

Community protests P.S. 14 extension

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

P.S. 14's expansion plan has come under fire.

A coalition of community members and parents believe the enlargement of the Hollywood Avenue school is too big and are calling on the School Construction Authority to halt the project until they have their questions answered.

The project has probably already been put out to bid, according to sources.

The opposition voiced their displeasure at a Community Board 10 meeting at the school on Thursday, May 19, and a CB 10 Youth and Education Committee meeting on Monday, May 23.

Traffic conditions at pick up and drop off time, proximity of the annex to a nearby house, the loss of parkland, were some of the concerns addressed.

"Let's stop and rethink this and get a consensus so that people feel that they are part of the process," said WLCA board member Mary Jane Musano, who favors a smaller addition.

Local business leader John Cerini also wanted more communication between the community and the SCA.

He was particularly concerned about the current traffic congestion at P.S. 14 at the start and end of the school day.

The SCA should first gather feedback from the stakeholders and then ask if the planned expansion is good by the community, said Cerini, who acknowledged the need for more student seats in Pelham Bay and Throggs Neck.

The plan calls for a building roughly the current size of P.S. 14, constructed to the right of the existing schoolhouse along Hollywood Avenue, which would be practically against Romana

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MARINA DEL REY OWNER DIES, 76

Sal Randazzo built an everlasting legacy

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Sal Randazzo, a visionary restaurateur and the founder of Marina del Rey Caterers, has passed away at the age of 76.

Family and friends mourned Randazzo, who opened the Throggs Neck waterfront facility in 1972 at the site of Dania Marina, which he and his brother operated.

He converted the marina into a catering business that will be his lasting legacy, many believe.

Marina del Rey, a community

staple that Sal Randazzo first designed as a one-room dining facility, gradually expanded to four rooms, and will continue to operate for the foreseeable future, said his nephew Carl Randazzo.

"The future of Marina del Rey is status quo," said his nephew, adding that Sal Randazzo built a business from the ground up that has endured for close to five decades and that his uncle wanted it to continue after he was gone.

"His final wish was to keep

Continued on Page 4



Badillo Post Office Renaming

Monday, May 23 marked a 'red letter day' for the historic Morrisania Post Office which was renamed in honor of the late trailblazing statesman Herman Badillo. Gail Badillo and Congressman Jose Serrano presented a plaque bearing the former borough president, congressman and NYC deputy mayor's name to be displayed on the 442 E. 167th Street building.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

Unionport Bridge replacement starts in '17

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Details continue to emerge about an upcoming bridge replacement project that will have consequences for east Bronx commuters and motorists.

The replacement of the Unionport Bridge, a vital link under the Bruckner Interchange spanning Westchester Creek, is scheduled to begin in 2017.

The bridge is a heavily travelled road for motorists seeking to access both the Bruckner and

Cross Bronx expressways and the Hutchinson River Parkway.

According to a NYC Department of Transportation spokeswoman, meetings with nearby communities are being planned to review the construction that will take place.

"The Unionport Bridge project remains on track for a spring (or) summer 2017 start of construction, and there will be stakeholder meetings in the near future," stated the spokeswoman.

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Outlook Point Condominiums, the gated community where the murder-suicide took place.

Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

Spencer Estate murder-suicide leaves two dead

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A gated community in Spencer Estate was the location of an apparent murder-suicide which resulted in two deaths.

On Tuesday, May 17, just after 1:30 p.m., the 45th Precinct responded to an assault in progress at 1422 Outlook Avenue.

Te police discovered a male and a female unconscious and unresponsive as a result of inflicted gunshot wounds to their heads.

Although it has not been confirmed by DCPI or the 45th Precinct, reports have surfaced that the two deaths were the result of a murder-suicide.

However, it has not been verified as to who shot who, although reports claim that 39-year old Fred Rudaj, shot himself in the head after shooting his girlfriend, 29-year old Florida Lumi.

Rudaj and Lumi were apparently living together in Apartment 3 of the three-story Outlook Point Condominiums at 1422 Outlook Avenue, that borders Eastchester Bay.

According to sources Lumi may have been four months pregnant.

The apparent incident took place inside the house, according to DCPI.

Local residents and building management expressed their empathy for the two individuals involved in the unfortunate situation.

"They were a very nice, loving couple," said the manager of Outlook Point Condominiums, who preferred not to disclose his name.

"This community has lost two good people - and a lot of residents are heartbroken because of this double-tragedy," he said.

"I didn't know them, but from what I've heard, they were very nice people who never

bothered anybody," said an Outlook resident who has lived in the complex for over 10 years. "It's sad to hear that something like this took place."

EMS pronounced both individuals deceased at the scene.

The Medical Examiner determined that the cause of death was a gunshot wound to the head for each individual.

Since DCPI did not confirm this incident as a murder-suicide, they stated that no arrests have been made and that the investigation is ongoing,

They have not ruled out the possibility that a third party may have been involved.



Rudaj and Lumi lived in Apartment 3 of 1422 Outlook Avenue.

Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

POLLO CAMPERO OPENS IN SOUNDVIEW

Pollo Campero, the world's largest Latin chicken restaurant brand, celebrated the grand opening of its newest Bronx eatery at 1590 Westchester Avenue on Wednesday, May 11. The daylong fiesta featured delicious Latin favorites from Pollo Campero's world-famous menu, prize giveaways and entertainment for the whole family.



Julia Polanco takes a selfie with Tamborcito outside the Soundview eatery.

Photo by Edwin Soto

BELMONT LIBRARY HOSTS STORYTELLING WORKSHOP



Children and their families joined in the creative fun.

Photo courtesy of Young Audiences New York

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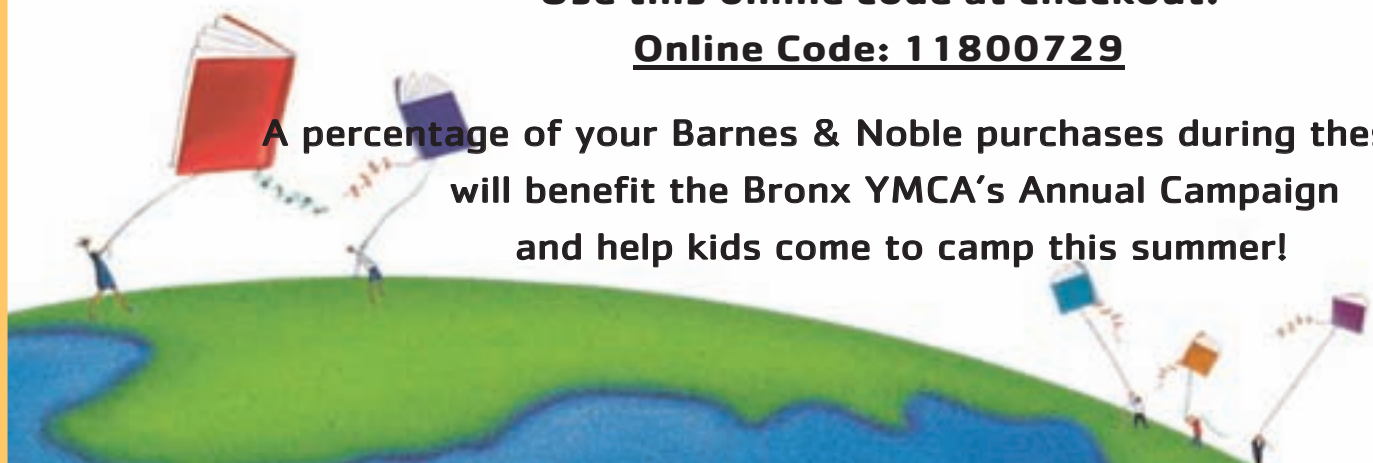
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Sal Randazzo and his mother Anna operated Marina del Rey together.

Photo courtesy of Carl Randazzo

Sal Randazzo, Marina del Rey owner, dies at 76,

from Page 1

the place going,” said Carl Randazzo. “The tenure in the management team is unbelievable; I think in the management team alone we have over 100 years of experience.”

In the late 1960s, Randazzo drew up plans for Marina del Rey while working at his family’s Throggs Neck Italian restaurant, Tom’s Villa Bianca, located at the corner of East Tremont Avenue and Sullivan Place, his nephew said.

“He wanted the best food, the best presentation for people having parties,” he said.

Randazzo relied on his mother Anne and his late-wife Lorraine, for interior decoration, menu planning and also with building a system for running Marina del Rey that was ultimately used in other businesses, according to information supplied by his family.

With an amazing atten-

tion to detail, Sal Randazzo built Marina del Rey into a highly successful endeavor after the tragic death of his older brother, who had been running the marina, said Don Kelly, his friend of 60 years.

“What’s interesting about Sal is that he had (little) formal education,” said Kelly. “And despite that, he envisioned, designed, built and managed this extraordinary business.”

Sal Randazzo left a legacy of hard work, opportunity, generosity, laughter and love, said Kelly, adding that everyone got to know him personally and that he was very generous.

“(Marina del Rey) has had an effect on literally thousands of young men and women who worked there as they were paying their tuition for college,” said Kelly. “So many went on to medical and law school, and to financial institutions, etcetera.”

Randazzo was an extraordinary conversation-

alist, said Kelly, and was open to discussing any topic.

“There was nothing that he could not get his head around,” said Kelly. “He was that facile intellectually.”

His nephew best remembered his charisma.

“He was very charismatic, and I think that charisma showed through the business, and was really the heart of the business,” he said.

Sal Randazzo was from the Throggs Neck community, growing up on Lafayette Avenue, said Carl Randazzo.

The cause of death was complication from a stroke he suffered. He passed away on Monday, May 23.

He is survived by two stepchildren, Joseph Benedetto and Melody Moricco. His two nephews Frank Randazzo and Carl Randazzo, his niece Anita Price, and his girlfriend Lucy Garcia also survive him.

P.S. 14’s expansion plan comes under fire by community

from Page 1-family house, the homeowner said.

“What really concerns me is this building will be right up to the wall of my house,” said Campisi, adding that the building would block air and light to her home and outdoor seating areas.

She is also concerned about diminished air quality during the construction, as a family member has asthma, she said.

“I don’t think it is a good project to have on this block; it is just too big,” she said.

P.S. 14 parent Gianna

Dell’Olio said that the school definitely needs more space, but that the location of the school, at the Bruckner Expressway, poses serious traffic problems.

As it stands now, one of her fellow parents gets to the school an hour in advance of dismissal to secure a nearby parking space. She added that many parents triple-park when they pick up their children.

CB 10 plans to send a letter to the SCA outlining community concerns said the district manager Kenneth Kearns.

The board’s Youth and Education Committee on May 23 included a presentation by an SCA official, who said the agency is not required to conduct a traffic study before a project is put out to bid, stated meeting attendee Andrew Chirico, WLCA board member.

“If (the SCA) really felt that they were doing the right thing, they would not...be pushing people out of the decision making process,” said Musano. “This is not a community that is being unreasonable. They are not saying no extension.”



(l-r) Victoria Malone, Jayden Gale, Ryan Malone and Edward Sanchez with their ‘save our school’ posters. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Musano



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Beth Abe's new owners to cut benefits

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

The employees at one of the borough's oldest nursing homes are uncertain about their future.

After the Beth Abraham Health Services facility was sold by CenterLight Health System to Centers Health Care in April, are leery over a pending benefits agreement.

According to Beth Abraham employees, the newly proposed collective bargaining agreement would reduce employees' salaries by 15%, reduce staff, eliminate a week of vacation time as well as reduce the number of sick days.

In addition, employees will have to transition through a three-month period without job security starting July 10, as part of the agreement.

The rehab facility's union, 1199, has until Thursday, May 26 to reach an agreement.

If the facility and union cannot come to terms the union will consider a strike action, employees said.

"I don't know what to expect in the coming months - everything is unknown," said a nurse of over 20 years who wished to remain anonymous.

The nurse added that under the CenterLight Health System contract, employees were promised a two percent

raise in October, which is now off the table.

She also added that employees will not be entitled to retirement funds for at least five years.

In addition, she said that Beth Abe's parking lots will no longer be free to the staff.

"It's a very tough situation and a very difficult time for us (employees)," she said.

Last week, about 30 employees gathered in the lobby of the Beth Abraham facility wearing purple and lavender in support of the union.

Centers Health Care legal representatives, who were present, threatened to call the cops if they continued their action, even though a rally or a protest was not taking place.

The union will meet with Center Health Care's lawyers next Tuesday, May 31.

A nursing assistant of nearly 15 years said, "This facility has not only supported its employees, but also the residents and families of this community for many years," she said. "It seems like all of that support gone."

Raphael Schweizer, a community activist said, "For all the positive impact that CenterLight has had on this com-

munity in the past, the way they have handled this transaction has been a slap in the face to us."

A neighborhood staple since the 1920s, the 90-year old facility has nearly 450 beds with three floors designated for short-term rehabilitation and two floors dedicated to Alzheimer's disease and dementia patients.

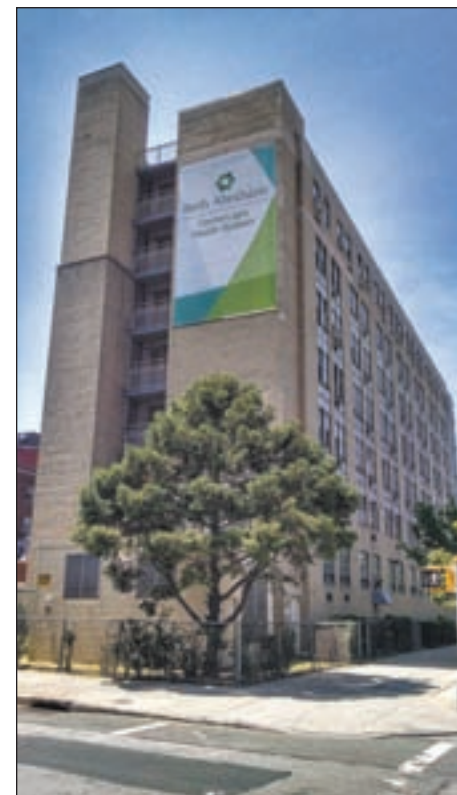
The nursing home also provides more than 100 recreational programs and activities for its patients and visitors each month.

Back in January, it was announced that CenterLight would have to re-pay \$47 million after it was found guilty of overbilling Medicaid.

In the settlement, CenterLight admitted to enrolling 1,200 Medicaid beneficiaries who were not eligible to receive managed long-term care.

Centers Health Care was founded in the Bronx in 1996 and is now headed by CEO Kenny Rozenburg, the owner of over 30 nursing home facilities in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Centers Health Care chose not to comment for the article until the closing of the Beth Abraham facility deal is finalized, out of respect for the CenterLight, according to a Centers Health Care spokesperson.



(Right) Beth Abraham Health Services facility.
Photo - Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

Dear Golf Enthusiast and Scouting Supporter:

On Thursday, June 9th, 2016, the Boy Scouts will host the 4th Annual Boy Scout Golf Invitational!

The Greater New York Councils, Boy Scouts of America is a 501c3 organization. The proceeds from this tournament will help provide Camp Scholarships known as 'Camperships' for needy Scouts in the Bronx.

The Boy Scouts Mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over the course of their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath & Scout Law. The BSA is comprised of many volunteers in the Bronx and the Greater New York Councils relies on the kind generosity of FRIENDS, FAMILY, & COMMUNITY MEMBERS to keep our organization thriving as the leading youth organization in the Country.

We hope you will be able to support the program this year and join us at the Golf Invitational on June 9th!

2016 Golf Committee

Lenny Caro, Mercy College
Joseph Kelleher, Hutchinson Metro Center
Michael O'Gara, Wealth Management Advisor



For More Information Contact:

Jason E. Tewes
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Birch Coffee opens Bronx shop in HP

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

If you are a coffee fanatic and live in the Bronx, you may want to visit Hunts Point.

On Tuesday, May 24, Birch Coffee held a grand opening celebration after opening Birch Coffee House, their first coffee shop location in the Bronx at 866B Hunts Point Avenue, giving Hunts Point its first coffee shop in 40 years.

The coffee shop offers espresso, cappuccino, latte, mocha, hot cocoa, chai latte, tea and cold brew, better known as iced coffee. A variety of muffins, donuts, scones, croissants and even granola bars are also available.

The shop's design features trendy exposed brick walls, reclaimed barn wood and stone countertops, which were donated by the nearby Colonna Marble Company.

The shop is located near the 2, 5, and 6 train subway stops and will be near the

Hunts Point Metro North station, which is slated to open in 2018.

For the next two weeks, the coffee shop will have a soft grand opening and will be open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"With the opening of this coffee shop, now everybody in this neighborhood has access to great coffee," said Jeremy Lyman, co-owner of Birch Coffee. "This is a new experience and we are very excited to have our business located in this area."

"I wasn't very familiar with the Bronx initially, but I knew that this would be a great area for this business if we did it right," said Paul Schlader, co-owner of Birch Coffee. "There has been a need for a coffee shop here for a long time, so there was no hesitation and no question that we wanted to pursue an opportunity here - it was a no-brainer."

"It certainly wasn't easy,



(l-r) Schlader, Carter and Lyman at the grand opening celebration.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

but we (Jeremy and I) couldn't have asked for better partners and supporters in StartUp Box, the Majora Carter Group and the NYC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce - and these

are organizations that know this neighborhood as well as anybody," Schlader added.

"Residents and businesses in this area have dreamed of having a coffee shop in

the neighborhood for a long time," said Majora Carter, a local resident and founder of StartUp Box and the Majora Carter Group, both partnering organizations of Birch Coffee which are based in the neighborhood.

"This is not just a coffee shop - it's one of the best rated coffee businesses in NYC, and that's what the Bronx deserves and needs to progress," she said.

"Getting the highest quality coffee shop possible for this area was a top priority," said James Chase, president of StartUp Box. "The south Bronx usually gets 'second best' compared to other boroughs, but this is a different story and residents have shown an incredible amount of support towards this new business."

"From the time I first heard about this idea, I knew that we had to get this coffee shop in the neighborhood,"

said Sulma Arzu-Brown, another local resident and director of operations for the NYC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. "When a business like this comes into a neighborhood, it empowers that community in a big way."

Arzu-Brown also added that she felt a special connection with Birch Coffee House after finding out that many of their coffee components are imported from Honduras, her native country.

Birch Coffee was started by Lyman and Schlader in October 2009, on 27th Street between Madison and 5th avenues.

They currently operate seven other locations, including shops in the Flatiron District, West Village, Upper East Side, Upper West Side, Murray Hill, lower Manhattan and a 4,000 square-foot roast house in Long Island City, where the coffee is processed.

PS 89 teacher: 'Principal must go'

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

Issues at an Allerton public school continue to generate concern among parents and teachers.

A teacher with 10 years at the school, but who was recently fired without being formally charged, asked how much longer will the school suffer under its current principal?

P.S. 89 The Williamsbridge School's principal, Ralph Martinez, who has been the school's top administrator since September of 2010, has single-handedly removed or reassigned nearly 100 teachers, including 20 teachers during a one-week stretch, according to teachers as well as parents whose students currently attend the school.

Teachers have been removed from their classroom settings and moved to other classrooms without parents being notified, they also claim.

Martinez has removed

parent coordinator and respected community icon Francine Palmieri as well as assistant principal Karen Shapiro, who brought in many programs and grants, including over \$250,000 for renovations of the school's auditorium and library.

In his six-years as principal, Martinez has been responsible for the replacement of 95 of its 145 teachers.

"My question is - why does this man still have a job? It's amazing," asked Samuel Pagan, who spent nearly a decade as a teacher, teacher's assistant and paraprofessional at P.S. 89 before being released earlier this month.

He was previously suspended indefinitely on allegations of misconduct which were never formalized.

He was switched to three different classes during a four-month pe-



P.S. 89 The Williamsbridge School. Community News Group / Steven Goodstein

riod. He also claims that he had not been reprimanded once during his entire teaching career.

"He (Martinez) does not care about the stu-

dents or their needs and it's a shame that new teachers can't make noise about this because they don't have knowledge of what is really going on

and they just want to stay on his good side. I believe that I was suspended, and eventually let go, because I reported these issues to the DOE."

According to Pagan, teachers have been asked to work 11-hour days (7 a.m. to 6 p.m.) as well as on Saturdays. "This man is a repeat violator - and the public as well as the state needs to know about this."

Martinez is also responsible for violating student's Individualized Education Programs, the teachers and parents charged.

The switching and removal of teachers has interfered with student's IEPs.

"The situation hasn't gotten any better," said Iris Rosario, a parent who was awarded over \$80,000 from the NYC Department of Education because P.S. 89 violated her two sons' IEP

programs.

"There has been a big mis-usage of funds and a lot of corruption taking place at this school," she added.

Earlier this month, former teachers and parents, including Rosario and Pagan, attended DOE town hall meetings in Long Island City and Flatbush, where they expressed their concerns about P.S. 89.

DOE chancellor Carmen Farina was "disengaged" and "uninterested", often staring at her phone or talking to others while their complaints were made at the meeting, they said.

Back in March, parents and former teachers demanded Martinez' ouster at a rally in front of P.S. 89.

Neither the DOE or the principal, responded to requests for comment.

Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade, Inc.'s 30th Networking MIXER

Partnered with Marketing and Advertising Solutions, Inc. and Pitorro PMD, the Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade, Inc. hosted its 30th Annual Networking Mixer on Tuesday, May 17 at the Port Morris Distillery. The mixer was hosted by Artie Rodriguez and featured live musical performances by Flaco Navaja and the Razo Blades. All proceeds raised from the event will be used to fund parade-related activities in the community and the annual children's scholarships.

Left, Artie Rodriguez just wanted one drink before the party started.

Insert, (l-r) Marketing and Advertising Solutions's Areli Diaz, Leslie Vega and Jackie Villanueva, participated in the networking mixer.

All Photos by Silvio Pacifico



(l-r) Michael Lambert, Jerome-East Gun Hill Road Business Improvement District executive director; Ischia Bravo, former Bronx Democratic County Committee executive director and George Llanos, NYS Metropolitan Transportation Authority Business and Diversity Initiatives manager.



(l-r) Francisco Gonzalez, Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade Inc. chairman; William Valentin, Port Morris Distillery owner; Ruben Rios, Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade Inc. president and Artie Rodriguez, event host, celebrated the 30th annual Networking Mixer together.



(l-r) Former parade queens Rosemary Colon and Elizabeth Hidalgo, parade director Maritza Martinez, former parade queen Gloria Rodriguez and current queen Angela Soto joined in the day's festivities.



Francisco Gonzalez, Angela Soto, Rosemary Colon, Ruben Rios and Gloria Rodriguez had a great time celebrating their organization's milestone.

Local photographer to exhibit Cuban

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A local photographer recently captured the life and times of the people living only 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

Walter Pofeldt, of Waerbury-LaSalle, will debut a selection of 20 prints from his 12-day trip to Cuba in October 2015 at an exhibit called 'The Faces of Cuba,' opening at the Poe Park Visitor Center on Saturday, July 2.

The exhibition opening is from 1:30 p.m.



Waterbury-LaSalle based photographer Walter Pofeldt captured photos of Cuba, like this one of street musicians, that will be part of a new exhibit.

Photo Courtesy of Walter Pofeldt

to 4:30 p.m., and the photos will be viewable between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. until Sunday, July 31.

Pofeldt said his images depict his impression of the Cuban people as individuals, and presents them in a non-political way.

"I hope people take away from these photos a good impression of the Cuban people themselves," said Pofeldt. "I don't want to be political at all; I just feel like they are a group of people who are just like any other people trying to get along in life."

The photographer, who has spent 15 years working at the Bronx Times Reporter both as a staff member and a freelancer, said that he encountered a people who are preserving under some difficult conditions.

"Regardless of the hardships that they endure, they are a warm, friendly and proud people," he stated, added that Cuba is a country that is suspended in time, and that music and art appear to be everywhere in the island nation.

During his time in Cuba, he photographed Havana, Cienfuegos, the city of Trinidad, as well as a fishing village that many believe was Ernest Hemingway's inspiration for his short masterpiece 'The Old



Walter Pofeldt's lens photographs a Cuban market. This and other photos will be on exhibit soon.

Photo Courtesy of Walter Pofeldt

Man and the Sea.'

The group he was with also toured Hemingway's Cuban home, a coffee plantation, a senior center, a childcare center and visited a modern dance company that has performed in New York called Malpasos Dance, he said.

There is very little crime or graffiti vandalism in Cuba, added Pofeldt, who said that a tour guide suggested it was because of the country's educational system.

While there are no overt signs of extreme poverty, people live a hand-to-mouth existence in crumbling Spanish-styled buildings, said Pofeldt.

The photos in the exhibit, as well as the

others the photographer took reflect all of this.

"I did not go to Cuba specifically to take pictures, but of course, I had my camera," he said. "A lot of the pictures are portraits where I saw an interesting face and asked to photograph them."

In the majority of cases, the Cuban people he met were obliging subjects, said Pofeldt.

Poe Park Visitor Center is located at 2640 Grand Concourse in Bedford Park.

For more information, call (718) 365-5516.

The exhibit curator, Lucy Aponte, can be reached at lucy.aponte@parks.nyc.gov.

Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade set

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

Next month will mark the 30-year anniversary of one of the borough's biggest parades.

The Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade will take place on Sunday, June 5, giving local Puertorriquenos and Puertorriquenas an opportunity to celebrate their culture.

The parade, which is planned and organized by the Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade, Inc. and LaSorsa Automotive Group, will start from 192nd Street to Van Cortlandt Avenue East on the Grand Concourse.

The parade, which will be produced by MAS Productions and hosted by Artie Rodriguez and Yamilet Mia, will kick off at 10 a.m. at Poe Cottage Park, located at 2640 Grand Concourse.

Sponsors for the parade include the Daily News, Red Bull, I-Hop, Jimmy's Grand Cafe, Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center, Mercy College, DJ Ambulette, Pitorro Port Morris Distillery, Delicioso Coco Helado, HealthFirst and United-Healthcare, among others.

Floats at the parade will showcase many of its sponsors.

"This is a very important event for the Bronx - probably one of the most important events of the year," said Mike Sassano, general sales manager for La-



LaSorsa Automotive Group employees (l-r) John Ninivaggi, Bill Lopez, Melinda Rodriguez, Will LaVia, Jesus Castillo and (standing) Sassano at last year's parade. Photo courtesy of LaSorsa Automotive Group

Sorsa Automotive Group, who will be the parade's honorary grand marshal this year and who's company has been involved in the parade for over a decade.

"We have, and will continue to show up front and center to this annual parade because we want to show that greatly support community activities and events such as this one."

"We are honored to be involved in

this parade, especially since we specialize in connecting and collaborating with other businesses," said Diana Vega, assistant marketing manager for MAS Productions.

"Currently, Puerto Rico is going through hardship, and this parade will let people of Puerto Rican decent in the Bronx know that we are aware of the situation and that we are hear to support them during this difficult time."

On Saturday, May 28, the 152nd Street Cultural Festival will take place on 152nd Street between Jackson and Union avenues, which will be held in preparation for the parade.

The festival, which takes place from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., will include musical performances, dancing, comedy, celebrity appearances and a children's pavilion with storytelling, face painting and arts and crafts, among other festivities.

This past Tuesday, May 17, the Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade hosted a networking mixer, which included live performances from Flaco Navaja and the Razor Blades and music by DJ Samr, also held in preparation for the parade.

The event was held at the Pitorro Port Morris Distillery, a supporter of the parade for many years.

The 59th annual Puerto Rican Day Parade will take place on Fifth Avenue from 44th to 79th streets on Sunday, June 12 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., for those who also want to attend the parade in Manhattan.

For more information, applications and sponsorship opportunities for the parade, please contact MAS Productions at info@masmarketing.com or call (917) 806-7088. For more information, go to www.facebook.com/bxprpa-parade.

THE QUESTION:

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Dozen CI blocks to get rehabbed

HBY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A major resurfacing project is scheduled for City Island.

Over a dozen blocks on the island, mostly near the City Island Bridge, are going to be rehabbed beginning on Tuesday, May 31, weather permitting, as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency project in response to Hurricane Sandy.

The NYC Department of Design and Construction will oversee the construction, an agency spokeswoman said, adding that it has a estimated date of completion in the fall of 2016.

Among the items the project will tackle are milling and paving of streets, as well as the installation of some curbs and sidewalks, according to DDC. Installation of tree guards may also occur at some locations.

Councilman James Vacca said the resurfacing was sorely needed.

"A lot of the streets are overdue," said Vacca, adding "Some of the surface conditions on City Island are terrible and some of the side streets are in need of resurfacing desperately."

The councilman's office has fielded a lot of requests from islanders about road paving, he said.

Vacca said the island work crews need to pay special attention to the pitching of streets in relation to storm sewers.

"We just have to be careful on City Island to make sure we have adequate drainage," said the councilman. "When they pave, every block has a pitch and the street has to be pitched exactly to the catch basins so that the water will flow to the basins."

Several board members of the City Island Civic Association said that they had not been informed of the project, but at least two commented on the needed work.

Barbara Dolensek, CICA vice president, said she thought the organization should have been informed.

"It could be okay," she said, "but it would be nice to let the community know, especially the people who drive on these roads."

Another CICA board member, Fred Ramftl, also said that the association had not been made aware of this particular resurfacing project, but indicated that the last time many island streets were paved was



Pavement at Minnieford Avenue and Sutherland Street shows signs of heavy wear.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

roughly 20 years ago.

"A lot of streets are full of potholes," he said. "We have...streets with sinkholes."

A list of the streets that are going to see the work, according to DDC, include: City Island Avenue near Bridge Street; Minnieford Avenue between Cross and Kilroe streets; Tier Street between City Island and William avenues; Kirby Street between

King Avenue and Long Island Sound; Ditmars Street between King Avenue and Eastchester Bay; Beach Street between Minnieford Avenue and Long Island Sound; Bridge Street between Minnieford and City Island avenues; Minnieford Avenue between Sutherland and Bridge streets; and Marine Street between City Island Avenue and Long Island Sound.

Unionport Bridge replacement starts in '17

from Page 1

woman, who did not give dates for the meetings.

According to a Hardesty & Hannover engineering report from July 2015 obtained by the Bronx Times, the Unionport Bridge replacement project will take place in four stages over approximately 44 months.

"Two temporary fixed bridges over Westchester Creek will be utilized during a critical stage to maintain traffic flow and limit disruptions," the report reads.

The temporary bridges will be used for a 60-day period, according to the report.

Councilman James Vacca forewarned motorists of delays on and around a bridge that is often jammed with traffic now.

"This is a multi-year renovation," said the councilman of the proj-

ect, adding "It is going to be an impediment to people getting to where they need to go."

Community Board 10 district manager Kenneth Kearns said that the board had already requested that the traffic enforcement agents be assigned to Brush Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard, at the eastern foot of the bridge, to handle the westbound traffic backup that motorists experience currently.

While a recent request for traffic agents at that location was denied by NYPD, Kearns said that the board would make another request for a traffic enforcement agent detail as part of the city's bridge rebuilding contract.

Local community activist and CB 10 member John Marano said that the board's original request for traffic agents was to help ease the flow

of traffic making turns from Brush Avenue onto the bridge.

He said that if motorists are driving from Throggs Neck, right now it can take about 15 minutes at peak times to travel on Lafayette Avenue, make a right onto Brush Avenue, and then drive roughly another block to make a left onto the bridge.

Traffic is backing up all the way to the Hutchinson River Parkway Service Road, he said, with many motorist making illegal U-turns.

"I feel that we need traffic agents for the everyday traffic that is there now," said Marano. "But with this Unionport Bridge project in front of us, there should definitely be traffic agents assigned to the intersection of Brush Avenue and the Bruckner Expressway service road."



An artist rendering of the replacement Unionport Bridge that features three lanes in each direction and dedicated bicycle/pedestrian passages.

Photo courtesy of DOT

I feel that we need traffic agents for the everyday traffic that is there now. But with this Unionport Bridge project in front of us, there should definitely be traffic agents assigned to the intersection of Brush Avenue and the Bruckner Expressway service road.

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