

NORWOOD NEWS

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VOTE!**Primary Day
Sept. 13****Guide, p. 6**

SLIDING INTO NEW SCHOOL YEAR



Photo by Adi Talwar

STUDENTS FROM PS/MS 20 on Webster Avenue in Norwood celebrate the arrival of a completely revamped playground area on Friday, Aug. 31, just a week before school starts on Sept. 6. The playground was dedicated to the school's longtime and beloved parent coordinator, Haydee Criscenti, who passed away last October. More photos from the dedication ceremony can be found online at norwoodnews.org.

Bronx's Hottest Political Race Takes Tabloid Detour

By ALEX KRATZ

In early August, the Bronx's most intense primary race made a stop outside of Tracey Towers, the high-rise apartment complex on Mosholu Parkway where tenants are fighting to stave off an enormous rent hike.

Tracey lies within the 80th Assembly District, which, following redistricting, winds through Norwood on its way to Morris Park and Pelham Bay. On this particular Saturday, tenants held a rally to protest the rent increase and invited anyone who would listen and support them. Representatives from several elected officials showed up and sat at a table in front of the crowd.

Half an hour into the rally, however, 80th Assemblywoman Naomi Rivera was nowhere to be found. That's when Mark Gjonaj, the well-heeled realtor who has launched a relentless campaign to unseat Rivera, was asked to sit at the front table. He obliged. Then 15 minutes later, he got up as Rivera made her way to the table.

Despite her lateness — attendance problems in Albany have plagued Rivera throughout her eight years in office — the incumbent wasn't quite ready to give up her seat. In her remarks, she laid into unscrupulous landlords and took a swipe at her opponent. (Gjonaj is well-connected in the Bronx real estate world. He says he's only a property manager who owns some vacant land, but his family owns several Bronx apartment buildings. Gjonaj wouldn't say how much of his campaign is funded by real estate money, but several real estate companies are listed as contributors, according to campaign finance records.)

The scene fit the narrative of the race up until it took a tabloid turn the very next day.

In its Sunday edition, the *New York Post* unveiled an "exclusive" story about a Facebook page Rivera used to post pictures of her getting cozy with a political hopeful from Brooklyn, Tommy Torres, who she hired to be a part-time commu-

(continued on p. 5)

Diaz Says Ice Center Is Best for Kingsbridge Armory

By ALEX KRATZ

Two weeks ago, in front of the Armory on Kingsbridge Road, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., flanked by a hockey team worth of political supporters, said he was throwing his weight behind a plan that would make better use of the Armory by turning it into the world's largest ice sports center.

The project, known as the Kingsbridge National Ice Center, is backed by a group of Long Island businessmen, and supported by two big names stars of the ice — New York Rangers hockey legend Mark Messier and Olympic gold medal-winning figure skater Sarah Hughes. At a cost of \$275 million, the final product would create nearly 1,000 temporary construction jobs and 270 permanent so-called "living wage jobs" (\$11.50 an hour).

"Given the developer's commitment to 'living wage' jobs, local hiring and community programming, it is clear that the Kingsbridge National Ice Center project is the right fit for our borough," Diaz said.

The center would feature nine Olympic-sized ice rinks, including a 5,000-seat arena, and 50,000 square-feet of communi-

ty space. It would also feature an affordable youth program based on a successful model implemented in Philadelphia.

Diaz said the group assembled — including State Senator Gustavo Rivera (who can see the Armory from his apartment, he likes to say), Councilman Oliver Koppell (who reminded everyone it was his dream to have ice sports at the Armory 15 years ago), and Assemblyman Nelson Castro — was speaking as a unified voice to the mayor's office and the city's Economic Development Corporation, which will decide on a developer for the Armory sometime in September. (Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz also came out in support of the ice center.)

Notably not present, however, was Bronx Councilman Fernando Cabrera, whose district includes the Armory. Although Cabrera wasn't available to attend the press conference due to a conflicting meeting with the police commissioner, his chief of staff, Greg Faulkner, said Cabrera has not taken a public position on which developer he prefers. A few months ago, Cabrera was said to be down on the ice center plan because it didn't offer enough community benefits.

The other group in the running is Young Woo & Associates, which wants to turn the Armory into a creative market for local artisans and entrepreneurs. The project would also include recreational facilities, some mid-sized retail, a gym, the world's largest indoor climbing rock and the country's first 4-D movie theater. According to the *Daily News*, Young Woo responded, saying it was "very surprised and obviously disappointed" by the borough president's endorsement and defended their plan, called Mercado Mirabo, as the option that would "offer the most significant benefits to the surrounding community and all the residents of the Bronx." (Young Woo announced last week that the National Hip Hop Museum will be part of the overall development plan for Mercado Mirabo.)

Diaz said the ice project would pump more money into the local economy and wouldn't compete with the area's small businesses.

Asked by BronxTalk host Gary Axelbank if Bronxites would actually use the ice rinks, Diaz said: "There's an old adage, Gary. If you build it, they will come."



Photo by David Greene

AT A PRESS conference in front of the Kingsbridge Armory, (left to right) Rangers legend Mark Messier, State Senator Gustavo Rivera, figure skater Sarah Hughes and Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. hold up a Bronx quilt.

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3400 Reservoir Oval East
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Phone: 718 324 4998

Fax: 718 324 2917

E-mail: norwoodnews@norwoodnews.orgWeb: www.norwoodnews.org

Publisher
Mosholu Preservation Corporation
Editor-in-Chief
Alex Kratz

CEO, Mosholu Preservation Corporation
Roberto S. Garcia

Classified Advertising
Dawn McEvoy

Accounts Receivable
Dawn McEvoy

Proofreader
Judy Noy

Production
Neil deMause

Regular Contributors
David Greene, Adi Talwar, Ronald Chavez

Interns
Chloe Rickert, Sarah Ramirez, Jaleesa Baulkman

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In The Public Interest

The 80th Assembly District Underdogs

Irene Estrada-Rukaj

Irene Estrada-Rukaj, an ordained minister and community activist, is challenging incumbent Naomi Rivera to represent the 80th Assembly District in Albany. Estrada-Rukaj is one of four candidates whose names are appearing on the ballot on Primary Day, Sept. 13.

Originally from Midland, Texas, Estrada-Rukaj came to the Bronx as a 20-year-old with her two young daughters in 1982 to get involved with ministry work. Since then, the Mexican-American has become a New York State chaplain and is heavily involved in community work.

"This is my district," Estrada-Rukaj said. "I've been living here for 30 years and have been very active for the last 30 years."

Now 52 years old and a grandmother of two, she lives alone on Wallace Avenue (she separated from her husband in 2003) and currently serves as the parent coordinator at Aspire Preparatory Middle School and is a member of Community Board 11. She has responded to 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. According to Estrada-Rukaj, her specialties are education, housing and emergency services.

Estrada-Rukaj lacks the strong financial standing that Assemblywoman Rivera and fellow challenger Mark Gjonaj have, but remains hopeful.

"The 80th district is not for sale," said Estrada-Rukaj. "Not to a landlord, not to a politician whose family is being investigated."

Estrada-Rukaj also pointed fingers at the press for making the primary look like a two-way race.

"That's not equal representation on their behalf," she said.

She also is confident her connections with the clergy, community board and children's organizations will make a difference in the polls.

"We're working hard getting the job done," said Estrada-Rukaj. "People are excited, people who have never voted before, because they know I've been working and running for so long."

The community activist also believes her experiences speak for themselves.

"I'm more concerned about the conditions of the community," said Estrada-Rukaj. "I don't believe in disparity."

She says many of the issues that apply to residents of the district also apply to her life, mentioning that she is in court with her landlord over the high rent.

"I'm a tenant, not a landlord," Estrada-Rukaj said, another dig at realtor Gjonaj.

Estrada-Rukaj also has a long politi-

cal history with Rivera – Estrada-Rukaj has been removed from the ballot twice before, including in 2004, when Rivera would go on to be elected to the Assembly. She, however, continues to pursue her political aspirations.

"We're taking the district back," said Estrada-Rukaj. "It would be a privilege to be in the Assembly."

Adam Bermudez

The youngest candidate in a crowded field for the 80th Assembly District primary, Adam Bermudez, 29, worked as a reporter for the *Bronx Times* and as a freelance public affairs consultant for other campaigns before deciding to run for office himself.

A self-described "progressive Democrat," Bermudez decided to get involved in the race because he was not pleased with the current state of the district.

"I realized that I was unsatisfied with the current incumbent [Assemblywoman Naomi Rivera]," Bermudez said. "I choose to run because I feel I could offer our community what we deserve."

Bermudez was born and raised in the Pelham Gardens neighborhood of the Bronx, and attended Regis High School on the Upper East Side before earning a bachelor's degree at Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

"I've lived here all of my life," said Bermudez. "I really know this community and understand this community."

Bermudez also has deep roots here, as both of his parents were born in New York City. His mom, who is of Irish descent, was born and raised in the Bronx and works as a part-time assistant in Manhattan. His paternal grandparents emigrated from Puerto Rico, and his father is a former mortgage broker. (Bermudez himself also dabbled in real estate.)

"I'm very much of a family hit by the financial crisis," said Bermudez. Unemployment is one of the issues he is most passionate about.

"As far as joblessness, as a young twentysomething, some of those most vulnerable in these tough economic

times are young adults and their parents, who are saddled with helping their adult children," said Bermudez.

Prior to announcing his candidacy, Bermudez was working with another campaign. He is now unemployed, and says he has a history of being underemployed. He cited Jose Rivera – his opponent's father and the patriarch of the Bronx political clan – as inspiration since he ran for State Assembly while collecting unemployment in the early 1980s.

Having only recently crossed the \$1,000 mark in fund-raising, Bermudez is running his campaign on a small scale, especially compared to Rivera and fellow challenger Mark Gjonaj.

"Bottom line is I had not started fund-raising early on," said Bermudez. "I wanted this to be a real grassroots campaign. I'm hoping to raise a few thousands of dollars to have a serious race."

Besides promoting job training to curb unemployment, Bermudez also wants to push education reform. (He spent a year studying for a master's degree in elementary education at the University of Pennsylvania before returning to the Bronx to pursue a career in politics.)

"What I really care about is education reform that considers the needs of the teachers," said Bermudez.

The candidate also believes his youth, coupled with his professional experience, is an asset rather than a detriment.

"People keep telling me I'm 'fresh blood,'" said Bermudez. "I feel many people are excited to see a fresh, young candidate who's not beholden to any special interests or allegiances. When a voter is voting for Adam Bermudez, they're voting for Adam Bermudez."

—SARAH RAMIREZ



IRENE ESTRADA-RUKAJ



ADAM BERMUDEZ

Public and Community Meetings

- **Primary Day is Thursday, Sept. 13. See page 6 for details on how and where to vote.**
- **COMMUNITY BOARD 7 will hold its general board meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 18 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Road. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.**
- **COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committee meetings will be held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Parks & Rec, Thursday, Sept. 6; Economic Development, Tuesday, Sept. 11; Traffic & Transportation, Thursday, Sept. 13; Health & Hospitals, Monday, Sept. 17; Housing, Wednesday, Sept. 19.**
- **The 52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL will meet on Thursday, Sept. 27, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Cosmopolitan AME Church, 39 W. 190th St. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.**



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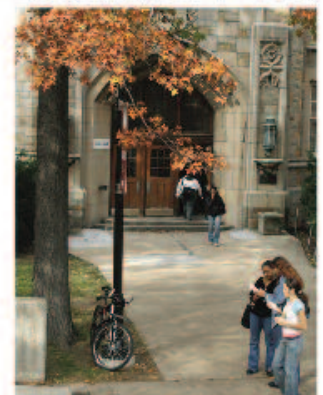
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Bronx's Hottest Political Race Takes Tabloid Detour

(continued from p. 1)

nity liaison for \$18,123 over a four-month period ending in December 2010. The story raised questions about how Torres could do that job, which amounted to about \$54 an hour, and still hold down full-time employment as a gym teacher with the Department of Education.

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver quickly sent out a statement, saying the hiring was completely above board. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and other supporters defended Rivera, saying she was the victim of a smear campaign. But questions remained about exactly what Torres did to warrant such a high rate of pay.

The next week, the *Post* dropped another bombshell report based on information provided by Vincent Pinela, a former personal trainer who Rivera had helped get a job as the executive director of the Bronx Council for Economic Development, a nonprofit started by former Bronx Democratic boss Roberto Ramirez.

Pinela said he was unqualified for the job, but Rivera, who has pumped hundreds of thousands of dollars in discretionary funds into the council over the years, gave it to him anyway. During his tenure at the council, which ended in 2010, Pinela said Rivera directed him to use council funds for extravagant personal meals, campaign expenses and to hire her brother for outside work.

When Pinela broke up with Rivera, he said the assemblywoman replaced his staff with her relatives and made it difficult for him to continue working there. When he was fired, Pinela filed a sexual harassment complaint against Rivera, but lost because she wasn't his direct employer.

To the *Post*, Rivera again denied the allegations, saying "The allegations made by Mr. Pinela against me are untrue and are made intentionally and maliciously to defame my character, and to question my integrity. Friends, and constituents who know me, know that these



Photo by David Greene

MARK GJONAJ rallies with tenants from Tracey Towers at Borough Hall after hiring a lawyer to file an injunction on their behalf to prevent a rent hike. Incumbent Naomi Rivera has counted on Tracey residents for votes over the past eight years.

are baseless accusations. I will not let myself be distracted from the work that needs to be done in my district."

But since the story broke, the Bronx District Attorney, the Attorney General's Office, the Department of Education and the State Joint Commission on Public Ethics have launched investigations into the dealings with Torres and Pinela.

Joseph McManus, the district leader in the 80th Assembly District initially brushed off the allegations. "If it's not in all three papers [*Post*, *Daily News* and *New York Times*], then it's not a story," he said.

But now, all of the papers have written about the scandal, lumping Rivera in with an infamous list of elected officials who have been buried by corruption scandals, including ex-state senators from the Bronx like Pedro Espada, Efrain Gonzalez and Guy Velella.

Rivera has since made appearances at recent community events, attacking Gjonaj for being an outsider, as

well as his real estate ties and his lack of Democratic credentials. (Gjonaj has a home on City Island, but is planning on moving into the district. He only recently became a registered Democrat and says he has identified as an Independent in the past.)

But Rivera hasn't talked to the media about the investigations since they became public. She declined to be interviewed for this article.

Meanwhile, Gjonaj is sparing no expense to take Rivera down and paint himself as a defender of tenants.

Last week, he helped re-open a shuttered community room at the Allerton Co-ops and hired a lawyer to file an injunction on behalf of tenants against the rent hike at Tracey Towers. (A hearing was scheduled for Wednesday morning, Sept. 5. Rivera said she would work toward stopping the rent increase, but it's unclear what she's done on behalf of Tracey tenants since the early August rally.)

Gjonaj has also sent out his Gjonaj CARES crew — stands for his mantra in acronym form: Community, Accountability, Respect, Encouragement, Service — an army of workers clad in yellow T-shirts who clean up various parts of the district.

"That's what I do," he says. "I see a problem and I do something about it."

The other two challengers in the race, however, say neither is worthy of representing the district.

"The 80th District is not for sale — not to a landlord, not to a politician whose family is being investigated," said Irene Estrada-Rukaj.

"It's clear by the misappropriation of funds that the incumbent has no respect for most workers," Adam Bermudez said about Rivera.

He added about Gjonaj: "I think Mark is a nice man. However, he is an independent, not a Democrat. I have no idea if Mark will pursue progressive Democrat legislation [if elected]."

The primary is Thursday, Sept. 13.

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Primary Election FAQs

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Primary Day is Thursday, September 13.

Where do I vote?

The Board of Elections notified registered voters about their polling sites via mail.

Find out your polling site is by visiting vote.nyc.ny.us,
 Click on "poll site locator and sample ballot"

Type in your house number, street address and borough
 Click "Search"

Contact the Bronx County Board of Elections at (718) 299-9017
 Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Sept. 13

Can I still register to vote?

No. To be eligible to vote in the Sept. 13 primary, you needed to register by Aug. 19. But don't let that stop you. You can register for the general election held on Nov. 6 until Oct. 12.

How do I register?

You can register in person at Bronx County Board of Elections located at 1780 Grand Concourse - 5th floor.

Register to vote at any New York State Agency-based voter registration center, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles and Social Services.

Call Board of Election's hotline to request a voter application at 1-800-FOR-VOTE.

OR download a PDF version of the New York State Voter Registration Form, or complete a PDF form online at elections.ny.gov/VotingRegister.html.

—Information courtesy of Board of Elections

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Fire Escapes Reinstalled, Tenants Return to U-Heights Building

By JALEESA BAULKMAN

Residents of a Bronx building in University Heights have returned to their apartments after being displaced for a month and a half when city inspectors discovered that contractors doing repair work had inexplicably removed all of the building's fire escapes without a permit. Now tenants are organizing in hopes of preventing similar problems down the road.

The Buildings Department, which issued the vacate order for 2400 Webb Ave. upon discovering the missing fire escapes, inspected the newly installed fire escapes and lifted the vacated order on July 19. Since then, the building's 200 or so tenants have been returning to their homes and normalcy.

"Folks are trying to reorganize themselves, everything appears to be in order," tenant Michael Staton said. "I can't say much about the quality of [the fire escapes]."

In July, Staton and other tenants took their landlord, Goldfarb Properties, to

Bronx Housing Court to address the permit violations and to discuss when tenants could move back in. The judge concluded that if the fire escapes aren't reinstalled and tenants aren't allowed back into the building by July 31 then penalties would be imposed on Goldfarb.

At the hearing, Goldfarb Properties' attorney said the building management could have the fire escapes up by the end of July or the first week of August.

But the job was completed earlier than ownership anticipated, and following the inspection, the vacate order was lifted completely. Other tenants who didn't need fire escape access, like those on the first floor, were allowed to return earlier.

Staton said that all tenants were allowed to move back into the building on July 20.

Tenant Karen Butler is glad to be back in the building after having to move her family to Yonkers to stay at a Residence Inn by Marriott Hotels for the past several weeks. She said the move made it difficult for her to get to work and get her daughter off to school in the morning.

Butler said she is not worried about the quality of the fire escapes after the building management expedited the process of reinstalling them. "I'm happy to be back at home and have normality in my life," she said.

In an effort to prevent this from happening again, tenants of the University Heights building are organizing to create a tenants association to improve communication between the tenants and Goldfarb Properties.

Staton said the purpose of this association is to address individual concerns and to look at ongoing work going on the building.

Tenants intend for their representatives in the tenants association to interact with Goldfarb Properties directly.

"[We want] to keep a watchful eye on things," Staton said. "We're looking to put that in place right away."

Staton is hoping to elect officers for the tenants association during September.



Photo by Chloe Rickert

THE FIRE ESCAPES at 2400 Webb Ave. have been reinstalled, but tenants are organizing to prevent future problems.

Police Report



Photo by David Greene

FIREFIGHTERS SECURE the scene after two SUVs crashed into a Jerome Avenue shoe store.

12 Injured as SUVs Crash Into Jerome Shoe Store

By DAVID GREENE

A dozen people were injured when two out-of-control SUVs jumped a busy sidewalk and plunged into a Norwood shoe store.

Rescue crews were dispatched to the Payless ShoeSource, located at 3457 Jerome Ave., at just after 7 p.m., on Friday, Aug. 24 to a harrowing scene.

"There was a worker who was pinned under one of the vehicles and a bunch of us went in there and we got her out," said one young man with fresh blood on his pants leg.

A second witness claimed one driver was making a broken U-turn when the driver of a Ford Expedition crashed into it at a high rate of speed.

But police said the second vehicle was parked, when the driver swerved, hitting the parked car and forcing both SUVs to be catapulted into the store.

Most of the injuries were described as victims minor and all are expected to survive.

Police say the driver and three passengers were injured in the Expedition and one victim was injured in the parked car. The seven additional victims were either walking along Jerome Avenue at the time of impact or inside the shoe store.

Employees at Payless were busy cleaning up debris the following day. The store was still not answering its phone last week.

While no one was killed in the crash, the area around Jerome Avenue, from Mosholu Parkway to East Gun Hill Road, is quickly becoming one of the most deadly roads in the city.

On Feb. 19, two men were seriously injured when their Chevy Impala struck a subway pillar on Jerome Avenue at Van Cortlandt Avenue. The two men in this crash were critically injured but are said to be recovering.

On Feb. 29, Norwood cab driver Kwame Awtwi, 51, suffered a heart attack and crashed into a pole at the corner of East Gun Hill Road and Jerome. Awtwi died a short time later at Montefiore Medical Center.

On March 28, 28-year-old Justin Bravo, a teacher at MS 244 in Kingsbridge was killed when he lost control of his motorcycle and slammed into the wall of an overpass on Mosholu Parkway at Jerome Avenue.

Detectives continue to hunt for the hit-and-run driver who mowed down 23-year-old Josbel Rivera, 23, who was killed on Dec. 26, as he crossed Mosholu Parkway at Paul Avenue. Days later the car was set ablaze in Kingsbridge.

New Manager of Local Parks Worked Her Way Up

By SARAH RAMIREZ

After seven years with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, Brooklyn resident Tannise Palmer has been named the Parks manager for Districts 7 and 8. The 7th district includes the *Norwood News*' coverage area and parks such as Williamsbridge Oval, St. James and Poe Park.

"I started as an intern and worked my way up," Palmer said in an interview with the *Norwood News*. Palmer graduated with a degree in psychology from Northeastern University in Boston, before beginning her internship with the Parks Department.

After her internship, Palmer also gained experience as an assistant to the director of capital projects and as an out-

reach coordinator working with volunteer groups. Later on as a requirements contract coordinator, Palmer helped manage the Parks budget and made sure money was being distributed to work on safety issues.

Palmer started in her new role in early June, at the start of the parks' busy season.

"My responsibility is to make sure everyone is doing their job correctly," said Palmer. "The supervisor makes sure the crews are going out and cleaning the parks to make sure the parks are clean and safe for the public."

Palmer works with two Level 1 park supervisors and one Level 2 park supervisor, as well as Associate Park Service Work (APSW) and City Park Worker (CPW) crews. The park supervisors take the crews

out to clean and maintain park areas.

"I would say I'm pretty easy-going, I don't micromanage my staff," said Palmer. "I know the work will get done, and so far we've been on the same page."

Palmer also steps out of the office to personally visit the sites.

"Throughout the week I go to a number of parks to make sure everything is ok, and that any issues get corrected," said Palmer. "Right now our focus is on cleanliness, especially in the summer months when the parks are getting the most use."

"So far my strategy is focusing on the parks that are highly used and have high visibility," Palmer added. "And the more involved the community gets, the more vibrant the park becomes."

This summer, APSW and CPW crews have been cleaning the Aqueduct Walk – a park consistently rated unacceptable in its overall condition – cutting overgrown grass and weeds.

Palmer also is working on establishing a partnership for the parks with a larger corporation, and having more cooperation between the parks and schools, including the schools around Harris Field.

Some parks present more of a challenge than others depending on usage and visitors' behavior.

"[Parks] may be challenged because we have a lot of people going there, who don't always follow park rules," said Palmer. "It's always a challenge, but we always do our best."

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Inquiring Photographer

By DAVID GREENE

With the Sept. 13 primary coming up, we asked readers why they thought the Bronx traditionally has a low voter turnout.



That is a good question. For one, I don't think the candidates are always visible and I think they need to make themselves more visible, so we know who they are and what they stand for. If they did that, I think more people would come out and vote.
Nicole Hill



Because most young people do not come out and vote. They were not taught about the power of turning the lever.
Paloma Archilla



The Bronx is a large immigrant community and many people from their home countries may have been fearful of voting and that may have carried over into their new lives, which is unfortunate. But that's the beauty of America, freedom.
Ed Taylor



I think it's either they don't care or they don't think their vote counts, I really don't know. I'm a voter. I haven't seen any rallies or anything — only when it's a mayoral race.
Julianna Crespo



Maybe they don't understand politics. Maybe it's too confusing and they don't understand how much change they can make in their own community by voting. I vote, absolutely. I think more people would vote if the politicians focused on the younger people. They are the future.
Jennifer Dragonetti

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Opinion

We love, welcome and encourage letters to the editor and opinion articles from readers. Write to: Editor, Norwood News, 3400 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467. Fax: (718) 324-2917; or e-mail: norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org.

Op-Ed

For Our Nation, Ignorance Would Not Be Bliss

By GREGORY JOST

Imagine a nation that does not know where its residents were born, how much they make, what type of housing they are living in, where they work or how they get to their jobs. This nation would not even know what percent of its population had finished high school or college, what type of heating fuel households are using, how many are going without health insurance, what the divorce rate is, or where its veterans are living.

This would be a nation without a sense of self, without data to plan for the future. No road map. No GPS. This would be a nation that would not know how to allocate resources or spend its money effectively.

The United States of America could soon become this nation.

House Republicans have recently voted to cut funding for a myriad of programs, including something known as the American Community Survey. If you've never heard of it before, the American Community Survey, or ACS, is administered by the Census Department and has, in effect, replaced the "long form" that a sample of residents would get every 10 years.

Begun in 2005, the ACS collects detailed information from a random sampling of Americans each year and pro-

vides a nuanced picture of what our nation (not to mention states, counties and neighborhoods) looks like, lives like, and how much we earn, how we commute, whom we live with, and a host of other data points that are not part of the regular census form. In fact, without the ACS, all we would have is an every-ten-year population count that includes age, race, and household composition. Nothing else.

Not only would we not have information on place of birth, income, type of housing, languages spoken or percent of people living in poverty, we would not have any sense of trends — no idea if these numbers were going up or down in one state, county or neighborhood, or another. We would be unable to evaluate the effectiveness of social, economic or immigration policies. In other words, we would be a nation lost and without directions.

The American Community Survey is too valuable to our planners, activists, advocates, businesses (of all sizes), researchers, municipal agencies, transportation authorities, and our nation itself to be on the chopping block in the name of our so-called budget crisis (that is really a revenue crisis). It currently costs taxpayers about \$242 million annually (or about 77 cents per capita — less than the cost of one day of war in Afghanistan), which I would say is money

very well spent. There is still hope that it will be saved by the Senate or in budget negotiations, but its defunding by House Republicans is a testament to short-sight-

edness. We should not trust them to invest properly in our nation's future.

Jost is deputy director of University Neighborhood Housing Program.

Letters

Stop "Stop and Frisk"

With respect to the front page story in your March 8 - 21 issue regarding "stop and frisk," it seems that for a police officer to use his authority to stop and search anyone at random and without cause is truly reprehensible. No one should be subjected to random frisking at the whim of a policeman merely because he can. Ditto for detaining anyone for questioning without any good cause.

There have already been numerous stories in the dailies about police overstepping their authority and this issue is no different.

There are those who may call this racial profiling, but what will this be called if white individuals are stopped, even if their numbers may be fewer than minorities? And heaven forbid if anyone should try to resist, since by doing so they might risk outright arrest. The officers involved should be out looking for an actual crime in progress instead.

Should the public now fear being out

and about since anyone can be stopped at any time without warning? This amounts to public humiliation, and even if an innocent victim subsequently complains to the Civilian Complaint Review Board and receives an apology, the victim is still left with the memory of a traumatic experience which cannot be undone.

It's bad enough that some airline passengers at an airport may be required to undergo a body search in the name of public safety, but on a public street? That's a bit much.

While there are the few who may actually be caught with something illegal during this procedure, it doesn't warrant pursuing the stop and frisk at random. Those who would carry a gun or who have planned to commit a crime will probably not be deterred.

The time of police could be better spent elsewhere.

Judy Noy
Norwood resident



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Business Beat

Bainbridge Ave. Fire Lot To Become Retail

If you've walked by the empty lot on Bainbridge Avenue and 204th Street recently, you may have noticed a difference: construction crews working to turn it into something other than the rubble-strewn lot that it has been since Halloween of 2009 when the building standing there was burned down by a fire.

According to plans on the website of the brokerage firm RKF, the lot will be turned into a one-story building that is already open for commercial lease.

RKF did not respond to inquiries for more information by press time, but construction is obviously still in beginning stages. —ALEX KRATZ



Photo by Alex Kratz

A LOOK INSIDE the construction zone at the corner of Bainbridge Avenue and 204th Street, which will be turned into a retail building.



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Neighborhood Notes

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Flag Football Program

The New York City Christian Athletic League, based in the northwest Bronx, is accepting registration forms for the upcoming fall season for those ages 12 to 18. The league starts Sept. 15 and will run for 10 weeks. All games will be played on Saturday mornings at Harris Field. The fee for all players is \$25. For more information or to fill out a registration form, visit nycccl.org or e-mail nyccal@aol.com.

CreativeMoney Workshops

The Bronx Council on the Arts and ArtHome are offering a series of workshops for artists and independent workers on Wednesdays, Sept. 19 (CreativeMoney Homeownership Basics; free) and Sept. 26 (CreativeMoney Balance Basics; \$20), each from 6:15 to 8:15 p.m. at Poe Park Visitors Center, 2640 Grand Concourse. Doors open at 6 p.m. Workshops will cover financial literacy, personal financial stability, credit access, small business success and more. Advance payment and registration are required. For more information or to RSVP, visit bronxarts.org or call (718) 931-9500.

Women's Support Group

The First Step Women's Support Group will gather at the Jewish Home & Hospital for the Aged, 100 W. Kingsbridge Rd. (small gallery), every third Thursday of the month, to discuss women's issues and concerns, including housing, childcare, education, domestic violence, health and more. For more information, call Pat Woods, (718) 877-5790.

Mentoring Program for Students

The Young Scholars Immersion Program, a program coordinated by Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and Manhattan College, provides year-round mentoring and enrichment opportunities for disadvantaged students in the Bronx. The program is currently seeking more high school applicants. Students get the chance to visit college campuses, participate in writing and study workshops and get constant support from tutors at the College's Center for Academic Success. For more information, contact Neil Bogan at nbogan@khcc-nyc.org or call (718) 884-0700 ext. 116.

MMCC Discovery Club

Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave., seeks students from kindergarten to 6th grade to register for the After School Discovery Club. Activities include homework help, sports, arts and crafts, dance, and more. Children are picked up from area schools and the program lasts until 6 or 6:30 p.m., when parents pick up the students. For more information and to register, call Ruth Moore at (718) 944-3207 or visit www.mmcc.org.

After School Program for Middle School Students

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The Bedford Park Congregational Church, located at the corner of 201st Street and Bainbridge Avenue, is celebrating its 123rd anniversary with a concert and dinner on Sunday, September 30, 2012. This classical music concert will begin at 3:30 p.m. in the church, followed by a delicious catered dinner in our hall at 5 p.m. Tickets, which benefit the Roof Repair Fund, are \$30 per person and can be obtained by calling James Moloney Jr. at (718) 882-0407. For further information, please contact Reverend Dr. Christopher Ponnuraj at (718) 367-8996. Please join us in celebrating our 123rd anniversary and help our community church.

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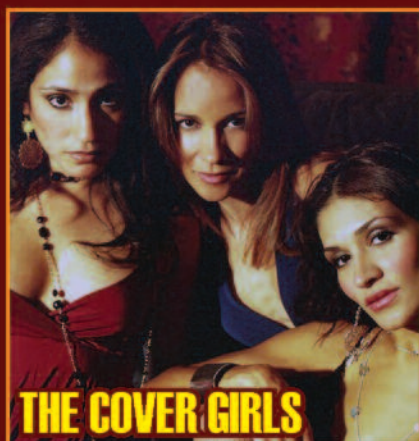
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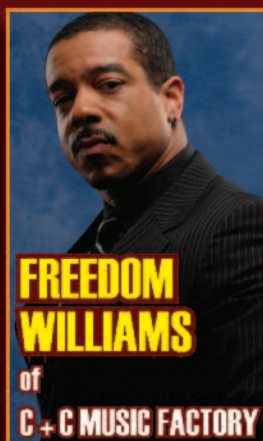
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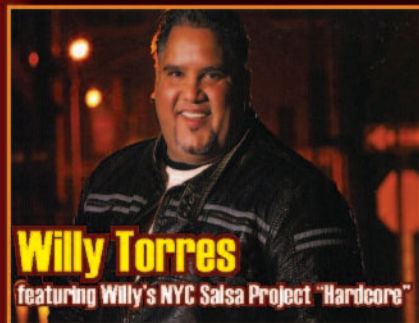
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Out & About

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Onstage

■ Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **Latino Concert Series**, beginning on Sept. 15 at 8 p.m., featuring Latin jazz and salsa, performed by the **Michel Camilo Trio** and **Tipica '73**, respectively, including numerous special guest performers. Tickets are \$45 to \$55. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

Events

■ The Bronx Zoo presents **Avenue Zoo**, a musical featuring Avenue Q puppet star Kate Monster, Thursdays to Sundays, to Sept. 9. For more information and a schedule, call (718) 367-1010 or visit www.bronxzoo.com.

■ The Fordham Road B.I.D. presents **Fordham Fever Fridays**, taking place the first Friday of the month from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Muller Park's Pedestrian Plaza on East Fordham Road and Creston Avenue: Sept. 7 and Oct. 5. The series features free Native-American storytelling, sports and fitness boot camp demos, artists displaying their artwork, live musical performances, and more. For more information, call (718) 562-2104 or visit www.fordhamroadbid.org.

■ New York Road Runners will hold a **Bronx 10-mile race**, Sunday, Sept. 9 starting at 7 a.m., followed by post-race entertainment for runners and supporters. For more information, fees, and race location, call (212) 423-2287 or visit www.nyrr.org to register.

■ The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (165th Street), presents its free **First Friday** on Sept. 7 from 6 to 10 p.m., featuring film, art performances, music and other special events. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

■ Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Be a Bee, to wear wings, antennae, a pollen cup, and a kazoo to buzz with; then join a bee parade and dance in a cardboard hive (weather permitting), Sept. 8 and 9; and Paperscapes, to make a hand-

made landscape using paper pulp, sticks, and leaves, Sept. 15 and 16; both from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Ecology Building. In addition, there is a **Birding Walk**, Sept. 9 at 9:30 a.m., from the Perkins Visitor Center (call for required registration or online at www.wavehill.org; severe weather cancels; call ext. 245 by 8 a.m. day of walk to confirm); and **Honey Weekend**, Sept. 8 and 9, which includes learning about honeybees as well as honey extraction and tasting demonstrations (call for detailed schedule). Grounds admission is free Saturdays until noon and all day Tuesdays. 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, call (718) 549-3200.

■ The New York Botanical Garden presents **Greenmarket**, the popular farmers market of GrowNYC, at the base of Library Allee inside the Garden's Mosholu Gate entrance, Wednesdays, through Nov. 21, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visitors may purchase affordable, locally grown produce and fresh, nutritious baked goods. For more information, call (718) 817-8658.

■ Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. invites the public to board the Bronx Trolley on Sept. 8 to celebrate Italian food and culture on **The Italian Culinary Tour**. This 2nd annual urban farm tour series is a narrated group tour of some of the Bronx's most amazing working farms and community gardens. Bring seeds to swap with gardeners at River Garden. Additional stops will be at the NY Botanical Garden's Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden and cheese-making mini workshop at Mike's Deli and lunch on your own. Tours will depart at 10 a.m. and return at 3 p.m. at 810 Seventh Avenue, corner of 52nd Street in Manhattan. Bronxites may board at the trolley's first stop at 10:30 a.m. at River Garden, 180th Street and Devoe Avenue (near Boston Road). Tickets are \$20, RSVP required. For more information, call (718) 817-8026.

Exhibits

■ The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse at 165th Street, presents

two exhibitions featuring modern and contemporary art from Latin America:

Revolution Not Televised (through Oct. 7) features contemporary Cuban art and takes the pulse of contemporary artistic practice in Cuba; and **Rituals of Chaos** (through Jan. 6, 2013) highlights the work of Mexican photo-journalist Enrique Metinides and 11 contemporary artists who similarly take the human experience in the city as their subject matter. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

■ The New York Botanical Garden presents **Claude Monet's Garden**, featuring his paintings, palette, and photographs, in the Rondina Gallery, through Oct. 21. Additional events include concerts, poetry, tours, film screenings, and family activities. For more information, call (718) 817-8658/8512.

■ The Bronx County Historical Society, 3309 Bainbridge Ave., presents **In Style, Bronx Architecture**, through Oct. 7, including Bronx landmarks. For more information and to reserve, call (718) 881-8900.

Library Events

■ The Bronx Library Center, at 310 E.

Kingsbridge Rd. off Fordham Road, presents programs for adults including **History of the Latino in the Bronx**: talk/discussion, Sept. 15 at 2:30 p.m.; **Free Introductory Computer Classes at 10 a.m.**: Sept. 12; and **Marketing Yourself With Confidence**: lecture on how to prepare for a job interview, Sept. 18 at 10 a.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

■ The Mosholu Library, at 285 E. 205th St., offers for seniors and adults: **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m.; **Wii Program**: Tuesdays at 3 p.m.; and **Open Lab**: to get basic computer questions answered (advance, in-person registration required), Sept. 19 at 10:30 a.m. Children can attend **Bilingual Birdies: Spanish Language**: (ages to 5 years), live music program including puppetry and games, ending with a bubble dance party, Sept. 18 at 11 a.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwood-news@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Sept. 10 for the next publication date of Sept. 20.

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EDITOR'S PICK

Remembering 9-11

The community is invited to join Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and the Supreme Court of Bronx County to pay homage to families, friends, and neighbors who perished on Sept. 11, 2001, at **A Day of Remembrance**, Sept. 14 from noon to 2 p.m. at Bronx County Building, 851 Grand Concourse on the steps of the main entrance. For more information and to confirm your attendance, call (718) 590-3522.



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