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CULTURAL PRIDE AT KHCC FESTIVAL



Photo by Adi Talwar

MARTHA ZARTE, owner of the Mazarte Dance Company, dazzles the crowd with this colorful dance during the annual Neighborhood Festival, sponsored by the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center. The weather was perfect for the community event on Saturday, April 12 that drew plenty of families and community groups to the neighborhood. A full slide show is available at norwoodnews.org.

New Croton Water Plant Entry Raises Suspicions

By SHAYLA LOVE

A pin oak tree lives on Jerome Avenue, where it meets 213th Street. The roots of this tree go deep. They extend under the cement sidewalk and into the soil of the Bronx's past, before the words "filtration plant" had ever been uttered.

At the April 10 Community Board 7 (CB7) Transportation Committee meeting, residents voiced concern for the tree's future. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) said that it has to remove it to build a second entrance to the Croton Water Treatment Plant (CWTP).

The entrance was approved by three community board chairs last year and is expected to be

(continued on page 6)



Easter Egg Hunt Is On!

p. 2



Bronx Political Machine Endorses Espaillat, p. 3

Big Norwood Presence at Bx Day in Albany

By DAVID CRUZ

Norwood has long battled "the Bronx is burning" image since the days when the nation witnessed charred building remains in the south Bronx during the 1970s. Though the trend never reached Norwood, its stereotype remained etched in the minds of skeptic out-of-towners believing those days continue to exist.

It's a reason why Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, representing Norwood, Morris Park, Bedford Park, and Pelham, was driven to begin Bronx Day in Albany. Last year was the venue's inception, where community groups, lawmakers and business groups showcased the best of the Bronx. The sequel is said to be even bigger after word over the popularity of its inaugural event spread quickly. Neighborhood groups have since mobilized even further this year.

The all-day event, slated for Monday, April 28 in Albany, is expected to draw hundreds of guests to the capital's conference building dubbed The Egg. For Gjonaj, his attendance to the event is bittersweet—he missed last year's event to attend his late father's funeral. This time, he's pumped to deliver a speech on why the Bronx should not be seen as an afterthought.

"You know, when I was campaigning, I promised I would bring Albany to the Bronx," Gjonaj told the *Norwood News*. "I got it wrong. I'm actually taking the borough of the Bronx to Albany and it's up to Bronxites to rebuild the reputation."

By bringing the Bronx to Albany, a proactive sense overtakes the borough, one where it cannot wait for the perception of the borough to shift. To Gjonaj, bringing the Bronx to Albany could shape the borough's destiny some. He often reminds the Bronx that the borough's days are in front of it, not behind it.

Community Groups Unite

Plenty of groups in the area will attend, including representatives from the Four Bronx Institution Alliance—Montefiore Medical Center, Fordham University, the Bronx Zoo, and the New York Botanical Garden. All are expected to offer a taste of the borough's progress. They'll be joined by elected officials who've been promoting their colleague Gjonaj's event via social media sites.

Neighborhood groups, including Community Board 7, the Bedford-Moshulu Community Association, and Friends of Moshulu Parkway, will also be on hand. Barbara Stronczer, head of the Bedford-Moshulu Community Association, will join the several hundred



A LOOK AT last year's Bronx Day in Albany celebration, where community groups, businesses and elected officials convinced out-of-towners to visit the Bronx.

Bronxites shuttling to Albany via bus.

For Stronczer, a lifelong resident of Bedford Park, Bronx Day in Albany carries the same pro-Bronx message she's been pushing for years. She's heard the arguments before from visitors "nervous about coming to the Bronx," but she's known to counter each argument to the suburbanites and Manhattanites who are cautious of the borough, hoping to peel away the layer of negativity associated with the Bronx. "I'm always talking about the zoo, the Botanical Garden, or let's meet and go to Yan-

(continued on page 7)



Business Beat: Tour the White Plains Road BID, p. 8

Be Healthy
Teens Compelled to B N' Fit, p. 10

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In The Public Interest

PS 51 Parents, Community to Meet With State DOH

By JUSTIN MCCALLUM

Questions over the closure and toxicity of a local Norwood school will be addressed at an upcoming public meeting that will determine the next steps for exposed students, parents and teachers.

The state Department of Health will be there to follow up on the toxic effects of PS 51 The Bronx New School, where students were exposed to the high levels of trichloroethylene (TCE), a cancer-causing carcinogen, for up to six years. But teachers could have been exposed even more if they had taught at the school from 1993 to its closure in 2011.

The meeting is set for 6:30 p.m. on April 24 at St Phillip Neri's Church at 3025 Grand Concourse.

Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky of Community Board 7's sanitation and environmental committee has been pushing for more outreach to notify former PS 51 students of the health risk they might face.

For nearly 20 years, TCE was known to have wafted into the Jerome Avenue school 10 times the legal limit, lingering unsuspectingly into classrooms, bathrooms and faculty offices, according to a state DOH report. While investigators theorized TCE could be coming from soil moisture, testing of the building showed that a high concentration of the chemical was found inside the first floor cafeteria. The state Department of Environmental Conservation later ordered the school closed, designating it a "potential inactive hazardous waste site."

Many former students were unaware that the school was closed or why, leaving Hartman-Kutnowsky to circulate fliers.

She hopes the state DOH recommends a doctor whose background includes the treatment of those exposed to harmful chemicals. Long-term exposure to TCE has also caused effects on the central nervous system, nasal passages, and pregnant women. In one alleged case, a 19-year teacher's aide sued the city Department of Education for TCE exposure, claiming she suffered from "pancreatic and liver cancer, mental and emotional injuries and distress, and a loss of quality and enjoyment of life," as a result.



File Photo

PS 51 REMAINS closed following news the students, parents and staffers were exposed to the cancer-causing chemical TCE.

With over two decades at their old location, the abrupt condemning of The Bronx New School came as a shock and led to outcry in the community. Much of the unrest came after parents and community members learned that the city allegedly stalled the closure for six months, having learned about the chemicals in January 2011.

After nearly two years of fighting, a report was released last summer outlining the harmful impact of students attending the school, once a repair shop in the '40s and '50s and lamp factory from 1957 to

1991. Still, many feel their questions have been rebuffed by state DOH.

Alan Gary, a Norwood resident and father of a student at the school told *The New York Daily News*, "We don't want money — we want justice."

A general community board meeting will follow at 6:30 p.m. on April 29 at Serviam Gardens. For more information on Community Board 7 meetings and schedules, call (718) 933-5650 or visit www.bronxcb7.info.

—David Cruz contributed to reporting

First-ever Spring Egg Hunt at Oval

This year, the Easter bunny is hopping to Norwood!

Children won't have to go farther than the Williamsbridge Oval, as they'll meet and greet the springtime hare while hunting for bright colored eggs containing candy and treats inside. This first annual Spring Egg Hunt will take place Saturday, April 19 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is sponsored by the Moshulu Preservation Corporation, the Jerome-Gun Hill BID and the city Parks Department.

Karen Pedrosa of Parks has teamed up with MPC and the grassroots group, Friends of the Williamsbridge Oval (FO-TWO). FOTWO will help deliver a day of family friendly fun that includes music, carnival games, a potato sack race at noon, and of course a real life Easter bunny.

Well before the friendly hunt, FOTWO

distributed fliers around the Norwood neighborhood to get the word out. Hoping to draw a big crowd to the venue, FOTWO also plans to deliver an anti-litter message to help curb the spike in trash that often accumulates in the Oval as temperatures reach a comfortable peak. FOTWO T-shirts will be sold, along with some nifty "sponge-bombs" — water absorb-

ing sponges that are custom-made in the shape of a ball. It's considered an alternative to water balloons.

Toddlers will get their first crack at the hunt, beginning at 1 p.m., followed by a hunt slated for 1:30 p.m., for children six to 11.

The event will take place rain or shine.

—SHAYLA LOVE

Public and Community Meetings

- **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meets Thursday, April 24 from 7 to 9 p.m. at 323 E. 198th St. For more information, call (718) 220-5811.
- **COMMUNITY BOARD 7** will meet on Tuesday, April 29 at Serviam Gardens, 321 E. 198th St. CB7 committees are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St., unless otherwise noted: Education & Libraries and Youth Services committees meet Thursday, April 17; Parks Committee meets Wednesday, April 23. For more information, call (718) 933-5650 or visit bronxcb7.info/calendar. All meetings are subject to change. Call to confirm.

Rangel, Espaillat Grab Heavy Backing

By DAVID CRUZ

In a move that casts a setback for Congressman Charles Rangel, the Bronx Democratic Caucus and Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. threw their support for Rangel's challenger for the 13th Congressional District, state Senator Adriano Espaillat. The first-time endorsement, particularly by Assemblyman and Bronx Democratic Party Boss Carl Heastie, can once again secure victory for Dominican-born legislator in the Bronx, a battleground borough.

But Espaillat still has to contend with the rest of Rangel's district, particularly Harlem, considered his strong base. Rangel has roughly 30 years of experience over Espaillat, intending to rally his base to a win.

"I am truly humbled to have the support of the Bronx County Democrats," said Espaillat, flanked by supporters and several members of the Bronx Democratic Caucus.

"... I know he will listen and act when our community speaks," said Heastie, who veered off his normal path of endorsing an incumbent. "Adriano is a proven fighter and he will carry that tradition on in Congress."

Espaillat ensured supporters that he can bridge a divide the 13th Congressional District has become, where a spectrum of neighborhoods differ in demographics. Still, issues of affordable housing and healthcare canvas the district, where Espaillat said he intends to address. He also promised a district office in the Bronx, something Rangel has also promised should he win re-election.

But Rangel's endorsements outnumber Espaillat's. As of press time, U.S. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand (she barely makes Primary endorsements), Congressman Joe Crowley and several labor unions have huddled around Rangel.

"I've seen how, as the Dean of the New York Congressional Delegation, Charlie Rangel has been an effective, progressive leader," said Schumer, in a statement announcing his support for Rangel. "He's fought for a higher minimum wage, health care and immigration reform — and he's not done."

The Rangel camp didn't directly respond to the latest endorsement, but added the district "can't afford to lose the experience and seniority Congressman Rangel brings to the table."

"The people know they can count on Charlie Rangel to be a champion in Washington to continue fighting for good jobs, better wages, and real healthcare reform for the families of this district and that's why he is earning their support once again," said the Rangel campaign.

First Debate

The news came days after Espaillat and fellow challenger, Reverend Michael Walrond, took part in the first debate against Rangel, who delivered several one-two punches at his contenders. And though the debate may have been miles away from the northwest Bronx, it was certainly mentioned, albeit in broad strokes.

The challengers sparred with Rangel at a packed Abyssinian Baptist Church to make their argument on why their vision fits to the changes happening within the 13th Congressional District. The district was redrawn in 2010 to include the northwest Bronx, benefiting Espaillat two years back when he first ran against Rangel.

The debate's tone was relatively cordial, though there were moments when the two rivals seemed to ally to criticize Rangel, 82, often put on the defensive for his participation in a U.S. Congress that's accomplished little. Rangel put the onus on Republicans.

The 22-term congressman labeled himself as the "top legislator of the year," citing a report by Track-Bill, which determines the productivity of any Congress member. At times he seemed self-deprecating for the sake of laughs, poking fun at his age though ensuring the audience he's a leader who doesn't "stay [in Congress] just to stay here and drop dead."

But Espaillat and Walrond pegged Rangel an ineffective legislator who has allowed high rents to overtake the district, where glimpses of gentrification have sprouted. Rangel remained neutral on gentrifica-



Photo courtesy Bronx Borough President's Office

BOROUGH PRESIDENT Ruben Diaz Jr. (at podium) announces support for Espaillat (third from left). Espaillat also secured backing from Bronx Democratic Party Boss Carl Heastie (second from left).

tion so long as protections were in place for the district's predominant working class. "We can do that by stopping luxury housing, concentrating on acquiring property the city can build and to make certain that when you talk about building that you're talking about building affordable housing."

Walrond countered, casting some blame on high rents on Rangel. "You cannot critique a problem that you were a part of," said Walrond.

In Agreement

But there were moments when the Democratic rivals found common ground. Each agreed to overhaul the justice system, proposing more alternatives to incarceration. On issues of charter schools, all three candidates approached the question differently. While Espaillat was unclear on his stance on charter schools, believing the preference falls on parents, Rangel and Walrond sided with children who attend the public school system, believing they would be better served if a public school were better funded.

"Like the Reverend said, it's the children, it's the children, it's the children," said Rangel. "I've been through

these public schools. No one asked me where I went to school. But at the end of the day, it's what you know, not where you went to school."

As the evening drew to a close, popularity seemed to gravitate toward Walrond, a Harlem pastor whose oratory skills overshadowed his inexperience in the political arena. During several moments of the evening, Walrond had received numerous standing ovations from a rhapsodized audience.

But his popularity may not translate in the Bronx, where little is known about the 18-year clergyman whose ties with the National Action Network have made him a formidable rival for Rangel, who draws his power from his Harlem base.

During closing remarks, Rangel had retorted on Walrond's claim he would be active at his home by asking if Walrond meant his home in New Jersey, a jab at a revelation that Walrond's recent address was in New Jersey.

The contention between the two could very well backfire for both as Espaillat could edge out both, thanks to the Hispanic voting bloc.

It's unclear when the first debate in the Bronx will be held, according to an Espaillat staffer.

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Inquiring Photographer

By DAVID GREENE

This week we asked readers what they thought were the most dangerous intersections in the Bedford Park and Norwood neighborhoods.



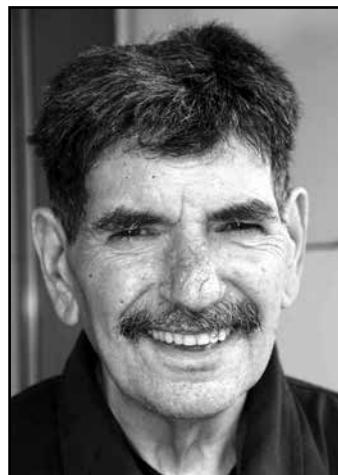
I've tried to cross Jerome Avenue and East Gun Hill Road a few times to go to the pharmacy and the stores around there and it's pretty dangerous with drivers turning. People turn at high speeds or race to catch a light.

Marlon McLeod



Fordham Road at Webster Avenue is pretty bad. We get a ticket if we are in the bus lane, but when buses come into our lane it's ok. Bedford Park Boulevard at Bainbridge Avenue is bad and Bedford Park at Jerome Avenue is dangerous and we need a street light here at East 204th Street and Decatur Avenue.

Elizabeth McKenna



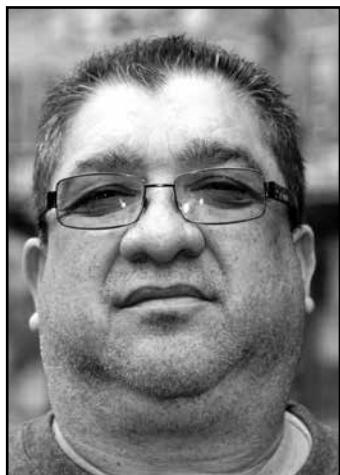
I think Van Cortlandt Park East and the Grand Concourse is pretty bad, but I think Moshulu Parkway is pretty safe because the lights are set up and sequenced. I think sometimes a driver's speed is the problem. At East 204th Street and Moshulu Parkway South I find drivers come to a rolling stop.

Steve Avallone



The one that makes me really scared is East Moshulu Parkway. It covers a really large area and I saw two people that were crossing that got hit by cars. I don't know if they're speeding or don't see the lights. My girlfriend was hit on the Grand Concourse near Fordham Park in November and the guy didn't stop. It was a hit-and-run.

Virginia Conde



Underneath the East 204th Street bridge they come flying through like it was a highway. You've got to run to the other side. It's crazy here with speeding and traffic. Also at East 204th Street and the Grand Concourse you have to run sometimes even though you have the 24 seconds they give you.

Randy Rivera

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Art Installation Brightens Fordham's Future

By JUSTIN MCCALLUM

While painters look upon a taut white sheet for inspiration, co-executive director for the Fordham Road Business Improvement District Daniel Bernstein sees the sparse north Bronx streets as a new space for art to bloom. "To be honest with you, we have a lot of blank canvases on Fordham Road — a lot of spaces with just nothing," Bernstein said.

But with the installation of a sculpture by Japanese artist Akihiro Ito at Fordham Road and Webster Avenue near Fordham's Metro-North station, Bernstein welcomes an artsy addition to the BID's goals of garnishing the area. "A lot of our mission has to do with beautifying Fordham Road and making the streetscape look nicer, so projects like this add color and pizzazz," he said. "It's important to bring arts and culture to this neighborhood. It's not just a retail shopping corridor, it's a place to stroll and stop and enjoy art."

The art installation entitled "Tomorrow," was installed April 10 and unveiled April 16 late in the afternoon. An enormous wooden sculpture made up of 600 pieces of Douglas fir wood shaped to resemble an infant is tenured to grace Fordham Road for a year. The sculpture carries a two-fold message—the relationship between the environment and humanity.

Using wood to create the shape of an infant, Ito describes the piece as "[illustrating] the harmony between humans and their natural surroundings, and reminds us of the importance of the environment" in his promotional materials. Ito adds, "I hope this sculpture provides an opportunity for people to think about humanity's connection to nature, and reminds us that we are all part of earth's family."

Does Bernstein fear the artwork will be vandalized?

Not so much.

"Usually what happens is we have a contract with the artist. It's the responsibility of the artist to clean it up," said Bernstein. "They have to clean it within 24 hours, and the BID chips in." He adds that the BID's first piece entitled "Silver," composed of a hodgepodge of recycled materials and found items received little vandalism when it was installed in 2011 on Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse.

After receiving a generous grant from the city Department of Transportation's art program "Artervention," the Fordham Road BID fronted the remainder of the costs to bring the popular sculpture, previously on display at Fort Greene Park in Brooklyn, to the Bronx. Bernstein hopes the centrally located art installation will attract tourists and, subsequently, spark an economic boost to Fordham Road businesses.

"It will be increasing the amount of foot traffic. There's going to be a lot of tourists from students looking at colleges to other artists who want to see this as well," said Bernstein adding, "As you increase foot traffic, the hope is you increase shopping with that."

Bernstein says that the BID's second foray into public art is meant to complement the green programming such as outdoor movies, a green walk, and recycling efforts. "The sculpture is aptly named, serving as a symbol of the future and the New Bronx," he said.

For now, the BID's efforts in sprucing up the look of the area coincide with the district's efforts to include One Fordham Plaza (1FP) into its borders. The 12-story building is home to an Applebee's restaurant, Party City, TJ Maxx, and city offices. The BID is also eyeing a portion of Webster Avenue that includes Burlington Coat Factory, the first in the Bronx.

For the past year, Bernstein and his co-executive di-



Photo courtesy Fordham Road BID

DANIEL BERNSTEIN, co-executive director of the Fordham Road Business Improvement District, stands with the latest attraction at the borough's largest BID.

rector, Wilma Alonso, have launched their game plan in their border expansion. The public review process to expand involves an act by the City Council. But the biggest hurdle was convincing 1FP property managers to join the BID, realizing they will be hit with a BID assessment tax. They were happy to partner with the BID.

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New Croton Water Plant Entry Raises Suspicions



Photo by David Cruz

IT'S UNCLEAR how many trees will be cut to make way for a secondary entrance to the Croton Water Filtration Plant site, but at least one has to come down.

(continued from page 1) completed in June. DEP said it will be used by construction vehicles until the plant is completed, then be redone as the permanent entrance for the Moshulu golf course. Adjacent to it will be a parking lot for golf course visitors.

The pin oak stands on the stretch of sidewalk where DEP will remove a section of wall and pave over the ground. When asked if the tree would be replaced, Shane Ojar, the Director of Community Affairs from the DEP said no. "The agreement that we have, is that we can replace [the tree] of like and kind at another location," he said. "Or you can

have a monetary exchange between the two agencies."

A voice piped up, "How much?"

Ojar said that the DEP will pay the city Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) \$32,000 for the tree. "I'll put it bluntly," Ojar said. "We don't particularly care what happens, how the tree is put back or if it's money. So we defer to Parks and we negotiated with Parks and we said this is what we have to do. What do you want?"

Board member William Francis was quick with a reply. "In your further dealing with this community, we would appreciate it if you'd think tree first," he said. "I understand that you don't care, but we

live here. And we do care. And that's very important to us."

Further Suspicion

The detailed exchange over the outcome of a single tree reveals the long-standing tension between the DEP and the community ever since plans for the project were unveiled years back. The CWTP is a saga of community versus city agencies, stretching back to 1998. Residents and groups fought the plant's existence, then the location, followed by the method of filtration. They lost on every count.

The second construction entrance may seem minor, but lately there are suspicions of any modifications relating to the plant.

Early Whispers

Bob Bender, the chair of the Parks and Recreation committee of Community Board 8 (CB8) heard about the entrance at the March Croton Facility Monitoring Committee (CFMC) meeting. He said he was surprised to hear about it and that CB8's Parks and Recreation Committee had opposed it one year ago. He's concerned about an undisclosed purpose for the land. "In my experience, when you add a driveway, some other agency will find a use for it," Bender said.

Bender said that the DEP has repeatedly lied to the community, citing the long overdue pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway and trees owed at Jerome Park. He is going to keep a close eye on the new entrance, to ensure it's being used for golf course parking and traffic only. "It should be clearly stipulated that this is the only permissible use for this driveway and that if the clubhouse were ever to close or relocate, the driveway would be demolished and the parkland restored," Bender said. "Unless those conditions are agreed to, I will ask every elected official as well as the CFM committee to oppose the driveway by every legal means possible."

Future Contention

When this struggle began, the pin oak tree was young, and its roots were strong and thick, called a taproot. Bronx groups and residents fought bravely against a filtration plant in their neighbor-

hood. As the tree aged, its roots lost their configuration and branched out like a thousand little hairs. Now it has a fibrous root system that is strongly implanted in the dirt, but more susceptible to harm.

Is all of this ancient history?

The plant is being built, the tree will be ripped up and the money will be spent. Sometimes a second entrance is just a second entrance; a parking lot, just a lot. But as completion of the plant draws nearer, every step forward continues to be met with distrust and trepidation from residents and the community.

Looking to the future, activists are now focused on the building of a pedestrian bridge, the return of the Jerome Park running path and the restoration of all the trees on the parkland. *The New York Times* reported in March that the Jerome Park Reservoir was sensitive to terrorism and that the double walled enclosure may have to remain. This explanation infuriates Gary Axelbank, of *BronxTalk*, long-time opponent of CWTP. He said it's still a sore wound for those who had advocated for the Westchester location and for Jerome Park to be taken offline, all those years ago.

"By choosing to do it in the Bronx, I would think, that they made the decision that it wasn't that big of a deal," he said.

The finished reservoir will only be a supplement to New York's drinking water, the majority of which comes from the Catskill/Delaware system. Axelbank thinks that if a terrorist really wanted to access the open-air reservoir, they wouldn't do so by land. And if they did, an eight-foot fence is hardly a barrier.

As for the pin oak, and all the parkland to be restored, Francis of CB7 said, "Trees cannot go back in until all the work is done. Yes, it's been a long time, but the plant is not done yet, and we do have to wait."

The voices in the CB7 meeting murmured around him. Barbara Stroncer, Bedford Moshulu Community Association president, muttered under her breath, "It feels like it's been going on forever."

Read more about CWTP's history in the Bronx and what Gary Axelbank calls "the most untold story" about the plant: membrane filtration, in the extended version of this article at norwoodnews.org.



Photo courtesy Gary Axelbank

ASSEMBLYMAN JEFFREY DINOWITZ (left) and Fr. Richard Gorman glimpse at Jerome Park Reservoir's jogging path, cordoned off for the last decade.

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Norwood Heads to Albany

(continued from page 1)

kee Stadium or Wave Hill," said Stronczer.

Her vice president, Norma Jean Scully, viewed Bronx Day in Albany as a day of schmoozing with community-minded residents like herself. She attended last year, exchanging emails and phone numbers, networking with folks and learning about what the elected officials are up to. "We have a table set aside for ourselves with our name on it," said Scully, who will also distribute fliers on behalf of the Friends of Mosholu Parkway.

Sheila Sanchez, representing three neighborhood groups—the Friends of Mosholu Parkway, Bedford-Mosholu Commu-

bill that passed, mandating that the state create an annual report detailing the economic climate of so-called "micro businesses"—small businesses comprised of 25 staffers or less. The report will also offer solutions.

"Although we pass bills we think are for constituents and small businesses, oftentimes we hinder and take the oxygen out of small business," said Gjonaj. "This report will actually detail what the needs are and we can focus on those needs first and foremost."

The Future of Bronx Day

The days of Bronx Day in Albany

"You know, when I was campaigning, I promised I would bring Albany to the Bronx. I got it wrong," Gjonaj told the Norwood News. "I'm actually taking the borough of the Bronx to Albany..."

nity Association and the Northwest Bronx Democrats—opportunely thinks this is the best time to cheerlead for the borough.

Tending to Small Business

The venue will also serve as a forum for disenfranchised small business owners who are part of a so-called donut hole that offers little incentives to them. A luncheon will kick off the meeting, intended to spark interest in several borough merchants to create a task force that would categorize any issues hurting them.

The task force would complement a

largely depend on Gjonaj's tenure. So far he has remained unchallenged this election season, offering him a chance to continue the event on through 2015. But Gjonaj hopes the Bronx delegation keeps this burgeoning tradition "because this is bigger than an individual." "The nature of this event has been embraced by the entire Bronx delegation to be supportive in every way possible," said Gjonaj.

Bus seats are limited. For more information, call Gjonaj's assembly office at (718) 409-0109. See Out & About under "Events" for more details.



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Business Beat

White Plains Road on the Rise

By DAVID CRUZ

Joe Thompson sat at the Rainbow Diner, his regular 24-hour eatery, ordering “the usual” black cup of coffee. Normally, it’s a quick stop before his daily walkthrough along the White Plains Road Business Improvement District, where he serves as its executive director.

It’s a walk reminiscent of the days when he was a beat cop in the 1970s, weeding out vagrants while also spotting any eyesores. This time it’s trash and graffiti-laden shutters that he spots along the BID, taking mental notes of any infractions that can hurt the commercial strip.

But Thompson veered off his regular Wednesday morning routine, walking instead around the corner and to a new supermarket at a site that was once a pornography theater. He saluted the new owner, Rafael Montes, an entrepreneur taking a chance on the BID.

“Now that’s a new addition,” said Thompson. “That’s a big addition.”

New Stores, New Image

And with that, the White Plains Road BID of today is not the White Plains Road BID of yesterday. It’s a good thing as far as Thompson’s concerned. To the neighborhood’s credit, the borough’s smallest BID has garnered attention from big chains such as Verizon, TD Bank, and Planet Fitness. Its name recognition counterbalances with small businesses ingrained in the community, such as BX Sports, Good & Natural, and Creston Optical, offering shoppers a balance between shopping big and shopping small.

The Vitality of Community

But Thompson delves into the trend deeper. He sees it as a sign of an overall healthy neighborhood, drawing parallels to the relationship between a neighborhood and its line of stores.

“You can tell the neighborhood and the income bracket of the neighborhood just by looking at the store,” said Thompson, adding that income values have indeed risen in the area.

His thoughts on the community are fitting. While he’s not lobbying politicians for more Christmas lights or ordering illegal street vendors to get lost, Thompson also serves as the president of the 49th Precinct Community Council and is a member of Community Board 11, taking the pulse of the neighborhood from a civic angle.

Roughly 88 businesses canvas the blue collar neighborhood of White Plains Road, between Pelham Parkway South and Brady Avenue—the BID’s borders. Before forming in 1994, the BID was known by many names, including the Pelham Parkway Merchants Association, Pelham Parkway Local Development Corporation and later the White Plains Road District Management Association.

A spectrum of backgrounds, including the largest Albanian population in the city, have added to the flavor of the area. They’ve raised families, assimilating enough to open nearby brick and mortars.



Photo by David Cruz

JOE THOMPSON (pictured) serves as the executive director of the White Plains Road BID, a district that’s reinvented itself into a vibrant, blue collar neighborhood balancing small and big business.

And the chance is a vote of confidence for the Pelham Parkway commercial corridor, one where its downward trend has faded to make way for a more vibrant strip free of “3 for \$10” T-shirt operations. Thompson compares the movement to that of a roller coaster. And this time the BID is riding to the top.

“It hasn’t reached where it was,” he said, “but it’s going in that direction.”

The trend is bolstered by a low crime rate, a nexus of transportation alternatives, and its proximity to neighboring cultural institutions, such as the New York Botanical Garden and the Bronx Zoo.

Foreseeing the Future

Thompson appears to be thinking ahead. He’s added plenty of items to his wish list—surveillance cameras for the corridor to deter taggers, removal of rusty tree grates, and cleaner store awnings.

Because BIDs rely heavily on property tax assessments imposed on the district’s property owners, the White Plains Road BID’s assessments have remained largely limited given the small size of the district. But the BID could very well double its size should they annex the neighboring Lydig Avenue shopping strip, a corridor comprised virtually of all small businesses such as 99 cent stores, fruit markets, a Key Food Supermarket, and dry cleaners.

The move would increase the BID’s capital, earmarked for perks that include sanitation, graffiti removal and advertising services. Thompson remained mum on any effort, simply confirming that the BID is weighing the idea.

Still, whether the BID’s board of directors pursues the Lydig Avenue option is not a deal breaker to the success of the

district. The metrics of low crime, transportation access and quality stores can certainly encourage more businesses.

“Come back here in five years and you’re going to see a huge difference,” said Thompson.



Photo by David Cruz

JOE THOMPSON (left) chats with Rafael Montes, new owner of a supermarket set to open on Pelham Parkway South between White Plains Road and Bolton Street, in late spring.

PLANTERS ARRIVE ON MOSHOLU PKWY.



Photo courtesy Elizabeth Quaranta, Friends of Moshulu Parkway
KUDOS GO TO the Friends of Moshulu Parkway for their efforts in bringing these planters in time for spring. The planters, aimed to prevent any major accidents while beautifying the parkway, arrived on Friday, April 11.

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Vital Stats

Bronx to Lace Up Shoes for Annual B'N Fit Walk

By PAOLO MOSSETTI

It's time for our kids to drop that remote and start running!

The Bronx Nutrition and Fitness Initiative for Teens (B'N Fit) has just announced the Annual Teen and Community Walk, and their website is open for registration.

The walk is a joint program sponsored by the Children's Hospital at Montefiore and Moshulu Montefiore Community Center and encourages young people to keep active by jogging in a non-competitive race.

The event will take place on Saturday, May 17, at the New York Botanical Garden, and will include a stretching session at 7:30 a.m. with New York Road Runners, free raffle prizes, refreshments and T-shirts to all participants who pre-registered. This year's walk is being presented in conjunction with Teen Diaries' Pretty Girls Sweat program.

Dr. Jessica Rieder, assistant clinical professor of pediatrics, is the event's show runner. She points out the benefits for young people who exercise can be vast and deep-reaching. "Of course weight loss

is the first goal of our initiative. Obesity, especially in teenagers, can predispose to heart diseases and reproductive issues," said Rieder. "If we walk, we can prevent serious health problems. The benefits are not only physical, but also emotional. If you stay in all the time, it's no good for your mental health," she said.

According to Rieder, long-term benefits of walking can be as important as the short-term ones. "The more you exercise in your daily life, the more you'll get used to exercise. It's like studying, and learning how to write: the more you practice, the more it will be easier for you in the future. We want to encourage changes in behavior, the same way it happens with school. So we encourage people to come with a friend or a family member, and enjoy a beautiful morning at the Botanical Garden."

The B'N Fit program, active since 2005, has been recently expanded, thanks to a massive \$150,000 grant by The AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation. While the core activity of B'N Fit is designed on medical evaluation and management for obese teens, in the last few years the program has expanded to include teaching ses-

CABRERA HONORS HIP-HOP LEGEND



HIP-HOP LEGEND Kurtis Blow (at mic) was the man of the hour on Saturday, April 12, accepting a Proclamation for his contributions to the musical genre in front of the Kingsbridge Armory. Councilman Fernando Cabrera (left) presented Blow with the special award, paying tribute to the singer's 30-year hit song "Basketball," which he drafted in the Bronx. A humble Blow told the crowd, "Praise God that God came into my life and changed things around. I have so many testimonials, so many miracles that I've seen in my lifetime." He added, "Just to let you know, with God, anything is possible." The Bronx is the birthplace of hip-hop.

Photo by David Greene

sions, outdoor events and summer camps.

Data from the 2007-2008 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey revealed that 18 percent of adolescents are obese. That percentage is greater among African-Americans and Hispanics — particularly those from poor communities,

such as the Bronx. In New York City, 40 percent of students are obese.

Sponsors and participants are encouraged to register on the website www.mmcc.org or write Sherice Brammer, Development Assistant, at [sbrammer@mmcc.org](mailto:sbраммер@mmcc.org).

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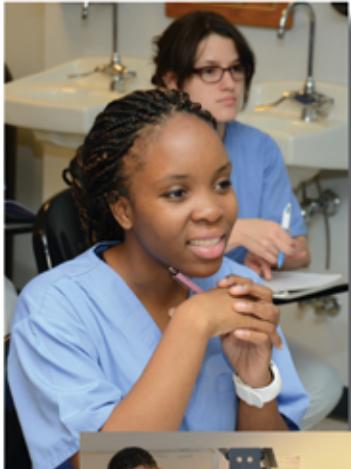
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DIVORCE SUMMONS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden, Division
Docket Number: HD14D0258DR
DIVORCE SUMMONS BY PUBLICION AND
MAILING
Remond Andrea Melvin-Lee (Plaintiff)(s)
vs.
Anthony Ramon Lee (Defendant)(s)

*To the above named Defendant:
A complaint has been presented to this Court by Remond Andrea Melvin-Lee, plaintiff, seeking Divorce.*

An automatic Restraining Order has been entered in this matter preventing you from taking any action which would negatively impact the current financial status of either party. Please refer to Supplemental Probate Court Rule 411 for more information.

You are required to serve upon - Remond Andrea Melvin-Lee - plaintiff - whose address is 194 Pine Street, Ludlow, MA 01056, your answer on or before July 22, 2014. If you fail to do so, the court will proceed to the hearing and adjudication of this action. You are also required to file a copy of your answer in the office of the Register of this Court at Springfield.

Witness, Anne M. Geoffrion, Esquire, First Justice of said Court at Springfield, this second day of April 2014.

(signed) Suzanne J. Seguin, Register of Probate

Duo Battles Tree Cutting on Mosholu Pkwy.

By PAOLO MOSSETTI

Timber!

It's not exactly a phrase residents want to hear, but it's happening on Mosholu Parkway. Some residents now want to stop the so-called arboricide happening along their beautiful thoroughfare.

Apparently for security reasons, the city Parks Department is chopping off several trees that occupied the parkway for over half a century. An operation described by local residents as both "unnecessary" and "criminal" and reminiscent of a tree massacre that happened during the 1980s.

John Eberenz, 47, whose family lived in the area since 1942, together with his brother Mike is one of the strongest advocates for the tree preservation. They first found out about the cutting one day, early in the morning, when they saw crews removing four trees in front of Mosholu Parkway.

"We tried to ask for an explanation, but the workers were elusive" said Eberenz. "They only told us it was for the safety of residents, in order to avoid branches falling. Truth is, we never had problems with those trees, even during the harshest weather conditions, and blazing winds. And they've been there for generations."

Despite protests from the siblings and other concerned advocates, Parks spokesman Nathan Arnosti called tree removal "routine," part of its "citywide tree maintenance."

"...[O]ur NYC Parks forestry team is pruning branches and removing trees along Mosholu Parkway," said Arnosti. "Of the 385 trees marked along the length of the parkway, 319 are marked for pruning, not removal, and NYC Parks is already in the process of replacing trees scheduled for removal."

But for John, the policy has more to do with budget spending than public's protection. "We called 311 and talked to people in the Parks Department, and some confidential sources confirmed it's all about the Sandy Relief funds," he said.



Photo courtesy John Eberenz

TREES HAVE BEEN reduced to stumps along Mosholu Parkway, an act called "arboricide" by two brothers shedding light on the tree removal.

"After Sandy, the Department had a surplus of money to spend. There's a lot of people working there, and as they didn't find a quick way to allocate their funds, they kept their employees busy working on the trees," he added.

The tree cutting brings back to memory another painful event for the community: the infamous "Mosholu Massacre" occurred in 1989, when the community woke up to find dozens of Norwegian Maples reduced to stumps. "This is not the first time that a disaster like this happens. Every 10 years they tried to do it," said Eberenz. "In the 1990s the city Department of Transportation apologized and agreed to replace them. They never delivered."

Most of trees along the parkway were planted almost

a century ago, to honor soldiers who died in WWI. "If you look at the pictures of the 1960s, here there was a forest," said Eberenz. "It was such a beautiful place for children to play in. Look at the street now. It's a desert. It's just not right to cut down living trees."

According to John, the battle for the preservation of Mosholu's natural environment is not merely an aesthetic one. "They're killing the birds, they're killing the animals that inhabited this area for decades. By cutting off these trees you're not just making a green space turn into a depressing grey: you're destroying an entire ecosystem." He's now formed a Facebook page called Stop the Arboricide Massacre on Mosholu Parkway.



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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

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■ Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W. presents free: **Faculty Jazz Combos**, April 23 at 12:30 p.m.; and **Lehman Jazz Band**, April 27 at 2 p.m.; both in the Music Building's Hearth Room; and **B.B. King**, featuring the Blues, April 19 at 8 p.m. (tickets are \$55 to \$100); and **Paquito Guzman** in his Great Farewell Concert, with **La Selecta Orchestra**, April 26. Program is subject to change; call for details, fees, and to confirm. For more information or for special discounts, call (718) 960-8833.

■ The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **All4One Piano Duo**, with Alex Wu and Sasha Papernik, April 19; and **Sonido Costeño Trio in Concert**, April 26; both at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

■ Bronx Arts Ensemble presents violinist **Joan Kwon** and pianist **Evan Solomon**, performing classical music, at the home of Drs. Beth Haase and Andy Meyers, 4673 Delafield Ave., April 27 at 3 p.m.; and **Young Bronx Artist Contest**, April

EDITOR'S PICK

Easter at the Oval

The public is invited to a **Spring Egg Hunt** at the Williamsbridge Oval on April 19 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. rain or shine. Events include carnival games, potato sack races, music, and a traditional egg hunt. There will be separate hunts for ages 1 to 5 and for ages 6 to 11 at 1:30 p.m. Children must bring their own baskets. For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

26 at 9 a.m., at the Amalgamated Houses Vladeck Hall, 74 Van Cortlandt Pk. So. (applications are available online or by calling the BAE office). For more information, call (718) 601-7399.

Events

■ The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park presents **Hike-a-Thon**, April 26 at 10 a.m. This hike is to help raise funds for the restoration of VC Park's trails. Participants can choose one of three hiking routes (one to five miles), may be eligible for gifts, and are urged to seek supporters to sponsor their hike for this rain or shine event. Registration fee of \$25 includes a Hike-a-Thon T-shirt and a guided hike of the park.

Deadline is April 21. For more information or to register, call (718) 601-1460.

■ NYS Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, NYS Senator Jeffrey Klein and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. invite the public to the **2nd Annual Bronx Day in Albany**, Monday, April 28 at The Egg, Empire State Plaza, Albany. Events include a luncheon and live performances by the Bronx Wanderers and Just Nuts. For more information and details, call (718) 409-0109.

■ The Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval E., offers ongoing **zumba sessions**, Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and Sundays at noon. No registration is required. For more

information, call (718) 543-8672.

■ Registration is now open for Moshulu Montefiore Community Center's **B'N Fit Annual Teen and Community Walk** scheduled for May 17 at the NY Botanical Garden from 8 to 11 a.m. (\$10). Included are free raffle prize valued at \$600, refreshments, and T-shirts to participants who preregister. For more information, call (718) 882-4000 ext. 350.

■ Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Arts Projects**: Eco Fair, to make crafts from recycled materials, April 19 and 20; and Buds, Buds, Buds, to observe trees, then make a sculpted tree, April 26 and 27; both at the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and Paper Resist, to trace your hand in pencil on a heavyweight piece of paper, then fill in with clear wax crayon, and decorate, April 17, 1:30 to 3 p.m.; all in the WH House. Additional event includes: **Daniel Kelly's Rakonto Wave Hill**, jazz concert (tickets are \$32; \$28/senior; \$18/ages 7 to 18; WH members \$22; child \$12). The **Sunroom Project** offers a series of events through Nov. 20 (call for a detailed schedule). Grounds



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admission is free Saturdays until noon all year, and free all day Tuesdays in April. Glyndor Gallery **tours** take place Tuesdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m.; garden **walks** are held Tuesdays and Saturdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m., from the Perkins Visitor Center. For more information and a schedule of events, call (718) 549-3200.

Library Events

■ The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents programs for adults including: **Single Stop/Government Benefits at 9 a.m.**: April 17, 22, 24 and 29; **MS Word for Beginners**: (advance in-person registration required), April 22 at 2 p.m.; **Estate and Gift Planning Seminar**: April 25 at 2 p.m.; **Latin & Puerto Rican Cultural Center/Heritage Exhibit Tour**: (phone or in-person registration required), April 25 at 5:30 p.m.; **Childcare Provider Resource Day**: April 26 at 10 a.m.; **LinkedIn for Job Seekers**: April 30 at 2 p.m.; and **Bronx Memoir Project**: creative writing workshop, May 1 at 11 a.m. Children can enjoy **Plant Pot Making**: (ages 7 to 12), April 17 at 4 p.m.; **Preschool Story Time at 11 a.m.**: April 17, 24 and May 1; **Toddler Play Time at noon**: April 17, 24 and May 1; **Pinocchio**: a play (for ages 3 to 12), April 19 at 2 p.m.; and **Whale Book Making**: May 1 at 4 p.m. Foreigners can attend **ESOL**: free English class,

April 22 at noon and 6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

■ The Moshulu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for seniors and adults: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m.; and **Wii Program**: Tuesdays at 3 p.m. Children can enjoy **Toddler Story Time at 10:30 a.m.**: (ages 18 to 36 months), April 24; and **Reading Aloud Story Time at 4 p.m.**: (ages 3 to 5), April 21 and 28. The entire family can attend **film**: "Saving Mr. Banks," April 21 at 4:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

■ The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: **Pajama Party**: (ages 5 to 12), April 21 at 6 p.m.; **Toddler Story Time at 11 a.m.**: (ages 18 to 36 months), April 23 and 30; and **film**: (ages 5 to 12), April 25 at 3 p.m. For adults: **Computer Basics Open Lab at noon**: April 17, 22, 24 and 29; and **Computer Basics**: April 25 at 10 a.m. For teens/young adults: **Teen Science**: April 17 at 4 p.m.; and **film**: April 24 at 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

HAPPY EASTER TO ALL OUR READERS!

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by April 21 for the next publication date of May 1.

Neighborhood Notes

Pre-K Seats Registration

The registration deadline for free pre-K programs (only for children born in 2010) at public schools and community-based organizations is Wednesday, April 23. For more information, call (718) 935-2009 or online at nyc.gov/schools/prek.

Free English Classes

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., offers free English classes: ESOL for those who want to learn and improve their English; and Reading and Writing classes (adult basic education), for those who speak English but need help with reading and writing in English. New students must attend an information session on April 22 at noon or 6 p.m. For more information call (718) 579-4244.

Summer Youth Internships

The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park offer two summer internships - Youth Run Farm Stand Summer Youth and Summer Teen Trail Crew. Applications are due in late April. For more information, call (718) 601-1553.

NYPD Career Day

The NYPD will host its annual Career Day on Saturday, May 3 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lafayette High School, 2630 Benson Ave., Brooklyn. Bring your resume for positions not requiring an entry exam. For more information, call 212-RECRUIT.

SYEP

NYC's Summer Youth Employment Program is accepting applications for residents ages 14 to 24 through April 25. Those chosen will be selected via lottery drawing. Participants are paid minimum wage and work at diverse types of businesses. For more information, call (800) 246-4646 or visit www.nyc.gov/dycd.

MetroCard Vans

MetroCard vans will be making stops on the second and fourth Friday of each month at Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse from noon to 2 p.m.; and Fordham Plaza from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Seniors with photo ID may apply for reduced fare cards and others may add value or purchase cards. For more information, call (212) METRO-CARD or visit www.mta.info.

Summer Camp Applications

The Fresh Air Fund is accepting applications for its free 2014 summer camp program for eligible children ages 6 to 12 for the Volunteer Host Family Program, and ages 8 to 15 for the camping program in Fishkill, NY. For more information, call (800) 367-0003 or go online to www.freshair.org.

For more Neighborhood Notes online, go to www.norwoodnews.org and click on "Neighborhood Notes."

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