org Headquarters, 940 Garrison Avenue. The meals, which were donated by vendors Guida Dairies, Rockland Bakery, Westside Foods, Orchid Island, Red Orchard Juices and First Fruits, among others, included all the fixings of a traditional holiday dinner, such as turkey, seasonal fruits and vegetables, dinner rolls, milk, juice and deserts.

BADLOR DONATES HOLIDAY MEALS

(Above) Baldor Specialty Foods, Point Community Development Center volunteers and members of the 41st Precinct and Community Board 2 gather during the holiday dinner distribution.

Photo by Aracelis Batista

(Right, l-r) Milagro Gonzalez, Maria Rivera and Maria's daughters Shaneilys, Dianelys and Dianasra gather during the holiday distribution.

Photo by Aracelis Batista



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Sloan Awards for Excellence in Teaching

On Wednesday, December 2, The Fund for the City of New York announced the seven recipients of the seventh annual Sloan Awards for Excellence in Teaching Science and Mathematics. The awards recognize New York City public high school teachers who motivate students to reach further, work harder, and develop and expand their love for science and mathematics.

Bronx teachers Patricia Peña Carty (University Heights High School) and Patrick Callahan (The Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics) were two of the seven New York City teachers recognized at the ceremony, which was attended by Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña.

For Patricia Peña

Carty, exposing students to professional-level science research opportunities while fostering an understanding in students of how science can be used as a vehicle for social change is paramount.

Her biology students have conducted original research on air quality concerns in the South Bronx and have presented their research to professional scientists and local lawmakers, while also researching wildlife forensics at the American Museum of Natural History. Ms. Peña Carty has also created a Genetics course at University Heights High School, with students designing and conducting their own genetic research projects to be presented at the Urban Barcode Project. Says

one colleague, "Students feel like scholars in her class. Their mastery of difficult scientific content is exceptional."

When Patrick Callahan arrived at The Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics in 2012, the only science course the school offered not tied to a Regents Exam was AP Biology. Upon arrival, Mr. Callahan created a Science Research course in which students independently design their own scientific research project and present their research at science fairs and competitions across the city.

This past year, Mr. Callahan also advocated for, designed and is teaching the school's first AP Environmental Science course. Says Principal Edward Tom,



PATRICIA PEÑA CARTY



PATRICK CALLAHAN

"He is a superstar as a teacher and scientific role model for our stu-

dents. His work ethic is unparalleled and he is always working to level

the playing field for students in the South Bronx."

BTR 'Pipe Dreams' columnist Bob Connolly dead at 73

From page 1

physical health," shared Erin Wilson, his daughter.

Wilson said her father went to St. John's University part time, but eventually dropped out to focus on providing for his family.

She added Connolly was devoted to "serving his family, community and God."

In the 1970s, Connolly was a Parkchester Little League coach for a few years while Sean was on the team before the family moved to Edgewater Park in 1976.

Connolly served as president and chaplain during his over 20-year career with the Edgewater Volunteer Firefighter Department.

Always active in his community, Connolly served as St. Raymonds High School for Boys' Parent Association president from 1981 to 1985 and Preston High School's Parent Association president from 1984 to 1997.

At age 50, Connolly graduated from SUNY Empire State College where he earned his Bachelor's of Arts degree in English.

For nearly two decades, Connolly penned a weekly sports column for the Bronx Times Reporter titled 'Pipe Dreams.'

He shared humorous stories or obscure facts about sports players, behind-the-scenes accounts of sporting events and promotions of up and coming figures in the sports world such as Bronx native professional boxer Maureen 'The Real Million Dollar Baby' Shea, each week.

A boxing fan, Connolly was very involved with the Police Athletic League's Golden Gloves which he often visited to cover events for his column.

Pugilists would frequently stop by his table to ask how Connolly was doing and to introduce him to the up and coming talent. As his condition progressed,

Connolly relied on a motorized wheelchair for mobility, but never lost his trademark loving and humorous personality, according to Sean.

Connolly's family credited the Throggs Neck Benevolent Association for supporting their father's

fight by providing him with ambulette transport to receive treatment and installing ramps as well as widening their home's doorways to accommodate his wheelchair.

A natural story teller, Connolly was also a well-known literary enthusiast who enjoyed reading works penned by O. Henry, Jack London and James Patterson. In his spare time, Connolly also ran a website called ourpipedreams.com which offered aspiring poets and authors an online platform to share their works.

His last Pipe Dreams column was published in the December 18 to 24 edition of the Bronx Times, the week of his passing.

Though diagnosed with advanced stage four melanoma five years ago, the ever determined Connolly defeated the cancer by seeking treatment at Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care.

Connolly was waked on Sunday, December 27 at Schuyler Hill Funeral Home and a Mass at St. Frances de Chantal Church was held for him

the next day.

He was cremated at Woodlawn Crematory and will be laid to rest at Woodlawn Cemetery, according to his family.

In lieu of flowers, Connolly's family asks donations instead be made to the Throggs Neck Benevolent Association to help others in their time of need.

Connolly is survived by his wife, Carol; their son, Sean and three daughters Erin, Jean and Judy, their seven granddaughters Mary Kate, Caitlin, Leila, Megan, Gabrielle, Theresa and Mallory and his siblings James, Gerry, Regina and Marilyn.

"My nickname is 'coach' and that became possible all because of my dad," said Sean, Our Lady of Mount Carmel girls JV basketball and Lady Hawks coach.

"He taught me the values of being a coach and that respect is something you don't get, you earn. Every time whether my team wins or loses, we always show respect to our opponents. I will always continue carrying on his values to keep his memory alive," he added.



An avid sports fan, Bob Connolly was best known for writing his weekly 'Pipe Dreams' sports column sharing little known sports insights and profiling up and coming sports figures.

Photo courtesy of Judy Futterman

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