

**Ortiz,
Gomez:
Valesquez
unfit to run**

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A candidate is back on the ballot in the 13th Council District race after his petition challenge was withdrawn.

Victor Ortiz was restored to the ballot in the Democratic primary race after a petition challenge, that was initiated by opponent Marjorie Velazquez's campaign intern Rebecca Chant, was dropped.

Ortiz believes he was challenged because Velazquez was attempting to unfairly limit Latino ballot choices.

"It is a victory for me," said Ortiz. "It is more of a victory for the people of the 13th Council District and the people of the Bronx."

Bronx Supreme Court Judge John Carter restored Ortiz to the ballot with 478 valid signatures, according to the court clerk's office, 28 more than he needed to qualify.

Chant, a junior attending college in Ohio, who hails from New Jersey, testified in Bronx Supreme Court recently that she was coached to mislead the court about her plans to become a Bronx resident, claims Ortiz, a requirement for challenging a New York State petition.

She said she didn't know if she intended on becoming a resident of the Bronx after college, that she was in the borough on a three-month fellowship with \$4,500 in expenses paid by Oberlin College and that she was asked to file the challenge, according to the court transcript.

She also testified that she voted in Ohio in 2016, according to the court records.

She stated in the transcript that she resided at 1816 Radcliff Avenue, apartment 3B when she only filed challenges against two Latino candidates: Alex Gomez and Ortiz's petition signatures.

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**2 CONFEDERACY
BUSTS REMOVED**

**Rebel generals' vanquished
by Governor Cuomo**

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

The removal of busts of two prominent American Civil War generals from Bronx Community College is drawing mixed reactions from local leaders and raising new questions about the venerable Hall of Fame of Great Americans on the college's campus.

Governor Cuomo called for the bronze busts of Confederacy generals Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson and Robert E. Lee to be removed from their Fordham Heights perch following civil unrest in Charlottesville, VA and

elsewhere over Confederate War statues that some say represent the nation's racist past.

College president Thomas Isekenegbe confirmed the move in a statement posted on the college website.

"For 60 years, Bronx Community College...has remained committed to reflecting its values of diversity and inclusion in all of its actions and statements," Isekenegbe said. "Embracing difference includes creating space where all people feel respected, welcomed and valued."

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A Royal Welcome

Disney royalty princess Belle and queen Elsa visited Bronx children undergoing their back to school physicals at St. Barnabas Hospital on Friday, August 18. Queen Elsa (l) hugged Yaha Fofana who dressed up as her sister, princess Anna of Arendelle.

Photo by Miriam Quin

**TN Strong meets with
2800 "owner", Fernandes**

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Members of the Throggs Neck Strong Coalition are in the process of writing a 'memorandum of understanding' for 2800 Bruckner Boulevard.

The building has been a lightning rod of controversy as commercial tenants have faced eviction even with long-term leases, and the purported new owner of the building, Michael Fernandes and his company Steward Redevelopment, have been unclear

concerning plans for the building.

The coalition, elected officials and tenants met with Michael Fernandes at Throggs Neck Strong coalition chairman's Steven Kaufman's office on Thursday, August 17 for a two and a half hour dialogue, said Kaufman.

The negotiations between the coalition, specifically created to deal with 2800 Bruckner Boulevard, and Fernandes are at a sen-

Continued on Page 15

Non-solicitation real estate zone readied for Country Club

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Households in Country Club and Spencer Estate may soon be able to avoid real estate solicitations if they don't wish to receive them.

The NYS Department of State announced that it is adopting a real estate non-solicitation 'cease and desist' zone covering Country Club and much of Spencer Estate after the conclusion of a 45-day public comment period on Saturday, September 9.

The zone, which will allow homeowners to place their names on a real estate 'do not contact list', should be in effect around Sunday, October 1, according to the state agency.

Senator Jeff Klein was helping local groups including the Country Club Civic Association, Waterbury-LaSalle Community Association and the Throggs Neck Homeowners Association collect evidence of real estate solicitations and presented them to state.

The agency held hearings in the east Bronx in 2016 on the issue.

A similar zone had previously expired for much of the area, and the new one should last five years, according to sources.

"The reinstatement of the cease and desist zone covering Country Club is a step in the right direction," stated Klein. "Residents there who have been bombarded by intense real estate solicitations can soon file a notice with the New York Department of State to put an end to these tactics."

Michael McNerney, CCCA president, said that the organization's members were diligent in collecting real estate solicitations and that the issue was a concern in their community.

"Country Club's inclusion in the non-solicitation zone is something we have long sought and expected," said McNerney.

"I think it is completely unfortunate that Waterbury-LaSalle and Throggs Neck are not included in this," he said.

McNerney said that if he could offer advice to neighboring communities, he would say that

whenever they receive real estate solicitations – whether a glossy post card or one with a cake recipe on it, as some of his members received – to bring them to Klein's office or to community association meetings.

According to a the state map, when the new zone goes into effect, Bruckner Expressway, Griswold Avenue, Layton Avenue and Eastchester Bay would be its boundaries.

Klein urged residents in Waterbury-LaSalle and Throggs Neck to continue to submit solicitations to his office throughout the public comment period.

Andrew Chirico of WLCA's board said that the group submitted many examples of real estate mailings.

"We had solicitations from Queens and Long Island asking people to sell their houses," said Chirico.

He added that many of the solicitors seemed to be developers and he was concerned this type of activity might encourage



The proposed zone barring real estate solicitations from those who register would include Country Club and much of Spencer Estate.

Photo courtesy of NYS Department of State

people who were not interested in selling into being coerced or frightened into doing so.

Robert Barbarelli, TNHOA vice president, said that the group would be open to appealing the decision before the deadline, were following Klein's lead

and would continue submitting materials if members were interested.

For a zone to be established, evidence must be offered of "intense and repeated" solicitation, according to Department of State.

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Confederacy busts removed; rebel generals' vanquished by Gov. Cuomo

from Page 1

Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. also applauded the move, arguing a more appropriate location for these two statues would be the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, where they could be presented in a historical context rather than venerated.

"Their inclusion at this location is especially galling," Diaz said. "There is nothing great about two men who committed treason against the United States to fight to keep the institution of slavery intact."

Mayor de Blasio announced the city will conduct a 90-day review of what he called symbols of hate in New York City.

But not everyone applauded the move.

Prominent Bronx Historian Lloyd Ultan said the move is misguided, since the generals were nominated due to their military achievements, not their loyalty to the Confederacy. The hall is the ideal place for such figures, he argued.

"They were chosen by people from every state in the union, and they were chosen because of their military contributions to strategy and tactics that are studied even today," Ultan said. "Both Lee and Jackson are in the section honoring people in the military. In fact, Lee's bust is right next to the bust of (Union general) Ulysses S. Grant."

The hall is an inclusive entity, he added, and contains Americans of all races and ethnicities, including several African-American and Jewish American inductees.

Adding to their historic nature, Ultan added, is the fact that the busts were created by two of the most prominent sculptors of their day, Bryant Baker (Jackson) and George T. Brewster (Lee).

The first hall of fame in the nation, the Hall of Fame of Great Americans dates back to 1900, when it was built on what was then the Bronx campus of New York University.

The 630-foot long open-air colonnade was designed by architect Stanford White, who also designed the adjacent library building long considered one of the most iconic buildings in the borough.

The 98 individuals enshrined in the hall, including the two removed, were voted upon by a group of peers in their field from across the country.

The competition was fierce — newspapers and interest groups lobbied hard for candidates.

One such group, The United Daughters of the Confederacy, was responsible for the induction of General Jackson in 1955.

Unfortunately, due to legal battles over who actually owns the hall and oversees inductions and a lack of funding, the hall had gone untouched save occasional maintenance since 1973 until the recent removals.

The last four inductees: Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis; American Red Cross founder Clara Barton; agricultural scientist Luther Burbank and steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, have yet to have their bronze bust sculpted and added to the hall.

No announcement has

been made on the fate of the two empty pillars that remain where Lee and Jackson busts once stood, or where the removed busts would be sent.

The removals also sparked questions over access to the public campus by members of the media.

J. B. Nicholas, a freelance reporter for the news website Gothamist, was arrested for trespassing after refusing to leave the campus after he was approached by security while interviewing students about the bust controversy. He plans to fight the charges.

Bronx Community College is overseen by City University of NY, a public, taxpayer-funded university system.

On Tuesday, August 22, this reporter walked onto campus and proceeded to the hall and began taking photos.

A security guard standing in the hall asked if I was a media member. When I confirmed that I was, I was told media were not allowed and ordered to leave the campus.

Bronx Community College legal counsel and deputy to college president Karla Renee said she would look into the incident.

"I have been in regular contact with the Chief of Public Safety and reporters are being allowed on campus to film and photograph the Hall," she said in a statement. "I'm not sure why you would have been approached and asked to leave, but I am reaching out to Public Safety now to inquire further. I apologize for the confusion."

Calls to Diaz for comment on the media-related incidents were not returned by press time.

Ortiz, Gomez: Valesquez' tactics make her unfit to run for office

It is a victory for me. It is more of a victory for the people of the 13th Council District.

Victor Ortiz

On being reinstated on the ballot in the Tuesday, September 12 Democratic primary



Marjorie [Velazquez] should resign from the ballot and apologize to her fellow Latino candidates and the constituents of the 13th Council District.

Alex Gomez



from Page 1

Posting under 'Becca Chant' on Facebook on Monday, June 5, she called on social media friends in New York City to sign petitions to put Velazquez on the ballot.

Ortiz also provided the Bronx Times with documents that appear to be petition signatures that apparently were gathered by Chant.

Ortiz said he is going to help fellow Latino candidate Gomez continue his fight to get back on the ballot too, going so far as to attend a hearing at the NYC Board of Elections with him on Tuesday, August 22.

They also protested together outside of Velazquez's

Westchester Square campaign office.

"I support my brother Alex Gomez and request that he be placed back on the ballot and allow voters of the 13th Council District to choose fairly their next councilmember on Tuesday, September 12," said Ortiz.

Gomez said that he would be back at another hearing on Tuesday, August 29 as the board continues looking into the matter.

"(Velazquez) conspired to throw off her fellow Latino candidates from the Democratic ballot at all cost," said Gomez, adding that she should withdraw her name from the ballot and apologize to her fel-

low candidates in the name of Latino unity.

Ortiz is requesting that an investigation be opened into the Velazquez's role in this matter.

A spokesman for Velazquez, Jon Greenfield, of Red Horse Strategies, her communications manager, in an e-mailed statement, denied the two men's claims.

He claimed her two Latino opponents were attempting to "paint her as having less Hispanic heritage than them."

Despite his court victory, Ortiz said he lost three valuable weeks of campaigning and had to expend significant financial resources during his legal challenge, he said.



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Heaps of trash plague 180th Street train station

BY BOB GUILIANO

Illegal dumping on sidewalks and the grassy areas near the 180th Street IRT train station at Morris Park and East Tremont avenues has created an eyesore and safety hazard for people commuting in the area, according to community officials.

From the Macca Poultry Shop at 605 Morris Park Avenue near Garfield Street, along MTA property lines to East 180th Street, people are dumping debris from their vehicles, including 5-gal-

lon buckets of sheet rocking compound, according to Anthony Vitaliano, chairman of Community Board 11.

Vitaliano said he spoke to Jacqueline Carter, the MTA liaison with community boards, to address the matter, and he was assured she would contact the NYC Department of Sanitation to clean up the trash.

But when the Bronx Times Reporter contacted Carter, she refused to acknowledge that she relayed the board's complaint



Illegally dumped trash is shown in this photo taken on Monday, August 21, around the East 180th Street IRT train station, specifically Morris Park Avenue, between Garfield and East 180th streets.

Photo courtesy of Chris Kirka, community associate, CB 11.



Vendors sell their wares on Morris Park Avenue in front of the 180th Street IRT train station on Tuesday, August 22. Community leaders have contacted the MTA and NYC Department of Sanitation Department to keep the area free of illegally dumped trash.

Community News Group/Bob Guiliano

to the MTA or whether she even contacted the DOS as she said she would.

She referred all questions to the agency's press office.

The MTA press office referred the inquiries to Kevin Ortiz, who handles transit issues, and Ortiz after viewing a photo taken of the trash on Morris Park Avenue between Garfield and 180th streets taken by a CB 11 board member - said the trash was not exactly

on MTA property, so it might be a DOS matter.

Unlike businesses or homeowners who are responsible to maintain clean sidewalks in front of their properties, MTA defers to the DOS when matters such as illegal dumping create hazards near its properties according to CB 11 district manager Jeremy Warneke.

In the afternoon of Monday, August 21, Warneke said he heard

back from the Department of Sanitation that it was going to try to clean up the mess later that evening.

"To my knowledge, it's the MTA's responsibility, but they depend on the Department of Sanitation to help them," Warneke said.

There are also vendors in the area of the 180th Street IRT train station that Warneke said he had reservations about their licenses to be there.

Vendors sell items including avocados, shish kabobs, fresh tropical fruit, and coffee outside the station.

Napkins and used coffee containers dumped in the vicinity of the station are probably coming from the vendors, according to Warneke.

The rest of the trash is coming from people who just discard it there.

For real estate developers trying to get bids on property in the area, "you get a hell of a welcome when you come up Morris Park Avenue," Warneke said, referring to the eyesore of dumped trash, especially near trees, in the vicinity of the train station.

Mott Haven to gain 167 affordable housing units

BY BOB GUILIANO

Plans for a large affordable housing development have been set in motion for 869 E. 147th Street in Mott Haven.

NYC officials joined with Radson Development partners on Friday, August 16, for a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the start of construction of Martin Luther King Plaza.

"Through the 167 affordable homes that will rise on this site, including 67 that will be permanently affordable, MLK Plaza is helping to shape a stronger, more diverse neighborhood for future generations," said Eric Enderlin, president of NYC Housing Development Corporation, in a news release.

The city is always looking to expand its tools to create more lasting affordability for New York City's neighborhoods, according to Maria Torres-Springer, commissioner NYC Housing Preservation and Development.

"Through the city's new Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program and HPD's OurSpace

program, 67 of the 167 homes at Martin Luther King Plaza will be permanently affordable, including 33 homes for formerly homeless New Yorkers," Torres-Springer said.

The creation of new affordable housing units is helping to drive the ongoing positive transformation of the Bronx, according to Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

"MLK Plaza will bring much needed affordable units to Mott Haven, and I was proud to have provided this project with \$500,000 in funding from my own capital budget," Diaz said.

Access to affordable housing is the most daunting challenge Bronx residents face, according to Congressman Jose E. Serrano.

"At MLK Plaza, hundreds of low- and middle-income Bronx families and individuals, including formerly homeless people, will now have access to quality affordable rental housing units with community and green spaces," Serrano said.



Representatives from the NYC Housing Development Corporation, NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. join Radson Development and project partners to celebrate the start of construction of Martin Luther King Plaza at 869 E. 147th Street in Mott Haven.

Courtesy of NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development

"With this building, we are also honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by making sure the socially disadvantaged have access to one of the most basic necessities, a place to call

home."

The development of this site was made possible following approval of a rezoning through the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure by the Department

of City Planning, in coordination with Radson Development, Mark-Viverito, Diaz, and Community Board 1, according to the release.

"Radson Development is proud to bring this beautifully designed building to the Mott Haven neighborhood," said Dan Rad, principal, Radson Development.

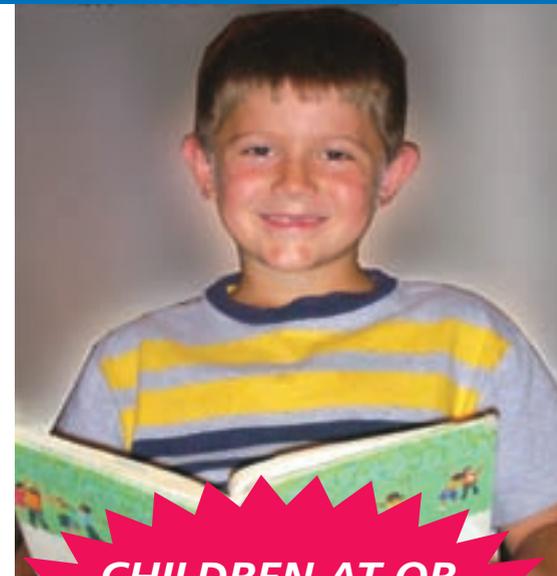
"This building will be the cornerstone of inclusive transformation of this community," Rad said. "Our ample on-site amenities and mix of affordable units will serve New Yorkers at a variety of income levels."

Apartments at MLK Plaza will serve households of a wide range of incomes including very low-, low-, and moderate-income families.

The unit mix will include 25 studios, 57 one-bedrooms, 60 two-bedrooms, 24 three-bedroom units, and one two-bedroom unit for the superintendent and a 722 square foot community room and a green roof.

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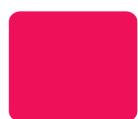
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An exterior view of the \$62.8 million homeless project at 233 Landing Road in University Heights. Expected to open for occupancy in November, it should house 200 homeless and also offer low-income housing. Community News Group/Arthur Cusano

Homeless project set to open in University Heights

BY BOB GUILIANO

As Mayor de Blasio's \$62.8 million homeless project prepares for occupancy at 233 Landing Road in University Heights, area residents feel frustrated in their attempts to get answers from elected officials about its anticipated impact to the neighborhood.

The Landing Road Residence will be the first project created under the mayor's HomeStretch Program, according to the New York Housing Conference website.

With 135 permanent units and a 200-bed transitional shelter, the project will offer 111 studios for single adults earning no more than \$21,175 annually, seven one-bedroom units for households of two earning no more than \$34,550 annually, 17 two-bedroom units for families of three earning no more than \$46,620 annually, and one super-independent unit.

The point of contention for the Fordham Hill Oval Owners Association is who will occupy the 200-bed shelter.

Officers of the association board have been told men only, but NYHC claims the residents will be working homeless single adults.

"We are demanding Commissioner Steven Banks (NYC Department of Homeless Services) and Deputy Commissioner David Neustadt (NYC Human Resources Administration)

to meet with us in person and look us in the eyes and say, 'Why are you bringing 200 plus not working, homeless men over near us and we're getting the run-around?'" Rachel Bradshaw, FHOOA vice president, told the Bronx Times.

While Bradshaw acknowledged that de Blasio appointed Banks to help solve the homeless epidemic in New York City, she was upset that "as the largest privately financed cooperative in NYC, and a staple in the community for 72 years," that FHOOA was not consulted before construction was approved.

The residents of the 1,100 units, nine building coop sought assurances that their safety would not be jeopardized.

"We are having a huge town hall in September," Bradshaw said. "We want Muzzy Rosenblatt, executive director of the Bowery Residents Committee, to come and face shareholders."

The association board is against the shelter housing 200-plus homeless men, but would entertain having Vietnam veterans, domestic-abuse survivors and single mothers living there, according to Bradshaw.

The BRC will provide on-site security around the clock, according to Matthew Borden, assistant commissioner of government affairs, DHS.

The BRC plans to hire 46

staff members with security functions, all of whom will be New York State-licensed security guards, according to Borden, who provided this information via e-mail to FHOOA officers.

He added that 69 security cameras have been installed inside and outside of the building to monitor both the transitional shelter and permanent residences.

Borden wrote, "Recordings will be made available to authorities in the event that arrests or prosecution are warranted."

Board officers said they had a "productive" meeting with Congressman Adriano Espaillat on Friday, August 18, at Fordham Hill, according to Blake.

They have also been trying to get a meeting with Assemblyman Victor Pichardo.

City officials met with FHOOA board members on Monday, June 26 to discuss the facility, according to Isaac McGinn, press secretary for the DHS.

"Our assistant commissioner of Government Affairs Matthew Borden, DHS Bronx Borough director Nicole Jordan, Council Member (Fernando) Cabrera, and David Tatum, chief program officer at BRC, the not-for-profit service provider that will be operating this facility, met with coop board members to discuss the facility," McGinn said in an email to the Bronx Times Reporter.

Mount St. Michael mourns athlete's death

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

Students and staff at Mount St. Michael Academy are dealing with the loss of an incoming freshman just weeks before the school year was set to begin.

A spokesman confirmed 14-year-old Dominic Bess of Baychester died during football practice Tuesday, August 22 on the campus of the Catholic high school, located at 4300 Murdoch Avenue.

Bess was taking part in cardio drills at around 9 a.m. on school grounds when he collapsed, according to a school spokesman.

Police from the 47th Precinct responded to a 911 call of an unconscious male at the school ball field at 9:31 a.m.

Upon arrival, officers found Bess unconscious and unresponsive.

Bess was transported to Montefiore Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

A medical examiner will determine Bess' cause of death and the investigation is ongoing, according to police.

Grief counselors will be at the school to help students cope with the tragedy.

"Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends, as well as coaches, the team and our student-athletes," said school spokeswoman Lisa Bennett.

I am incredibly saddened to learn of the sudden passing of this young student and promising athlete. My thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends and teachers during this very difficult time.

Andy King
Councilman

Football players resumed practice at 8 a.m. Wednesday, according to the school's official Twitter feed.

Local elected leaders also voiced sympathy for the sudden death, including Councilman Andy King.

"I am incredibly saddened to learn of the sudden passing of this young student and promising athlete," King said. "My thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends and teachers during this very difficult time."

Senator Jamal Bailey also offered condolences for the Bess family.

"Incredibly saddening news. Please pray for the family of this young man," Bailey said.

On the school's Facebook page, alum and parents offered condolences to the family.

"When my son called me today telling me about this devastating news that happened at practice it broke my heart," said Tracy Monica Zea. "My condolences go out to his family. Every parent's worst nightmare. May God bless his soul."

Some parents questioned why practice wasn't cancelled or moved inside due to the excessive heat.

The temperature had already risen to around 80 degrees with high humidity, and a heat advisory had been issued by the National Weather Service for later that day.

"It is so sad," said Ray Ann Kaseman. "A day like today with this heat, practice should have been cancelled. Use common sense."

Mayor de Blasio also chimed in on the issue, calling for more oversight over athletic activities during extreme heat on Twitter.

"Our hearts break for this young man's family," the mayor said. "We should prohibit sports practices during heat waves."

Bess' death follows the passing of a football player at Sachem High School East on Long Island earlier in the month.

That 16-year-old student died when a heavy log being carried by players during a drill dropped on his head.

Some of the football coaches at the school have since been relieved of their positions.

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(l-r) DVI director general Dr. Roy Petel with volunteer dentists Dr. Lenny Bers, AFDVI Board member; Dr. Scott Dubowsky, AFDVI Board president; Dr. Ariel Levy and Dr. John Case.

Photo courtesy of American Friends of DVI

Bronx dentist helps Israeli kids regain smiles

BY ROBERT WIRSING

A Bronx dentist joined his peers in helping underprivileged Israeli children regain their smiles.

American dentists, doctors Steve Katz, Ariel Levy and John Case, recently traveled to Israel to volunteer at the Trudi Birger Dental Clinic in Jerusalem through Dental Volunteers for Israel, a special program providing free dental care and oral health education to thousands of Jerusalem's needy children annually.

Dr. Ariel Levy, a five-year St. Barnabas Hospital orthodontics resident, is an Israeli native.

At age 22, Dr. Levy and his family emigrated to the U.S. where they settled down in Riverdale.

Dr. Levy is a Brandeis University Class of 2009 graduate and a UNC School of Dentistry Class of 2013 alum.

"I go home to Israel every year to see friends and family. I dearly miss it," he said. "In recent years, I have been able to use my dental experience back home at this wonderful clinic. DVI has advanced equipment and experienced staff that make a visit a pleasure for any doctor or patient."

This is the second time Dr. Levy has volunteered

with DVI in his home country.

He has booked his next visit with DVI for February 2018.

With a total population of 830,000, Jerusalem has over 200,000 youth living below the poverty line.

Volunteer dentists and their Israeli colleagues perform approximately 1,000 treatments each month.

Most DVI patients are referred to the free clinic through the Municipal Welfare Office, homeless shelters, at-risk youth programs, shelters for battered women and their children and other welfare organizations.

Each patient has a story and a reason for living below the poverty line.

One such patient doctors Levy, Katz and Case treated this year was Eden, a 21-year-old woman born into an abusive family who suffered sexual and physical abuse by her biological parents.

At age 13, Eden's mother struck her so hard that she fell and knocked out her two front teeth.

She was fitted with temporary crowns two years later, but was not able to replace them due to her family situation.

Over the years, Eden's

temporary crowns deteriorated and fell out, leaving her with a gap that led to shifting teeth and an unhealthy mouth.

She will require extensive specialized dental treatment including surgery, root canal therapy, implants and crowns.

"It's an unfortunate situation with Eden's teeth and she needs a lot of dental work," Dr. Levy noted.

The American Friends of DVI, a non-profit supporting DVI's work through volunteer recruitment and fundraising efforts, has launched a GoFundMe campaign to help Eden regain her smile.

If interested in donating, visit www.gofundme.com/help-eden-regain-her-smile.

DVI was founded by late Holocaust survivor, microbiologist and dedicated humanitarian activist Trudi Birger in 1980 when the Israeli government cut dental care from public health programs.

Having survived one of history's darkest chapters, Birger vowed to prevent the suffering of other children through DVI which she oversaw until her death on April 24, 2002.

For more information, visit www.americanfriendsofdvi.org.

New Van Cortlandt Library to add needed space



The Van Cortlandt Library will be moving to a larger location down the road after decades at its tiny Sedgwick Road location.

Arthur Cusano

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

The Van Cortlandt Library is moving to a much larger building after decades in its tiny Van Cortlandt Village location.

The one-room, one-floor library has been located at 3874 Sedgwick Avenue, just down the road from the Jerome Park Reservoir and historic Van Cortlandt Park, since 1968.

Prior to that, it had been based out of a small apartment building down the road.

Earlier this month New York Public Library finalized its purchase of a 5,800-square-foot building at nearby 3882 Cannon Place that will be converted into the new branch.

The building was purchased by the NYPL on Thursday, August 17 for \$1.85 million, according to NYC Department of Finance documents. Prior to that, the building had been owned by a limited liability company.

Councilman Andrew Cohen, Senator Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. allocated over \$2 million for the new facility, expected to be com-

pleted in spring 2019.

"I'm thrilled that the Van Cortlandt Branch has found a new home," said Cohen. "I was proud to help fund this project that will allow the Van Cortlandt Library to grow with the community. The Van Cortlandt Library has always been an important part of our community and I am excited for its expansion."

The larger location will enable even more families to enjoy their favorite books and library programs, said Klein, who allocated \$500,000 for the project.

"The purchase of the new Cannon Place property by the NYPL is a monumental step for Bronx residents and their quest for a new Van Cortlandt branch," he said.

The move can't come soon enough for branch manager Peter Pamphile.

Despite the small size, the branch has seen a 49 percent increase in program attendance in recent years, which Pamphile said has created conflicts

"Programs happen on the floor itself in the children's area, and that's an area meant for seating

where people read books," he said. "We had a program where someone was giving the history of beats and percussion of a drum, so we had to warn the whole branch ahead of time that it was going to be louder, and people were disturbed by it a bit."

The branch is very crowded, he said, especially after school since it is located near P.S. 95. But Pamphile said it isn't just used by children.

"It ranges from infants looking to take out their first book to seniors who want the new James Patterson novel," he said. "I can honestly say there is no primary user, we run the full gamut of ages."

Pamphile said the library system would be reaching out to residents for their input about what they want to see in the new library.

The two-family home originally on the property was demolished in 2008 to make way for a two-story supportive housing building.

A temporary certificate of occupancy was issued for a two-story, 10-unit facility in 2016.



Bronx YMCA

Bon Appétit Fundraiser to benefit the Annual Campaign

honoring

Gary Axelbank

Rosemary DeLuca

Demetris Giannoulis

Chairman & CEO, Spring Bank

Nalini Singh

Principal at Antonia Pantoja Preparatory Academy

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16th Annual Clesse Run September 9th

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

It's time to lace up your running shoes for a worthy cause.

The 16th annual Lt. Thomas Clesse 5k Memorial Run that remembers the events of September 11th 2001 and commemorates one of the 49th Precinct's 'Finest' takes place on Pelham Parkway on Saturday, September 9 at 9 a.m.

The proceeds from this year's event will go to Detective Miosotis Familia's family, said 49th Precinct

way honor fallen officers from September 11th and to remember Clesse, who embodied the idea of community policing.

Familia was assassinated as she sat in a mobile command unit in the 46th Precinct on Wednesday, July 5.

Thompson said that in past years, the event has also helped the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013.

Since he and three other people founded the race, Thompson said the

run in this race," said Thompson.

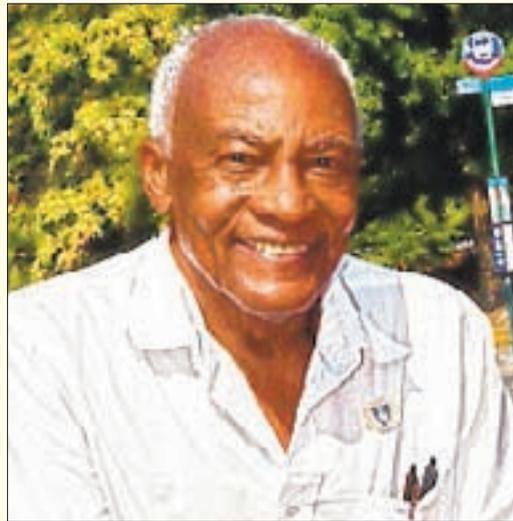
Thompson said that he was very grateful to the event's sponsor: Simone Development.

Joseph Kelleher, president of Simone Metro Properties at Hutchinson Metro Center, said that Simone Development supports the race because the 49th Precinct is the development's local community police force and they have done a fantastic job protecting and reaching out to the com-

It's one of those things that happened on our soil that we should never forget.

Joe Thompson

On remembering September 11, 2001 at the Clesse 5K run walk



Community Affairs police officer David Lepore.

Most years the charitable race supports the Patrolmen Benevolent Association's Widows and Children's Fund, said Joe Thompson, 49th Precinct Community Council president, but sometimes race organizers feel compelled to help others as well.

"In years past the proceeds have almost always gone to the widows and children's fund, but with (Familia's) ultimate sacrifice so fresh in our minds we decided it to be most fitting to donate to her family," said Lepore.

The event is typically an "amazing day where we get our community and police running together," said Lepore, adding it is a

precinct and its community affairs office has always been supportive of the effort.

"We pick a date that is close to September 11th," said Thompson, saying that the race "commemorates an atrocity that happened on our soil that we should never forget."

First, second and third place winners among men and women runners are honored with trophies.

Two sets of trophies are given out to men and women under and over 50, so there are plenty of chances to win, he said.

There will also be a children's race with medals awarded, he said.

"It helps to bring our community together, because all kinds of people

community.

"We just believe in the cause of supporting police officers in the line of duty that have given their lives for the sake of public service," said Kelleher.

He added that it is great feeling to race down Pelham Parkway without traffic.

According to a previously published Bronx Times Reporter story, Clesse passed away from cancer on July 27, 2002 after a 32-year NYPD career.

To sign up for the upcoming event, people can go to the 49th Precinct at 2122 Eastchester Road before the race starts the day of the event or they can call the community affairs office at (718) 918-

Bon Appetit Fundraiser set at Bronx YMCA

BY BOB GUILIANO

The Bronx YMCA is planning its Bon Appetit Fundraiser with four local honorees on Thursday, September 7, at its 2 Castle Hill Avenue location.

Offering a "selection of food and wine from some of the best restaurants in the Bronx and beyond," according to a flyer, the event will honor Gary Axelbank, Rosemary DeLuca, Demetris Giannoulis and Nalini Singh.

Tickets cost \$100 per person with the money going toward providing the Y's toddlers, children, teens, adults and senior citizens with "quality activities and services that keep our communities strong," Axelbank noted.

Axelbank hosts BronxTalk, a flagship talk show in the Bronx that debuted in October of 1994.

As a call-in talk show, BronxTalk gives Bronxites an opportunity to talk on the air with the borough's movers and shakers.

It has also presented political debates in some of the borough's most hotly contested campaigns.

BronxTalk also tackles issues including Bronx education, crime and policing, politics, health care, youth services, domestic violence, housing, economic development, arts and entertainment, and quality of life.

BronxTalk, produced by Yeila Lluberes, is broadcast live on Cablevision's channel 67 and Verizon Fios channel 33 at 9 p.m. Mondays.

DeLuca is a former Wildlife Conservation Society executive who was honored for her service to the institution and people of the Bronx during a retirement party on Wednesday, July 12, inside the Bronx Zoo's Schiff Family Great Hall.

DeLuca served as WCS's director of government rela-



'BronxTalk' host Gary Axelbank is one of this year's honorees. File Photo

tions for 16 years and previously worked as the New York Botanical Garden's community affairs manager for seven years.

Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and other elected officials declared the day as 'Rosemary DeLuca Day' in her honor.

Giannoulis is the founder, chairman and CEO of Spring Bank, which supports the growth of small businesses and startups in the Bronx through a partnership with the Business Outreach Center, a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)-certified small-business development organization, according to the website for Community Development Bankers Association at <http://cdbanks.org>.

In the summer of 2014, Spring Bank wrote a letter of credit to help the Business Outreach Center secure the lease for the Bronx Business

Incubator, a new space for entrepreneurs to conduct business, engage in workshops and network with peers, according to the website.

"A majority of small businesses get their first loans from community banks," said Giannoulis. "It's fun to meet people and hear them talk passionately about something that they're working on and to be able to be a part of it. That's the great thing about being a banker."

Nalini Singh is principal of Antonia Pantoja Preparatory Academy: A College Board School, 1980 Lafayette Avenue. No information was available from the school's website at www.appabx.org/home.

The Y requests that those interested in attending the gala to R.S.V.P. by Tuesday, September 5, by calling Deborah Adams at (718) 789-9736 Ext. 209, or emailing her at de-adams@ymcany.org.



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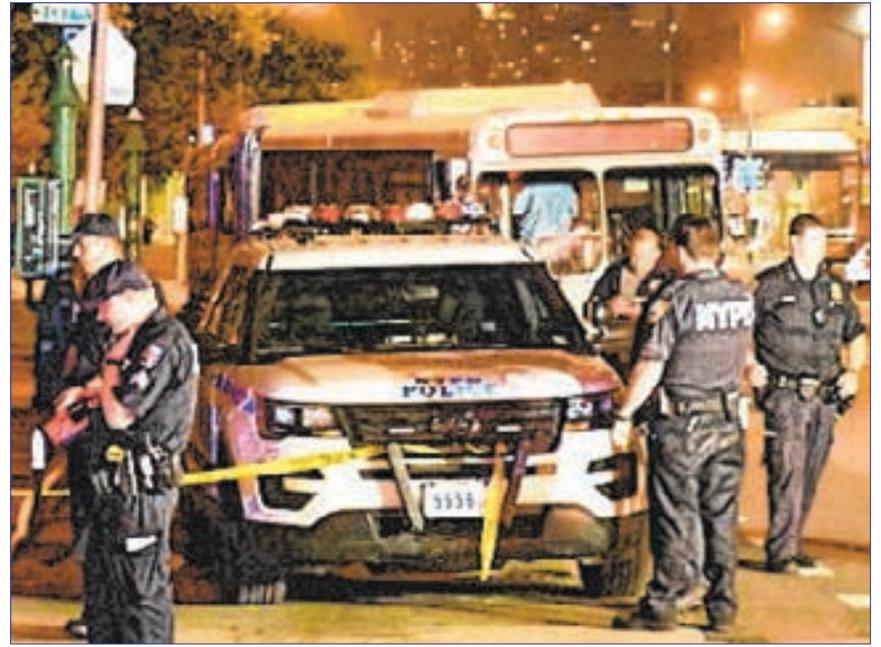
VEHICLE OVERTURNS ON PELHAM PARKWAY



Police responded to a call of an overturned vehicle on Saturday, August 19 at 5:50 a.m. at Pelham Parkway South and the entrance to the Bronx River Parkway South near the Bronx Zoo. The driver was taken to a local hospital for treatment. The incident remains under investigation.

Photo by Edwin Soto

BB GUN SHOOTING IN MOTT HAVEN



Police are investigating the BB gun shooting of a police officer and woman in Mott Haven. According to police, on Tuesday, August 15 at around 10:30 p.m. police officers and EMS workers were helping a 61-year-old woman who had been shot in her right hand with a BB at 300 E. 138th Street. Suddenly, the first responders came under fire from a BB gun. An officer was shot in the forearm by a BB and was treated at the scene. The woman was taken to Lincoln Hospital for treatment. No arrests have been made in this ongoing investigation. Anyone with information is asked to call Crime Stoppers at (800) 577-TIPS. All calls are kept strictly confidential.

(Above) Police searched for pellets that were fired at a police officer and a woman standing outside of the J.P. Mitchell Houses last Tuesday night.

Photo by Edwin Soto

TN Strong meets with 2800 “owner”, Fernandes

from Page 1

sitive juncture.

“The was an extensive give and take between us and Michael Fernandes,” said Kaufman. “People were airing every concern that they had, he was trying to answer them.”

At the end of the meeting, Kaufman said that TNS and those present suggested that they draft a memorandum of understanding for Fernandes to sign.

MOUs don’t have the force of law but could be used later in a legal proceeding if necessary.

“He will in a letter, hopefully, agree to what we expect to have in the building,” said Kaufman.

TNS co-chairman Bob Jaen said the stipulations, which are still being de-

veloped, include that the current renters in the building can stay, that there will be no homeless shelter or transient housing for addiction related services, and that a future use will be services for autistic children.

“We understand that the community is looking for answers, but at this time, we are in a negotiation-type atmosphere,” said Jaen.

At the meeting, Fernandes said he was working with two health-related entities, Advantage Care Physicians and Advocate Care Community Partners, but elected officials checked with both groups, and they have denied any affiliation to the building or to Steward Redevelopment.

In a joint statement,

Senator Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Michael Benedetto and Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj called on Fernandes to reveal his plans.

“It came to our attention that Michael Fernandes, the ‘owner’ of 2800 Bruckner (Boulevard), indicated that he would be opening social service offices with reimbursement coming through his partnership with ACP, a Medicaid service provider,” the statement read. “Since Medicaid is a state-run program, we immediately looked into his claims.”

A spokeswoman for Advocate Care Community Partners denied any involvement.

“We are not affiliated in any way with Mr. Fernandes, Steward Redevelopment (or) 2800 Bruckner

(Boulevard),” said Cindy Goff, an Emblem Health vice president on behalf of ACCP, explaining that Fernandes used the acronym at the meeting.

Alexandro Damiron, Advantage Care Physicians chief of staff, said any claims of their involvement are totally false.

“ACP has nothing to do with this property or anything with Michael Fernandes,” he stated.

The electeds asked: “so we ask again Mr. Fernandes -- what are you planning to do with 2800 Bruckner and why won’t you come before Community Board 10 with your real plans?”

Steward Redevelopment, is a known developer of supportive housing.

Fernandes, who introduced himself first to tenants as a co-owner of the building, said he is now the building’s sole owner in previously published Bronx Times interview.

Michael D’Alessio, a local developer, built 2800 Bruckner Boulevard.



Throggs Neck Strong coalition president Steven Kaufman said the leaders of the coalition and the renters had an extensive give and take with Michael Fernandes and are looking to create a memorandum of understanding with terms to which both they and Steward Redevelopment can agree.

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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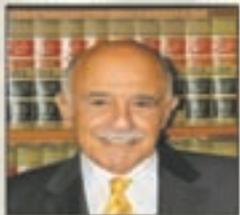
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