

# NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 27, No 20 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • OCTOBER 16-29, 2014



**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER**  
**DANGEROUS CLUBS | PG. 4**



**BE HEALTHY:**  
**REBIRTH OF NCBH**  
**MOMMY WARD | PG. 12**

## NORWOOD'S BADDEST LANDLORDS EXPOSED

*Report Shows 39Norwood /Bedford Pk. Bdgs. on Worst Landlord List*



Photo by Adi Talwar

**VICTOR ROSARIO**, A tenant at 3450 Decatur Ave., shows off a series of letters blasting management. The Norwood residence is managed by one of the city's worst landlords. Clothes and a black trash bag work as insulation against a window that won't close.

**By HAYLEY CAMACHO**

On his dining room table, Victor Rosario has six letters from the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development's Code Enforcement Division certifying the numerous violations in his apartment at 3540

Decatur Ave. Rosario has been fighting an uphill battle for the last several years to get the landlord, Bob-Al Management Corp, to make the necessary repairs.

Not surprisingly, the landlord was on Public Advocate Letitia James'

list of worst New York City landlords released last week. The list works as a public shaming against shifty landlords who balk at living conditions. In Norwood and Bedford Park, 39 buildings were cited in the list.

"A lot of these landlords

have been repeat offenders," said James in a radio interview. "They have been on this list since its creation in 2010 and HPD really needs to be more aggressive in their enforcement mechanisms."

For Rosario, conditions  
*(continued on page 18)*



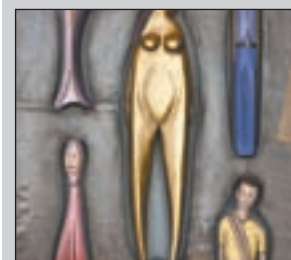
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## IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST



### Getting a Say: More Participatory Budgeting Sessions Set

If you had the chance to fill the role of New York City Councilmember, where would you earmark \$1 million in capital funds? It's a question Councilman Andy Cohen will continue posing in his latest round of Participatory Budget sessions, a yearlong process where locals as young as 14-years-old in his 11th Council District can offer input on how to spend taxpayer monies to better their communities.

Six workshops are slated for this month:

- **Monday, Oct. 20 at 7 p.m.**  
Schervier Nursing Home  
2975 Independence Ave.
- **Wednesday, Oct. 22 at 7:30 p.m.**  
Rambling House  
4292 Katonah Ave.
- **Thursday, Oct. 23 at 7 p.m.**  
Mosholu Montefiore Community Center  
3450 DeKalb Ave.
- **Monday, Oct. 27 at 7 p.m.**  
Riverdale YM/YWHA,  
5625 Arlington Ave.
- **Wednesday, Oct. 29 at 7 p.m.**  
Lehman College Lovinger Theatre,  
250 Bedford Pk. Blvd.
- **Thursday, Oct. 30 at 7 p.m.**  
Vladeck Hall,  
74 Van Cortlandt Pk. So.

"Participatory Budgeting is the true definition of bringing government to the people," said Cohen, in a statement. "Through this process we will engage residents, increase civic participation and give the public more confidence in government."

There are caveats-- proposals must be a construction or renova-

tion project, cost a minimum of \$35,000, and proven be a boon to the public for more than five years. The winning bid must be submitted by the middle of 2015.

For more information on the process, residents are asked to call Councilman Cohen's office at (718) 549-7300.

### Home Run for USC Knights



Photo courtesy Councilman Andy Cohen's Office

**FOR THEIR VICTORY** in the annual Borough Cup, the Uptown Sports Complex Knights were awarded by Councilman Andy Cohen (2nd from left) on Oct. 7 with a citation. Cohen shares a moment in City Hall with USC Knights Coach Juan Delarosa (4th from left), fellow Councilmember Rafael Espinal (r.), and USC Knights.

### Put the Pedal to the Metal at the 20th Annual Tour de Bronx

Bronxites will strap on their helmets, tune up those bikes and traverse the borough for the 20th annual Tour de Bronx.

The free all day event gears up Oct. 26, with thousands of riders trekking through nearly 60 neighborhoods that include Norwood, Kingsbridge, Riverdale and Mott Haven. Beginning at the Bronx County Building and ending at The New York Botanical Garden, the state's largest tour is not much of a race but a promotional vehicle showcasing some of the borough's hidden and well-known gems.

"Riding in the Tour de Bronx is a healthy way to explore our borough, especially with 6,000 fellow travelers," said Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., in a statement. "Once again, I am proud to welcome cyclists from all over the region to this fantastic event."

Cyclists can opt for either a 25-mile course or the loftier 40-mile trail that stretches to the northern end of

the Bronx. All types of cyclists often take part in the race, from the leisure rider with an elaborate two-wheeler to the more hardcore cyclist in training.

The venue also serves as part conditioning in a borough still lagging in physical fitness that's tethered to high obesity, asthma and heart rates.

Registration begins at the Bronx County Building, 851 Grand Con-

course at 9 a.m. Participants will receive a free bike helmet, courtesy of the city Transportation Department, while supplies last. Sponsorship proceeds will go towards Transportation Alternatives, an advocacy group pushing for a more bike-friendly city.

--David Cruz

**Editor's Note:** See "Editor's Pick" in *Out & About* on page 19.

### Public & Community Meetings

**COMMUNITY BOARD 7** will hold its general board meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 21 at Serviam Gardens, 321 E. 198th St., at 6:30 p.m. Committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Education/Libraries & Youth Services committee meets Wednesday, Oct. 22; Parks & Recreation and Senior Services committees meet Wednesday, Oct. 29 (Note: Senior Services Committee meets at 7:30 p.m.) For more information call (718) 933-5650.

**THE 52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meets Thursday, Oct. 16 at the Fordham Hill Oval Corporation, 2455 Sedgwick Ave. from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.





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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE

**After a wild murderous melee outside a local night club, we asked readers their thoughts on the club scene and how guests can stay safe.**



I think that economically they actually help the community with their taxes, but there's a lot of danger because it's not really positive or energetic because most people want to get loose and go wild. And that can lead to negativity. So violence-wise it's a bad thing, but economically it's a good thing.

**Joshua Cabrera**  
Kingsbridge



In my opinion, there should be a couple of night clubs for all the young people, so their moms and dads my age will know where their kids are and are safe in the community as they go and dance and have a drink with their friends. They will enjoy themselves and be off the streets and away from trouble in a safe environment. There're not enough clubs now for the younger people, so they all go to one place and when everybody goes to the one place, you have conflict.

**John Peelan**  
Woodlawn



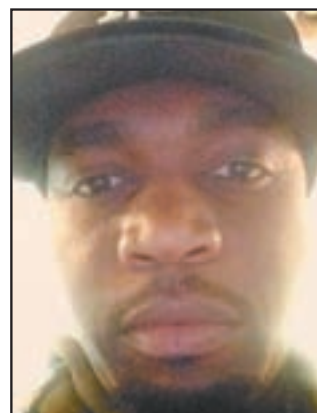
It's unfortunate, but it happens. Night clubs have been around since before I was a younger man and there was always trouble and violence at night clubs. We had Prohibition and that didn't work. People work all week and like to unwind and go to night clubs and socialize with their friends. So there's really nothing you can do about it. Night clubs are around, so you just have to be aware of your surroundings and what type of club you go to and just be careful.

**Michael Reddington**  
Norwood



I think these things happen within any group of people. I think the issue is what makes people get violent and do this. Yes, alcohol plays a part, but some people are more violent than others and it's difficult to stop that. How you pick a club that is safe is another good question. By a community's word of mouth, do your research. That's the point of Yelp and other websites. You shouldn't have to be afraid of violence when you go out.

**Emanuel Antigua**  
Inwood

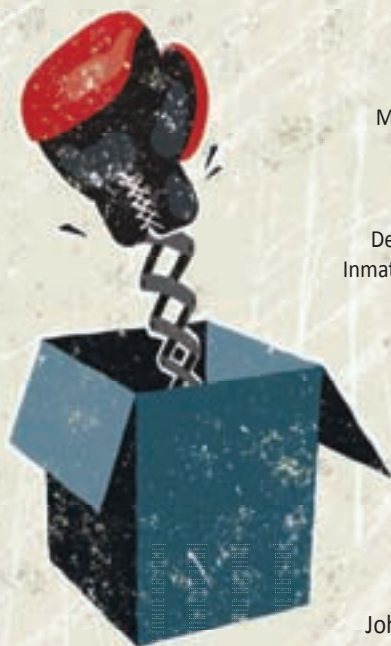


As far as selecting a club, location is always key. A strict dress code and an admission cover are also important. It goes across all races and ethnicity and really comes back to income. I'm in a band called OMF and we perform regularly at Pianos, the Brickhouse Brewery and Revolution and they never have a problem. Usually, if you have people looking for a cheaper night, you get a younger crowd and people with limited funds. If you have a club without a dress code, you'll get a rougher looking crowd.

**James Donald**  
Jamaica, Queens

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# Judge: Kingsbridge Armory Ice Plan Can Proceed

By DAVID CRUZ

A plan to build an enormous ice center in the Kingsbridge Armory can proceed following a legal squabble that ended with a Bronx judge ruling in favor of its lead developer.

Judge John A. Barone dismissed claims by the plaintiffs—Jonathan Richter, Jeff Spiritos, and Marcos Wignell—claiming the trio should be considered lead developers of the project. Barone ruled that it's Kevin Parker who is the sole partner of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center LLC and allowed to continue lease negotiations with the city Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

In July, the three plaintiffs had asked a judge to bar Parker from speaking with the city EDC, the real estate arm of the city, over lease negotiations on the Armory. The latest development allows Parker to continue his talks with the city over when a lease will be signed, clearing KNIC to repurpose the Armory into an ice skating center complete with nine sheets of ice and a 5,000-seat arena for \$320 million.



Artist rendering courtesy Kingsbridge National Ice Center LLC

**A BRONX JUDGE** recently ruled that the Kingsbridge National Ice Center can proceed, putting this rendering of KNIC closer to reality.

The lead attorney for the plaintiffs, Ernest Badway, refused to comment on the ruling.

Parker's attorney, Bill Brewer, emphasized that the three plaintiffs "had no right to interfere with this project or impede its progress." "Our clients will continue to aggressively pursue all the legal remedies to which they are entitled," said Brewer in a state-

ment.

Some legal challenges still linger, which involve undisclosed monetary claims made by Richter, Spiritos and Wignell. Brewer has less than three weeks to answer. Still, Brewer told the *Norwood News* that the "lease is imminent."

For now, the lease terms are still being hashed out between Parker and

the city EDC, with an agency spokesperson stressing the lawsuits had never once hampered the EDC's talk over the lease with Parker.

The summer-long lawsuits have likely pushed back construction of the massive ice center, originally slated to wrap up construction by 2017. The project is now a year delayed. Once the site is built, it will activate the Community Benefits Agreement, a legally binding document hammered out by the community stakeholders and KNIC. The agreement tacks on stipulations that include local hiring, a one percent revenue sharing plan, and an allocation of 50,000 square feet of community space at the Armory's lower levels.

And even as KNIC plowed through the judicial channels, it was able to secure financing from various groups, namely The Kresge Foundation. Driven by its need for "social investment," the philanthropic organization agreed to serve as the lead investor in a \$30 million equity raise for KNIC. The project is estimated at \$350 million.

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# BronxTalk Celebrates 20 Years on the Air

By DAVID CRUZ

The Edward R. Murrow of the Bronx is celebrating 20 years on the air.

Gary Axelbank, the even-handed Bronxite who's been the host of *BronxTalk* since 1994, is slated to hold an anniversary bash of the public access show on Oct. 22 that takes a trip down memory lane.

The soiree at the Andrew Freedman House will highlight some landmark episodes in the program, a journalism talk show that's seen a pantheon of pundits, politicians and locals discuss borough issues each year. Axelbank recently wrapped up his 950th episode with the *Norwood News* and Friends of Mosholu Parkland. He's added it to a 68-page list of every episode and guest that's appeared on the program.

Following the recap presentation will be a meet and greet with Axelbank, who will don his hosting cap to gauge guests about the program's popularity. "*BronxTalk* was a revelation because it was the first talk show in the Bronx," Axelbank told the *Norwood News*. "I worked with people



Photo courtesy BronxTalk With Gary Axelbank

**GARY AXELBANK**, HOST of *BronxTalk*, reached a milestone with its 950th episode on Monday, Oct. 6, with guests David Cruz, *Norwood News* editor-in-chief (2nd from right) and Elizabeth Quaranta (r.) of the Friends of Mosholu Parkland stopping by to share what's happening in the community.

that reflected the local realities that are outside people's windows."

With 950 episodes in the can, a swell of unforgettable moments followed. One of them involved a 1996 debate between convicted former State Senator Pedro Espada and State Senator David Rosado. "Mr. Espada had let his security guards hand him

a hatchet, and that was the moment that nobody could've predicted, and nobody has done better," said Axelbank with a laugh.

The show currently airs every Monday on BronxNet, the public access station that's been the home of *BronxTalk* since the beginning. The program is not always hard-news

driven--there are certainly light-hearted moments such as art presentations by Daniel Hauben.

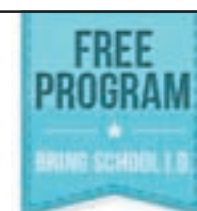
Axelbank was no stranger to broadcasting, having hailed from the radio music industry in his early years. After stints in Maryland and Delaware, he worked alongside an unknown shock jock Howard Stern, who was then a program director at the former radio station WRNW.

"By the time *BronxTalk* came around, this was 1994, I had already been on the air for 18 years," said Axelbank. "So being on the air was not the issue, it was just learning a new medium." Axelbank has adapted well, never breaking a sweat and preparing ahead of time for any interview or yearly debate during the political season.

He's never tired of the program and he intends to stick around. "Every day and every show is something else to communicate," said Axelbank. "The biggest personality of that show is the borough of the Bronx. It's just an endless amount of things to talk about and an endless number of interesting people."



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# Rivera Reminds Pinnacle Tenants of Payout

By JANAKI CHADHA

Though the class-action lawsuit against The Pinnacle Group resulted in a settlement over three years ago, roughly 1 percent of Bronx tenants in Pinnacle buildings have filed claims for their share of the settlement.

This issue drove Senator Gustavo Rivera to visit qualified tenants in his 33rd Senate District, reminding them of the settlement. Rivera has gone door-to-door since late September. On a visit on Oct. 9, Rivera handed out notices to tenants who have lived in Pinnacle-owned building between 2004 and 2010.

Tenants have been receiving legal notices about these claims in the mail, but according to Rivera, “a lot of folks doubted the legitimacy of the notices.”

Legal Aid Society attorneys, tasked to hand out settlements, said there are 66 Pinnacle buildings in the Bronx with a potential 6,671 claimants. But so far, only 87 claims in the borough have been filed. Lack of notice about the settlement has compelled the courts to

extend the filing deadline from October to Dec. 31.

The case against The Pinnacle Group goes back to 2006, when the *Norwood News* broke the story on the questionable tactics management used against various tenants in the Northwest Bronx and parts of Harlem. Several allegations of harassment, unlawful evictions, and rent increases followed that eventually led to a class-action lawsuit settled in 2011.

Kim Powell, a tenant organizer who suffered under Pinnacle's hand for several years, said many tenants have had trouble deciphering the filing process and their entitlements since information was, at first, hard to understand.

Her organization, Buyers and Renters United to Save Harlem (BRUSH), has set up workshops to deconstruct the filing process. “I think it makes it easier for tenants to understand exactly what a claim is, rather than simply presenting them something that says, ‘come one, come all, here’s free



Photo courtesy Sen. Gustavo Rivera's Office

**A PAYOUT MAY** still await this tenant (r.), paid a visit by Sen. Gustavo Rivera, letting residents know of a recent settlement reached between tenants of buildings owned by The Pinnacle Group and its occupants.

legal representation,” she said. The organization has also held workshops informing tenants on what they’re entitled to, how separate occurrences are handled, how one can locate or retrieve old records, and other aspects of filing a claim.

On his various recent building visits, Rivera commented that, “Overwhelmingly, the response had been positive,” but also stressed the urgency of the situation.

“In this case, this company has set-

tled a lawsuit that was brought against them alleging all sorts of horrible behavior,” he said. “We have to make sure the people that had been victims of this behavior can actually get the money that is due to them as part of the legal settlement, so it’s really important to me that Bronxites know.”

Rivera encouraged affected tenants to call the Pinnacle Legal Assistance Helpline at (888) 736-8115 to receive assistance in hammering out their claim.

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# Building Upon Webster Avenue

## Construction of new 10-story residence underway

By ANTON K. NILSSON

Heavy-duty bulldozers and trucks pepper an empty lot on Webster Avenue near 205th Street, where a new 10-story, 160-unit residential building is now under construction. And the point has been made loud and clear: The Bedford, as it will be called, will not be supportive housing, a nagging problem for the burgeoning Webster Avenue stretch.

A small fraction of units, however, will be reserved for the formerly homeless through the state Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, said Guido Subotovsky, president of the Azimuth Development Group, the building's landlord. Over the summer, Subotovsky's crew tore down a glass shop, private home, and a church to make way for the modern art deco building at 3160 Webster Ave.

The residence will largely offer apartments at affordable rents and a first floor commercial component, as per city guidelines.

The \$22 million project is financed through the New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal, which mandates affordable



Photo by Anton K. Nilsson

**SAFETY COORDINATOR MARK BASS** (r.) and a colleague oversee the removing of debris from the building site at 3160 Webster Ave.

leases be doled out via lottery. Monthly rents will run \$751 for a studio apartment to \$1786 for a three-bedroom unit, Subotovsky said.

The entire first floor will be allotted to commercial or community spaces that's part of a larger plan to turn Webster Avenue into a "vibrant corridor" for new housing and retail.

Azimuth has already built a three-story mixed-use building abutting the site of

The Bedford, housing a charter school, an impending medical office and a Crunch Fitness gym. The idea behind this wave of construction came after a major rezoning effort of 80 blocks of Webster Avenue in 2009, a move lobbied by the Four Bronx Institution Alliance.

"The rezoning of Webster Avenue that occurred a couple of years back was extremely important for the uptake of new development,"

Subotovsky said. He notes that since rezoning, "the area has gone from much more of a heavy commercial district with auto garages and things of that nature, to a real retail thoroughfare."

Assaf Gal, owner of the Crunch next to The Bedford, told the *Norwood News* it is apparent that the neighborhood is changing. "It's not that it's becoming upscale," Gal said. "There are just more options now."

The Webster Avenue Merchants Association, helping to spur business development on Webster Avenue between East Mosholu Parkway and 195th Street, released a retail analysis of the area this summer, identifying which types of businesses are most sought-

after by local residents.

A bank and a "nice, sit-down restaurant" are attractive businesses for The Bedford, said Marcia Cameron, deputy director of the Mosholu Preservation Corporation, the organization that created the group.

Adaline Walker-Santiago, chairperson of Community Board 7, told the *Norwood News* that her organization fully supports the development at 3160 Webster Ave. "There are so many things happening on Webster Avenue right now, that it is hard to keep track of them," Walker-Santiago said. "[The Bedford] is exactly the type of building we want," she continued. "It is classic, yet modern, and it is for people of mixed income." The commercial ground floor, Walker-Santiago said, is "exactly the type of place the community is looking for."

The latest construction project complements further development on the strip. A mile and half down, the Stagg Group is at the last phase of erecting two affordable housing buildings by Webster Avenue between 201st Street and Bedford Park Boulevard.

But a block up from The Bedford, an eight-story supportive housing facility by Concern Norwood Housing Development Fund Inc. is going up. The Bedford is expected to be completed by 2016.

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- Rents from \$858 to \$1244
- Maximum household income \$36,300 to \$48,800 (Depending on household size)



Photo by Anton K. Nilsson

**A SIGN INFORMS** passers-by of the ongoing construction project at 3160 Webster Ave.





## CRIME FILE



# Cops Search for White Car Linked to Fordham Melee

By ANTON K. NILSSON

Police are on the lookout for a white vehicle seen bolting the scene of a murderous melee outside a Fordham night club on Sunday, Oct. 5. One person died and five people were injured in a blocks-long street brawl that began outside the Xtreme Lounge at 2510 Valentine Ave.

Photos from a surveillance camera, which captured the white car leaving the crime scene, were distributed by the NYPD's 52nd Precinct, and police are now asking the public to help identify the vehicle.

The deceased, 24-year-old Dennis Rodriguez of Mott Haven, was shot in the torso as he exited the Xtreme Lounge around 3:50 a.m. Two others were also shot, one of whom was hit in the head and is listed in critical condition at St. Barnabas Hospital. Two victims were slashed, and



Photo by David Greene

**POLICE SHUT DOWN** several streets as they investigate a brawl on Valentine Avenue that continued along East Fordham Road.

another was assaulted with a baseball bat, taking hits to the head and torso.

By late Sunday morning, detectives sifted through more than 40 pieces of evidence, mostly clothes and lost footwear from fleeing partygoers. One piece of evidence included the aluminum baseball bat used on one of the victims.

The nightclub has been a problem for some time, local residents say. One man, who works in the building opposite the Xtreme Lounge and who refused to be identified, told the *Norwood News* that there have been "a lot of problems" at the club, and that "crazy people" from Manhattan regularly show up on weekend nights to cause trouble. "People are tired of it,"

the man said.

Another local resident, who likewise declined to give a name, said she was sorry to hear the news about the deadly incident. "There is a lot of violence in this neighborhood," the woman said sadly as she enjoyed the sunshine on a bench in nearby Poe Park. "A lot of violence. Lord have mercy."

Still, according to the New York State Liquor Authority, the agency that regulates bars, Xtreme Lounge has a current license with no recent incidents of violence reported.

**Editor's Note:** *Anyone with information in regard to this incident is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 800-577-TIPS. The public can also submit their tips by logging on to the Crime Stoppers Website at [www.nypdcrimestoppers.com](http://www.nypdcrimestoppers.com) or texting tips to 274637(CRIMES), then enter TIP577. Additional reporting by David Greene.*

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# Pickwick Arms Apartments Left in the Cold

By KASIA ROMANOWSKA

After living for months without gas and an on-site super in case of emergencies, tenants of a historic building in Norwood are now demanding better quality of life as the wintry months loom.

Problems for tenants at the famous Pickwick Arms at 3224 Grand Concourse began in April after smelling a gas odor in the courtyard of the building. Crews soon shut down the gas, later doling out portable electric stoves to tenants, making it an impossible task to cook. In some cases, tenants just order takeout or have family members bring in hot food. But what was thought of as a temporary fix seems to have gone on too long for residents.

The lack of heat and the constant threat of a gas explosion caused “one frustration after another,” according to Helene Hartman-Kutnowsky, a Community Board 7 member who has been living in the building for 30 years.

## No Super

On top of the lack of heat, the tenants of the Tudor-style building have been grappling with the absence of a super who quit just as the gas problem surfaced.

“We need someone who could be available to take care of [the building],” said Hartman-Kutnowsky. Charlie Fritsch, a fellow tenant who worked as a building manager for separate residences, has equally grown tired of seeing the custodial post vacant.

The pre-war walk-up building with 114 apartments is owned by 3224 Grand Concourse LLC with the head officer listed as Shaul Koplewitz and the managing agent identified as Si-



Photo by Kasia Romanowska

**THE PICKWICK ARMS** in Norwood continues to grapple with a lack of heat and super for at least half a year.

mon Roseman. “The manager is polite with me, but he does nothing” said one of the tenants who tried to call the office, but was unsuccessful. Management didn’t return calls to the *Norwood News* seeking comment.

Tenants have also harangued 311, but their grievances have been over-

looked.

## Legal Troubles

The dwelling has 262 violations, among them 99 complaints regarding the lack of heat, according to the city Housing Preservation and Development agency. The majority, 148, are hazardous B violations. Up until Oct. 8, the building was not registered on the HPD website, a violation of the agency’s rules.

In addition, HPD and tenants have separate pending court cases against the building owners for lack of upkeep. HPD had to step in several times to make repairs, spending \$5,472 of taxpayer money to perform emergency repairs the owner did not correct fast enough.

According to a new violation imposed on the management company, the workers making basic repairs are unskilled and have no license. The overall response from city agen-

cies has largely been slow, according to Fritsch, who longed for the years when the city was more responsive. “Ten years ago if you said you had no heat, no hot water, you had inspectors crawling over the building,” said Fritsch. “It wouldn’t happen anymore.”

Although he has been dealing with all kinds of situations throughout his 30 years of living at the Pickwick Arms, he called this one “the most venal, avaricious, greedy, incompetent bunch without a shred of humanity.”

As October moves along, residents are beginning to worry about their fate when the colder months settle in or when the holidays roll in. Many can’t quite envision what Thanksgiving will look like, let alone the holiday bird.

“It would look bad and taste bad,” said Rafael Cestero, a retired resident living on the first floor.



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# Be Healthy **10%**

Percentage of Bronx births that happen at North Central Bronx Hospital.  
(Source: North Central Bronx Hospital)

Vital Stats

## The Rebirth of NCBH's Maternity Ward

By DAVID CRUZ

North Central Bronx Hospital has delivered its newest bundle of joy—a revamp of its maternity ward that's slated to open soon.

A contingent of community groups, hospital officials and elected officials gathered for a ceremonial ribbon-cutting of the mommy ward, where service halted over a year ago amid a medical staffing shortage.

Anthony Rajkumar, the Chief Operating Officer for North Bronx Healthcare Network, told the *Norwood News* his hope is the suspension “never occurs again.”

“At that moment we were challenged in terms of having the appropriate levels of staff,” said LaRay Brown, with HHC’s Corporate Plan-

ning, Community Health and Intergovernmental Relations. “But we have come a long way for all the babies in the North Bronx.”

Staff shortages at Jacobi Medical Center forced medical staffers from NCBH to head there. That snowballed at NCBH, creating a crisis that endangered service that forced expectant families to schlep to Jacobi, which is three miles away. NCBH was responsible for 10 percent of Bronx baby births, or 1400 newborns yearly.

A grassroots movement borne of the closure formed, drawing attention from local legislators who pressed city hospital officials to map out a game plan to reopen. This came after several somewhat raucous community meetings

and City Council hearings. Eventually, the two sides began “rowing in the same direction,” according to Councilman Andy Cohen, whose district lies within the hospital.

Cohen’s colleague, Councilman Ritchie Torres, was also credited for spearheading talks. “I feel like it was the community that really created the momentum that led to this moment,” said Torres, who earmarked \$600,000 of the \$2 million needed for the ward’s facelift. “I’m proud to be a part of the fruits of your labor.”

Monies went to new equipment, an upgraded recovery room, and the installation of a new infant protection system. Funds also went to an aggressive media blitz to ensure par-



Photo by David Cruz

**HOSPITAL OFFICIALS, LAWMAKERS** and community leaders help cut the ceremonial red ribbon for the newly revamped maternity ward at North Central Bronx Hospital.

ents knew about the opening.

Unions also stepped in to ensure adequate staff were in place to prevent another exodus. HHC heard that input, according to a statement by Dr. Frank Proscia, president of the Doctors Council SEIU.

The ward on the seventh and eight floors of the Norwood hospital still needs ap-

proval by the state Health Department, which is imminent, according to officials.

With the ward set to reopen shortly, Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, whose district hugs the city hospital, declared the ward “open for business!”

“So go home and start practicing!” said Gjonaj, drawing laughs.

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# Bronx Youth Heard

## Spotlighting Bronx Youth Heard



Photo by Katina Paron

**BRONX YOUTH HEARD** picked up a generous grant from the Simon Bolivar Foundation on Sept. 18 at a ceremony in the Bronx Zoo. David Cruz (r.), editor-in-chief of the *Norwood News* and program director of *Bronx Youth Heard*, stands alongside Rafael Gomez, president of The Simon Bolivar Foundation.



Photo courtesy Bronx Youth Heard

**BRONX YOUTH HEARD** instructor Katina Paron leads a full house of students for the first day of the fall *Bronx Youth Heard* journalism program. The 12-week after school initiative teaches Bronx high school students the basics of journalism. Students between the ages of 13 and 19 are given the tools needed to write their own news stories. Best of luck aspiring journeymen!

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2 bedroom	\$1024	10	2 people 3 people 4 people	\$35,109 - \$40,320 \$35,109 - \$45,360 \$35,109 - \$50,340

\* Rent includes gas for cooking

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\*\*\* Household earnings includes salary, tips, pension, social security, child support, public assistance and other income for household members. Income guidelines subject to change.

### How Do You Apply?

Apply online or through mail. To apply online, please go to: [www.nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://www.nyc.gov/housingconnect). To request an application by mail, send a postcard or self-addressed envelope, to: Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation, Attn: Tiebout Green LLC, 2751 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468. If you choose to submit your completed application by mail, completed applications must be sent by regular mail only (**NO PRIORITY, OVERSIZED, CERTIFIED, REGISTERED, EXPRESS OR OVERNIGHT MAIL WILL BE ACCEPTED**) to the Post Office Box address indicated on the application. Only send one application per development. Don't submit duplicate applications. Do not apply online and also send in a paper application. Applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified.

### When is the Deadline?

Applications must be postmarked or submitted online no later than **November 10, 2014**. Late applications will not be considered.

### What Happens After You Submit an Application?

After the deadline, applications are selected for review through a lottery process. If yours is selected and you appear to qualify, you will be invited to an interview to continue the process of determining your eligibility.



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HPD Commissioner Vicki Been

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# Community Fuming Over Armory Soiree

By KASIA ROMANOWSKA

Hey, where's our say??

A German rave scheduled at the Kingsbridge Armory in November stirred outrage over the logistical nightmare posed by the two-day international event. It also revealed the lack of communication between the City Economic Development Corporation and Community Board 7, blindsided by the venue.

"It would be the wise thing for the city to have consulted and talked about the infrastructure and also the strategy of this event," said Councilman Fernando Cabrera at a news conference in front of the empty fortress on Oct. 13.

Cabrera, along with CB7, are still demanding to see the permits and fire safety protocols required to operate the event. Dustin Engelken, CB7 district manager, said that in case of such a big event, "all the agencies should be involved" in the decision-making process. Engelken noted that only the local Police Department was notified about the event.

Time Warp, the two-day German rave festival, is set to mark its 20th

anniversary this Thanksgiving weekend. It will bring 10,000 domestic and international revelers to the Armory, which could hamper parking in an otherwise crammed neighborhood.

Although merchants are excited about the event expected to jolt businesses, residents are worried that the chaos will disrupt the life of the community, causing security, traffic and drug-related problems. The issue of parking has already drummed up outrage by opponents of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center in the Armory, expected to bring a swell of traffic in the coming years.

But Adaline Walker-Santiago, CB7 chair, noticed the positive impact of the festival. "They tried to take [the event] to the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, so I'm impressed they're doing it here," she said.

The issue was brought up during a recent CB7 Public Safety Committee meeting, where Board members were reassured by the Police Department about the safety of the event. "We had music events over here, but they were for one day," said Walker-Santiago.

William Francis, a member living



Photo by Kasia Romanowska

**COUNCILMAN FERNANDO CABRERA** (at podium) stands in front of the Kingsbridge Armory, the site of a giant German rave next month. Alongside Cabrera are (l-r) resident William Francis, Community Board 7 Chair Adaline Walker-Santiago and CB7 district manager Dustin Engelken.

close to the Armory, said "the EDC showed no respect to the community" by allowing the rave to happen without public input. He's also concerned about the wrong message that could be sent to young people throughout the entire event.

"It's sad that we're here today without any real information on what's happening," said Engelken. "But it's

not too late. I hope [the EDC and the festival organizers] will take the invitation and give us a call and make sure we're doing the things in the right way."

For now, members have extended an invite to city officials to discuss logistics. Concerns can be directed to Community Board 7 at (718) 933-5650 or e-mail [info@bronxcb7.info](mailto:info@bronxcb7.info).

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## TRIPS

### Trip to Atlantic City

Saturday, Oct. 18, 2014 - Atlantic City Tropicana Casino. Leaving from East 163rd Street and Southern Boulevard at 3 p.m. For more information, please call Eddie at (718) 757-5485.

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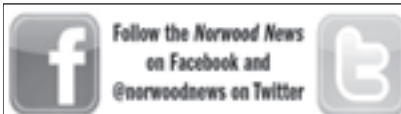
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# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

## Gjonaj Mobile Office

Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj's mobile office van is open each Wednesday from noon to 4 p.m. at the corner of East 204th Street and Bainbridge Avenue for constituents to voice community concerns. For more information, call (718) 409-0109.

## NYPD Career Community Day

NYPD recruiters will be at Poe Park at East 192nd Street and the Grand Concourse on Saturday, Oct. 18 from noon to 4 p.m. as part NYPD Community Career Day. Various departments include police, school safety and traffic divisions. For more information, contact your local precinct.

## Free Flu Shots

Free flu shots will be administered to residents ages 18+ on Friday, Oct. 24 at the Riverdale YM-YWHA at 5625 Arlington Ave. between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Participants are required to contact the office of Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, a lead sponsor, at

(718) 796-5345 to guarantee a flu shot.

## Free Financial Seminars

Ridgewood Savings Bank will hold a First-Time Homebuyers Workshop on Oct. 21 from 6:15 to 8:15 p.m. at 711 Allerton Ave. (call (718) 882-2220); and a Financial Education Seminar on Oct. 29 from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. at 3445 Jerome Ave. (call (718) 881-3430); both free and open to the public.

## Financial Ed Workshops

University Neighborhood Housing Program at 2751 Grand Concourse, offers a series of five free financial education workshops on Tuesdays from 6 to 8 p.m. beginning Nov. 4. Topics include credit building and debt management. For more information or to RSVP, call (718) 933-2539.

## Food Bank Assistance

The Food Bank of New York offers free meals and food for the

needy throughout the Bronx. It also assists with other services including food stamps, income tax returns, job training, and legal assistance. To find a location near you, call (212) 566-7855 or visit <http://www.foodbanknyc.org/news/find-help>.

## MMCC Services

The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center offers a number of services including food stamps (ext. 304) at 3450 DeKalb Ave. For more information and details of classes and programs, call (718) 882-4000. In addition, there is Head Start and Universal Pre-K at the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center at 3880 Sedgwick Ave. Call (718) 654-0563 for more information.

## Recycle Clothes and Food

Recycle old clothes, food scraps for compost, and other textiles at GrowNYC's Poe Park Greenmarket, 192nd Street and the Grand Concourse, Tuesdays from 8 a.m.

to 1:30 p.m., through Nov. 25. For more information, call (212) 788-7964.

**Homebuying Assistance**The Northwest Bronx Resource Center hosts homebuying counseling workshops on the first or third Friday of every month. For more information or to RSVP for an appointment with a HUD counselor, call (718) 933-3101.

## 52nd Precinct Explorers

The 52nd Precinct Law Enforcement Explorers meets Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m. at 3016 Webster Ave. The group is open to youth ages 14 to 20. Learn about law enforcement as a career, meet with local police officers, participate in projects, trips, and various activities. For more information, call PO Yvette Palermo-Ortega at (718) 220-5833.

**Editor's Note:** Have a Neighborhood Note item? Send it to David Cruz, Norwood News editor-in-chief, at [dcruz@norwoodnews.org](mailto:dcruz@norwoodnews.org).



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# New Monte AIDS Research Center Opens

Montefiore Medical Center has recently opened the Oval Center, a new care, teaching, and research site of the Montefiore/Einstein AIDS Center and Division of Infectious Diseases. Located just four blocks from the main hospital on Montefiore's Moses campus at 3230 Bainbridge Ave., the Oval Center offers:

- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) screening and treatment by expert staff
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# S. Bronx Group Home Under Fire After Abuse Claims

By DAVID GREENE

A 17th staffer at a South Bronx home for special needs adults has been told to stay home amid a state investigation of alleged chronic abuse by employees.

Family members for residents at the Union IRA group home at 570 Union Ave. in Mott Haven claim their loved ones were being assaulted and deprived of food while staying at the supportive residence.

During a meeting with family members on Sept. 20, Sheryl Minter-Brooks, the state operations director for the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the agency that oversees homes across the city, revealed that seven caregivers had been removed since the spring.

"We are as sickened by this as everyone else is and we're working to get to the bottom of it," Minter-Brooks told an outraged crowd. "We have reason to suspect that something happened, it does not mean that it did happen."

For now, staffers remain home with pay while the New York State Justice Center, an investigatory body, looks into the claims. A spokeswoman for the OPWDD declined to discuss specifics of the matter while it's under investigation.

## Anonymous Letter

At least five family members received a two-page letter dated Aug. 20. The anonymous writer, claiming to be a worker at the home, detailed systematic beatings, food deprivation and one allegation of sex abuse by a female employee. According to the letter, claims of abuse were backed up by photos of staff members attacking residents.

The letter claimed that one state employee was accused of assaulting a resident so bad it ruptured an eardrum. The whistleblower admitted to keeping silent on the assault, believing that speaking up or reporting assaults would "label me as a snitch."

Families have remained vocal on the abuse charges, which they believed ran rampant at the home. Several family members of one resident accused staffers of refusing to stock a bathroom with toilet paper. Staffers believed the toilet would simply clog up.

## Zoraida's Case

Before obtaining legal guardianship, Barbara Melendez was in limbo attempting to get her sister Zoraida out of the home. During Zoraida's stay



Photo by David Greene

**SEVENTEEN WORKERS FROM** the Union IRA home in the South Bronx (pictured) have been ordered to stay home with pay, pending the outcome of widespread abuse allegations.

at the home, Melendez claimed her sister suffered ongoing abuse that was brushed off by staff members. "They had all the power and I still needed my guardianship," recalled Melendez.

On Oct. 2, Zoraida was discovered with bruises near her pelvis and breasts. She was later taken to an area hospital, where the NYPD was called. Officers took a report for an "unknown assault," but hospital officials told Melendez that there was a time-lapse in reporting, so a rape-kit wasn't performed.

A history of abuse has followed Zoraida since last year, according to the letter. Some incidents involved a split lip requiring seven stitches while another incident involved staffers kicking Zoraida's legs until they swelled, according to the letter. Zoraida would be taken to local emergency rooms six more times between January and August this year for a bruise on her arm, a gash to her foot that required stitches and a black eye.

"When I began to question it they would tell me, 'Oh she's accident prone,'" Melendez recalled. "So what could I say? They knew how to cover themselves."

## Searching for Closure

Family members hope the investigation leads to arrests and dismissals even if they are cleared of all allegations. But Minter-Brooks of OPWDD said she "can't guarantee" any firings, citing the employees civil service contract.

One family member recalled an incident involving her brother, telling the group, "We had an independent investigation that took many months and it's finally completed, but we're not allowed to get copies of the reports or know the results."

Claiming that the safeguards are flawed, Melendez added, "If they are found guilty, they should never work with the disabled again." Despite apologies from Minter-Brooks, Melendez argued the sentiment was "a little too late to be sorry."

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# Norwood's Baddest Landlords Exposed

(continued from page 1)

in his apartment range from faulty windows, a deteriorating floor, mice infestation, and broken, defective plastered surfaces. "It's terrible, terrible," he said, showing the violations. "That's why I'm planning on moving."

The building racked up 327 violations this year, 26 more than in 2013. Eight percent are deemed Class C violations, considered the most hazardous and in need of immediate repair. They include inadequate fire exits, large rodents, lead-based paint, no heat or hot water, electricity, or gas. The bulk of the violations runs into the Class B category, with some infractions ranging from self-closing public doors, dim lighting in public areas, lack of a posted Certificate of Occupancy and an influx of vermin. Owners are given a month to make repairs. Class A violations are the less egregious, though they include building floors that aren't properly numbered.

Anthony Holmes has been a resident in the building for 25 years and said the building has been in decline for the last decade. "There are problems with the boiler, the elevator," he said. "About every two weeks, there's no hot water. [The landlord] makes us wait a whole week for hot water. Everybody had to call 311 so they could come investigate."

Another resident, Marisol, who did not want to give her last name, cited the frustration of unclear communication with the landlord on getting repairs. A four-year resident, Marisol's still waiting on a paint job and repairs for her apartment bathroom. "When I call the office, they tell me to speak to the super. Then I'll tell the super 'what's taking you so long?' And he'll say I have to call the office. There's always this back and forth," she said.

## Cataloging Shady Landlords

The list began in 2010, created by Mayor Bill de Blasio during

his days as Public Advocate. This year nearly 6,800 buildings across the city made the list. Brooklyn topped the list with close to 3,700 buildings, followed by Manhattan and the Bronx. According to James, the distinction for worst landlord in the city, belongs to Robin Shimoff, who owns 13 buildings throughout the Bronx totaling 778 units with more than 3,300 open violations in 2014.

One resident at 2830 Briggs Ave. was reluctant to discuss the conditions at her building owned by Maribel Martinez. There are 168 violations in all, mostly logged under class A. "I've lived here 36 years and I don't want to get involved in that," she said in Spanish. "My apartment is fine."

Six blocks away, 167 open violations remain at 3158 Perry Ave., a six-story apartment building. A call to 3156-58 Perry LLC, the management company, was not returned.

At 2566 Bainbridge Ave., building owners have allowed 210 viola-

tions to accrue, with one resident who went by Douglas expressing shock the building made the worst landlord list. "I've lived here for many years," he said. "I have full confidence in the management. I see that they do send maintenance personnel. The inside of the building is kept quite clean, the door is locked and the building kept in good repair. For myself I'm happy living here."

Currently, if an emergency condition is verified in an apartment by an HPD inspector, and the owner fails to make the necessary repairs in the time frame set for the violation, HPD's Emergency Repair Program (ERP) may repair the conditions, later passing the costs on to the owner.

James also called for greater legal resources for tenants. "When these tenants go to court, the landlords usually have a team of lawyers," she said. "Most of these tenants are represented by themselves. Tenants need to be represented by council."



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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### The Bronx by Bike

The 20th annual free Tour de Bronx will take place on Sunday, Oct. 26, offering a 25- or 40-mile ride, starting from the Bronx County Building, 851 Grand Concourse at 161st Street and will culminate at the New York Botanical Garden with live music and light snacks. Check-in time is at 9 a.m. Free bike helmets will be fitted and distributed from 8 to 11:30 a.m., while supplies last. Participants must sign a waiver. To register, go to [www.iLoveTheBronx.com](http://www.iLoveTheBronx.com). See story on page 2.

## Onstage

- The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the **Bronx Symphony String Quartet** performing Beethoven, Oct. 18 at 2:30 p.m.; the **Rafael Hernandez Music Festival** featuring singers and musicians, Oct. 19 at 2 p.m.; and **Murder and Madness and Poe** featuring drama with poetry, music and readings, Oct. 25 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).
- The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents the **Senegal St. Joseph Gospel Choir**, Oct. 19 at 4 p.m. (tickets are \$15 to \$25; \$10/ages 12 and under); and **Jose Albert "El Canario" and La Tipica '73**, Oct. 25 at 8 p.m. (tickets are \$30 to \$50). For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

## Events

- Van Cortlandt Park's Sachkerah Woods Archway, at Gun Hill Road and Jerome Avenue offers **free classes** in zumba, Saturdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. through Nov. 1 (wear sneakers and comfortable clothes). For more information, call (718) 430-1890.

- Van Cortlandt Park invites the public to join its **BronxNet's Halloween 5K Fitness Race and Family Run**, Oct. 26 at 12:30 p.m. to benefit the preservation of the XC Trail. Preregistration fee is \$25; on-site fee is higher; \$15/ages 7 to 12; free/6 and under. Participants will receive a gift. Come in costume. Top winners will receive Sketchers shoes; gifts to winners of each age division and best costume; all followed post-race

activities. For more information and to register, contact [info@vcpark.org](mailto:info@vcpark.org).

- The public is invited to a taping of **BronxTalk's 20th anniversary show and celebration**, Oct. 22 at 8 p.m. at the Andrew Freedman Home, 165th Street and he Grand Concourse. For more information, call (718) 960-1180.

- **Making Strides Against Breast Cancer**, a celebration of survivorship, is a 3.2-mile event to raise awareness and raise money to help the American Cancer Society fight the disease with research, information, and services. The event will be held at Orchard Beach, Oct. 19 at 8 a.m. Volunteers are sought. For more information, call (800) 277-2345.

- The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center Senior Center, 3450 DeKalb Ave., presents a **Harvest Hop**, Oct. 29 at 12:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-4000.

- Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Arts Projects**: Fairy Wands and Tiny Houses, to make a wand, then visit the woodlands to create a fairy dwelling with sticks and leaves, Oct. 18 and 19; and **Hawks Take Flight**, to observe soaring hawks, then make a hawk glider, Oct. 25 and 26; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also offered is **Falconry Presentation**: Skyhunters in Flight, to watch hawks, falcons, and owls, then learn about falconry and see live raptors, Oct. 25 at 1 p.m.; and **Horszowski Trio in Concert**, performing classical music, Oct. 26 at 2 p.m. in the WH House (\$28; \$15/ages 8 to 18; \$22/WH member; \$12/WH member child). Registration is required for each, online at [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org) or at the Perkins Visitor Center; info at

ext. 251). Grounds admission is free until noon Saturdays and Tuesdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

## Exhibits

- Manhattan College, 4513 Manhattan College Pkwy., hosts a **sculpture exhibit** by WWII vet Jay Moss who has sculpted since childhood, and is the father of a former *Norwood News* editor, Jordan Moss. The exhibit will be held in the O'Malley Library (first floor, room 100) in the Alumni Room from Oct. 22 (reception from 4 to 7 p.m.) to Dec. 16. For more information, call (718) 710-3382.

- The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, presents **Beyond the Supersquare**, featuring a variety of artwork, through Jan. 11. For more detailed information, call (718) 681-6000.

## Library Events

- The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: **Preschool Story Time at 11 a.m.**: (ages 3 to 5 years), Oct. 16, 23 and 30; **Toddler Play Time at noon**: (ages 18 to 36 months), Oct. 16, 23 and 30; and **Puppet Making Workshop**: (ages 5 to 12), Oct. 25 at 2 p.m. Teens/young adults can attend: **Chess at 5 p.m.**: Oct. 20 and 27; **Poof! Life in a Vacuum**: Learn about the earth's atmosphere and astronauts, Oct. 29 at 4 p.m.; and **Programs in a Box (Stop Motion Animation)**: Learn to create clay characters that walk and talk, Oct. 29 at 5 p.m. Adults can enjoy: **Advanced Word**: Oct. 20 at 2 p.m. (in-person registration required). For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

- The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Toddler Story Time**: (18 to 36 months), Oct. 16 at 10:30 a.m.; and **Read Aloud Story Time at 4 p.m.**: (ages 3 to 12), Oct. 20 and 27. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **Film**: "The Lone Ranger," Oct. 25 at 2 p.m. Adults can attend: **MS Word 2010 at 10:30 a.m.**: Oct. 22 and 29 (in-person advance registration required). For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

- The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: **Active Health**: Yoga and zumba, Oct. 17 at 4 p.m.; **Pajama Party**: Enjoy arts and crafts, read aloud and snacks, Oct. 20 at 6 p.m.; and **Chess Program**: Learn to play, Oct. 28 at 4 p.m. (all for ages 5 to 12); **Toddler Time at 11 a.m.**: Oct. 22 and 29 (for ages 18 to 36 months); and **Things That Go Bump in the Night**: Halloween stories, Oct. 28 at 3:30 p.m. (for ages 3 to 12). Teens/young adults can enjoy: **Film**: Oct. 16 at 3:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Computer Basics Open Lab at noon**: Oct. 16, 17, 21, 23, 28 and 30. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

**NOTE:** Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org), and should be received by Oct. 20 for the next publication date of Oct. 30.



Photo courtesy Jay Moss

**THIS FINE PIECE** of sculpture and many others can be viewed at "Sculpture and Social Consciousness," at the Alumni Room at Manhattan College's O'Malley Library (see details under "Exhibits." ).



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