

**AG Schneiderman:
Taser death not
found criminal**

BY BOB GUILIANO
AND ROBERT WIRSING

Ariel Galarza's family plans to file a civil lawsuit following the release of a report that "no criminal culpability" was found in Galarza's death on November 2, 2016 after multiple Tasers by police.

Sanford Rubenstein, the attorney for the family, said on Wednesday, September 6, that although the report of Attorney General Eric Schneiderman's investigation, released Thursday, August 31, ruled out criminality by police, there are "serious issues involving whether there is civil liability here and we will be filing a civil lawsuit against the NYPD and the officer sometime this week."

The police officer, sergeant William Melrose of the 45th Precinct, had Tasered Galarza while responding to a 911 call of an emotionally disturbed man armed with a knife behaving violently at 1840 Mayflower Avenue last November.

Galarza, 49, had allegedly threatened Melrose with an intact glass bottle when officers entered his basement apartment inside the multi-family home.

The cause of death was ruled a homicide by the medical examiner, according to Julie Bolcer, NYC Office of Medical Examiner's public affairs director.

"The classification does not imply any statement about intent or culpability," Bolcer had said in April. "The evaluation of the legal implications of this classification is a function of the district attorney and the criminal justice system."

Schneiderman's Special Investigations and Prosecutions Unit reported that its investigation — led by Chief of the Special Investigations and Prosecutions Unit Alvin Bragg — found no criminal culpability in Galarza's death.

Continued on Page 4

**BRONX SUFFERS
UNFAIR SHARE**

**Gjonaj sues city over
homeless burden**

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

Northeast Bronx assemblyman and a candidate to replace Councilman James Vacca, Mark Gjonaj, has filed a lawsuit alleging the Bronx is getting more than its fair share of homeless shelters.

The lawsuit, filed August 29 in Bronx County Court through Manhattan-based attorneys Dunnington, Bartholomew & Miller LLP, names the city of New York as defendant and Gjonaj and 13 other Bronx residents as plaintiffs.

"This does not seek to reduce or stop current supportive housing options," Gjonaj stated of the complaint. "It seeks to ensure that each borough in the city pitches in to do its fair share to aid the neediest among us."

Since 1989, the city charter's Fair Share provision requires the issuance of annual 'beds to population' index to assess the impact of city facilities on communities to ensure equitable distribution of

Continued on Page 4

**Capital One Bank closing
two branches in November**

BY BOB GUILIANO

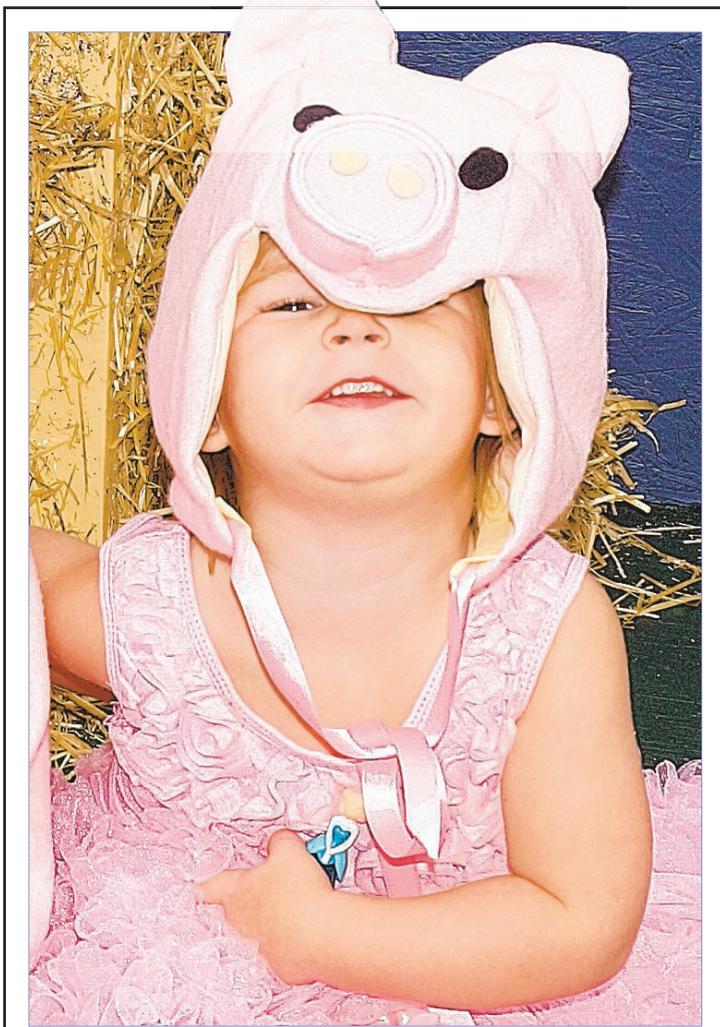
The imminent closing of two Capital One Bank branches on Friday, November 17, at Throggs Neck and Westchester Square, will re-route customers to the Pelham Bay branch.

"It's a shame but it goes to show you the sign of the times," said Bob Jaen, president, Throggs Neck Merchants Association. "Everybody says the economy

is doing so well and even though I believe it's coming back on an upswing, some of the big companies are starting to feel the heat."

When the branches at 3780 East Tremont Avenue and 35 Westchester Square close, the branch at 3049 Buhre Avenue in Pelham Bay will be servicing the three neighborhoods, according to Amanda Landers, spokeswoman for Capital One Corporate Com-

Continued on Page 14



Edgewater Park Baby Parade

Celebrating 101 years, the Edgewater Park Labor Day Weekend Festivities began with the time honored Baby Parade on Saturday, September 2. Tara Butler dressed up as one of the Three Little Pigs for an award-winning float.

Photo by Laura Stone

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: 13th CD Q&A

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

The Bronx Times Reporter sent six questions to each of the candidates running in the 13th City Council District Democratic Primary on Tuesday, September 12.

In an effort to provide voters with more information to make better-informed decisions, questions and answers from the five candidates running can be found in this article.

On the ballot are John Doyle, Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, Victor Ortiz, Egidio Sementilli, and Marjorie Velazquez.

BTR: *Some community leaders in the 13th Council District recently disagreed with Councilman James Vacca's stance on two important matters: the narrowing of the roadway on part of East Tremont Avenue and the size of the new wing of P.S. 14.*

Vacca pushed the plans through despite community opposition. As a council member, how would you handle issues where there was no clear consensus?

Doyle: I testified against the road diet proposal when it came before Community Board 10 in May 2015. However my concern was centered on the process. We should have allowed for residents to give their suggestions for improvements first, before narrowing the roadway.

On the P.S. 14 issue, I initiated a Freedom of Information Request with the Waterbury LaSalle Community Association. I plan on hosting open town hall meetings in every community every year. This promotes accountability and information being shared with everyone.
Continued on Page 10



Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj
Photo by Walter Pofeldt



John Doyle Courtesy of J. Doyle



Marjorie Velazquez

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: 18th CD Q&A

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

The Bronx Times Reporter sent questions to each of the candidates running in the 18th Council District Democratic Primary on Tuesday, September 12.

In an effort to provide voters with more information to make better-informed decisions, questions and answers from the five candidates running can be found in this article.

On the ballot are Michael Beltzer, Ruben Diaz Sr., Amanda Farias, Elvin Garcia and William Moore.

BTR: *Councilwoman Annabel Palma is funding the creation of a Business Improvement District in Castle Hill. Will you continue her efforts to support it and do you see any other business areas that could benefit from a BID?*

Beltzer: As a former merchant organizer that worked on Castle Hill Avenue, it is surprising that the merchants would agree to a BID before the merchants association is fully functioning.

I would like to see at least five years of continuous merchant association business before a BID is formed in the district.

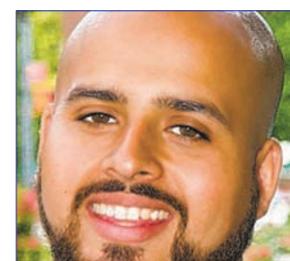
Diaz Sr.: I am an enthusiastic supporter of Business Improvement Districts. I have seen the results in my district and elsewhere in the borough.

They are a win-win situation, and I am happy to support them wherever they may be forming.

Farias: There is a BID along Westchester Avenue that could be expanded, and I would also put efforts towards creating a BID along
Continued on Page 12



State Senator Ruben Diaz Sr.
Courtesy of Ruben Diaz Sr.



Michael Beltzer
Courtesy Michael Beltzer



Amanda Farias
Courtesy of Amanda Farias

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AG Schneiderman: Taser death not found criminal

from Page 1

According to the report, on November 2, 2016, 45th Precinct police officers responded to a 911 call from another resident of Galarza's building, who said that Galarza had been brandishing a knife and screaming.

When the police officers arrived, they found Galarza in his basement apartment holding a 12-ounce glass bottle.

When ordered to lie down on the floor, Galarza stood up and lifted the bottle in the air, within eight feet of sergeant Melrose.

When Galarza ignored orders to drop the bottle, Melrose deployed a Taser and delivered a five-second electric charge.

Galarza continued to struggle with the police officers as they attempted to handcuff him, reports state.

Melrose activated the Taser two more times for five seconds each, before the officers were able to restrain Galarza.

After he was handcuffed, Galarza lost consciousness and his heart stopped beating.

EMS personnel arrived within minutes and were able to restore a heartbeat. However, once at the hospital, emergency room physicians were unable to maintain a normal heart rhythm and Galarza was pronounced deceased.

"There are key is-



Attorney General Eric Schneiderman's Office recently completed its comprehensive investigation into the police involved homicide of Pelham Bay resident Ariel Galarza.

Photo courtesy of Facebook

sues here," said Rubenstein. "One is the fact he was Tasered twice after he dropped the bottle and secondly, there were three Tasers within one minute — all which violate the guidelines in the (NYPD Patrol Guide)."

Rubenstein said that Galarza's family "looks forward to a jury made up of citizens from the Bronx making a determination with regard to the issue of civil liability and damages. A jury will decide the damages this family is entitled to after we determine the issue of liability."

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner conducted an autopsy, and SIPU also retained an independent forensic pathologist to conduct a separate autopsy, according to the report.

OCME and the independent expert separately reached similar conclusions that Galarza died of cardiac arrest resulting from a combination of a pre-existing heart condition, drug intoxication, and obesity, combined with the effects of physical exertion, restraint, and the use of the Taser.

The drugs included cocaine and "bath salts," classified by the Drug Enforcement Administration as n-ethylpentylone, a type of synthetic cathinone, which are cheap substitutes for methamphetamine and cocaine.

In light of all the evidence — including that Galarza was threatening the police officers with a glass bottle, and that a police officer may justifiably use reasonable force in order to protect himself against the imminent use of unlawful force against himself or another person, or to effect an arrest — SIPU found that criminal charges against the responding police officers were not warranted.

"We send our deepest condolences to the family of Mr. Galarza, whose death was a tragedy," said Schneiderman. "We remain committed to following the facts and providing exhaustive and transparent accounting of all cases we investigate under the executive order."

Bronx suffers unfair share; Gjonaj sues city over homeless burden

from Page 1

supportive housing city-wide.

The lawsuit alleges the city has failed to issue that index since 2003.

The suit also alleges the Bronx has a significantly higher number of shelter beds than other boroughs — approximately 830 beds per 100,000 people.

That number is more than double the number in Queens and almost double what Brooklyn has, the lawsuit states.

Gjonaj is asking the city to issue the mandated annual index so that the fair share criteria can be known when considering any future applications for new or expanded residential facilities.

"As someone who has fought to protect and create affordable housing options for the most vulnerable New Yorkers, I know firsthand the severity of the problem that we face as a city," Gjonaj added. "It is the responsibility of each borough to be part of the solution."

New York City, under Mayor de Blasio, has recently launched a new initiative to close so-called 'cluster sites,' where the city rents apartments in existing buildings to house the homeless, and replace them with permanent shelters citywide.

Under that new initiative, the city plans to build shelters in areas where large homeless populations already live.

Many Bronx leaders



(Above) Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj has filed a lawsuit against the city along with a dozen other Bronx residents alleging the borough gets an unfair share of homeless shelters. File photo

fear the borough will continue to get a larger number of homeless than other boroughs.

The other plaintiffs in the lawsuit are Clarisa Alayeto, Felix Aponte, Bernard Smith, Wilbert Lawton, Mohammed Mardah, Sheila Sanchez, Sara Nunez-Mejia, Jean Hill, Rafael Barbosa, Yasmin Cruz, Gerardina Colon, Janice Walcott and Robert Hall.

Hill is the Land Use, Zoning and Housing Committee chair for Community Board 7, but stressed she joined the lawsuit as a private individual.

She cited the recent proposal by Sam's Floor Coverings at 3041 Webster Avenue to add a third level to the two-floor commercial building to create a 200-bed homeless shelter just feet away from P.S. 20. That proposal is still being considered by the city.

"There are a lot of homeless shelters planned in places that are inappropriate," she said as the reason for joining the lawsuit.

The NYC Law Department is reviewing the complaint, according to a department spokesman.



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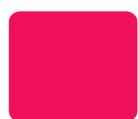
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3 council seats wide open; some incumbents challenged

BY BOB GUILIANO

Most Bronx Council members are facing Democratic challengers to represent the party on primary day, Tuesday, September 12, with the exception of term-limited council members.

The primary races to replace term-limited James Vacca and Annabel Palma are covered extensively on page 5.

Melissa Mark-Viverito, who represents the 8th Council District which encompasses El Barrio/East Harlem, Mott Haven, Highbridge, Concourse, Longwood, and Port Morris, is also term limited. Her seat is up for grabs as well.

Mark-Viverito, born in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, worked for over a decade in local activism, nonprofit organizations and grassroots labor organizing before being elected to the City Council in 2005. She was unanimously elected to serve as NYC Council Speaker in January 2014.

Democratic candidates vying for her seat are Diana Ayala, Tamika Mapp, Assembly-



Andy King Courtesy of NYC Council website

man Robert Rodriguez, and Israel Martinez.

Council District 12 incumbent Andy King, first elected in November 2012 by a landslide of 80 percent, was re-elected by a majority to his first full four-year term in November 2013.

The 12th CD includes Wakefield, Olinville, Edenswald, Eastchester, Williams-



Fernando Cabrera
Photo courtesy of NYC Council website

bridge, Baychester, and Co-op City.

King faces challenges from Pamela Hamilton-Johnson, and Karrée-Lyn Gordon.

Council District 14 incumbent Fernando Cabrera has served since January 2010 in positions including chairman of the Juvenile Justice Committee and co-chairman of the Gun Violence Task Force.

Cabrera is a member of the



Rafael Salamanca Jr.
Photo courtesy of NYC Council website

Black, Latino & Asian Caucus and is an advocate for tenants, youth and seniors.

The 14th CD includes Morris Heights, University Heights, Fordham, and Kingsbridge.

Cabrera faces challenges from Randy Abreu and Felix Perdomo.

Council District 17 incumbent Rafael Salamanca Jr.,

the son of first-generation Puerto Rican immigrants, grew up in the Bronx valuing hard work and giving back to the community.

Beginning his career working in healthcare to expand access for low-income and working families, Salamanca then served as district manager for Community Board 2.

He also previously served as president of the 41st Precinct Council, working closely with the NYPD and other local leaders to help improve public safety in the community.

Salamanca faces a challenge from Helen Foreman-Hines.

The 17th CD includes Concourse Village, Crotona Park East, East Tremont, Hunts Point, Longwood, Melrose, Morrisania, Port Morris, West Farms, North Brother Island, and South Brother Island.

Not facing challengers as they enter their final four-year term are: Andrew Cohen, 11th CD; Ritchie Torres, 15th CD; and Vanessa Gibson, 16th CD.

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Businesses cited for illegal alcohol sales to minors, drugs and weapons

BY BOB GUILIANO

Youths in the NYPD Explorers program working undercover with police stung nine out of 17 businesses, with citations including sales of alcohol to minors, during a six-month period. Eight businesses were commended for following the law.

While three businesses were cited over alleged sales of alcohol to minors, two involved marijuana arrests, one involved a gun, narcotics and untaxed cigarettes, one involved consumption of alcohol in the store, one did not have legal drinking age signs posted, and one involved violation of a business law.

This compliance check of businesses conducted from January through July of 2017 was co-sponsored by Forward South Bronx Coalition and the 41st Precinct, according to Cedric McClester, project coordinator and founder/chairman emeritus of FSBC.

"In an area where underage drinking is the number one substance-abuse issue, it is critically important that business establishments that sell alcohol, avoid selling to underage individuals," McClester said.

FSBC operates out of Longwood and Hunts Point, according to McClester.

2017 is the second year that FSBC received federal funding and gave \$20,000 to the 41st Precinct to help cover the cost of the operation.

"We are grateful that FSBC provided us with the financial wherewithal to conduct increased compliance checks," said captain Louis DeCeglie, commander of the 41st Precinct.

These businesses were commended for complying with the law and passing their compliance checks:

- El Exito, 960 East 165th Street.
- Intervale Liquor, 944A Intervale Avenue.
- El Porton Bar, 576 Southern Boulevard.
- El Valle Restaurant, 1008 Westchester Avenue.
- El Polvorin Restaurant, 807 Hunts Point Avenue.
- Family Deli Grocery, 19



Best Price Liquor, 995 Westchester Avenue, was among nine businesses cited for alleged alcohol sales to a minor during a compliance check done from January through July of 2017 sponsored by the 41st Precinct and Forward South Bronx Alliance. Community News Group/Bob Guilliano

- ZE Food, Inc., 551 Southern Boulevard
- A&G Deli, 976 Prospect Avenue

These three businesses were cited for allegedly selling alcohol to a minor:

- South Bronx Liquor, 866 Prospect Avenue.
 - Best Price Liquor, 995 Westchester Avenue.
 - Hunts Point Gourmet, Inc., 770 Hunts Point Avenue.
- Clerks at Best Price Liquor

IDs before selling alcohol, and had no comment about the alleged citation.

Workers at South Bronx Liquor and Hunts Point Gourmet had no comment about the alleged citations.

Sammy's Deli and Grocery Corp., 1126 Westchester Avenue was cited for not clearly posting a '21 and older' poster.

Arrests were made over alleged possession of marijuana

• Family Deli Grocery, 1019 Simpson Street.

• Smooth Life Gourmet Deli, 1016 Westchester Avenue.

El Morro Grocery, 1048 Westchester Avenue, faced charges over allegedly having narcotics and a gun on premises, and for selling untaxed cigarettes.

Lucky Brothers Deli, 706 Faile Street, was cited for someone allegedly consum-

And Big A Hookah, 703 Hunts Point Avenue, was cited for an alleged business law violation.

The penalties for a licensee selling alcohol to a minor ages 18 to 21 include being charged with a class 2 misdemeanor, resulting in a possible 30-day maximum sentence and a small fine.

Selling to a minor under 18 is a Class 1 misdemeanor, resulting in a possible year in



(l-r) Elizabeth and Thomas Chapman and Councilman Cabrera hold a copy of the new street sign.
Photo by Silvio Pacifico

Street renamed for 'Al' Chapman, housing advocate

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

A Bronx street now bears the name of Francis 'Al' Chapman, the former chair of the board of directors at the Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association.

Members of the KHNIA were joined by Senator Gustavo Rivera and Councilman Fernando Cabrera on Monday, August 28 to name the intersection of University Avenue and West 197th Street in Kingsbridge Heights to honor the longtime community activist.

The busy location will now be known as Francis 'Al' Chapman Way.

"Our community continues to benefit from Al's devotion and commitment," said Cabrera. "I am proud to have sponsored the NYC Council legislation that honors Al with this street co-naming."

Rivera described Chapman, who passed away in March, as a courageous community leader who dedicated more than 30 years of his life to helping his neighbors.

"There were many individuals who were there during the tough times, and in the toughest of times in-

stead of leaving they took it upon themselves to organize their communities... to somewhere other people would want to move to," Rivera said during a brief memorial last month.

Chapman became a vocal opponent of major capital improvement rent increases, or MCIs, which caused rents to spike in the 1980s.

Under previous laws landlords could bill tenants for capital improvements over a five-year period. However there was little oversight to make sure the work was actually done and cost what the landlord charged for it.

Longtime Northwest Bronx Clergy Coalition board member Margaret Groark said Chapman's rallying of community organizations citywide in opposition to the odious increases eventually led the state legislature to pass legislation extending the calculation period and effectively slashing future capital rent increases significantly.

"I remember we once planned a meeting with Division of Housing and Community Renewal that Al chaired, where we challenged the agency to look

more carefully at the (MCI) applications and only approve them if they were legitimate," Groark recalled.

Although they have been significantly mitigated, the MCI charges still exist to burden tenants, Groark said.

"If Al was alive today he would say there is a need for serious MCI reform," she added.

KHNIA president Elizabeth Thompson said Chapman's work was vital to the organization's work on behalf of residents for many years, and upon his death, members petitioned Cabrera to name a street in his honor.

"We felt he needed to be honored. He was very good with housing," she said. Tenants don't know their rights, and a lot of them are scared to say anything against the landlord. We still need more education in that area."

Thompson said the association is looking for more members to help keep the area moving in the right direction.

Area residents looking to get involved are asked to call (718) 618-7550 or email to kingsbridges2805@gmail.com.

Father of son killed in MP shooting has questions

BY ARTHUR CUSANO

The father of a man killed in a dispute last month at a Morris Park home said he is still searching for answers after his son's assailant received a light sentence.

Michael Mendoza, 21, was killed on the morning of Friday, August 11, by 26-year-old Joseph Matos at Matos' home at 1651 Tomlinson Avenue.

Matos shot Mendoza through an apartment window while Mendoza was standing on his porch.

Mendoza, who was joined by three other people, was holding a shotgun, which he discharged toward Matos, according to police.

Mendoza was transported to Jacobi Medical Center where he was later pronounced dead. The shooting was deemed to be in self-defense by investigators

Matos, a familiar face to local police, with a prior drug offense conviction, was found with drugs in the apartment and was initially charged with a slew of weapon and drug-related counts.

However despite the litany of charges, Matos pleaded guilty to a single charge on Wednesday, August 30: fourth-degree criminal possession of marijuana,

a misdemeanor.

He was also granted a conditional discharge that will allow him to avoid jail time as long as he stays out of trouble for the next twelve months.

"Matos was charged with the weapons charges at his arraignment, but when no gun or other ballistic evidence was recovered...we didn't have evidence to proceed with the homicide," said D.A. office spokeswoman Patricia O'Shaughnessy.

Miguel Mendoza, Michael's father, said he still has unanswered questions about the shooting that took his son's life and is asking District Attorney Darcel Clarke to review the case.

Among them is how the shooting could be deemed self-defense by investigators if the weapon Matos used was never recovered.

"The only story they have is from the people who don't want to go to jail," Mendoza said. "My son can't speak for himself and they didn't bother to look at the autopsy report."

While he attended Matos's criminal court proceedings, Mendoza said he was not allowed to address the judge and requests to see his son's autopsy have not been met.

Mendoza wants to know what angle the bullet entered his son's body, and how many gunshot wounds he suffered.

Investigators also mentioned the possibility Mendoza was killed by friendly fire, his father said.

"Wouldn't the autopsy be a main part of an investigation? Mendoza said. "Isn't that the only voice the deceased have?"

O'Shaughnessy said it often takes months for an autopsy to be released, but that it would eventually be available through the medical examiner's office.

Mendoza said he was also frustrated by the D.A. office's protection of Matos, the defendant, even though he engaged in the same kind of illegal drug activity his son was alleged to be involved in.

"The assistant district attorney said Matos is a drug dealer who sells drugs right (from) that same porch," Mendoza said. "If Matos were a police officer the scrutiny he would have faced would be incredible, but as a drug dealer the courtesy extended to him, the defendant, is simply unbelievable."



The father of a man killed in a gunfight at a Morris Park home last month is seeking answers after the conviction of the alleged shooter.
Arthur cusano

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: 13th CD Q&A

From page 2

we need to act on big issues, these meetings will provide the forum to have those needed discussions so we can arrive at a consensus.

Gjonaj: When there is no clear consensus among different parties, I believe it is important that we first listen to the community, and then bring together all parties to find where we agree and work together for solutions.

As council member, I would have met with the community board and brought in DOT officials to look at all sides of the issue and come up with a compromise.

In regards to P.S. 14, we must take into account whether the surrounding infrastructure can support new construction; otherwise any improvements will be a detriment to the community.

The community board voiced its concerns, but the decision was made without taking their input or the needs of the surrounding infrastructure into consideration.

Ortiz: I am against any proposed 'road diet' construction in the community. It prevents first responders from easier access to the community. Furthermore it creates a nightmare for commuters in the neighborhood. I would stop all funding for such activities.

Sementilli: I have opposed the 'road-diet' at the public hearings for the reason that it would impede traffic flow.

I would have handled it with complete public review and a round table with DOT to resolve the liability and public safety issue in creating a better result.

I agree that we need more schools in our community. P.S. 14 was a planned development without prior discussion except for the public hearing after the plans were drawn.

The park separating the private homes should have been left alone to create a natural barrier that had existed there for years.

Velazquez: I believe the city should have had further dialogue with the community on their updated plans

before just starting the project.

On the P.S. 14 annex, I believe our children need modern school buildings with the necessary classroom and extracurricular space, and shouldn't be forced into portable trailers in a school yard.

Balancing the varying concerns of residents requires listening and engaging with all sides through multiple meetings and conversations, trying to find consensus.

BTR: Do you agree with Mayor de Blasio's decision to create a panel to review possible 'symbols of hate' within a 90-days? Should the Christopher Columbus statue in Columbus Circle be on the table for review?

Doyle: I have no issue with a panel being set up to review these things but there are far more immediate needs in this city that need to be addressed.

Gjonaj: Mayor de Blasio is right to root out symbols of hate. However, I am afraid of this turning into a witch hunt. How will we create a score card for the accomplishments of historical figures? I do not think this is the right way to help our children understand the past. I believe we should be choosing education over destruction.

As an historical figure who discovered our great country, Christopher Columbus is important to American history and is a profound figure in Italian cultural heritage.

While many could have academic discussions on the explorer's record, the idea that we should rip down his iconic monument is irrational.

In 1892 President Benjamin Harrison officially recognized Columbus Day on its 400th anniversary, encouraging Americans to celebrate the diversity of America. We should continue that sentiment today.

Sementilli: Mayor de Blasio is creating a panel of hate and separation to enhance division among our communities.

The Columbus statue represents pride and it must stay. One must remember that the statue was erected

in 1892 after the largest lynching in America, of Italian citizens in New Orleans (1891).

Velazquez: I am not in favor of removing the Columbus Statue in Columbus Circle. Whether we review this issue through the mayor's new panel or not, we need to consider the context.

BTR: Recently, some developers, including Stagg Group, have been constructing apartment buildings they claim will be market rent, then turn them into homeless shelters.

What do you think of the city's policy of leasing new buildings to house homeless people?

Doyle: I joined Councilman Andy King for a protest outside of Stagg's development on White Plains Road recently. These 'bait and switch' tactics absolutely erode any sort of trust the community hopes to develop during the land-use process.

Gjonaj: The community must come first. Developers must present their plans, in their entirety, at public meetings, which will be documented so that they can be held accountable.

Additionally, community members need to be made aware of any building permits that are applied for before construction begins.

I will be looking into drafting legislation that will make it a requirement to notify community boards the moment a permit is applied for.

Ortiz: I believe that the Bronx has its share of homeless shelters. We do not need to subsidize anymore of our tax dollars to this cause.

However I would only reserve my vote for shelters that help veterans in our district. I believe that the veterans are the most underprivileged people in our society.

Sementilli: Recently, I stood with Councilman Andy King in a protest in front of a Stagg Project turned into supportive housing after telling the public it was built for market rate apartments on White Plains Road.

Velazquez: This kind of 'bait and switch' is not fair

to our community. The process exists to give residents a voice in what happens in their community through our community boards.

BTR: It is documented that the Bronx plays host to more supportive housing than other parts of the city. Do you think this is fair?

Doyle: Of course it isn't and unfortunately legislation in Albany to address this has languished for years.

I have been supportive of legislation to require notification before these facilities are built so we can have a honest discussion about which neighborhoods are already bearing their fair share.

Gjonaj: Just last week I filed a lawsuit that claims New York City is unduly burdening the Bronx with a disproportionate level of supportive housing facilities.

Specifically, I believe the city is in violation of its charter's 'fair share' provision which requires the issuance of annual 'beds to population' index to assess the impact of city facilities on individual communities to ensure equitable distribution of supportive housing options throughout the city.

This inequity in supportive housing has undoubtedly placed a disproportionate strain on the Bronx's housing supply, policing, transportation, healthcare and education system.

Ortiz: I support supportive housing for those who are disabled in our community. I believe that supportive housing has been overdeveloped in this district. I do not think it is fair to spend \$1.7 billion dollars on this issue. The tax payers of New York City are overwhelmed with this issue. I would provide legislation to oversee any new projects in the 13th district to prevent any more



Egidio Joseph Sementilli



Victor Ortiz

supportive housing.

Sementilli: The politicians support developers and have created a friendly environment to build and that is why you have so many in the Bronx.

We need to build affordable market rate apartments that working families can afford instead of Manhattan-style prices

Mayor de Blasio plans to build 90 homeless shelters. It's 'pay back' to the developers and the council must stop him.

Velazquez: I do not believe it is fair that the Bronx has more supportive housing than other parts of the city, and other boroughs should certainly take on their fair share of the supportive housing in the city. But my first and foremost priority is our district 13, where I do not want to see any more homeless or supportive housing units built.

BTR: Please provide a list of any endorsements.

Doyle: I have been endorsed by the NY Daily News, the Empire State Humane Voters, the Small Business Congress and Bronx Progressives (formerly 'Bronx for Bernie' (Sanders)).

Gjonaj: Labor Unions: 32BJ, Steamfitters Local 638. CSA, CSEA, Carpenters Union, 1199SEIU, PBA, UFT, UFOA, UFA, HTC, TWU Local 100.

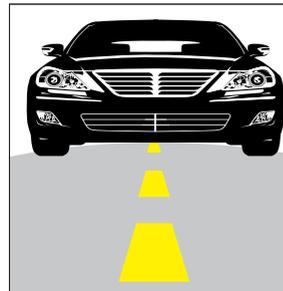
Elected officials: Sena-

tor Jeff Klein, Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. Bronx Democratic Party Chairman and Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson, Senator Jamaal Bailey, Councilwoman Annabel Palma, Congressman Joe Crowley, Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, Councilman Andrew Cohen, Assemblyman Victor Pichardo, Councilman Rafael Salamanca, Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano, Congressman Adriano Espaillat, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie.

Sementilli: None.

Ortiz: I don't want any endorsements from special interests or any big names.

Velazquez: Council members James Vacca and Ritchie Torres, The New York Times, DC 37, Communication Workers of America District 1, Teamsters Joint Council 16, PSC CUNY, The New York State Nurses Association, Uniformed Sanitationman's Association Local 831, New York League of Conservation Voters, Stonewall Democratic Club, Planned Parenthood NYC Votes, TenantsPAC, Working Families Party, Women's Equality Party, Citizen's Union, National Association of Social Workers NYC Chapter, NYC Chapter National Organization for Women, SSEU 371, Local 802 AFM.



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Parks breaks ground on Little Claremont Park

BY BOB GUILIANO

Officials broke ground on a \$3.3 million reconstruction project at Little Claremont Park in Claremont on Tuesday, August 29.

Under the Community Parks Initiative, the NYC Parks Department will begin a total transformation of the park, including new play equipment for ages five to 12, a spray shower, community garden, synthetic turf field, and an outdoor classroom/performance area, according to a news release.

NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver joined Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson, Community Board district manager John Dudley, and students and teachers from P.S. 42 to break ground on a total reconstruction of Little Claremont Park. The project is part of the Community Parks Initiative.

The project, with funding provided by the mayor's office, is anticipated to be completed by the spring of 2018.

CPI is a multi-faceted program launched in 2014 to invest in under-resourced public parks located in New York City's densely populated and growing neighborhoods with higher-than-average concentrations of poverty, according to the release.



Bronx Parks Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa (2nd from l), Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson (3rd from l), NYC Parks Commissioner Silver (c), P.S. 42 students and faculty broke ground.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

CPI is investing \$318 million through 2019 to make renovations on more than 60 community parks that have not undergone significant improvements in decades.

"Today is the start of a huge transformation for Little Claremont Park," Silver said. "As of next spring, the students of P.S. 42 and all Claremont families will have a better-than-new park."

Claremont Community Park, bounded by Claremont Parkway between Park and Washington Avenues, has been under the wing of P.S. 42 since 1992.

The school, which has been instrumental in the creation of this green space, was established in 1906.

This property became a GreenThumb Garden in May 1994.

GreenThumb is a Parks initiative that facilitates the transformation of vacant city lots into community gardens.

In 1998, former Mayor Rudy Giuliani's office approved the permanent jurisdiction and management of this garden by Parks.

The NYC Department of City-wide Administrative Services then assigned the property to Parks on

July 12, 1999.

The neighborhood of Claremont derives its name from a mansion that once stood in what is now Claremont Park, according to the website: <https://www.nycgov-parks.org/parks/little-claremont-park/history>.

The park was originally part of the old Morris family estate, established in 1679.

Aware of encroaching suburban development with the arrival of the New York and Harlem River Railroad, Gouverneur Morris II (1813-1888) auctioned off much of his land in 1848.

Newlyweds Elliott Zborowski de Montsaulain and Anna Bathgate acquired a parcel in the northern portion of the former Morris property soon after.

Anna had grown up on the neighboring Bathgate estate, which now constitutes Crotona Park.

In 1859, the couple built Claremont Mansion, renowned for its white marble sculptural decor, and developed the extensive grounds with terraced lawns that descended to the Mill Brook (now Webster Avenue).

There is also a Claremont Playground in Manhattan's Riverside Park.

Businesses cited for illegal alcohol sales to minors, drugs and weapons

From page 9

jail and a \$1,000 fine, according to Adam Vukovic, a legal writer with LegalMatch.

The penalty for the clerk who actually sells the alcohol is liable for all the same penalties as the licensee.

The clerk may also have his or her driver's license suspended for 30 days to a year, according to Vukovic.

More details on the penalties the offenders, if found guilty, would face was not available before press time.

The police officers work with youths participating in the Law Enforcement Explorers program, that provides young men and women with an introduction to

a career in law enforcement or a related field in the criminal justice system, according to the NYPD website.

"This is a perfect example of a community-based organization working in conjunction with the local precinct to abate law violations, which can negatively impact youth," said Richard P. Sherman, FSBC chairman.

Just elected chairman in June, Sherman said the coalition includes elected officials, representatives, the district attorney and national guard, who are all working together to help alleviate the opioid crisis and underage drinking.



South Bronx Liquor, 866 Prospect Avenue, was among nine businesses cited for alleged alcohol sales to a minor during a compliance check done from January through July of 2017 sponsored by the 41st Precinct and Forward South Bronx Alliance. Community News Group/Bob Guiliano

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: 13th CD Q&A

From page 2

id- ing a push to bring a supermarket to the shopping center near Lafayette.

I would continue the work of Councilwoman Palma to fund and create the BID in Castle Hill as well.

Garcia: A BID in Castle Hill is a step in the right direction but we also need to support small business and create other business improvement districts in the other main corridors of the district along White Plains Road, Westchester Avenue, and Soundview Avenue.

Moore: I will continue any and all funding given to the newly created BID in Castle Hill.

In addition to that, I will be very supportive to the formation of more BIDs throughout various commercial strips in District 18.

My philosophy is that a strong and robust BID will provide the necessary backbone to strengthen small businesses and create a more attractive character of business unity in the district.

BTR: *Parkchester is a large housing development in the 18th CD. Condo owners recently saw a significant common charge increase for roof repairs. What kind of assistance do you propose for Parkchester to help them absorb future unexpected increases?*

Beltzer: Being that Parkchester is a private complex, there is little that can be done by municipal government to help.

I believe leadership and residents need to demand Parkchester North and South do a total assessment of needs so a capital borrowing plan can be proposed and residents can approve and plan accordingly.

Diaz Sr.: I was very involved in that issue, and was lead complainant in a lawsuit involving the increase. We managed to work out extending coop owner payments for the maintenance increase – which was a temporary

one – for those owners who were able to show financial need.

I will always seek to work with management to verify the need for any maintenance increase – temporary or otherwise – and see whatever financial relief formula can be worked out for those who may need it.

Farias: I would create oversight over the condos in the district to ensure the money paid in maintenance fees is being used properly, and a reasonable amount is being charged for the repairs.

Garcia: Parkchester residents should receive tax abatements for necessary improvements like roof repairs.

We can help secure this tax support by supporting smarter, more energy efficient improvements.

It's the right thing to do and will lower costs all around for residents.

Moore: I would seek grant assistance from the NYC Housing and Preservation and Development to shelter Parkchester residents from unexpected maintenance increases.

I would also work with the state legislative members to get assistance from the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal department.

Additionally, I would also earmark funds from my discretionary budget to offset or absorb future unexpected increases to Parkchester residents.

BTR: *York Studios recently built a new movie studio facility in Soundview? What other industries would you like to see set up shop in the district?*

Beltzer: Light manufacturing such as 3-D printing and more maritime industry.

Diaz Sr.: Anything that is environmentally sound and brings local jobs, jobs, jobs, including training programs.

Farias: I support all industries that provide good paying jobs with benefits

so employees can actually support a family.

I would encourage more manufacturing and industries that deal with green energy and sustainability, including the manufacturing of solar panels.

I would like to see more incentives for entrepreneurs to open up businesses in the Bronx. This includes establishing a 100% tax break for a new business' first three years, which tend to be the most tumultuous.

Garcia: I want to be an advocate to small businesses in the district. Small businesses help prevent gentrification and provide good jobs to local residents. I hope to increase the number of small minority owned businesses in the district that are owned, operated, and staffed by people already living in the community.

Moore: I would like my district to be home to more technological and green energy industries. We need wind and solar industries in my district.

We need a factory in this district to tap into these industries to create permanent jobs for technicians skilled in this endeavor.

The Bronx is a hands-on borough and I am confident my district residents are ready to make a median income of over \$75,000 a year.

BTR: *What plans do you have to address the district's older housing stock?*

Beltzer: I will work with the community to pass a comprehensive community based plan that will include protecting the affordability of existing housing stock, like I have with Park Lane, a Mitchell Lama complex.

I believe we can also get capital monies from new development to address capital needs in the older housing stock.

Diaz Sr.: I have been a leading advocate for affordable housing, which can also include renovation to many existing properties

in the district and across the borough and city.

Farias: With fewer dollars coming from the federal government to help with funding of NYCHA, and buildings falling into disrepair, we need to push the city to allocate money from the budget towards the maintenance of our housing stock.

We need to also create a fund that goes towards maintaining and upgrading our older housing stock.

I would offer up increasing the hotel tax fractionally to help jumpstart this fund with a dedicated funding stream.

Garcia: The district's housing, especially in NYCHA, requires immediate improvements.

I plan to use a portion of my discretionary funds to clear the backlog of NYCHA repairs and work with HPD to find new revenue sources to fund ongoing improvements to housing.

Moore: I will seek tax abatements to redevelop all older housing stock in my district.

I will also work with the city's Department of City Planning, Department of Buildings and Community Board 9 to bring all aging housing stock up to code and equip them with smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

BTR: *It is documented that the Bronx plays host to more supportive housing than other parts of the city. Do you think this is fair? If not, what would you do to address this issue?*

Michael Beltzer: No, it is not and as per the NYC Charter Fair Share criteria we are doing more than enough.

I will work to plan our community and push back on the overdevelopment of supportive housing.

Ruben Diaz Sr.: Everyone has the right to housing.

The Bronx has done more than its fair share.

Things have been looking up in recent years, but



Elvin Garcia

Courtesy of Elvin Garcia



William Moore

Courtesy of William Moore

we still need to focus on Bronx job creation and education – including adult vocational training - that can lead to people improving their economic situation so they can afford decent housing.

Amanda Farias: Having such a high volume of supportive housing in the Bronx means that people don't have access to necessary resources like reliable transportation, healthy food, good jobs, and health-care.

I would push to have a more even distribution of supportive housing throughout the five boroughs, and advocate to have more of them located in communities with the infrastructure to provide the necessary support to those seeking help from supportive housing.

Elvin Garcia: While we need to provide families with supportive housing, ideally in the neighborhood they formerly lived, the Bronx is doing far more than its fair share.

The City Council needs to work with the borough presidents, community boards, and mayor's office to find more equitable sites to create new supportive housing.

William Moore: I find it unfair that the Bronx is almost always the first to be selected for more supportive housing.

I believe all boroughs should take on their fair share. I will fight to stop the city from giving greedy slumlords money for transitional housing.

Instead, I will support a Nehemiah Housing Plan

to build affordable housing for the homeless and lower income families.

I will not stop just there, I will force the NYC Housing Authority to stop warehousing empty apartments and filled them with homeless families in need.

BTR: *Please provide a list of any endorsements.*

Beltzer: Bronx Progressives; Local 1407.

Diaz Sr.: New York Daily News; Detectives Endowment Association; Correction Officers Benevolent Association.

Farias: Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley; Councilwoman Helen Rosenthal; District Council 37; National Association of Social Workers; National Institute for Reproductive Health; Planned Parenthood; Citizens Union; Empire State Humane Voters; National Organization for Women; Run for Something; Streets PAC; Vote Pro Choice; 504 Democratic Club; Filipino American Democratic Club; Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club; Muslim American Democratic Club; Black Lives Matter Caucus New York Social Justice PAC.

Garcia: Tenants PAC, NYS Democratic Party Vice Chair Christine Quinn; Councilman Danny Dromm; Assemblyman Danny O'Donnell; Assemblywoman Deborah Glick; LatPAC and the National Latino Officers Association.

Moore: New York State Reform Party; the New Parkchester Democratic Club; District Leader Omar Adams, 87th Assembly District.

Food & Wine Festival's 'Hip Hop for Hunger' set for September 16

BY ROBERT WIRSING

The Boogie Down Bronx will live up to its namesake in a lively charitable celebration.

Eat nYc the Bronx Food and Wine Festival, Windows of Hip Hop and Aval and Co Runway Production will present 'Hip Hop for Hunger' on Saturday, September 16 from 4 to 9 p.m. at Andrew Freedman Home, rain or shine.

back to the Food Bank for NYC and our neighbors who depend on its lifesaving services."

Andrew Freedman Home is known as 'Hip Hop Mansion' due to artists like DJ Kool Herc and Melle Mel hosting events there.

The Bronx Food and Wine Festival incorporates fashion, music and food into one event.

Attendees will be treated

Copa Di Vino, Manhattan Beer Distributors, Cabot, Kevita, DIG Farm, Lotus Flame Restaurant, Metro Multimedia, The Alchemist Food and Wine Magazine, Green Mountain Energy, Taino Ink Screen Printers, Hasani Beaute Beauty and Skin Care, MJ Entertainment LLC, Baron Ambrosia, Wine Pine Farm, Strongbow Hard Apple Ciders, Lucca Fine Italian Cuisine and La

Hip Hop for Hunger focuses on all of the incredible things that come from the Bronx such as music, food and fashion. It's our way of giving back to the Food Bank for NYC and our neighbors who depend on its lifesaving services.



John Denizard, Eat nYc

The Bronx Food and Wine Festival President and Co-Founder

Hosted by hip hop legends Melle Mel and Grandmaster Caz and Culinary Ambassador of the Bronx Baron Ambrosia, the third annual charitable event sponsored by Lemle and Wolff Real Estate helps the Food Bank for NYC feed 25,000 hungry men, women and children while raising awareness of this critical issue.

For every dollar raised, Food Bank for NYC is able to provide five meals to those in need.

John Denizard, Eat nYc president and co-founder, confirmed 100% of all proceeds raised go toward Food Bank for NYC.

The event is opened to anyone 21-years-old and over.

"Hip Hop for Hunger focuses on all of the incredible things that come from the Bronx such as music, food and fashion," shared Denizard. "It's our way of giving

to a V.I.P. Runway Fashion Show hosted by Chrys Childs at 5 p.m. showcasing designs by Miros Rosado, Chuks Collins and Corey Rodgers.

The star studded evening features musical performances by Italian American hip hop artist Rob Salese and salsa singer-songwriter EC Salsero, Melle Mel, Grandmaster Caz and several surprise hip hop performers made possible by Fever Records.

Guests can engage in live, high-speed auctions hosted by Hunt Auctioneers.

The event features over 30 participating vendors including Mike's Hard Lemonade, Hush Hip Hop Tours, Brotherhood Winery, Metro Optics Eyewear, Residence Inn by Marriott, Blue Moon, Señor Sangria, Porto Salvo, Cabo, Outback Steakhouse, Port Morris Distillery, Limation, Lloyd's Carrot Cake, AriZona Beverages USA,

Casa Grande Cigars among others.

The festival includes on-site cooking demos on the mansion's massive lawn and food, drink and promotional product samplings from local restaurants, wineries, distilleries, breweries, bakeries and businesses inside the landmark's three grand ballrooms.

To purchase tickets, visit www.eatnycfoodandwinefest.com or visit www.eventbrite.com searching for Eat nYc the Bronx Food and Wine Festival-Hip Hop for Hunger and enter promo code 10OFF to buy one \$50 ticket and receive another free.

General admission tickets will be available for sale at the door the night of the event.

For additional information and to participate, contact Eat nYc at eatnyc2015@gmail.com.

Viviana Bianchi named BCA's 5th executive director

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

One of the borough's premiere arts organizations has a new executive director.

The Bronx Council on the Arts, a non-profit focusing on locally-based arts, artists and programing, appointed Viviana Bianchi as its new executive director after a six-month search.

Bianchi began her new position on Tuesday, September 5.

She takes the helm of the grassroots organization at an exciting time in a history stretching back to 1962.

The continually changing nature of borough communities makes this a moment for new alliances for BCA, she said, adding that there will be both challenges and opportunities ahead.

"I believe in the power of arts to change and impact communities," she said, adding "I am very interested in finding out more of what is needed neighborhood by neighborhood."

Construction work on a new BCA headquarters at a donated former bank building in Westchester Square is well underway, and Bianchi said she plans on visiting the building to determine how best to use the space.

Bianchi said that she expects the new headquarters to be a resource that will allow BCA to bring some of the programing now done elsewhere to its headquarters.

She added: "My goal is to make BCA the place to go for the arts."

For the new executive director, the position is one that brings together two areas that have been focal points of her career: the arts and non-profits.

"I am very excited about being able to blend those two things," she said. "It is like two tracks of my life that finally came together."

Before any new initiatives, she plans on accessing artists' and community needs, she said.

Bianchi added that she plans on collaborating



Viviana Bianchi's been named new executive director for Bronx Council on the Arts. Photo courtesy of Bronx Council on the Arts

with the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs on a new cultural plan, engaging in 'creative placemaking' where artists work on meaningful social projects to improve communities and working with the Westchester Square Business Improvement District.

Charles Rice-González, BCA co-chair, stated that Bianchi's passion for artists and the arts would elevate BCA's voice as an artist advocate.

She came to the position from Mindbuilders, another borough-based organization that provides artistic programing, as well as sports activities for youth.

She has extensive non-profit and arts experience in organizations in Florida, Washington D.C. and New York and in her native Argentina, she said.

In Argentina, Bianchi founded her own company, Pegasus Solutions, which provided development,

planning and marketing services to clients that included the Argentinian government's Ministry of Culture and individual artists.

One of her favorite positions during her career, she said, was as project director for the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media, a position she held in the 1990s that gave her extensive experience in grantmaking.

She worked as an actress, as well as a film festival producer, she said, and comes from an artistic family.

Her brothers are painters, her mother dabbled in painting and acting and her father published a few collections of stories in Argentina, she said.

BCA's outgoing executive director, Deirdre Scott, resigned in the fall of 2016, said a spokesman.

After Scott's departure Barbara Prete temporarily took the organization's reins.

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Legion Post sets pre-airing of PBS's 'The Vietnam War'

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A preview of what promises to be an epic film about an important and troubled time in American history is coming soon to a local veterans post.

The Sam Young American Legion Post 620 will hold a one-hour preview of the PBS's latest documentary: the 18-hour Ken Burns and Lynn Novick film 'The Vietnam War,' which airs nationwide beginning on Sunday, September 19.

The veterans post will view select excerpts from the film a week before it is broadcast, with doors opening at 1 p.m. on Sunday, September 10 and the screening beginning at 1:45, said post member Joseph Mondello.

The screening will be followed by a question and answer session with veterans.

Community members, local schools and organizations are welcome to attend, said Mondello.

The post will preview the film on its 15-foot screen, he said. The post is in the process of creating a new auditorium space. He urged all to attend.

"It is a way of honoring our Vietnam Veterans as we approach Veterans Day, and to experience some of Ken Burn's film on the Vietnam War," said Mondello.

The screening will also be a chance to highlight the post's new stage, which they hope might play host to open mic nights, karaoke, musical performances and coun-



try dancing in the future. Joe Mondello, Sam Young American Legion Post 620 member and 'Legionnaire of the Year' award winner, invites all to a one-hour preview of Ken Burn's and Lynn Novick's latest documentary 'The Vietnam War'.

try dancing in the future.

Local veteran's advocate and Vietnam veteran Pat Devine, of Theodore Korony American Legion Post 253, said he is planning on attending.

"Most of the Vietnam Veterans are getting up there in age," said Devine. "Hopefully, they will have a nice audience and get some good feedback and it will be positive."

Devine recalled his service in the mountain ranges of Vietnam, arriving in

the war zone as a U.S. Marine when he was 19-years-old.

Devine said he was spared the sometimes inhospitable return to the United States that many Vietnam veterans faced because Throggs Neck was and is a very patriotic community where his service to his country was valued.

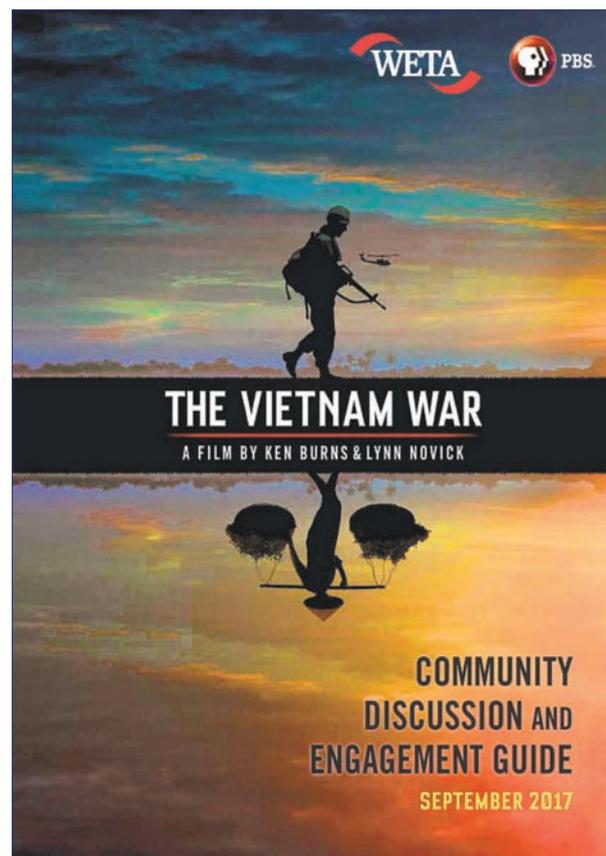
Ken Burns, who has made notable documentaries about the Civil War and World War II, as well as films on the U.S. National Parks and the Brooklyn Bridge, joined with filmmaker and longtime collaborator Lynn Novick for the 10-year project.

The film includes original interviews with 80 American, South Vietnamese and North Vietnamese combatants and civilians, according to materials provided by WNET.

It features original war footage, as well as music from the era and original music from Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross and the Silk Road Ensemble featuring Yo-Yo Ma.

"Ken Burns' meaningful film, 'The Vietnam War' gives context to a piece of history that touched us all, especially those who served in the military," said Neal Shapiro, CEO of WNET. "WNET is proud to be sharing a preview of the film with veterans and the entire Bronx community at the Samuel Young American Legion Post."

The post is located at 1530 Hutchinson River Parkway.



The PBS documentary premieres nationwide on Sunday, September 17.

Photo courtesy of Channel 13

Capital One Bank closing two branches in November

from Page 1

munications.

"We began notifying customers in mid-August that the Westchester Square and Tremont Avenue branches would be closing," Landers said. "The decision to close these branches was difficult and one that our bank leaders did not take lightly."

Jaen said corporations such as Capital One Bank are consolidating to tighten their budgets.

"Imagine what the medium and small business people are doing," Jaen said. "Some of them go week to week and month to month, but they still stay strong and they still try to keep their businesses open."

Meanwhile, banks' board of directors negotiate what they want to do to make their bank more beneficial to the stockholders, according to Jaen.

He praised Capital One as being a "good service bank to the community in Throggs Neck for a lot of years, and I'm sure they're going to survive."

Landers said the closings occur "as Capital One continues to evolve

and optimize our branch network in response to changing customer preferences and to ensure we're operating as efficiently and effectively as possible."

"We recognize the effect that this decision will have on our customers and associates," Landers said. "We've been encouraging customers to give us a call or stop by before their branch closes to ask us any questions."

Customers will be shown options to bank through online banking, bill pay, and mobile banking, according to Landers. They are encouraged to try different ways of banking, such as using the ATM to make withdrawals or deposits, and using their smartphones to deposit a check.

The Tremont branch closing will affect two Capital One associates, who will receive career transition support, and eligibility for a severance package, including retraining assistance and outplacement services, according to Landers.

The associates at the Westchester branch will relocate to other branches.



Capital One Bank, 35 Westchester Square, is also set to close on Friday, November 17.

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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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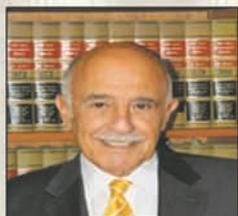
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