

Rino's Restaurant serves lasting memories

BY ROBERT WIRSING

After more than three decades of serving traditional Italian fare an iconic Bronx restaurant has closed its doors.

Saturday, August 27 marked the final day for Rino's Italian Restaurant, but it was just like any other day for the well-known East Tremont Avenue eatery.

Many customers patronized Rino's on Friday, August 26 to dine with family and friends and wish the restaurant's staff well.

Popular Italian music and laughter filled the air.

This same day, Fr. Robert Dunn, Jeanne Jugan Residence chaplain, celebrated his birthday at the restaurant with his family and blessed the staff.

Rino's co-owners Gaspar D'Rendi and Carmine Fardella, grew up in the restaurant business which served as the catalyst for their careers.

Both were employed at other restaurants before they ventured out on their own.

D'Rendi and Fardella's dream became reality when they first opened Rino's in Morris Park on February 12, 1983.

Rino's would relocate to Throggs Neck in 1990 where it became a neighborhood staple.

The old-fashioned restaurant specialized in heaping portions of familiar Italian American classics such as chicken marsala, linguine Rino's and fried calamari among others leading to its 333 years of success.

D'Rendi and Fardella sold the business so they could enjoy retirement.

Fardella said a Japanese hibachi restaurant is in the works for Rino's location.

"We've been packed since this

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PROGRESS KILLS MATURE TREES

SCA destroys oasis for P.S. 14 extension

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Many in the Waterbury-LaSalle community continue to oppose the size of an addition to P.S. 14, especially after at least two-dozen mature trees were cut down to make way for the extension.

A work crew recently cut down the trees, located on NYC Department of Education property to the right of P.S. 14, according to neighbors and the Waterbury-LaSalle Community Association.

Local residents, who objected

to the size of the expansion and their lack of input into the process, said they lamented the loss of the green oasis.

The School Construction Authority-approved arboricide occurred on Thursday, August 18.

Next-door neighbor Romana Campisi, who was vocally opposed to the expansion in its current form, said that no notification was given before the trees, some of which had stood for half a century, were leveled.

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Everlasting Friendship

Bronxites boogied on down to the Grand Concourse on Sunday, August 28 for the Boogie on the Boulevard summer celebration.

The event reallocated the Grand Concourse's center lanes from East 162nd to East 170th streets for a vibrant festival featuring fine and performance art-based activities. Twahira Kahn displayed a photo of her late friend, Elizabeth Ortiz, a talented painter who passed away recently, taken at last year's Boogie on the Boulevard.

Photo by Miriam Quin

Mott Haven gentrification protest targets Knick star

BY ROBERT CHRISTIE

New York Communities for Change and the Banana Kelly Resident Council held a protest on Thursday, August 25 aimed at New York Knick forward Carmelo Anthony's involvement with Mott Haven developer Keith Rubenstein.

The attendees felt Anthony's involvement with Rubenstein would greatly benefit the developer who has been criticized by local stakeholders opposing gentrification.

In addition to the protest, which took place at 2401 Third Avenue, NYCC compiled a report and statement on Anthony and Rubenstein to go along with the protest.

Anthony has been in the news recently as a prominent athlete who is standing up for injustices, particularly against the African American community.

NYCC asked how Anthony would be fighting for justice and at the same time be aligned with

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New CB 6 DM excited to partake in area's growth

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

At 27-years-old, the newest Bronx district manager is also the borough's youngest district manager. And with all the plans he has for the area, he may soon be the busiest.

Community Board 6 district manager John Sanchez was hired in early August.

He has been busy get-

ting to know how to best provide services and funding for area residents.

A Bronx native, Sanchez grew up at 167th and Walton and later 184th and Park Avenue and currently resides in Parkchester.

After attending New York University's Stern School of Business he worked as a personal trainer before a volunteer gig with a local elected sent him down a different path.

"I decided to volunteer on the campaign of (Assemblyman) Michael Blake," he said. "I then became a paid intern, and then I became the field organizer for the campaign and then the deputy chief of staff. All in a span of two months."

Sanchez worked with Blake for about a year before being hired by the Northeast Charter School Network where he served as a New York City advo-



John Sanchez is the new Community Board 6 district manager.

Photo courtesy of Community Board 6

cacy manager before landing his current job.

Sanchez has already assembled a pool of 15 interns who will begin training next week to help address the needs of the district, of which he said there are many.

The interns come from

several northeast colleges, including several from nearby Fordham University.

"Community Board 6 ranks number one in unemployment in the entire city, and number one for families living under the poverty line – 44 percent,"

he said.

Another goal is to create a business improvement district, or BID, for the East Tremont business corridor to help lure more retail, better restaurants, a new community center, better public transportation and maybe even a movie theater to replace the one the neighborhood lost.

"What people don't want is more 99 cent or discount stores," Sanchez said.

In addition to the Bronx Zoo and the New York Botanical Garden, Sanchez's district also includes Little Italy in Belmont that brings in significant tourism dollars to the district.

Sanchez said two separate robberies of elderly residents in recent days showed that more can be done to make the area safer.

"Safety is always going

to be a concern," Sanchez said. "We don't want people to stop coming here."

Another long-term concern for Sanchez is the need for school in the area to accommodate the children who will live in hundreds of units of new housing planned for the district.

In the next 10 years, there is slated to be over 2,500 units constructed in CB 6, Sanchez said.

Of the 1,500 student seats planned to be built, about 900 of them are funded but are not in the design and scope phase.

"There is going to be a great need," Sanchez said. "There is already a bunch of housing going up. You can't have 2,500 new apartment units without a school."

Sanchez replaces Ivine Galarza, the longtime DM of CB 6 who retired recently after more than two decades in the position.

There is already a bunch of housing going up. You can't have 2,500 new apartment units without a new school.

John Sanchez

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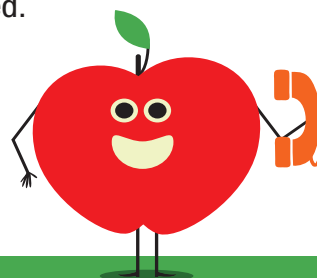
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A view of what was once a lovely patch of green in the city.

Photo courtesy of the Waterbury-LaSalle Community Association

Progress kills mature trees; SCA destroys oasis for P.S.14 extension

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"The day they knocked down the trees, we were just looking on in awe," said Campisi, adding "Why take away the area's beauty?"

The homeowner said that she had hoped the project would have been modified to be less impactful on the surrounding community.

She said she feels let down by the process and Councilman James Vacca, who approved the current design, and still doesn't know how close the new building will come to her property.

"I think (the city) did it in such a way where they didn't tell us everything about this project until it was already in the works," said Campisi, noting that by May, the blueprints were already finalized and the contract awarded.

Another neighbor, who

asked not to be identified because of a relationship with DOE, said that trees were 'massacred' and that it now looks like a 'wasteland.'

The WLCA was opposed to the size of the building and supported a smaller expansion of the school.

WLCA board member Andrew Chirico said that they wanted to work with the DOE and SCA to develop an L-shaped building plan that would have avoided destroying the trees.

"They could have built towards Crosby Avenue," said Chirico. "We would have saved all of these trees and we could have kept the greenery and the look of the neighborhood."

WLCA wrote to city officials about their L-shaped design idea, and got a response stating that this could not be done because it would disrupt the portable

classrooms in the schoolyard at the start, rather than the end, of the project, said Chirico.

Instead, the expanded school is expected to run along Hollywood Avenue, according to an artist rendering.

Mary Jane Musano, another WLCA board member, said that she had tried to reach out to high-ranking DOE personnel to no avail.

A local resident noted the starkness of the area also and was noticeably saddened by it.

"The specialness of the wooded area next to the school is gone," said Country Club resident Marcia Pavlica. "I know it is in the name of progress and they had to come down, but it is a loss."

Both SCA and DOE did not respond as of press time to requests for comment.

Rino's serves lasting memories

from Page 1

past Monday," said D'Rendi. "A lot of people come here with their families telling us how much this restaurant has meant to them."

The partners said they look forward to spending time with their family and grandchildren.

Michael Bernard, Ring 10 vice president, said Ring 10 would meet at Rino's the second Tuesday of every month with police officers, lawyers, local politicians and residents to discuss event and fundraising ideas for retired boxers in need.

Lifelong Throggs Neck resident and Ring 10 member, John Marano has been going to Rino's since he was

six-years-old.

Marano celebrated many milestones at his favorite eatery throughout the years including his St. Frances de Chantal School 25th Reunion, family and friends' birthdays and First Holy Communions.

"It's a cozy restaurant with great food and friends," he said. "Gaspar and Carmine treat everyone like family and we hope they will stay in touch with us."

Rino's was one of many local businesses that participated in the Throggs Neck Merchants Association's inaugural Throggs Neck Restaurant Week.

"Rino's has been a

neighborhood institution for many years and have always been an active participant in many of our events," said Stephen Kaufman, TNMA president.

He added, Rino's allowed TNMA to host many meetings at the eatery.

"We wish Gaspar and Carmine tremendous happiness on their retirement. They've worked very hard and deserve it," Kaufman said.

The former log cabin at 3938 E. Tremont Avenue has been the home to many restaurants.

For decades it was the Neck Inn and later it featured big band music as Buster Long's.



Rino's co-owners Gaspar D'Rendi (2nd from l) and Carmine Fardella (3rd from r), Michael Bernard (back, c), John Marano (1st on r) and his son, Andrew (2nd from r) congratulated Fr. Robert Dunn on his birthday, Friday, August 26.
Community News Group / Robert Wirsing



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TN tree pits fall victim to weeds and debris



An neglected tree pit on East Tremont Avenue near Lafayette Avenue is one of several on the Throggs Neck commercial shopping strip. Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio



A tree pit with overgrown weeds on East Tremont Avenue is just one of several examples of sites requiring maintenance.

Photo courtesy of John Marano

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

After a massive cleanup last year, it appears that there is more to be done to keep tree pits in Throggs Neck's commercial corridor clear of debris.

Even after the Throggs Neck Merchants Association completed a cleanup of tree pits along the main thoroughfare in the fall of 2015, some of the pits remain stubbornly overgrown with weeds and prone to litter accumulation residents said.

John Marano, a community activist who was involved in last year's cleanup, said that some pits have reverted back to their previous state of neglect.

TNMA president, Steven Kaufman, said that the cleanup included many volunteers over several weekends in September and October 2015 and consumed over 100 bags of mulch and probably over 20 hours. He said that some tree pits required more than five bags of mulch.

Marano is calling on the TNMA's merchants and urging them to clean the pits in

front of their stores.

He recalled that he and his brothers were required by his parents to sweep up in front of his family's bakery on East Tremont Avenue when he was growing up.

"I think some merchants on the commercial strip should take a little more pride in the front of their stores," said Marano, adding that on occasion, he has heard merchants say that the debris and weeds in the pits is not their responsibility.

"But then again," he said. "It is in front of their store, so if they clean the pits, it will make their store look better."

Councilman James Vacca said that cleaning tree pits is the responsibility of the property owner, and he said he did notice a lack of uniformity in maintenance of tree pits along East Tremont Avenue.

"I am supportive of the creation of a Throggs Neck Business Improvement District, and if there was a BID there, there would be someone administering, and then we would have (regular) cleanup of tree pits," said Vacca.

The councilman said that if a tree pit is unkempt, the city could issue a summons, but the councilman believes that a more effective approach would be to have the TNMA contact individual merchants and let them know that in the interest of neighborliness it would be in the best if the nearby storekeepers cleaned the pits, whether they were legally required to or not.

The TNMA hopes to go out again sometime soon to correct the problem, according to the group's president.

"We speak to the merchants and encourage them to clean up and maintain them," said Kaufman. "With a lot of tree pits, the abutting landowner may not be a merchant."

The merchant association president added that some people are more attentive of the pits than others.

Marano said that certain tree pits on East Tremont Avenue near Lafayette Avenue, are overgrown.

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Italian Disaster Relief Fund forms in Belmont

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

The borough's 'Little Italy' community is coming together to help the victims of an earthquake in Italy.

Councilman Ritchie Torres, the Belmont Business Improvement District and Community Board 6 have established a relief fund for the victims of an earthquake that affected an area north of Rome on Wednesday, August 24.

The Italian Disaster Relief Fund's formation was announced at the Belmont Public Library on Friday, August 26.

"The earthquake has claimed at least 250 lives, there are reports that the death toll continues to rise and thousands of people have been displaced," said Torres during the conference, adding "This has particular resonance in Arthur Avenue and Little Italy because many of the residents and business owners have attachments to Italy, and the very vitality and identity of this neighborhood is owed to the people of Italy."

"The three of us will make every effort to collect donations for those in dire need in Italy," added the councilman.

The councilman said that he



(l-r) Phil Marino, Belmont BID executive director; Councilman Ritchie Torres and John Sanchez, Community Board 6 district manager at the announcement regarding Italian earthquake relief at the Belmont Library on Friday, August 26.

Community News Group / Patrick Rocchio

would personally be calling people to solicit donations on behalf of the people in need.

John Sanchez, CB 6 district manager, said about the effort that if something affects one community in the district, it affects them

all.

"It was vital that we give back in some way," said Sanchez, citing a significant Italian population and influence both in CB 6, and in New York City itself, which is home to the largest Italian-Ameri-

can population in North America.

Donations can be made at the board office, he said.

He will also be making an announcement about the Italian Relief effort during his first full, general board meeting on Wednesday,

September 14.

"It will be the first board meeting when the board reconvenes, so I think it will be the perfect opportunity to give people the information," said Sanchez.

Marino said that he was getting a lot of questions and comments regarding what could be done to help the victims.

"It was sad and people wanted know what they could do," said Marino. "I know New Yorkers... and when chips are down, we are here to help."

Marino said he had e-mailed people about the relief effort, and that collections were expected during the BID's upcoming Ferragosto celebration on Sunday, September 11, which will run from noon to 6 p.m.

The organization that was to have been the conduit for the donations, the Italian Consulate General, cannot accept donations, a Torres spokesman stated after the press conference.

As of press time on Tuesday, August 30, a Torres spokesman said that donations should be made to Italian American Relief Fund at www.italianamericanrelief.org.

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Intersection of West Mt. Eden Ave and Inwood Ave before the DOT road improvements - no sidewalk or crosswalk.
Photo courtesy of NYC Department of Transportation

W. Mt. Eden receives DOT pedestrian improvements

BY ROBERT CHRISTIE
Pedestrians no longer have to walk in the street on West Mt. Eden Avenue following new road improvements.

The ‘safety improvements,’ according to the NYC Department of Transportation, include a two-block adjustment on West Mt. Eden Avenue changing the roadway from a two-way street to a westbound only one-way street.

The one-way adjustment runs from Jerome Avenue to Macombs Avenue.

DOT then added a sidewalk on the north side of the avenue from Inwood Avenue to Macombs Road.

In addition, at the intersection between West Mt. Eden Avenue and Inwood Avenue, there are now new two crosswalk areas.

Also, motorists can no longer make a right turn from Inwood Avenue onto West Mt. Eden Avenue as, according to the DOT, it was difficult for drivers to see oncoming traffic.

Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson said when pedestri-

ans “are forced” to walk in the street, both motorists and the walkers are presented with risk.

DOT Deputy Borough Commissioner Nivardo Lopez echoed Gibson’s sentiments saying it “never makes sense for pedestrians to walk in the street.”

Over the years, DOT had received multiple requests from residents, politicians and community members to address the north side of West Mt. Eden Avenue.

Prior to the improvements, the sidewalk on West Mt. Eden stopped at Inwood Avenue.

This caused pedestrians to either cross to the other side of the street or walk on the roadway until they reached Macombs Road.

According to the DOT, as many as 1,100 people were recorded either crossing at Inwood Avenue or walking in the street from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The new sidewalk will service people coming off the 4 train at Jerome Avenue, as well as those previously

walking in the street.

In 2013, DOT released a Jerome Avenue Transportation Study which suggested changes to West Mt. Eden including the sidewalk and the narrowing of the roadway.

The DOT report said it would have been difficult to construct the sidewalk on a narrow 32-foot two-way wide street. To resolve the matter the one-way street plan was initiated.

“These changes will provide a safe route which will have a positive impact on area residents’ quality of life” said Paul Philips, district manager for Community Board 4.

The improvements in the Mt. Eden neighborhood are part of the mayor’s Vision Zero Initiative.

The initiative will provide safety for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists alike.

Earlier this year, Mayor De Blasio announced a \$115 million investment in street redesign and traffic-calming measures on certain thoroughfares around the city.



Intersection of West Mt. Eden Ave and Inwood Ave after the DOT road improvements - new sidewalk and new crosswalks.
Photo courtesy of NYC Department of Transportation

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'Groundbreaking' fix up for Parque de los Ninos

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

Like many of her Soundview neighbors, Councilwoman Annabel Palma grew up playing at the Parque De Los Ninos playground through all four seasons.

"I grew up on Boynton and Watson, so as a child, this was my playground," Palma said. "This is where my mom used to bring my brothers and I to play in the summer time. I can look back at old pictures I have at home of me in the park with mountains of snow."

Palma was among several city and state elected officials who attended an Wednesday, August 24 groundbreaking ceremony announcing \$1.6 million in major renovations to the park that should be completed by next summer.

Funding was obtained by Palma and Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. through the mayor's office.

Diaz also recalled playing in the park on a little league team with his brother.

"We won the championship in 1980 and 1981, and we have fond memories of playing in this park," Diaz said. "My two sons, they practiced here with the Bronx River



A groundbreaking ceremony at Parque De Los Ninos in Soundview was held last week to celebrate over \$1 million in planned renovations. Photo courtesy of NYC Parks

Bulldogs and played Pop Warner football."

Renovation plans include playground equipment and safety surfacing for children ages 2 to 5 and 5 to 12, a spray shower and swings. The seating area of the park will get be receiving new fencing, landscaping and new benches.

NYC Parks commissioner

Mitchell J. Silva announced a second phase of the project would see the softball field renovated with natural grass outfield and a rubberized all-weather track with a multi-purpose infield, as well as adult exercise equipment.

The playground renovations, which will be completed by next summer, are part of \$34 million in

projects planned for the Bronx, and Silva made children in attendance from the local camp program to promise to take care of them.

"We are going to invest a lot of money here and we need you to tell your friends that once we start to restore this, we want to make sure you take care of it because this park is for you," he said.

The playground, located on the corner of Morrison and Watson avenues and originally known as the James Burke Ballfields, was completed in 1956.

It was given its current moniker in 1995 to honor six neighborhood children killed in the late eighties.

Palma credited Silva and Bronx Parks Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa for getting various parks projects past the planning stage to fruition.

"For many years I heard complaints that we didn't have enough funding for our parks, that we didn't care about our parks, but that isn't the case," Palma said. "We put a lot of funding into the parks but the projects were just taking longer to move along. Under these two commissioners we have been on a fast track."

Not to be left out of the celebration, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo promised to sponsor a neighborhood youth Olympics Day games once the park renovations were complete.

"There will be games and tournaments, hot dogs and hamburgers - we can't grill them here but we can bring them in," he said.

DOT begins long-awaited Morris Pk. fixes

BY ROBERT CHRISTIE

Residents in Morris Park are getting long-awaited fixes to Morris Park Avenue.

Earlier this week, the NYC Department of Transportation began drawing new double yellow lines on the road beginning at Colden Avenue in both directions - something residents had spent more than a year

requesting.

In addition, there is a new crosswalk at the Morris Park Avenue and Colden Avenue intersection.

Prior to Mayor de Blasio's Bronx town hall meeting on Wednesday, August 10, community board members were asked to write down five issues to present to the

mayor's office.

Community Board 11 district manager Jeremy Warneke presented, as one of his issues, the lack of double yellow lines along Morris Park Avenue.

Warneke said he had previously brought up the issue at a district service meeting in October 2015.

He said representatives from city agencies had not been helpful in getting the yellow lines problem resolved but instead took issue with the green, red, and white lines the Morris Park Columbus Day parade organizers place down the middle of the road.

"Something's better than nothing," Warneke recalled telling one of the representatives.

Councilman James Vacca, who moderated the town hall meeting, said he had made the Morris Park Avenue road issues a priority at the town hall meeting.

"I had been told any day now," said Vacca of the timetable for the fixes.

"We've waited too long for these lines to be redone and replenished," Vacca also said. "We needed to quicken up the process."

Warneke said last week he had become quite annoyed with the lack of progress on the road and decided to take a picture of the road in front of the Community Board 11 building.

He posted the photo to Facebook on Wednesday, August 24 with a caption ask-



Photo before DOT began drawing new double yellow lines on Morris Park Avenue Photo Courtesy of Jeremy Warneke



Photo after DOT began installing the double yellow lines

Photo Courtesy of Jeremy Warneke

ing residents to comment if they have complained about the lack of yellow lines on the roadway.

Warneke said he doesn't know if his post had anything to do with the DOT's movement on the project but added social media can be an effective tool at times.

He said now when he walks outside the CB 11 building - located at 1741 Colden Avenue - he can see the double yellow lines running in either direction.

According to a DOT spokesperson work is still continuing on Morris Park Avenue.

"Refurbishing work is being done from White Plains Road to Newport Avenue," the spokesperson said.

Gjonaj sets upcoming Mother Teresa celebration

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

The canonization of the Mother Teresa as a saint will lead to many celebrations, including a Manhattan family-themed gathering that will likely be attended by many Bronxites.

The borough's Albanian-American community is coming together to remember Mother Teresa of Calcutta, an Albanian Catholic nun, soon-to-be saint and Nobel Peace Prize Winner.

Planning for the New York area celebration of her canonization is underway.

A planning session for the event in Manhattan's Battery Park took place on Friday, August 26 at Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj's campaign office in Morris Park.

The assemblyman is part of a committee developing the celebration, which takes place on Sunday, September 4, from noon to 8 p.m., with a live simulcast from the Vatican at 4 p.m.

It will include family-themed events, ethnic Albanian and Indian dancing, music, games, food and giveaways.

"Because her mission was established in the south Bronx, and she has helped so many Bronxites, the borough will be there to remember Mother Teresa and celebrate her in a way that is fitting," said Gjonaj.



Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj speaks at his campaign office on Friday, August 26 during a planning session with a committee working on a celebration of the Albanian-born Mother Teresa's canonization. The event will take place in Battery Park in Manhattan on Sunday, September 4. Photo by Walter Pofeldt

The Albanian community would like to have a role in planning and celebrating with people from all walks of life who recognize Mother Teresa's contributions the poor and to humanity in the four corners of the world, said Gjonaj.

The assemblyman recalled her visit to his Albanian Catholic church on Park Avenue near East Tremont Avenue when

he was a child.

"I did not know who she was but I knew something was different because we were celebrating Mass outdoors," Gjonaj recalled, adding that the parking lot of the church was packed with people.

The Battery Park event will be an all-day event where people of all differ-

ent age groups, faiths and backgrounds can partake of the festivities, said the assemblyman, adding that it was not a religious event per se.

"For the Catholics, it is tremendous honor to be canonized into sainthood," he said. "For all of us, it is remembrance of a person who served the poorest of the poor who were not even Catholic."

Gjonaj estimated that about 20 people had a hand in the planning session at his campaign office on August 26.

For Albanian-Americans who met Mother Teresa during her missionary work around the globe, the canonization is a time rich with vivid recollections of the Missionaries of Charity's founder.

That order was founded by Mother Teresa in 1950 and continues to work around the world, including at its East 145th Street convent.

Gjek Gjonlekaj was a freelance journalist who covered Mother Teresa at a 1988 visit to the United Nations and who invited her to visit the borough and meet with its Albanian-Americans, which did at St. Rita of Cascia Church that year.

He said she will be unique as a saint because she is not instantly identifiable with a particular country or region, but rather that she worked with the poorest in every continent, caste and faith.

City looks to curb derelict bicycle scourge

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

Every week Gus Luna rides a bike to work at the Quality Grill and Gyro just off Buhre Avenue and locks it to a round, metal city-installed bike rack outside the store.

He is among the growing number of bicycle commuters in the borough, and across the city.

"People who work in Pelham Bay bike there in the morning and then in the afternoon they ride back. It's cheaper than driving," Luna said.

Just feet away two bikes sit illegally locked to a road sign, one of many places across the city where bikes can sit for days, weeks or even months before being removed by sanitation.

"It's no good," he said.

Cycling in New York City has nearly tripled in the last ten years, and by 4 percent in just the last year, according to the NYC Department of Transportation. But that has created a glut of derelict bikes locked to bike racks or street signs across the city.

Under current city law, a bicycle can be declared derelict and removed if it is crushed or not usable, it is missing parts, it has flat

or missing tires or it has damaged handlebars or pedals or is 75 percent rusted.

However the DOS is proposing to change rules to lower the minimum to two characteristics and reducing the minimum rust requirement to 50 percent.

At Izzy's Gourmet Deli on Westchester Avenue, cashier Ghassan Alkmel said while he didn't think the problem was too serious in that area, he supported the city's efforts to get derelict bikes off the street to make room for the growing number of cycling commuters.

"I know some parts of Brooklyn where the bikes will sit there for two or three weeks," Alkmel said. "One day, someone will take a wheel and then another guy will take something else. So if the city came and took them after more than one or two days, I would support that."

At an Tuesday, August 9 public hearing in Manhattan, Ben Smith of DOT said crushed, rusted and stripped bikes made New Yorkers more hesitant to bike.

"Such bicycles clog our city racks, taking up bicycle parking needed by our cyclists," Smith

told city officials on hand. "Ensuring the availability of convenient, secure, parking for bicyclists at their destination is important to encourage cycling as a mode of transportation throughout the city."

But cycling advocates who spoke said proposed changes didn't go far enough.

Julia Kite, policy and research manager of Transportation Alternatives, said last month alone, the city's 311 service received 163 complaints about unusable bicycles chained to public and private property.

"The way it has been up until now, a bike could be totally unusable, but still not meet the criteria to be removed," Kite said.

Pio Tsai, head of NYU Bike Share, told officials the amount of time bicycle is left in a single place was just as good an indication of being derelict as one that is missing parts or damaged. He recommended two weeks as a criteria to have a bike removed.

"A bicycle left in the same spot for two months is as derelict as a bicycle that has a broken wheel and is unable to be moved," Tsai said.



Gus Luna is among the growing number of city residents commuting by bicycle. The Sanitation department is looking to crack down on abandoned bicycles to help accommodate those cyclists.

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Mott Haven gentrification protest targets Knick star

from Page 1

Rubenstein?

Rubenstein and his development company Somerset Partners are currently working on two projects in the south Bronx.

One project is at 9 Bruckner Boulevard and the other is on the corner of 2401 Third Avenue and 101 Lincoln Avenue. The properties were purchased for over \$65 million.

The property at 101 Lincoln Avenue/2401 Third Avenue is expected to consist of six 25-story luxury apartment towers.

According to the Somerset website, it will contain 1,600 residential units in addition to "a retail component and a waterfront promenade."

The rents are starting at \$2,900 a month, according to the website.

NYCC said this is three times the median rent in the neighborhood which is \$782 a month.

"By snapping up property in a distressed neighborhood and attempting to create a luxury market at

more than triple the rent, Keith Rubenstein is the very definition of a NYC gentrifier," said NYCC.

"The south Bronx always been a very humble, family-oriented community, a working class community," said Nathalie Hernandez, Bronx organizer for NYCC.

The organization is also calling out Anthony and Rubenstein for a Halloween party Anthony hosted for Rubenstein last fall entitled 'Macabre Suite.'

At the party were props such as burned out cars and burning trash cans representing the area's recent past.

At the time, residents felt this was disrespectful, viewing the party as a mockery of the widespread arson attacks in the Bronx during the 1970s.

The party was meant to introduce Somerset's new property at Lincoln Avenue.

Initially, the property was going to be named The Piano District.

The name was in ref-

erence to the Bronx's history in the early 1900s as a prominent place for piano manufacturing.

According to NYCC, the name Piano District is no longer a part of the project.

NYCC is hoping that if Anthony removes his name and speaks out against the developer, it would help hinder the project's success.

Rubenstein and Somerset did not respond directly to questions about gentrification.

However, a representative for the company said, "It is very important to retain the character of the community, to embrace the heritage of the residents, while creating more opportunities for more and more people and families to flourish."

He also said, "All plans are being finalized. So we are not prepared to discuss any further specifics at this time."

Carmelo Anthony did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



Residents protest New York Knicks forward Carmelo Anthony's connection to developer Keith Rubenstein. Rubenstein has been criticized for his plans to gentrify Mott Haven.

Photo Courtesy of New York Communities for Change



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TOP DRIVER DISTRACTIONS

Using mobile phones

Leading the list of the top distractions behind the wheel are mobile phones. Phones now do more than just place calls, and drivers often cannot pull away from their phones, even when driving. According to the California Department of Motor Vehicles, studies have shown that driving performance is lowered and the level of distraction is higher for drivers who are heavily engaged in cell

phone conversations. The use of a hands-free device does not lower distraction levels. The percentage of vehicle crashes and near-crashes attributed to dialing is nearly identical to the number associated with talking or listening.

Daydreaming

Many people will admit to daydreaming behind the wheel or looking at a person or object outside of the car for too long. Per-

haps they're checking out a house in a new neighborhood or thought they saw someone they knew on the street corner. It can be easy to veer into the direction your eyes are focused, causing an accident. In addition to trying to stay focused on the road, some drivers prefer the help of lane departure warning systems.

Eating

Those who haven't quite mastered walking and

chewing gum at the same time may want to avoid eating while driving. The majority of foods require a person's hands to be taken off of the wheel and their eyes to be diverted from the road. Reaching in the back seat to share some French fries with the kids is also distracting.

Try to eat meals before getting in the car. For those who must snack while en route, take a moment to pull over at

a rest area and spend 10 minutes snacking there before resuming the trip.

Reading

Glancing at an advertisement, updating a Facebook status or reading a book are all activities that should be avoided when driving. Even pouring over a traffic map or consulting the digital display of a GPS system can be distracting.

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