

## Buildings collapse during windstorm

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN  
AND PATRICK ROCCHIO

A pair of building collapses in the Bronx were the result of last week's intense windstorm.

Last Wednesday night, February 24, brought a wild windstorm that brought down portions of two different buildings across the borough - one a vacant building located at East 183rd Street and Beaumont Avenue and the other one located at 190 Fordham Street on City Island, more than likely resulting from wind gusts that reached up to 50 miles per hour that evening.

Although neither of the buildings experienced a total collapse, what was left of the vacant building in Belmont had to be knocked down and was demolished last Thursday night.

The building on City Island experienced a facade collapse, when sheathing on one side of the building, which was nailed over brickwork, fell to the ground.

Barbara Dolesnek, manager of the City Island Nautical Museum, located right next to the building at 190 Fordham Street, an off-limits area, said that the collapse of the facade did not affect the museum, but that the neglect of the building next door (and the building's brickwork) has resulted in leaks and damage inside the museum.

She also mentioned that another piece of metal on the building, which was also nailed over brickwork, will soon collapse as well as a result of the storm's aftermath.

No individuals were reported

*Continued on Page 11*

# \$\$ TO RESTORE BEACH PAVILION

BP's capital budget funds landmark

BY ROBERT WIRSING

A beloved Orchard Beach landmark may get the chance to relive its glory days.

During the State of the Borough Address, Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. announced he will allocate \$10 million from his capital budget to fund the restoration of the memorable Orchard Beach Pavilion.

According to James Rausse, AICP, director of capital programs for the borough president's office, this marks the first phase of a \$40 million multi-phase project slated for the 'Bronx Riviera'.

Rausse explained the objectives are to redesign the pavilion within its landmark parameters while better fortifying it against

hurricanes, providing additional direct access to the beach and establishing more food concessions and tourist shops at the pavilion.

The project is dependent on receiving \$10 million from the borough president, NYS senate and assembly members and NYC Parks. Parks.

Once fully funded, Rausse said early estimates have construction starting by at least 2018.

"NYC Parks appreciates Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.'s enthusiasm and eagerness to restore Orchard Beach Pavilion," said Bronx Parks Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa. "We understand the importance of this project and look forward to continuing

*Continued on Page 4*



## Celebrating Black History

Shereece Love performs an African dance during the New York Botanical Garden's Black History Month Celebration on Wednesday, February 24. The event included workshops, presentations and musical performances.

## Andrews Ave. blaze displaces families

BY ROBERT WIRSING

A devastating blaze left many Morris Heights families without a home last week.

According to a FDNY spokesman, on Tuesday, February 23 at 2:14 a.m., a four-alarm fire was raging at 1892 Andrews Avenue resulting in 39 FDNY units and 168 members dispatched to the scene.

The inferno which tore

through the six-story apartment building was brought under control two hours later.

The FDNY reported that five civilians sustained non-life threatening injuries from this early morning fire and were taken to local hospitals for treatment. There were no fatalities.

Fire marshals determined the cause as a clothes dryer fire

*Continued on Page 4*

# Exercise stations planned for 3 parks

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Get ready to strengthen your abs and biceps.

Three east Bronx parks were selected to receive body building equipment within the next year or two.

The City Council allocated about \$618,000 towards constructing new exercise stations in Bronx Park East at Lydig Avenue, Pelham Bay Park near the running track, and Bicentennial Veterans Memorial Park in Throggs Neck, according to a Parks Department spokesman.

The equipment is slated for anyone over 12 years of age.

The construction of the athletic equipment in Pelham Bay Park is expected to begin first, in the spring, and will complement pieces already in place at the park.

Councilman James Vacca secured the funding for all three projects, which according to a Parks Department spokesman includes \$418,000 for Pelham Bay Park, and about \$100,000 each for the two locations.

"I want to get rid of the Bronx's distinction of being the 62nd county in the state out of 62 when

I want to get rid of the Bronx' distinction of being the 62nd county in the state out of 62 when it comes to being healthy.

**James Vacca**  
Councilman

it comes to being healthy," said Vacca.

The Pelham Bay Park installation will include at least 12 pieces when complete, according to a Parks presentation.

These pieces are a leg extension, lat pull down, shoulder rotator, sit up bench, hanging rings, pullup bar, parallel bars, upright cycle, chest press, captain's chair and vertical press.

"Hopefully, people will supplement using these with an appropri-

ate diet and they will see results," said the councilman.

Donations to the Friends of Pelham Bay Park funded three pieces of workout equipment that were installed next to the park's running track in 2014.

The group applauded the latest development.

"We are grateful that Councilman Vacca allocated funding for a full-size outdoor fitness area for the park," stated Judge Lizbeth Gonzalez, FPBP president. "Once construction for that area begins, the Friends will work with the Pelham Bay administrator's office to re-locate the three pieces that we funded. A healthy Bronx is a great Bronx!"

At Bicentennial Veterans Memorial Park, six pieces of workout equipment are planned, but a coalition of local veterans is insisting that the area adjacent to a living memorial dedicated to the 1571 Vietnam War veterans from New York City who died during that conflict is preserved, said Pat Devine, one of the veterans who lobbied to get the park built.

"We support it, but not in the memorial area," said Devine, refer-



A sampling of the workout equipment to be placed in Pelham Bay Park is depicted here in a Parks Department presentation.

Photo courtesy of Parks Department

ring to an area of trees and shrubs next to a flagpole in the park.

The preliminary plans show the workout equipment located next to the memorial area, said Devine.

He believes that the location of the equipment can be worked out before construction begins, and that there is ample space for it elsewhere in the park.

"The veteran community

would like to have an on-site meeting with the Parks Department so we can all get on the same page," said Devine.

Vacca said he was aware of the issue and he believes it can be resolved. According to Parks, construction at Veterans Park is slated for the fall of 2017.

A meeting was held on the Bicentennial Veterans Park plan on Monday, February 29.

## Soundview Ferry plan could create havoc

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

One year ago, Mayor de Blasio announced that ferry service would be expanded citywide. One of five new routes included Soundview and Community Board 9 is fearful that a parking nightmare could occur when the service debuts in 2018.

The Soundview ferry will stop at East 90th Street, East 62nd Street, and finally Wall Street and will cost the same as bus fare.

Soundview was chosen as one of the locations for ferry service because the community is largely isolated and has few mass transit options.

The idea is to reduce congestion and traffic while cutting commute times to Manhattan for Bronx residents.

However, with the current public transportation system, most commuters will have to drive to the ferry, making parking for Soundview residents more difficult and forcing commuters to continue to use their cars (not to mention the fact that many residents don't own vehicles).

CB 9 has held various vision sessions and meetings on how to increase ferry accessibility.

A free taxi system that would take people to and from the ferry is a potential option that residents are advocating for.

Marabell Narcado of CB9 said that while the community is in support of the ferry, one of the biggest concerns residents bring up is how to get there.

"If people from outside the neighborhood come in, they don't know where they [soundview residents] will park, since there is no parking in the area, and that's how the idea of a free taxi service came up," said Narcado.

William Rivera, district manager of CB 9, has proposed changes to the BX36 and BX39 bus lines so that they would make a stop at the end of Castle Hill Avenue, where the ferry is set to launch from. Right now, there is no bus stop close to the ferry.

He also said that the board is proposing that developers in the area offer shuttle bus services that would take residents to and from the ferry at peak hours throughout the day, increasing ridership and allowing ease of accessibility for commuters.

Rivera, even though he feels a free taxi system to the ferry "isn't viable," would bring it up to the NYC Economic Development Corporation.

A more likely option, he said, would be that all taxi services within the Bronx offered a reduced-rate ride to the ferry.

"This is going to be huge for economic growth... they don't want to leave the Bronx behind," said Rivera.

Councilman James Vacca says he supports the Soundview service but won't stop pushing for a ferry stop in Throggs Neck.

"We have to continue fighting, I'm not giving up on this in any way," said Vacca, who thinks Throggs Neck residents may struggle to access a ferry they have to drive to, that is so far out of their way.

"When you have ferry service you have to get to the most distant communities," he continued, "and that's where the plan is flawed."



The Soundview ferry is set to begin service in 2018.

Courtesy of NYC Economic Development Corporation



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# Borough president's capital budget funds Orchard Beach restoration

From Page 1

ing the dialogue with our elected partners and community stakeholders.”

Deborah Wye, Friends of Pelham Bay Park communications coordinator and Museum of Modern Art curator emerita said. “It was Robert Moses who suggested that the pavilion have a colonnade that responds to the verticality of the trees in Pelham Bay Park and its curving wings echo the crescent shoreline of the beach.”

“The NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission has called Orchard Beach ‘among the most remarkable public recreational facilities ever built in the United States,’” said Judge Lizbeth Gonzalez, FPBP president, adding.

According to Lloyd Ultan, Bronx borough historian, Orchard Beach was artificially created in 1936

under the leadership of NYC Parks Commissioner Robert Moses by using imported brown and white sand from the Rockaways, Sandy Hook and Northport to close the inlet of LeRoy Bay.

As part of this \$8 million Works Progress Administration project, the landmarked 50-foot wide pavilion was constructed by NYC Parks with Aymar Embury II serving as an architectural consultant on the project.

More than 18,000 people attended Orchard Beach's opening day on July 25, 1936, however the pavilion itself would not be completed until the following year.

In its heyday, Ultan explained the Art Deco designed building was utilized as two separate gender specific public bathhouses.

This historic pavilion also included a 500-seat formal dining room, a laundry service for rental towels and bathing suits, changing rooms and indoor showers.

However, as the city faced a fiscal crisis in the mid-1970s, NYC Parks did not have enough money to fund the pavilion's upkeep, Ultan said.

A \$4.3 million project completed in 1997 under Mayor Giuliani and Borough President Fernando Ferrer restored the upper loggia and main pavilion and added a new tent structure and performance stage at the pavilion's lower section.

In 2006, Orchard Beach Pavilion was officially designated as a NYC Landmark by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.



A construction crew cleans up a building collapse at the corner of East 183rd Street and Beaumont Avenue resulting from last week's wind storm.  
Photo by Silvio Pacifico

## Two different buildings collapse during recent windstorm

From Page 1

injured during either of the building collapses.

Following the vacant building collapse on East 183rd Street and Beau-

mont Avenue, two families from a neighboring building were asked to evacuate and were temporarily displaced.

Red Cross teams re-

sponded to the incident to provide emergency assistance, and did so by providing emergency funds for basic necessities to both families.



Borough President Diaz has committed \$10 million from his capital budget to fund a multi-phase \$40 million restoration project for the landmarked Orchard Beach Pavilion.  
Photo by Silvio Pacifico



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Invited by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Bronx high schooler Giovanni Hernandez, visited the Supreme Court. Courtesy of Annie Soriano

# From Pelham Bay to the Supreme Court

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

Giovanni Hernandez hadn't always been interested in law. He is what his mom calls "an artsy kid", who is never the loudest person in the room.

A lot changed for Giovanni on a seemingly routine day in his P.S. 71 seventh grade classroom, when Giovanni's Social Studies teacher selected him as one of the participants in a mock trial that was to be run out of the Bronx District Attorney's office.

Annie Soriano, Giovanni's mom, was a little nervous for her introverted son, knowing that this mock trial would mean he had to speak in front of a crowded room.

As the case went on his confidence grew, and by the end Giovanni was lead counsel for the defense team and presented closing arguments with ease.

"I was shocked, he totally came out of his shell," said Soriano of her son's performance.

From then on, Giovanni took a keen interest in law. He was on the mock trial team again in eighth grade, and this time lawyers helped to coach the students.

Down at the criminal

court house on Grand Concourse, P.S.71 presented arguments against other Bronx schools.

"That was a turning point in my kid's life," said Soriano looking back at the experience.

Now in high school, Giovanni commutes each day from Pelham Bay to the High School of Art and Design in Manhattan.

One day, at the advisement of a friend, Giovanni read about the High School Law Institute at Columbia University - a program in which Columbia law students teach constitutional and criminal law classes to teenagers from all five boroughs.

The program is free, but consequently highly selective.

Giovanni applied by writing a passionate essay about the person he most admired - Bronx born and bred Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

"She is a huge inspiration to me because we have so much in common, and under similar situations as mine, she rose to become the first Latina Supreme Court Justice in U.S. history," wrote Giovanni.

He was accepted in September 2015. Soriano wrote

to Justice Sotomayor to thank her for inspiring her son - and much to her surprise received a prompt and warm response.

"Hearing about students like Giovanni makes the work I do worthwhile," wrote Sotomayor.

She invited Giovanni and his mother to come to the Supreme Court to view oral arguments in front of the court and to enjoy a private tour of the chambers- just for the two of them.

Giovanni was in awe upon arrival, the experience cementing his decision to focus on a law career, and to maybe one day to become a judge.

Most teenagers long to sleep in on Saturday's but 15-year old Giovanni is more than happy to wake up early, commute to Columbia, and study law.

His dedication is obvious in the excited way he talks about the program, and the profession he is so eager to join. He's especially intrigued by criminal law.

"If you see an opportunity take it! Don't just expect that you'll get another one," urges Giovanni, who hopes one day his passion will take him as far as it took his role model.

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# St. Patrick's Parade set for March 13

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Nearly two dozen recently deceased community members will be honored when the 2016 Throggs Neck St. Patrick's Day Parade steps off.

Families and friends of 21 honorary grand marshals, people being posthumously remembered during the 18th annual parade, will be marching when it steps off at noon on Sunday, March 13 at East Tremont and Lafayette avenues.

The parade reviewing stand will be located at Harding and East Tremont avenues.

Loved ones of several of the honorary grand marshals said they would march in groups to celebrate their lives during the festive community celebration.

They will join grand marshals Noreen and David Kilkenny, honored

clergy Fr. Christopher Devron and scores of civic associations and community groups, as well as thousands of spectators.

Danny Boyle, the son of honorary grand marshal Carol Boyle, said that he and his brother, his brother's family, and his girlfriend and her family would all be marching to honor his mother.

"It will be a very festive day... a celebration of her life," said Danny Boyle, who said that the family has had other honorary grand marshal remembered in past parades as well.

She would have been thrilled to know she was being remembered by a parade going through Throggs Neck, where she raised her family and where her children left their marks, her son said.

Patty Murphy, the daughter of honorary



Carol Boyle

grand marshal, said that her father Joseph Murphy Sr. said that he used to march in the parade as part of St. Benedict's Knights of Columbus chapter, where he was one a grand knight.

"I think he liked the sense of community and the sense of togetherness during the parade," said Patty Murphy, who added that her family will be marching, along with her cousins.



Michael Martz

Many in Throggs Neck may remember her father as an organizer of blood drives, and also as the equipment manager for the New York Rangers who brought the Stanley Cup to the neighborhood after the team won in 1994.

Honorary grand marshal Michael Martz attended the parade every year. Kevin Martz said his dad liked to see families in the neighborhood coming together.



Joseph Murphy

His son added that his dad especially liked seeing members of the FDNY in the parade because he was a retired fireman.

Kevin said that many family members and friends want to march in his father's memory.

"My dad helped out a lot of people and they want to march in his honor," said Kevin Martz.

Marianne O'Hara Ryan, daughter of honorary grand marshal Te-

resa O'Hara, said that her family would be marching, along with staff from Jeanne Jugan Residence, where her mother lived.

"We are all marching; we have a huge banner," she said, adding that family is coming in from Long Island, New Jersey and Connecticut and that her mother's nine grandchildren will be carrying the banner.

The honorary grand marshals for the parade are: Margaret Babcock, Carol Boyle, Monica Burns, John Byrne, Charlie Capezuti, Robert Connolly, Dan Cotter, Ann Devany, Elizabeth Kelleher, Thomas Laughlin, Michael Martz, John Mullins, Joseph Murphy, Teresa O'Hara, Daniel O'Shea, George Peragine, Benny Randazzo, Anthony Riccardella, Mildred Scott, Ethel Tarpey and Alice Tell.

## Iconic 'History Channel' ad removed

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

An iconic advertising billboard that stood atop a south Bronx waterfront building for over 15 years is now history.

The iconic 'History Channel' advertisement in Mott Haven was razed after the cable network's parent company did not renew its advertising agreement, according to sources.

The giant gold colored 'H' and 'The History Channel' in big red capital letters are now a memory.

It was almost impossible not to see the massive, 4,000-square foot History Channel advertisement and logo from parts of Harlem, especially while driving northbound from Manhattan across the Triboro/RFK or Willis Avenue bridges.

The life expectancy of the billboard had reached the end of the road.

The steel frame structure, atop 20 Bruckner Boulevard, was disassembled in early January after all of 'The History Channel' lettering and the electronic message board were removed.

In February, the symbolic 'H' was removed from the building's roof, completing the removal process, eliminating all evidence of the advertisement that looked across the Harlem River.

"There is a long history of advertisements and signs being put up in promi-

nent places - especially an area with heavy traffic flows," said Lloyd Ultan from the Bronx Historical Society.

"This area, an area that is so close to Manhattan and has easy access to transportation is a prime spot for billboard advertising. I assume that this billboard will be replaced by something - I'd be surprised if another advertisement wasn't put in its place."

"As a historian, it was always a pleasure and always very welcoming to see the 'History Channel' advertisement upon entering the Bronx," said Thomas Casey, president of the East Bronx History Forum. "However, that area of the Bronx (Mott Haven) is rapidly developing, and this is just another change in that area of the borough.

Casey added that he recently received a tip that the vacant advertising space may be substituted for a 'Greetings From The Bronx' sign, similar to a post card he designed many years ago.

The building that sported the billboard was once the home of the Ruppert Ice House, an ice manufacturer that operated before the refrigeration era.

A&E Networks, who represents the History Channel, as well as Clear Channel Outdoor, the advertising billboard corporation who owns the rights, did not return a request for comment.



A view of the former advertising billboard site from Alexander Avenue. Community News Group / Steven Goodstein





Dunkin' Donut (l) vs. Quality Donut. The winner is...

Madeline Anthony / Community News Group

# Quality is as crowded and cheery as ever

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

Quality Donuts isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

Two months ago the restaurant was forced out of its longtime location at the corner of Westchester Avenue and Crosby Avenue in Pelham Bay after 30 years in business.

Today, 'Quality Grill & Gyro' has opened on 1805 Edison Avenue diagonally across the street.

The new location is less than half the size of the old restaurant, but the atmosphere remained the same on a recent Tuesday afternoon visit - crowded and cheery.

Managers and workers say the place has been busy since it opened three weeks ago.

Breakfast is still served all day, but changes have definitely been made; gyro's are now on the menu, and there are fewer baked goods

available.

George Katsmanis, owner of Quality, says he is making the best out of his new situation, and business is going well.

"It's not like it used to be, but it's still good," said Katsmanis. "It's a great location...and a much better landlord," he continued with a laugh.

The infamous donuts that were so well known and loved at the old location are now being baked down the road at Pelham Delite on Crosby Avenue, a popular bakery that Katsmanis purchased in October.

The donuts used to be baked fresh at Quality, but faced with new space limitations, Katsmanis and his team bring a small assortment of donuts from the bakery to be sold at the new restaurant.

The selection including jelly, vanilla sprinkle, cinnamon sprinkle, chocolate,

and coconut donut line will be expanding in the coming months to include more options.

"In time there will be more flavors," said Katsmanis, but right now his greatest challenge is building his business all over again.

The Bronx Times compared Quality's donuts with its main competitor - Dunkin Donuts - to decide which dessert gives you more bang for your buck.

We purchased jelly donuts from each shop and compared them on price, size and taste.

Here's our findings: the Quality donut will cost you 6 cents more, \$1.25 vs. \$1.19, however it was substantially larger and had more jelly filling than the Dunkin Donuts version - and the Quality donut was definitely tastier, according to our expert (and sweettooth) taste testers.



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# Belden Point pocket park nears completion

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

The long-awaited street-end plaza on City Island is almost complete.

The pocket park at the southern tip of City Island Avenue, between two restaurants at Belden Point, is now open to the public, with minor items still left to be finished, a Parks Department spokesman stated.

Work on the green space had been stalled for about a decade, with initial funding being allocated by then Borough President Adolfo Carrion Jr. and money allocated in Albany.

Ground was finally broken in April 2015, after advocacy from the City Island Civic Association and a long search for a contractor, according to CICA board members.

"The construction is by and large done, and it is an asset to the community," said John Doyle, CICA board member.

New York State, Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and the mayor's office all contributed funding to the project when it came to fruition.

The new space which cost \$420,000 to construct, provides pedestrian access, according to the Parks Department.

A chain link fence previously cut off access to the location.

The contract called for the installation of decorative railings and pavement, planting beds and a landscaped area to the end of the street, the spokesman said.

"The functional design at Belden Point will also serve to define a vehicular turn-around with an 18-inch-wide curb with safety posts," said the spokesman.

Senator Jeff Klein was able to preserve \$170,000 in the state budget for the project after it was almost removed during the fiscal crisis following the 2008 stock market and housing market crashes.

In a statement, Klein lauded the completion of the green-space.

Klein's office also recently helped to remove graffiti from the area as part of a continual effort to keep it clean, the senator added.

"I am glad that the CICA and the community played a big part in making this happen" said Doyle. "It is a small win, but still a



The new Belden Point pocket park at the end of City Island Avenue is almost complete.

Community News Group/Patrick Rocchio

win. If residents are walking their dogs or going on a stroll, there is now a nice end to (City Island Avenue)."

Barbara Dolensek, CICA vice president, said the next order of

business is to have the weathered pier pilings in the waters off Long Island Sound, near the pocket park, removed from the water.

The pilings are from a pier that was washed away many years ago,

she explained, adding that of it is nice to see the Belden Point park finally come to fruition.

"(The area) is looking way more attractive that it used to," she said.

## Community wants bomb detonation warning

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A group of citizens are making noise about the NYPD's noise pollution impacting communities lining Eastchester Bay.

Members of the City Island Civic Association have written to the police commissioner, calling on the department to create an e-mail notification system when its bomb squad detonates ordinance at the NYPD facility at Rodman's Neck in Pelham Bay Park.

In a letter to NYPD Commissioner William Bratton dated Tuesday, February 9, the CICA noted that more frequent explosions at the firing range and detonation facility were unnerving both adults and children, and causing property damage.

The cacophony may even tax the city's 911 system, the letter stated, because startled locals may call 911 if they are unsure of what they heard or where it is coming from.

"We ask that your department develop a plan to implement an e-mail notification system for communities along Eastchester Bay, so that residents can be notified before these explosions occur," the CICA stated.

The measures are necessary because there have been more bomb detonations lately, said Barbara Dolensek, CICA vice-president.

Dolensek said. "I don't know why or what is causing it."

The association is not asking that the NYPD 'reinvent the wheel,' just do something for their neighbors, said John Doyle, CICA board member.

"If there can be an e-mail notification sent

through Notify NYC of a traffic buildup, of inclement weather...the surrounding communities of City Island, Country Club and Edgewater Park can be given a heads up," said Doyle.

Most of the bomb explosions are planned in advance, according to his knowledge of the matter, he said.

E-mail notifications are already sent through Notify NYC, a city system, and NY-Alert, a state program, and could likely be put in place with minimal cost, said Doyle.

"It would be a step in the right direction," said Doyle, adding "This is a quick change that they could make right away. All you would have to do is to create a web form and have people put in their email addresses."

Some kind of notification would not solve every community concern regarding the NYPD facility at Rodman's Neck, but could be useful in terms of helping control the reactions of children or the elderly who might be disturbed by the denotations, he said.

Even a small change, according to the CICA letter, "would be taken as a sign of respect to those living in the area and demonstrate a change in the decades of secrecy concerning the range."

The CICA has also corresponded with the NYPD about issues at Rodman's Neck related to noise from its firing range.

During a visit to City Island in July 2015, Commissioner Bratton said that the NYPD would spend \$150 million to renovate the Rodman's Neck facility.

The NYPD did not comment as of press time.



The entrance to the Rodman's Neck NYPD facility in Pelham Bay Park marks the area off-limits to the general public.

Community News Group/Patrick Rocchio



# Martial arts grandmaster teaches life lessons at the 'Y'

BY ROBERT WIRSING

One local Tae Kwon Do grandmaster is teaching Bronxites not only to defend themselves, but also to better themselves.

For 15 years, Master George Somersall has been instructing Bronxites on the ways of Tae Kwon Do and Hapkido at the Bronx YMCA.

With more than 30 years of experience and knowledge in martial arts and traditional Hapkido under his black belt, Master Somersall shares his expertise with New Age Tae Kwon Do students Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:15 to 9:10 p.m. and Saturdays 9:30 to 11:45 a.m. at the Y located at 2 Castle Hill Avenue.

The sahyun teaches beginners, intermediate, adults/advanced and black belts as well as YMCA summer camps students.

New Age Tae Kwon Do students are taught a variety of practical martial arts styles including joint locking techniques to disarm an opponent, pressure point locations and targets, self-defense against knives and guns as well as cane and fan techniques.

Cane and fan techniques allow practitioners to utilize a cane, walking stick or a handheld fan as a self-defense weapon in many martial art styles including Hapkido.

Tae Kwon Do is a Korean-based fight style that emphasizes head-height kicks, jumping and spinning kicks and fast kicking techniques while Hapkido, another Korean style, uses an opponent's body weight and pressure points against them, he explained.

A Pelham Parkway resident, Master Somersall said students also learn how to properly handle and use weapons such as bo staffs, nunchucks, sais, swords and Filipino fighting sticks.

Beginners and children use rubber versions of these aforementioned weapons whereas black belt students handle the real thing, he said.

Prior to every seminar, Master Somersall's students exercise to prepare themselves for their training and are expected to study Korean terminology.

"It's not just important to teach my students about the art, but it's also important for them to learn about the philosophies be-



Tae Kwon Do Hall of Famer Master George Somersall teaches Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday classes at the Bronx YMCA.

Photo courtesy of Master George Somersall

hind it," he said.

Master Somersall said his students learn the Korean terms for fighting techniques as well as how to say certain phrases such as 'thank you' to instill discipline.

Originally from Basseterre, St. Kitts in the West Indies, Master Somersall said he was inspired by his brother Glen, as well as famous Hong Kong American martial artist and action film actor Bruce Lee, into pursuing martial arts.

At age five, Master Somersall trained alongside Glen and learned karate from Master Joe, a Peace Corps officer from America.

In 2013, Master Somersall was inducted into the Tae Kwon Do Hall of Fame in recognition of his efforts in developing and promoting Tae Kwon Do as a martial art and global sport.

The following year, he received his PhD in martial arts from Eastern U.S.A. International Martial Arts Association in Pittsburgh, PA.

On November 16, 2015, Master Somersall received his 8th dan in Tae Kwon Do deeming him a grandmaster in this fighting style.

For more information, contact Master Somersall at (347) 228-8042, the Bronx YMCA at (718) 792-9736 or visit [www.newag-etkd.com](http://www.newag-etkd.com).

It's not just important to teach my students about the art, but it's also important for them to learn about the philosophies behind it.

Master George Somersall



Community Affairs Officer for the 49th Precinct David Lepore says a few words before the first march on February 27.

Walter Pofeldt

## Neighborhood anti-crime walks initiated

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

The Bronx Park East Community Association is sick of crime infiltrating their neighborhood.

In response to gun shots fired last Monday, they will be hosting community marches each Saturday throughout the month of March.

The 'March Against Crime' walks will consist of neighbors, friends, and newcomers who want to not only take a stand against rising violence in the area, but also add something valuable to the community - positive energy.

Raphael Schweizer, co-founder and chairperson of B-PECA, says the idea for the action came after shots were fired at 11 p.m. last Monday at Bronx Park East near Waring Ave.

"That was the last straw," said Schweizer, who has lived in the area his entire life. "My group will not stand by when gun shots are fired. When one shot is fired that means one person could be killed," he continued.

Unfortunately, the shooting was just one of many violent incidents that have occurred lately.

"I don't just want to go around shouting stop the crime, I want to bring people together in a positive atmosphere," said Schweizer of the positive vibes he comes the marches will bring. "You can light all the candles you want, but we want to provide an alternative".

Each march begins with motivational music - last week it was a piece from 'Rocky'.

Pastor Jay Gooding will lead the group in a prayer this week. Following the warm up, the group will zigzag through the Allerton Avenue, Pelham Parkway, and Van

My group will not stand by when gun shots are fired. When one shot is fired that means one person could be killed. I don't want to go around shouting stop the crime, I want to bring people together in a positive atmosphere.

Raphael Schweizer

Nest neighborhoods chanting: "Whose streets? Our Streets! Whose Park? Our Park! Who Are We? Bronx Park East!"

"The Power of Positivity is great," said Schweizer, admitting that he borrowed the slogan from a wrestling tag team.

The 49th Precinct, which supports the marches, will also be present at each walk.

"It's a very positive thing they are trying to do, it's great to see the community stand together" said David Lepore, of the 49th Precinct. "They want to be able to raise kids and walk their dogs in the area, and they are fed up."

Each walk will begin at 3 p.m. on Saturday and conclude at 4 p.m.

Hot coffee and bagels will be provided by the Pakistani Community Council.



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# Lehman Center presents 20th Anniversary Tour

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts will celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the R&B/Hip Hop singing group Dru Hill featuring Tamir "Nokio" Ruffin, Mark "SisQó" Andrews, Larry "Jazz" Anthony and Antwuan "Tao" Simpson with special guests Jon B and Kenny Lattimore on Saturday, March 2, at 8 p.m. Produced by Lehman Center.

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts is on the campus of Lehman College/CUNY at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West.

Tickets are \$85, \$75, \$65, \$55 and can be purchased by calling the Lehman Center box office at (718) 960-8833. Low-cost on-site parking available for \$5.

Dru Hill originated as a Baltimore, Maryland gospel vocal group called 14K Harmony that was founded in the 1990s by childhood friends Tamir "Nokio" Ruffin, lead singer Mark "SisQó" Andrews, James "Woody" Green and Larry

"Jazz" Anthony. They made a local name for themselves for their soaring harmonies and musicality while singing at The Fudgery fudge factory located in Baltimore's inner harbor. After switching to R&B, the teen-aged group was spotted in a 1995 talent show by Hiram Hicks who signed them to Island Records, changed their name to Dru Hill (after the West Baltimore neighborhood Druid Hill Park where they grew up) and recorded their first single "Tell Me" that rose to #5 on the 1996 R&B Billboard chart and was included in the movie Eddie. Their first album, 1996's Dru Hill, went platinum, charted at #5 (R&B) and also included the #1 R&B hits "In My Bed" and "Never Make A Promise", and "Whatever You Need" which made it to #7. Dru Hill was honored with the 1997 Billboard Music Awards for Top R&B Song, Top R&B Artist and R&B/Hip Hop Songs Artist of the Year and the 1998 Soul Train Best



Dru Hill at Lehman Center for the Performing Arts.

R&B/Soul Single and Best R&B/Soul Album Awards. In 1997, the group recorded "We're Not Making Love No More" that was written by Babyface and co-produced by Babyface and Daryl Simmons for the film Soul Food. The single was a #2 R&B hit, went gold and was included on the film's #1 R&B selling soundtrack album that was a huge success, going multi-platinum. Their next

hit song "How Deep Is Your Love" spent 3 weeks in the #1 R&B spot and was featured in the film Rush Hour. It was included on their 1998 multi-platinum second album, Enter the Dru, that climbed to the #2 spot on both the Billboard Top 200 and R&B album charts, sold two million copies by the end of 1999 and also contained three addition hit songs: "These Are the Times", "Beauty" and

"You Are Everything".

In 1999, Dru Hill went on hiatus so that the individual members could each work on a solo album: SisQó a pop album, Jazz a R&B/soul album, Nikio a hip hop album and Woody a gospel album. SisQó's debut solo pop album Unleash the Dragon was released at the end of 1999, rising to the #2 spot on both the pop and R&B album charts and went five times platinum. The album contained the smash pop hits "Got to Get It" (#12 R&B), "Thong Song" (#3 pop, #1 R&B) and "Incomplete" (#1 both pop & R&B) and earned SisQó scores of awards including six 2000 Billboard Music Awards (the highlight being the Male Artist of the Year), the 2000 MTV Best Hip Hop Video Award and four additional nominations, four 2001 Grammy Award nominations and two 2001 American Music Award nominations. His follow up second solo LP, Return of the Dragon, was released in June 2001 and went platinum

with the singles "Dance for Me" and "Can I Live". SisQó released his third solo LP, Last Dragon in 2015.

Dru Hill as a group reunited in 2001 and added a fifth member Rufus "Scola" Waller to record Dru World Order which went gold reaching #2 on the 2002 R&B album charts and contained the hit songs "I Should Be...", "I Love You" and "No Doubt". The group toured until 2005, when they went on a second hiatus, reassembling in 2008 without Scola. In 2010, Woody left the group to concentrate on gospel music and was replaced by Antwuan "Tao" Simpson for the recording of Dru Hill's fourth album InDRUpendence Day which climbed to #10 on the R&B album chart. SisQó, Nokio, Jazz and Tao are currently touring in celebration of Dru Hill's 20th anniversary and are working on a new album that is scheduled to be released later this year.

## Andrews Ave. blaze displaces families

from Page 1

which started in the Super Laundry located on the building's ground floor.

A NYC Department of Buildings spokesman said the agency issued partial vacate orders for fire, smoke and water related damage to apartments located on the fourth and fifth floors.

Portions of the roof were lost.

The DOB spokesman confirmed that despite this extensive damage, the building itself remains structurally sound.

Michael de Vulpillieres, American Red Cross Greater NY Region communications officer, said several Red Cross teams were dispatched to the scene to aid eight households left displaced by the fire.

In addition to providing food, blankets and other relief items, Red Cross responders provided three families with temporary housing at local hotels and emergency funds to help

them get through these next few days.

The remaining families self-relocated, he said.

"Losing your home is an extremely traumatic experience and we want these victims to know they're not alone and the American Red Cross is here to help them during this extremely difficult time," said de Vulpillieres.

"When I arrived at the scene last Tuesday morning, I saw many distraught tenants and people panicking standing in the streets," Dr. Bola Omotosho, Community Board 5 chairman, who was a first responder aiding residents during the evacuation.

Dr. Omotosho commended the 46th Precinct for securing the area to provide easier access to first responders and to the FDNY for combating the blaze.

Practicing what they preach, Fordham Evangelical Lutheran Church opened their doors to some of the displaced residents

allowing them to use their restrooms and to briefly recuperate that Tuesday morning, Dr. Omotosho noted.

CB 5 distributed a booklet containing a directory of community facilities and agencies to the victims that can assist them in their long-term living needs.

The following day, CB 5 held its general board meeting and discussed the Andrews Avenue.

"There's no fire without smoke so we urge people to be more mindful of whenever they smell or see smoke to report it immediately to the FDNY," said Dr. Omotosho. "This is especially important when living in an apartment building because you might be doing everything right, but your neighbor might not and that can affect you, your family and everyone else's safety."

Anyone in need of American Red Cross assistance can contact (877) RED-CROSS.



Thirty-nine FDNY units were on the scene to combat last Tuesday, February 23's four-alarm fire that tore through 1892 Andrews Avenue.

Photo courtesy of FDNY

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