

NORWOOD NEWS

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Be Healthy

Anti-Bullying 101
 page 6

Indicted Castro Helps Build Corruption Case

By ALEX KRATZ

Nelson Castro's career as a politician and undercover informant began with a lie. Ironically, the lie made him one of the most trustworthy lawmakers in New York.

"With the amount of supervision he was under from the very beginning, there was no person less likely to be corrupt in Albany than Nelson Castro," said Castro's lawyer, Michael C. Farkas.

Before becoming the first Dominican elected official from the Bronx, rising to a leadership position on immigration issues in the state Assembly and becoming a star in a federal corruption case against fellow Bronx assemblyman Eric Stevenson, Castro stood accused of voter fraud.

Case Vanishes

In the summer of 2008, Mike Soto, one of Castro's opponents in the race for the 86th assembly district, which includes parts of Fordham and University Heights, brought a general objection to his collection of registered voters who had signed his petition to get on the ballot for the fall primary.

Under scrutiny, it turned out that nine people on his petition said they lived in Castro's one bedroom apartment in the west Bronx, including some who were his relatives. Castro said he didn't know any of them.

(continued on page 2)

Teen Charged in Fordham Heights Blaze

By DAVID GREENE

Law enforcement officials say a teen fighting with her mother intentionally set a blaze that injured six firefighters and left homeless two dozen residents of a Fordham Heights building.

Fire Department officials said resident Princess Martinez, 19, confessed to setting the blaze after having a heated argument with her mother. The teen allegedly set fire to a mattress before exiting the apartment. The mother escaped unharmed.

Martinez was charged with arson and remains held on \$100,000 bail.

Firefighters were called to the six-story building at 2254 Cedar Ave., at West Fordham Road, at just before 9 a.m., on Saturday, April 6, when the fire broke out on the fifth floor. It quickly spread to the top floor and roof.

(continued on page 4)

MARCH TO SPRING TRAINING



Photo by Adi Talwar

ON OPENING DAY for Mosholu Montefiore Community Center's youth baseball league, April 13, young players, coaches, parents and supporters march from Gun Hill Road in Norwood to Harris Field in Bedford Park to kick off the new season. More photos on page 6 and norwoodnews.org.

Bangladeshi Group Gathers in Bronx To Support War Crimes Tribunal

By WILL SPEROS

Dozens of Bangladeshi New Yorkers congregated at a church in Norwood on a recent Sunday evening to demonstrate their support for a controversial war crimes tribunal that is prosecuting alleged crimes against humanity stemming from Bangladesh's war for



Photo by Adi Talwar

DOZENS of Bangladeshi New Yorkers came out to Holy Nativity Church in Norwood to celebrate and remember their home country's violent path to independence.

independence more than 40 years ago.

Though BCA president Ansar H. Chowdhury said the event would include "celebrating [independence] together," the night would largely be one of "remembrance." Hundreds of thousands died in the war and, recently, dozens have been killed in clashes between Bangladesh security forces and an Islamic Party protesting against the tribunal.

The event, held at the Holy Nativity Episcopal Church on Bainbridge Avenue, was put together by the Bengali Cultural Association of the USA, an organization with a goal to make secularism, democracy, and human rights a priority since its inception in 1971 when Bangladesh first achieved its independence.

New York City has the highest Bangladeshi population in the country, with over 57,000 living in the five boroughs today. The Bangladeshi population in the Bronx has soared in recent years and Muslim leaders are in the middle of building a new Islamic cultural center in the Norwood area to accommodate their growing numbers.

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BREAKING BRONX



News • Politics • Policy

By ALEX KRATZ

Under Indictment, Castro Helps Build Corruption Case

(continued from page 1)

According to reports, the mediator hearing the case found his testimony “less than credible” and it looked like Castro would be kicked off the ballot. But somehow, the controversy melted away.

Ultimately, Castro, who was also found to have a short criminal record from his younger days and thousands of dollars in unpaid parking tickets, remained on the ballot and easily won election.

His honeymoon as an assemblyman didn’t last long. Just a few months into his freshman year as a legislator, in April of 2009, Castro was indicted on perjury charges by the Bronx District Attorney’s office.

Rather than face the charges, which political insiders say would have been difficult to prove, Castro cut a deal. He agreed to help the DA’s office uncover corruption and, in exchange, they would seal the indictment and Castro could continue to hold his job in Albany.

On His Own

For four years, and two re-election campaigns, Castro continued on as a state legislator, solidifying his hold on the 86th assembly district despite vigorous opposition from his own party.

In 2008, Bronx Assemblyman Jose Rivera was chairman of the Bronx Democratic County Committee, which comes with serious political clout in the borough. Despite a couple of minor red flags, Rivera said County’s executive committee at the time recommended Castro to fill the 86th assembly seat, which was vacated by Luis Diaz who had taken a job working for Governor David Patterson.

Despite the flags, which included his criminal record and the outstanding parking fines, Castro was experienced, having worked as chief of staff for upper Manhattan Assemblyman Adriano Espaillat, who’s now a state senator.

Still, Castro wasn’t connected in Bronx political circles and the decision to go with Castro over party loyalist Hector Ramirez upset some of the rank-and-file Bronx Democrats.

Later that fall, Rivera was ousted as chairman during a raucous meeting at the historic Paradise Theater on the Grand Concourse.

In 2010, the new leaders of the Bronx County Democrats put their full weight into taking out Castro, pouring its resources and ground game into the candidacy of Hector Ramirez.

A Solid Reputation

Mike Nieves, a top Democratic political operative who’s worked on campaigns all over New York, said the County Committee tried, but couldn’t dig up any dirt (other than what was already known about him) on Castro because it simply wasn’t there.

“He was clean,” Nieves said.

Castro ended up beating Ramirez soundly and other borough elected officials began warming up to him.

Over the next two years, Castro developed a reputation as an effective legislator and an engaged representative for his constituents. Recently, he was named



Photo courtesy Castro’s office

FORMER BRONX ASSEMBLYMAN Nelson Castro (left) during a recent hearing on immigration issues in Albany. Castro was just starting to come into his own as a lawmaker when he was forced to resign because of perjury charges brought against him in 2009.

head of the assembly’s sub-committee on New Americans, where he championed pro-immigrant legislation.

Rivera, for one, was impressed.

“He was doing a lot of stuff,” Rivera said. “He was very visible, bringing people together. And he was doing that until all of this exploded. It broke my heart.”

Although Castro admitted to the perjury charges and helping out on “various” investigations over the past four years, nothing came of his cooperation with law enforcement officials until early 2012, when a political operative named Sigfredo Gonzalez approached him with an offer.

Working for the Feds

Gonzalez, who worked for former Bronx state senator and now convicted felon Pedro Espada, was working for a group of developers. They wanted to open two new adult day care centers, one in Castro’s district on Jerome Avenue and another in Bronx Assemblyman Eric Stevenson’s central Bronx district.

Gonzalez told Castro that he wanted to set up a meeting with his associates. At the meeting, Castro said he would help out the developers in exchange for “special treatment.”

One of the developers, Igor Tsimerman, according to court documents, told Castro, “I am sure that we can afford the same ‘special treatment’ that is necessary in the course of this business and that are vital for the existence and course of this business.” He added. “We’ll be able to help, we’ll be there for you.”

At the time, Castro was wearing a recording device provided by law enforce-

ment officials.

According to court documents, a few weeks later, on Jan. 27, Gonzalez brought Castro an envelope containing \$12,000. Gonzalez took \$2,000 for himself and gave the rest to Castro.

A few months later, Gonzalez began working for the federal government and, over the next year, with little help from Castro, helped the United States Attorney’s office build a strong case against Stevenson and the developers.

Prosecutors say for around \$20,000, Stevenson, who comes from a politically-connected family and represents some of the poorest neighborhoods in the central Bronx, including Morrisania, agreed to help the developers cut thought red tape, recruit seniors for the two new adult day care centers and introduce legislation that would eliminate competition for the developers.

When the indictment against Stevenson and the developers was unveiled on April 4 (he and the developers pleaded not guilty), Castro announced that he would resign as part of his cooperation agreement.

The next week, Castro’s indictment on perjury charges was unsealed and, although he admitted to lying about not knowing the registered voters who claimed his address back in 2008, he pleaded not guilty.

“I deeply regret my misconduct while campaigning before I was elected to office,” Castro said in a statement. “It is my sincere hope that my constituents remember me most for the good I have done as their representative, rather than for the poor example I set as a candidate.

Public and Community Meetings

- **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: **Community Relations/Long-term Planning, Thursday, April 18; Land Use/Zoning, Thursday, April 25; Youth Services/Public Safety and Quality of Life, Friday, April 26** (St. James Rec Center, 2530 Jerome Ave. (between 190th and 192nd streets). All Community Board meetings are open to the public. For more information, call (718) 933-5660 or visit www.BronxCB7.info.
- **The 52nd Precinct Community Council** will meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 25, at Glad Tidings Assembly of God Church, 2 E. Van Cortlandt Ave. (off Jerome Ave.). All are welcome. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.

Art Thrives on School's Walls

By SARA REGALADO

With help and support from PS 246's maintenance staff, faculty, and former and current students, Annie Coan, an art teacher at the school, has mothered an artistic atmosphere that breathes on the school's walls.

"Although budget cuts have decimated every aspect of our educational system, at least we still have an art program at PS 246," Coan says. "Principal Pascal Miller and our assistant principals have worked so hard to keep the arts alive in our school because the arts keep kids in school!"



Photo by Sara Regalado

PS 246'S walls, inside and out, are painted with murals, many that include inspirational messages and quotes for its students.

Coan was approached with the idea of creating a mural in front of the school by its "beloved" principal, Beverly Pascal Miller. Coan worked on selecting education-based quotes. Soon after, Pascal Miller chose George Washington Carver's "Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom" to adorn the building.

Coan decided to unite Carver's quote with President Theodore Roosevelt's four freedoms (freedom of expression, freedom to worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear), along with several inspirational sayings such as "be who you want to be," all of which are painted in diverse colors of red, blue, yellow, and orange. Building manager, Eddie Cintron also assisted.

Social mobility comes through hard work and education," Coan says. "I imagine most of the immigrant population of the Bronx hopes and prays this remains true."

Because this Carver/Roosevelt mural project is not the first of its kind, Coan is hopeful for more murals at PS 246, also known as the Poe Cottage School. Recently, 5th graders added to the collection, completing an indoor mural of a Bat-fish aquarium.

"Whether it's art or technology, teaching with visuals is another way of engaging students in learning," Pascal Miller says.

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Police Report

String of Violence in Norwood, Fordham-Bedford

The return of the warm weather has also come with heated tempers as evidenced by three violent incidents reported over a four-day period in the Norwood and Fordham-Bedford communities.

The three unidentified victims were wounded in separate, apparently unrelated, incidents across the 52nd Precinct patrol area.

The outbreak of violence included two shootings and one stabbing.

Police were called to 3200 Perry Ave. at East 206th Street, at 11:49 p.m., on Wednesday, April 3, when officers discovered a male victim who had been shot in the

neck and back. The wounded man, who was identified as John Bello, was rushed to Jacobi Hospital, where he is expected to survive, but remains paralyzed from the waist down, according to 52nd Precinct Commander Inspector Joseph Dowling.

Dowling wouldn't go into details about the investigation because it remains ongoing, but did say that it appeared to be marijuana related.

Investigators were looking for a group of black males between the ages of 18 and 24 years old who were observed running from the scene.

One suspect was described as 5-foot-

6-inches tall and wearing a gray hooded jacket under a green bubble jacket. One police source stated the jacket had the logo of the Seattle Seahawks on the back of it.

A second suspect was described as being 5-foot-9-inches tall, wearing a gray hooded jacket and a Chicago White Sox baseball cap.

The group reportedly fled on foot across East 206 Street and south on Bainbridge Avenue.

On Friday, April 5, police were called to Risse Park, located at Jerome Avenue and West Mosholu Parkway South after a man was reported stabbed inside the park. The victim was rushed to a nearby hospital and is expected to survive.

Another man was wounded when gunfire erupted at the corner of Bainbridge Avenue and East 196th Street, at 5:30 p.m., on April 7. The victim was transported to a local hospital and he, too, was expected to survive.

Police have yet to announce any arrests in any of the incidents.

—DAVID GREENE

ring just a block away on Valentine Avenue and East 194th Street.

Of the 28 defendants, whose ages range from 20 to 41, 16 of them were taken into custody as part of a larger undercover operation. Between May 2012 and March 2013, several undercover NYPD officers made over 20 purchases of heroin from some 18 members of the Briggs Organization that were marked with some of the group's signature stamps. The organization was also involved in circulating crack cocaine.

During the course of the investigation, undercover officers were sold over 900 "bundles" of heroin and firearms. Weapons included in these bundles were AK-47 assault rifles and UZI 9 millimeter machine guns.

All but one of the 28 defendants are facing life sentences.

—WILL SPEROS

'HANDS' REACH OUT TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE



Photo by David Greene

HUNDREDS OF anti-violence demonstrators made a strong statement against gun violence as they held hands along the Grand Concourse, from Kingsbridge Road to Mosholu Parkway on Sunday, April 14. The event, organized by the Bronx Reentry Task Force and the Bronx Clergy Criminal Justice Roundtable, featured several speakers, including Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. and Bronxite Yvette Montanez, whose niece was caught in the crossfire of a shootout between two rival gangs in the South Bronx. Montanez explained, "The more people that come out, the more that our elected officials know that they need to stick together and stop the violence and stop the trafficking of illegal guns."

—DAVID GREENE

Briggs Ave. Drug Crew Busted

Law enforcement officials say they have crippled an extensive drug and weapons organization that operated in the Fordham-Bedford area.

Following a joint investigation by local police and federal agents, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York said they had indicted 28 members of the crew, known as the "Briggs Avenue Organization" because they allegedly conducted their illegal business around Briggs Avenue and East 194th Street.

The organization operated within the confines of Sector George, a neighborhood where dangerous crimes of this caliber are nothing new. In 2011, federal agents helped bring down another drug

Beating at Oval Park

Just before 9 o'clock on Thursday morning, April 11, traffic built up around Reservoir Oval in Norwood as dozens of local police, aided by helicopters, chased after a group of suspects who, witnesses said, severely beat up a local barber.

Police managed to track down and capture at least one of the suspects. By 9:15 a.m., he was sitting in a police car on Reservoir Oval East at Putnam Place. While he sat in the back of the police car, the victim was laid out on a stretcher in an ambulance just 10 feet away. Both were later taken away.

The barber, who is Dominican, was jogging in Oval Park when a group of black men began yelling ethnic slurs at him, according to witnesses. The group then chased him down out of the park and beat him up using various makeshift weapons.

Some speculated that the beating might have stemmed from an earlier beef between the barber and his friends and the group of men who beat up the barber.

—ALEX KRATZ

Teen Charged in Fordham Heights Blaze



Photo by David Greene

A PHOTO OF Princess Martinez who officials said confessed to setting the fire in her mother's apartment.

(continued from page 1)

One woman, visibly shaken, said, "[Firefighters] said that someone set the fire and we lost everything."

The fire victim added that many years ago another intentional blaze was set inside the same apartment.

It took 150 firefighters more than an hour and a half to stop the blaze, which damaged three apartments and forced dozens of residents, including Metropolitan Opera singer Andrey Nemzer, to evacuate.

Six firefighters suffered minor injuries and were treated for minor burns and smoke inhalation.

After the fire, Red Cross organizers were working to find homes for the tenants displaced by the damage.



Photo by David Greene

FIREFIGHTERS BATTLE a three-alarm fire that broke out on the top floor of a building on Cedar Avenue on Saturday.

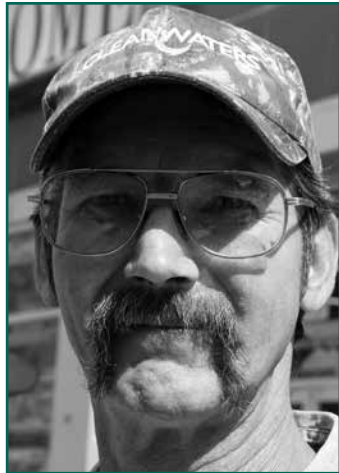
Inquiring Photographer

By DAVID GREENE

This week we asked readers about the corruption charges filed against several high-ranking public officials.



It embarrassed the entire city. It brings everybody down. Where is the pride? They should be helping to make the city better for the people and look what happens. Now people aren't going to vote because of what happened and I feel bad.
William Guatalupe



There's a lot of crooked [officials] out there, but I don't think they're all crooks. But they should put an end to it. I think politics breeds corruption — it's been going on for years and they're just getting more bold about it.
Cliff Duso



I'll vote again. I don't think all politicians are crooks, but a lot of them are. They have to do something to get a lot of these guys out of office. There should be no such thing as a career politician, you shouldn't make a career out of politics at all. The people are scared of the government now and it shouldn't be like that.
Julio Torres



[Politicians] take too much advantage of us, personally, with the money from our taxes. Half the time we don't get half our tax money back. There's a lot of stuff going on, a lot of underhanded stuff going on in politics. If you ask me all of them deserve jail time because they are stealing from us.
Jason Camacho



The opposition party, whoever it might be, will come after all those who are on top. It's not so much that all those persons were accused of trying to throw the mayoral race, it had more to do with destroying the Democratic party line and the democratic idea.
Dr. Chancy Marsh

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Be Healthy

77

Percentage of kids who experience some type of bullying, according to a recent survey.

Vital
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Anti-Bullying 101

By ALEX KRATZ

In the wake of a disturbing bullying episode at MS 80 in Norwood that left a 14-year-old hospitalized after months of abuse, the *Norwood News* spoke with Cheryl Hurst, who developed an anti-bullying program for the Montefiore School Health Program called STAR (Strengthening Tween and Adolescent Relationships). It's an 8-week program that operates in several Bronx middle schools, including PS/MS 95, but not MS 80.

As its title suggests, Hurst says her program is a crash course in creating and maintaining healthy relationships, mostly for kids in middle school, but some fifth graders as well. They've also developed a curriculum for high school students.

Bullying, Hurst says, is a symptom of deteriorating relationships that leave young people hurt — psychologically, emotionally and physically.

The biggest and most important thing STAR does is "empower" participants with language, Hurst says. There are four main ways young people can be empowered with language when a bullying situation arises. Below are the basics of each empowerment tactic.

1) Be Assertive. Hurst says young people need to "speak with confidence" when

somebody makes fun of them or puts them down. They should tell the person taunting them, "I don't like that." Then walk away and tell somebody — your teacher, school administrator or parents — about it.

2) Avoid Being Aggressive. In a similar situation, when faced with bullying, you shouldn't lash out physically by punching someone in the face or responding with hateful or derogatory comments. Being aggressive will only escalate the situation and make it worse.

3) Avoid Being Passive. Hurst says this one is "tricky" because, in a way, you have to be passive by not getting involved. But when faced with a bullying situation, you also shouldn't just walk away and then not tell anyone about it. Realize you have resources and don't have to be a victim. In other words, don't be aggressive by fighting back or hurting someone, but be assertive and tell somebody about it.

4) Avoid Being Passive Aggressive. If faced with acts of bullying, don't pretend like everything is fine. If an interaction with someone is bothering you, tell somebody about it. Don't bottle it up inside of you. Over time those hurtful words and interactions will build to the point where it will start to have negative impact on

your psyche and self-confidence. Bottom line: if you're being bullied or even think you might be facing a bullying situation, tell an adult, either your parents or someone at your school.

Blood Drive

Save a life by giving blood this Thursday, April 18, at the North Central Bronx Hospital's mobile bus located at the hospital's entrance on Kossuth Avenue from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Free Cancer Check

On April 19 at the Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer, 1521 Jarret Place, there will be free oral, head and neck cancer screenings. When detected early the treat-

ment and survival rate for cancer dramatically increases. The screenings are free and consist of a brief examination by a physician. No appointment is necessary. For more information, call at (718) 920-8488.

Earth Day Event

Montefiore Medical Center is hosting its 6th annual Earth Day event on Monday, April 22. This year there will be an Earth Day symposium in the hospital's Grand Hall, from 12:15 to 2:15 p.m. for anyone interested in learning more about how to reduce your carbon footprint and what Montefiore is doing to become more energy efficient. For more information, call (718) 920-4542 or email fesabill@montefiore.org.



YOUNGSTERS FROM the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center's youth baseball league use all kinds of bells and whistles and faces during their march to Harris Field to celebrate Opening Day. More baseball photos at norwoodnews.org.



Photos by Adi Talwar

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Fordham Plaza Movie Nights Part of Expansion Plan

By WILL SPEROS

The Fordham Road Business Improvement District recently announced plans to host a series of outdoor movie nights at Fordham Plaza starting on April 26 (see Out & About on page 10 for details).

Daniel Bernstein, the BID's deputy director, says these "clean, safe, family-friendly" movie nights are part of a larger plan for the BID to expand their boundaries to include the Fordham Plaza area.

Their boundaries currently extend from Third to Jerome avenues along East Fordham Road. A two- to three-year construction plan is already under way in the area, and this construction is anticipated to expand from the road to the interior of the plaza within the next year.

Fordham Plaza functions during the day as a flea market of sorts, offering everything from sunglasses and produce to parrots. The space is considered to be underutilized after dark, which is why Bernstein feels that using the space for movie

nights is an ideal marketing opportunity.

Bernstein and his fellow BID members have received a "slew of support letters" from businesses within the 1 Fordham Plaza building saying they are eager to be included within the BID's boundaries.

While the outdoor plaza itself will definitely be obtained by the BID, there is no official word yet on whether or not the neighboring building will be as well. However, Bernstein says recent talks about including 1 Fordham Plaza have been very positive. If talks continue to go well, the BID may also obtain Cookie's Department store off East

Fordham Road on Webster Avenue.

Bernstein says families are highly encouraged to grab some blankets and chairs and come enjoy a "great summer" of outdoor movies. The BID will be showing "The Amazing Spider-Man," "Despicable Me," and "Megamind." The public will get to participate in a Facebook vote to determine whether the last film will be "Up," "Brave," or "Oz: the Great and Powerful."

Editor's Note: For more information on the film festival or the BID's expansion plan, visit fordhamroadbid.org.

'Band of Brothers,' Activists Protest Cemetery

By SARA REGALADO

At least 50 activists rallied outside of the gates of Woodlawn Cemetery last Saturday to protest against what they called a racist, discriminatory and retaliatory work environment inside the historic landmark.

The rally was also in support of a discrimination lawsuit brought against the cemetery by three former employees and one current employee.

The former employees — Frank Russo, Todd Brown and Alex Coss — said they were ousted for speaking against the injustice going on inside the cemetery.

Russo called his fellow plaintiffs his "band of brothers" and said he was fired

for speaking out after returning to work following a brain tumor operation.

"They mentally, physically, and financially strangled me. Even one of the foremen mentioned to me that if I had never stayed with these guys, I would have never have had to 'suffer the consequences.' Those are his words," Russo said.

Alex Coss' brother, Rick Coss, the only plaintiff still working at Woodlawn, said he wanted to strengthen his fellow workers' union, noting that their contract expires at the end of the year. That is, if he doesn't get fired first.

"I'm the only one still actively working at the cemetery," Rick Coss said. "So if tomorrow, or Monday, I'm no longer there — you know why."



Photo by Alex Kratz

FLEA MARKET by day, Fordham Plaza will turn into a movie theater on select nights this spring and summer.

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Bangladeshi Group Supports War Crimes Tribunal

(continued from page 1)

According to the latest American Community Survey conducted by the Census Bureau, Parkchester has the most concentrated Bangladeshi population in the Bronx, with an estimated 2,642 people. The only neighborhoods more populated with Bengalis are Kensington in Brooklyn (2,671) and Jamaica Hills, Queens (4,104).

Inside the church on April 7, the walls of the large social room were decorated with posters of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a man the Bangladeshi people consider “The Father of the Nation” for his work in helping them achieve independence from West Pakistan.

The event included appearances and speeches from several Bangladeshi political leaders who are active in the United States, each of them wearing red and green scarves, the colors on the nation’s flag.

Those invited to speak at the event Sunday evening spoke in Bengali without a translator present. This was done to reflect the BCA’s effort to “preserve culture, language, and identity” outside of the country of Bangladesh. The BCA representatives interviewed in English, however, all spoke of the similar goals.

BCA secretary M.A. Salam discussed the group’s desire to “mobilize the people of the U.S, who believe in democracy and who believe in human rights” to cooperate with the Bangladeshi people living in the United States. Nearly all members of the BCA, like Rahman himself, said their goal is to have the Bangladeshi people become a more secular and democratic

people.

Sheikh Al Mamum, a local math teacher and supporter of the BCA, detailed the complex and often violent history of the Bangladeshi independence saga, which has continued to evolve with the latest bloodshed.

On March 7, 1971, Rahman motivated the people of East Pakistan to fight for their independence and separate from West Pakistan, first through protests and civil disobedience. But tensions escalated when West Pakistan security forces attacked East Pakistan civilians and on March 25, East Pakistan declared its independence. The next day, war broke out. What ensued is often viewed as genocide committed by West Pakistani forces.

Mamum estimates that three million innocent people were killed during the ordeal, and roughly 200,000 women were raped by attackers from West Pakistan. War raged for nine months until the Indian army intervened and helped negotiate a ceasefire. (Editor’s Note: Casualty estimates vary widely, from 200,000 to three million deaths, but, by all accounts, the war was considered one of the 20th century’s most violent.)

East Pakistan ultimately achieved its independence that year and became known as the sovereign nation of Bangladesh.

While these events occurred 42 years ago, those accused of committing war crimes during the ordeal are only now facing trial. Indictments have been issued since 2010, and some 10 to 15 men are cur-



Photo by Adi Talwar

LOCAL BANGLADESHI leaders said they support their home country’s controversial war crime tribunals, which have stirred violence.

rently awaiting sentencing for the atrocities committed at the time.

But the tribunal has not been met with universal support.

Jamaat Ul-Islam, an Islamic political party, has taken action to spread its belief that the treatment of the men on trial is unjust, especially after one of its leaders was sentenced to death. Over the past several months, Jamaat supporters have

clashed with security forces, leaving dozens dead and many more injured.

Those present at Holy Nativity Sunday night made it clear they simply want to end this ugly portion of the Bangladeshi history, and move on.

“People should be able to enjoy their freedom, and create a society where everyone can enjoy the country” Mamum said.

Neighborhood Notes

English Convo Skills

Speakers of any language (all levels) are invited to join English conversation classes at LIFT-the Bronx, 2381 Belmont Ave., between 187th and 186th streets, Wednesdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Topics will range from current events to sports. For more information, call (718) 733-4061 or email liftenglishconversation@gmail.com.

Run the Bronx

Bronx Community College is sponsoring its 35th Annual Hall of Fame 10K (6.2 miles), 5K Run (3.1 miles) and 2-Mile Walk on Saturday, May 4, at 10 a.m. (rain or shine). Register online at www.bcc.cuny.edu/10krun or call the 10K hotline at (718) 289-5877. Pre entry registration ends Friday, April 26.

Martial Arts Classes

The Cove & CTM Dreams offer martial arts classes for people ages 5 to adult at The Cove, 3418 Gates Place (in the basement, through the gate on the side of the building), at \$5/week. For more information, call Starr at (718) 405-1312 or e-mail anorris@ctmdreams.org.

Mentoring in Medicine

The Frederick Douglass Academy I, 2581 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd. (7th Ave.), between 148th and 150th streets, hosts Mentoring in Medicine, to learn about careers in the healthcare industry, April 27 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. This free program includes hands-on workshops, interactive demonstrations, research competitions, a health fair and other activities. For more information, visit [\[calmentor.org\]\(http://calmentor.org\). To RSVP, call \(718\) 920-6626 or email \[mimconference@gmail.com\]\(mailto:mimconference@gmail.com\).](http://medi-</p>
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Youth Basketball

The New York City Christian Athletic League begins its spring youth basketball program on April 27 at Devoe Park (Fordham Road and University Avenue), for ages 12 to 15 and 16 to 18, and will run Saturdays for 12 weeks (\$25 per player). For more information or to sign up, visit nyccal.org.

Norwood Food Co-op

Join the Norwood Food Coop (share prices vary according to family size) and choose from fresh organic vegetables, fruits, milk, eggs, cheese and yogurt, from June to November, all for less than green market prices, in exchange for a few hours’ work with other coop members. The coop accepts SNAP/EBT/food stamps and has installment payment plans. Registration deadline is April 26. For more information or to register, visit www.norwoodfoodcoop.org.

Literacy Connection

Improve your reading, writing and math skills and work toward your GED with the Literacy Connection, a free education and employment program for young adults ages 16 to 24. The program is offered at the Mott Haven, West Farms, and Bronx Library Center branches of the NYPL. For more information or to RSVP, call (718) 401-7453.

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

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For more information, call:
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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

Onstage

■ The Bronx Library Center, at 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Bach to the Future: Classical and Jazz Piano**, April 20 at 2:30 p.m.; **Salsa Concert by the Jose Obando Quartet**, April 25 at 11 a.m.; and **Mariachi Real de Mexico in Concert**, April 27 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

■ The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **Lehman Brass Quintet**, April 18 at 11 a.m., and **Lehman Woodwind Quintet**, April 21 at 2 p.m., both in the Music Building Recital Hall; and **Lehman Jazz Band**, April 28 at 2 p.m. in the Music Building Hearth Room (all free); and **Stars of the Russian Ballet**, April

21 at 4 p.m. (tickets are \$25 to \$40; \$10/ages 12 and under); and **Fusion Urbana Live in Concert**, April 20 at 8 p.m. (tickets are \$25 to \$45; \$10/ages 12 and under). For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

■ The Bronx Music Heritage Center Lab, 1303 Louis Niñé Blvd., presents **Bronx Rising**, a series of events featuring live music, film, and spoken word, as follows: Mariachi music on April 18 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.; Golden Age of Mexican cinema on April 19 from 8 to 10 p.m.; and Words: Rock & Read, performance by an Irish rock band, April 20 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Suggested donation is \$5 for each performance. Programs are subject to change. For more information, call (718) 793-2211 or visit bronxmusic.org.

■ Casita Maria, 928 Simpson St., presents free, **Militeri Tucker and the Bomba Dance Co., Lero**, April 26 and 27 at 8 p.m. (subject to change), featuring Puerto Rican traditional drum song and dance. For more information and to confirm, call (718) 589-2230 ext. 6193.

Events

■ The Bronx Arts Ensemble is having a **40th Anniversary Party**, April 27 at 6 p.m. at Pelham/Split Rock Golf Club. Enjoy music, art, and more. BAE also seeks advertisers for its gala journal. For more information, call (718) 601-7399.

■ The New York Botanical Garden presents **The Orchid Show**, in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, featuring a viewing, music and complimentary cocktail with admission, April 20 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. (tickets are \$20/members; \$30/non members). For more information, and to reserve, visit www.nybg.org.

■ The Wildlife Conservation Society presents its 5th annual 5k **WCS Run for the Wild**, at the Bronx Zoo, this year dedicated to saving elephants from poaching crisis, April 27 at 8 a.m. Casual

runners and walkers can participate in the Family Fun Run/Walk at 8:45 a.m. Prizes will be awarded to those who meet various fundraising goals. Minimum to raise to participate is \$30. For more information or to register, visit www.wcs.runforthewild.org (\$35/adults; \$25/ages 3 to 15 and seniors).

■ The Woodlawn Conservancy offers events held at Woodlawn Cemetery: **Woodlawn is for Lovers**, tour and concert. Visit memorials followed by a concert featuring a variety of music genres, April 21 at 12:30 p.m. (tickets begin at \$10); **Urban Birding**, guided tour to view birds in residence (tickets are \$15/adults; \$10/Conservancy and Audubon members, students, seniors); and **Encore: A Jazz Revival**, including Duke Ellington music, and featuring trolley and walking tours (free, RSVP recommended), April 28 at 1 p.m. For more information, call (718) 920-1463.

■ The Bronx Council on the Arts, 2700 E. Tremont Ave., offers free Big Read in the Bronx events through May 5. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 931-9500 ext. 21 or visit www.bronxarts.org and click on The Big Read. Also offered is its final workshop, **Recycle Art With Start Nigro**, as part of its free series of Third Saturday Family Craft Workshops, April

EDITOR'S PICK

Free Movie Al Fresco

The Fordham Road Business Improvement District will host a series of outdoor movie nights at Fordham Plaza, located at 189th Street at Third and Park avenues, throughout the summer. The next scheduled show is "The Amazing Spider-Man," on April 26 at 8 p.m. Bring a chair or a blanket. For more information, call (718) 562-2104 or visit www.fordhamroadbid.org.

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20 from 12:30 to 3 p.m. at the Huntington Free Library, 9 Westchester Square. For more information, call (718) 931-9500 ext. 33 or (718) 829-7770 or visit www.bronxarts.org.

■ The Bronx County Historical Society, 3309 Bainbridge Ave., presents **The Legacy of the Piccirilli Brothers in the Bronx**, a free lecture about this famous family of sculptors, April 20 at 11 a.m.; and **Historic West Farms**, walking tour, April 27 at 11 a.m. (\$10/BCHS members; \$15/non members). For more information, to confirm locations, or to RSVP, call (718) 881-8900.

■ Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Arts Projects**: Flags and Kites for Earth Day, made out of colorful plastic bags, April 20 and 21; and Fly Me to the Dove Tree, to make a dove tree sculpture out of natural materials and paper or a flock of doves out of plaster of Paris, April 27 and 28; both from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Ecology Building. Also scheduled is **Lecture and Book Signing: NYC of Trees**: Slideshow of city trees followed by Q&A and book signing, April 20 from 2 to 4 p.m., in the Ecology Building; and **Bikes and Nature: Exploring Bronx Tees**: low-impact bike tour of Riverdale trees, April 27 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (starts in northern Manhattan: meet at the southeast corner of Isham Park at Broadway and West 211th Street, and ends at Wave Hill; free, registration required at www.wavehill.org). Grounds admission is free Saturdays until noon and free Tuesdays all day. 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.

■ The public is invited to ride the May 1 free **Bronx Culture Trolley**, which transports visitors on the first Wednesday of every month (except January and September) to Bronx hot spots, all featuring a variety of entertainment options and ends at Sweetwater's Bar & Grill for music, food and drink. Trolley night starts with a 5 p.m. reception at the Longwood Art Gallery at Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse (at 149th St.). From there, the trolley departs at 5:30, 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. New attractions are added monthly; admission to most venues is free. Riders can get on and off at any scheduled stop and spend as much time as they wish at any or all of the featured venues. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 931-9500 ext. 33 or log on to www.bronxarts.org.

■ Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, presents **1040 Lounge**: to celebrate and promote the arts in the Bronx and enjoy drinks and artist talks with your neighbors, April 26 from 6:30 to 9 p.m.; and **Readings & Conversations**, May 1 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., both in the north wing lobby. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

Exhibits

■ The Bronx County Historical Society's

Museum of Bronx History at the Valentine-Varian House, 3266 Bainbridge Ave., presents **Pastimes & Pleasures: Having Fun in the Bronx**, from April 18 (opening reception from 4:30 to 7 p.m.) to Oct. 23. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

■ The Bronx Council on the Arts presents free, **In the Realm of Dreams & Fears** at Hostos Community College's Longwood Art Gallery, main gallery, through May 1. For more information and a detailed schedule, call (718) 518-6728.

■ Lehman College Art Gallery, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **Contemporary Cartographies**, expressing an array of ideas in various styles, through May 11, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 960-8731.

Library Events

■ The Bronx Library Center, at 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents programs for adults including **Single Stop/Government Benefits at 9 a.m.**: April 18, 23, 25 and 30; and **Mango Language Program**: to learn one of more than 40 languages, April 28 at 2 p.m.. Teens/young adults can attend **NYPL College Conference**: to meet with college reps and learn about college tuition funding, April 27 at 11 a.m.; and **On the Plate**: cooking workshop (all materials provided), May 2 at 4:30 p.m. Children can enjoy **Global Partners Junior at 4 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12: phone or in-person registration required),

April 24 and May 1; **Preschool Story Time at 11 a.m.**: April 18, 25 and May 2; **Films at 4 p.m.**: April 23 and 30; **Chicken Book Making**: April 18 at 4 p.m.; and **Mother's Day Card Making**: May 2 at 4 p.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.; 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 18 and May 2; and **Read Aloud at 4 p.m.**: (ages 3 to 12), April 22 and 29. Teens/young adults can join **Arts & Crafts**: all materials provided, April 23 at 4 p.m. Speakers of other languages can attend free **English Conversation Program**: intermediate level, Tuesdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m., April 23 and 30. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

■ The Jerome Park Library, at 118 Eames Place, offers **Cooking at 4 p.m.**: April 18, 23 and May 2; and **Craftersnacks**: (all materials provided), May 1 at 4 p.m.; both for teens/young adults. Children ages 5 to 12 can enjoy: **Pajama Party**: April 29 at 6 p.m. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics at noon**: April 30 and May 2. The entire family can join **Cooking**: April 27 at noon. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by April 22 for the next publication date of May 2.

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Saturday, April 20, 10:30 am

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250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., Bronx, NY 10468

Friday, May 10, 10:30 am*

at CUNY on Concourse, 3rd floor
2501 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468

Tuesday, May 14, 6:30 pm

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