

# NORWOOD NEWS

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## ILLEGAL BBQs INVADE PARKS

*Season of grilling starts, angering longtime residents*



Photo by David Greene

**THIS MAN STANDS** near fired up grill beside a tree at Mosholu Parkway South and East 203rd Street for a Memorial Day weekend barbecue, one of many barbecues witnessed throughout local parks.



**Youth Envision  
Oval Skate Park**  
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### By JASMINE GOMEZ

With climbing temperatures and daylight hours extending, the barbecue season is heating up.

And along Mosholu Parkway, some residents are fuming over illegal barbecues, a common sighting as hints of summer settle in.

The parkway has seen an

influx of non-community members hosting illegal barbecues where alcohol drinking, drug use, and heavy littering takes place, according to Sandra Pabon of Norwood. For the past few years, Pabon has watched grillers cooking on the parkway, often lounging there for hours.

The unsanctioned gather-

ings have long resulted in several quality of life concerns that trouble Bedford Park and Norwood, who've battled unwanted barbecues for years.

Residents typically notice a dirty parkway and heavy smoke that seeps into residents' homes as the parties on the grassy span convene. In some instances, barbecue par-

ties become territorial, leaving passersby to feel unwelcome, sometimes avoiding a section of the parkway altogether.

At the end of parties, locals are often forced to pick up after partygoers through organized cleanup days. Pabon sees this as a constant struggle, blaming a spike of vermin to barbe-  
*(continued on page 15)*



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## IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

# Public Input Sought by City for New Skate Park at Oval

By MOSES BUSTOS

A skateboarder wants a bank to ledge. Another wants longer runways to pick up speed. A third one requested a bowl.

These street-style obstacles served as source material for an impending skate park at the Williamsbridge Oval Park. The scope meeting on May 18, hosted by the Office of Councilman Andrew Cohen, who represents the area, drew representatives from the New York City Department of Parks and local community groups.

Visions of half pipes, pyramids and ramps were shared in an open dialogue. Cohen argued that by using public input to help shape the development of the new park project, the final product would ensure the satisfaction of not only taxpayers, but also those who enjoy the park grounds on a regular basis.

Securing the \$750,000 in funding necessary to build a "quality park" was his end of the bargain, said Cohen. "Now it's up to the Parks Department to make the most of this money," he said, motioning towards a rendering of the 8,000-square-foot space cleared for construction.

Which is why local skaters were invited to share their perspective. Park designer Judy Tung presented existing New York City park layouts and a possible blueprint for the allotted venue, highlighting the many ways the park could be oriented.

Brian Cantwell, another designer with the Parks Department, agreed that the available area showed much promise, he told the *Norwood News*. The space and funding provided are "comparable to that of larger parks

throughout New York City," he said.

With the added input of local residents, city planners hope to maximize the potential of the based on the needs and preferences of the people most likely to enjoy it.

"What do you want to see?" asked Sheila Sanchez, president of the Friends of the Williamsbridge Oval [FOTWO]. Though younger members of the audience were hesitant to chime in at first, Linda Bonilla, Bronx Outreach Coordinator with the Partnerships for Parks, assured them that "the whole idea of this conversation is to get feedback."

Eager to help, suggestions from the audience came pouring in. Ramps, drops, rails, the pros and cons of 4-steps vs. 3-steps and the importance of transitions between obstacles were openly discussed. James Asante, a 19-year-old skater, even provided a hand-drawn sketch of the ideal "park flow."

No suggestion, like marble flooring for instance, was too far-fetched not to be mentioned, while others, like outdoor lighting, were indeed outside the budget. "It will probably cost us over a million dollars to add lighting," warned Tung.

Suggestions and requests were abundant. "There's so much input," said Tung. At one point, Brian De La Rosa, an 18-year-old skater in the audience, recommended another meeting be organized with "just the skaters,"



Photo by Moses Bustos

**SKATEBOARD ENTHUSIASTS TAKE** part in a brainstorming session for an impending skateboard park at Williamsbridge Oval Park.

and just like that, an interim meeting was slated for less than a month from now.

In an effort to speed up development, Deputy Chief of Operations Larry Scoones, advised against budget changes. "We want you to enjoy this park while you're still on skateboards, and not walkers," he said, citing the long process by which suggestions in budget changes can delay park projects.

Residents are now tasked with submitting their sketches by the first week of June to the office of Councilman Cohen. Offering up his own scanning machines and office resources, Cohen implored those with input to email his office as well.

When asked what can be expected moving forward, Cohen said it's all up to the kids and the Department of Parks now. "It's hard enough getting young people to participate like this," he said. "I'm happy with this meeting's turnout."

With so many suggestions, it's likely some of the newer skateboarding terminology may be lost on older members of the development team. "Take pity on us, we're old and don't know what some of these words mean," said Scoones with a smile.

## Public and Community Meetings

**BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meets June 3 at 8 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., apt. B1 (lobby floor). For more information, call (718) 367-2230.

**COMMUNITY BOARD 7** will hold its general board meeting on June 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the New York Botanical Garden Visitor Center Café. CB7 committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Veterans on June 1; Executive on June 2; Public Safety & Quality of Life on June 4; Environment & Sanitation on June 9; Health & Hospitals at 7:30 p.m. on June 9; and Traffic & Transportation on June 11. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

**52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING** meets at St. James Episcopal Church, 2500 Jerome Ave., May 28 from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.



# Decatur Avenue Street Festival Canceled After Shooting Breaks Out

By **TATYANA TURNER**  
and **DAVID CRUZ**

A 22-year-old man was shot on the outskirts of Kingsbridge/Bedford Park just an hour before the community was to enjoy a street festival. The shooter remains on the run in a case of what police sources say was a gang-related, retaliatory shooting.

Children were prepared to come out for the 2nd annual Decatur Avenue Street Festival on May 22 when gunfire erupted.

Cops from the 52nd Precinct suspect the shooting began at a barbershop on 194th Street and Decatur Avenue. The

victim trudged to 195th Street and Decatur Avenue with gunshot wounds to the groin. He was transported to a nearby hospital with his condition unknown. The victim, part of the notorious Crips gang, was shot by a rival Bloods gang member in retaliation for a deadly shooting that happened on the corner of Creston Avenue and East 193rd Street in broad daylight two days before, according to one police source.

Decatur Avenue has been marred with gun violence in the last few weeks, with the 52nd Precinct attributing it to an ongoing turf war. It's prevalence is so common these days residents have



Photo by David Cruz

**POLICE SEAL OFF** a section of 195th Street and Decatur Avenue shortly after the daytime shooting.



Photo by David Cruz

**THE VICTIM'S BLOODED** clothes seen a block from where he was shot.

set up a makeshift memorial that includes pictures and empty liquor bottles.

Councilman Ritchie Torres, who was expected to appear at the festival, said in a statement that the shooting, in effect "wounded the entire community." "My thoughts and prayers are

with the victim and his family for a full and speedy recovery," said Torres.

The shooting came on the same day as 14-year-old Christopher Duran, a known gang member, was shot to death in a suspected gang-related shooting on the Concourse.

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## INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers how difficult it is to afford today's rent rates in the Bronx in light of the upcoming expiration of the state's current rent laws.



We haven't seen any affordable housing in years and it's kind of sad because it drives out middle-income communities and leaves the city to just rich and poor people. Poor people can get Section 8 or whatever programs there are, the rich are moving into Harlem now. That's the sad part of this—we're losing the middle class base.

**Ezra Glaser**  
Van Cortlandt Park South



It's very hard, but I'm with SCRIE [Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption] because I'm 74. At 62 my rent got frozen because I'm not rich. If it wasn't frozen, I don't think I could pay it. And the cost of food is so high.

**Withheld**



Rents in the Bronx are very high, that's for sure. I mean, in another five years you won't even be able to afford to live out here. Rents are getting just as high as Manhattan and Brooklyn. So the middle class is getting pushed out of Manhattan and they're going to come to the Bronx. If they migrate this way, what happens to us? We're left out.

**Gilberto Colon**  
Norwood



I have to work eight days a week, not seven to pay the rent. Oh, the apartment I live in, oh boy. The landlord keeps asking for more money. It's too much and our salaries don't go up.

**Gihad Quteibi**  
Bedford Park



I think that most rents here in the Bronx are fair, but some are too much. I feel it depends on the area. If someone can pay it and it's a quiet area, then it's worth it. Honestly, only respectful people can afford a higher rent, so it's worth the price. But there should be more affordable housing.

**Ryan Perciaccanto**  
Van Cortlandt Park

**Editor's Note:** Have an idea for an Inquiring Photographer question? Send suggestions to [dcruz@norwoodnews.org](mailto:dcruz@norwoodnews.org).



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# Loss of Shelter Director Inspires Talk of Security

By DAVID CRUZ

In the weeks following the death of Ana Charle, the director of a homeless shelter in Wakefield, security at the shelter has picked up. A parked security car sits outside the shelter. Three part-time peace officers and a supervisor from the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) now roam the facility, a reactionary response by DHS shortly after Charle's death.

Charle had been allegedly stalked and killed by West Spruill, a former resident of the shelter who knew Charle, in a shooting that's galvanized the community and renewed calls from local legislators to demand the shelter close despite the Charle-Spruill incident happening outside the shelter's walls. DHS currently has a contract with Project Renewal at 4380 Bronx Blvd., which operates the site since opening in 2013. Charle had been its director, supervising the men's only shelter that's generated nearly one thousand 911 complaints originating there.

Just across the street, another shelter is under construction. The Mueller



Photo by David Cruz

**A SECURITY VEHICLE** from the New York City Department of Homeless Services parks outside the Project Renewal shelter in the aftermath of Ana Charle's death.

Center, at 555 Nereid Ave., is expected to house 200 men. As the shelter is being built, a burning question at a recent 47th Precinct Community Council was raised: How can the Police Department, which routinely responds to 911 calls at the Project Renewal site, handle an increased volume of issues that could emanate at shelters?

A review of Project Renewal's contract with DHS shows \$0 were allocated to security when the shelter first opened, though metal detectors, an X-Ray machine and surveillance cameras were installed. But apparently, it wasn't enough, given requests by Charle and Councilman Andrew Cohen, whose district covers the shelter, to incorporate more security at the site.

In late April, as part of the executive budget process, the city approved increased funding for security at the site by \$38,285 for Fiscal Year 2015 and \$51,016 for Fiscal Year 2016. The budget has increased from \$0 in 2011, when Project Renewal was awarded a 20-year, \$86 million contract.

In some ways, the battle to keep the neighborhoods protected from the shelter population is fought on two fronts by the 47th Precinct, whose jurisdiction covers several shelters and supportive housing sites in the north Bronx. They partner with the city Department of Homeless Services in conducting active warrant sweeps throughout shelters. One was scheduled for the week of May 18 at the Project Renewal site, an indication some felons live there. In the case of Spruill, the suspect had a long criminal rap sheet that includes an attempted murder charge in the 1990s.

At the precinct council meeting on May 12, Deputy Inspector Ruel R. Stephenson, the 47th Precinct's commanding officer, has suspected some shelter residents to have committed crimes that remain unsolved. "We had a forcible touching pattern all of last year,"

said Stephenson. "Nineteen victims. Young girls, 12 to 25. Most of them are the ages of 13 to 15. We're very sure that the perpetrator was from one of those homes."

Stephenson pointed out that in some cases, panhandling by the homeless is a daily occurrence, becoming a nuisance to store owners. "It's calmed down because we addressed it," said Stephenson, who warned that shelter residents, who come from all over the city, may pose a danger to residents.

The Project Renewal site is one of several shelters currently open within the 47th Precinct's borders—which include a temporary housing shelter at East 233rd Street and White Plains Road. The shelters are joined by a supportive housing site, operated by Praxis Housing, at 4453 White Plains Rd. In the last year, activity occurring in or around the Project Renewal shelter generated 987 calls to 911. Stephenson didn't elaborate on the nature of those calls about the shelter, which houses men with psychiatric conditions.

Project Renewal asked for more security at the site in February to handle the population, a plea echoed by Cohen who conducted joint walkthroughs of the shelter in recent months, noticing shelter employees were assigned to monitor its clients.

For now, the Mueller Center is unwelcome in the community, fueled by incidents at the Project Renewal shelter. At the precinct council meeting, Stephenson warned the audience they "should be concerned," encouraging residents to take a stand.



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# Crews Seal Perry Ave. Sinkhole



Photos by David Cruz

**A LOOK AT** a before and after image of this sinkhole at the intersection of Perry Avenue and 204th Street that caused some major traffic headaches for local drivers. The sinkhole was initially fixed until an outer layer of tar slowly buckled. Some fast-thinking residents called the city to fix the sinkhole, now covered with a temporary plate.

## Another Property Sold in Bedford Park

By DAVID CRUZ

Bedford Park is becoming the bedrock of development.

The latest is the purchase of an abandoned piece of property at 232 E. 201st St., which was at one point the home of squatters.

Ariel Properties executed the sale for an undisclosed buyer for \$650,000, translating to \$36 per buildable square feet. It's located at the corner of Valentine Avenue and 201st Street, deemed an R8 zoning district. Developers can build upwards to 17,982 buildable square feet as-of-right or 19,416 should developers work community space into the development.

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The latest purchase makes it another purchase of property buying in Bedford Park, a neighborhood that's home to a mix of residential developments and private houses.

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# 40 Years Strong, a Civic Association Still Active in Bedford Park

By DAVID CRUZ

In the 40 years the Bedford Mosholu Community Association has remained synonymous with the Bronx's Bedford Park community, change has remained a constant in the leafy neighborhood.

The 1970s' white flight phenomenon came and went. The city edged toward the brink of financial ruin, and seeds of development had to take shape. But in the face of change, and as it reaches the 40-year mark, BMCA's mission has been the same: preserving the quality of life for the little-known working-class community.

It's the first Monday of April, and residents cram a tiny apartment at a building tipping Mosholu Parkway South and Webster Avenue. It's one of those can't-miss meetings that offer a briefing over the state of the neighborhood. Barbara Stronczer, BMCA's fifth and long serving president, sits alongside an executive board that includes Robert Hamill, Margaret Collins, Mary Vallati, Norma Jean Scully and Grace Siemer. Stronczer updates members on development projects, concerns over varnished fireboxes and plans for a spring cleanup of the parkway.

And sustaining an organization is never an easy feat, especially if it solely depends on volunteers to carry out its mission for a higher standard of living. Volunteers can be non-committal. Solutions often lumber, taking years to see through. But BMCA has kept its eye on the ball, taking the city and state to task whenever issues arise. After all, BMCA members have long been tired of the Bronx playing second fiddle to the rest of the city.

"If you don't invite different people to a meeting to express your concerns or send letters from an organization, things don't get touched," said Stronczer, in an interview with the *Norwood News*. "And certainly the Bronx has a reputation for being the stepchild in the city, anyway."

The group became the de facto community organization, shortly after the Bedford Park Civic Association, one of the more familiar groups of yesteryear, began to phase out.

Bedford Park remains a relatively unknown neighborhood in the Bronx. Dotted with two-family homes, co-ops, easy public transportation access and some retail corridors, Bedford Park is geographically fortified by some of the borough's well-known institutions—Montefiore Medical Center, The New



Photo courtesy John Reilly

**A LOOK BACK** at an early accomplishment by the Bedford Mosholu Community Association: stopping the closing of the local 52nd Precinct.



Photo courtesy Bedford Mosholu Community Association

**BMCA CONTINUES COMMUNITY** outreach events today. Here, a look at a cleanup event the group sponsored in October 2014.

York Botanical Garden, Fordham University and The Bronx Zoo—diverting from the spotlight. It's also occupied by Mosholu Parkway, a tree-lined roadway that serves as a neighborhood boundary and amenity. Barbecuing and organized games are prohibited yet still abound.

But there were moments when Bedford Park's seams began to tear. Crime reared its ugly head, as thugs routinely shook down the elderly. The year was 1975, when the onset of urban decline took shape, and city services began to wane. More than 300 tenants met at Bedford Park Congregational Church, forming a neighborhood watch program, with help from several block and tenant associations BMCA initially formed.

"Each block had a few people come to a meeting. And in order for a block to join the security patrol they had to pay \$300 'cause this was going towards

the equipment," said Stronczer.

Protesting was the last resort for BMCA, but warranted should authority figures ignore the association, said Stronczer. It happened during BMCA's earlier months, when a proposed playground on Mosholu Parkway stoked BMCA's ire.

Strength in numbers reflected in BMCA's victory in staving the city's plan to close the local 52nd Precinct on Webster Avenue in late 1975. This followed several days of large-scale demonstrations inside the precinct and throughout the community, with droves of tenants pounding the pavement. BMCA's mobilization efforts were grand, coming long before the days of the Internet, when word of mouth and flier distributions fueled troupes of demonstrators.

The rally would last four days. Protestors were seen carrying large signs as another group paraded down Web-

ster Avenue towards Fordham Road, lifting a coffin donated by the local funeral group, a macabre symbol of the precinct's fate. Bystanders, many in shock, mistook the procession for a real one, Stronczer recalled.

"People on the sidelines said, 'He must've been a very important person.'"

Look at all these people marching," said Stronczer of the presentation, adding there were sit-ins and sleepovers at the 52nd Precinct, a show of force against the city's plans. City legislators, under intense pressure, soon relented. "It was a real community event," said Stronczer.

"[BMCA] became very quickly a voice for very specific items they needed out of the city," said John Reilly, currently the executive director of the Fordham-Bedford Housing Corporation and one of the credited founders of BMCA.

Their efforts are broad, and never beneath them. So if it was painting fireboxes, seeing the re-opening of C-Town supermarket in a deprived section of the neighborhood or convincing the city to plant trees on Mosholu Parkway, the group was there. Even sophisticated matters proved to be projects BMCA could take on, particularly investment matters where neighborhood banks invested capital monies into derelict buildings.

The group's mission remains the same. On the first Monday of each month (excluding July and August), Stronczer leads a forum that's akin to what one would see in a small town—neighbors turning a cramped apartment into a house of ideas.

For now, rehabilitating Mosholu Parkway remains at the top of BMCA's agenda, engaged in a broad campaign to revamp the parkway. Those efforts coincide with BMCA's worries of overdevelopment, a recent phenomenon born out of a 2009 rezoning for nearby Webster Avenue. It's a sign of Bedford Park's view as a family-friendly community, but also a concern for BMCA.

The neighborhood has since benefitted from the kind of stalwart presence BMCA has become, forging a sense of community seen in tight-knit neighborhoods.

"It did create very much more of a feeling of community," said Reilly. "Neighbors were talking to each other. So that was a side benefit that was beyond the issue. That probably helped as much as anything."



# BRONX WEEK 2015



Photo by Austin Crimmins

**THESE CADETS FROM** Isobel Rooney Middle School 80 proudly march along Mosholu Parkway during Bronx Week Parade.



Photo by David Cruz

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT** Ruben Diaz Jr. speaks with a community resident after he wraps up hosting duties for the Bronx Week Parade.



Photos by David Cruz

**TWO LITTLE GIRLS** dance in their colorful costumes as they stride down the parade route.



Photo by Vivian Carter

**BRONX YMCA FAMILIES** carry after school posters as they guide their children through the parade route.



Photo by Austin Crimmins  
**A LITTLE GIRL** transforms into a beautiful butterfly as she gets her face painted during the Bronx Week festivities.



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# A History Lesson, Over a Sip of Tea, at the Bronx Historical Society

By JASMINE GOMEZ

Like characters from a Jane Austen novel, several middle school girls from the Young Women's Leadership Academy of the Bronx were decked out in petticoats, corsets, and bonnets with smiles and stares from passersby as they walked down Bainbridge Avenue. From there, the girls went back in time.

They were heading to the Bronx County Historical Society's Museum of Bronx History at the Valentine-Varian House in Norwood, a trip that culminated their after school "Teen Thursdays" program. They dove into history by participating in a "High Tea" event, where they drank tea, ate cookies, and engaged in conversation while donning the typical costumes of women in the late 1800s.

"Teen Thursdays" is an initiative from the New York City Department of Education where schools can apply to participate and be partnered with cultural institutions across New York City. Each partnership allows students in grades 7 and 8 to learn American history through a hands-on curriculum that teaches students skills they can later apply in the actual classroom.



Photo by Jasmine Gomez

**TEA TIME FOR STUDENTS** from the Young Women's Leadership Academy in the Bronx, culminating the seven-week after school program hosted by the Bronx Historical Society.

Sarah Reul and Matt Saccocio, both history teachers, said the initiative is intertwined with what's happening at school—taking its historical lessons and applying it to the classroom, and vice versa.

This semester, the girls focused on the building of the High Bridge, which is soon to reopen following a \$65 million rehabilitation project, and how

the building coincided with the generational changes women have experienced since the mid-19th century.

By sharpening their skills in research and the use of primary and secondary sources, the students created both a quilt and newspaper showcasing all the information they have learned throughout the semester. "They did all the research themselves based on

primary sources, primary documents at our historical society, pictures and documents that are part of our history, and they are the actual reporters," said Dimitris Raptopoulos, director of Operations and Development for the Bronx County Historical Society.

Topics ranged from fashion in the 19th century compared to today's current fashion trends, how the methods of fighting fires have evolved, and the juxtaposition of past and present diseases with an article entitled, "Is Yesterday's Cholera Today's Ebola?"

By having the students fill out actual job applications at the start of program as a learning activity, Janet Noquist-González, an educator of the program, models the curriculum to the individual interests of the students and to help them explore skills they may one day use when they enter the workforce.

The students also participated in field trips that included exploring the Highbridge neighborhood, a visit with a fashion consultant to explore the styles of different time periods, and a visit to the New York Botanical Garden, where they learned the roles of women in the evolution of the garden.

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### NOTICE OF MEETING

The Board of Directors of the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District presents its 19th annual Board meeting on Tuesday, June 2 at 5:30 p.m. at Escape Lounge, 3489 Jerome Ave., Bronx, NY 10467. Please join us as we discuss accomplishments and plans for the coming year, elect Board members, and review the BID's financials. Complimentary food and refreshments will be served by Escape Lounge. For more information, call (718) 324-4461.

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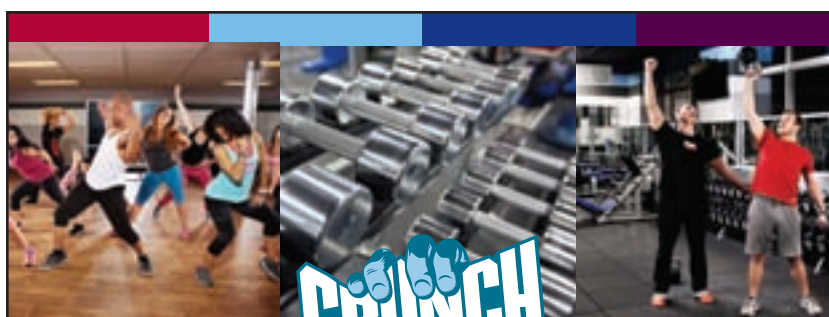
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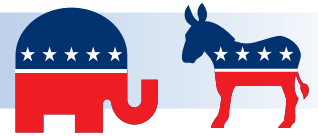
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# THE BRONX BELTWAY

By DAVID CRUZ



## Hector Ramirez

Hector Ramirez, a cyclical candidate for the 86th Assembly District seat in the West Bronx, can't seem to catch a break. He lost in the latest race against party favorite, Assemblyman Victor Pichardo, for a second straight time. Now he's got an indictment on his hands for allegedly trying to rig it.

His alleged infractions in cooking up absentee ballots and electioneering in last year's September Primary caught up with him after the Bronx District Attorney's Office nailed him and his campaign manager with a whopping 242-count indictment. Seven counts apparently correspond to one absentee ballot Ramirez is suspected of soliciting.

Of course, the rumor mill busted after many suspected Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, who was the Bronx Democratic County Committee chair at the time, had a hand in sealing Ramirez's indictment by talking Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson into doing it. Perhaps fueled by a City & State report suggesting that Johnson's palling around with those he's supposed to watch over, many critics suggested Johnson lacks the chutzpah to go after the borough's inner circle of legislators. A spokesperson defended Johnson's decision (and rightful one) to go after Ramirez, saying the office acted on a tip from the Board of Elections.

"There was no communication with Carl Heastie or anyone who was not involved in the investigation," said Terry Raskyn, the Bronx DA spokesperson. "Our investigation led to the indictment, which will be reviewed by the Court."

## City & State

*City & State* published an interesting magazine detailing the highs and lows of the borough (mostly highs), with musings from politicians on how the borough can reach another echelon. The same things were raised--affordable housing and jobs. The talking points were the same, though Councilman Andy King had probably the best one: participation.

"I like to think of the Bronx as a team, and in order for it to be a winning team, the teammates must participate," wrote King in his submission to *City & State*, capping it with his signature phrase, "People pay attention to people who participate."

Sort of refreshing given how few

politicians explicitly prefer input from the masses.

## Vacca's Successor

Even though Councilman James Vacca's 13th Council District seat isn't vacant until 2017, a list of names has begun to pop up in the two-year quest to succeed the friendly, neighborhood oriented Vacca. One political source ran a number of names, including former Community Board 10 Chairman John Marano (long shot), community activist and former Sen. Jeff Klein operative John Doyle, and Vacca's chief of staff Michael Rivadeneyra.

The district is certainly activist heavy, although once you're in as Council Member, and at least show up to events, your competition is nil. Vacca first ran in 2005 in a somewhat crowded race to replace term-limited Madeline Provenzano, so it's likely this race will be a repeat in the number of candidates...maybe even more.

*(Side Note: We ventured to Wikipedia to get a look at Vacca's political background--his page is by far the most detailed of the other Bronx Council Delegation. Look it up.)*

## Bronx Week

The stars came out for the culmination of Bronx Week, with its gala filled with glad handing, awkward dancing, and some sliver of hope. Above all, the talking point was the same--the Bronx is strong. But once again, there was recurring talk of Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. angling a run for office. This time it came from Pix 11 News and mistress of ceremonies Sukanya Krishnan cryptically saying, "The Bronx is only the beginning."

Diaz has long deflected any hint he'd seek higher office, making it one of the worst kept secrets. He refocuses his attention, as it has now become apparent, to his grand chess piece--Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie. "While Brooklyn may have the Mayor (Bill de Blasio), we have the Speaker," said Diaz before a crowd of hundreds.

Doesn't this put Heastie in a tough spot involving matters with de Blasio? De Blasio has publicly put in a good word for Heastie for months on a variety of topics (funding for NYCHA roof repairs, mayoral control of schools). Should the day of endorsement come, who will Heastie side with?

*(Another Side Note: Any good reporter, when attending an event, is always working. The person to whom this is addressed knows to what I'm referring.)*

## Heroin in the Bronx

As the *Norwood News* reported months ago in a three-part series, heroin in the Bronx remains a constant, and yet few politicians have responded to this outbreak that's killed more people in the Bronx than the rest of the four boroughs. It's undoubtedly ruined thousands of lives.

A tip of the hat to Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, however, for introducing a

bill that increases access to naloxone, a drug that reverses overdoses. He and Governor Andrew Cuomo are some of the few to go on the record sounding the alarm over the epidemic.

Shouldn't it set alarms that the latest and biggest heroin bust in the northeast happened in the quietest of places in the Bronx?--an apartment in Fieldston. And it's not staying in that apartment, but seeping into the homes of someone you know. If that doesn't raise anyone's hackles, then this issue will continue happening. This apathetic look at heroin in the Bronx is arguably one reason why it's exploded in recent years.



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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Free Bronx Day at NYBG

The New York Botanical Garden presents **Bronx Day**, May 30 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Garden's Clay Family Picnic Pavilions. Bring lunch and enjoy free musical entertainment, fun events for the entire family including face painting, and health, finance, and education resource information kiosks. Advance tickets (free) are required for admission. For more information or if inclement weather, call (718) 817-8990.

## Onstage

- The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **BWV String Trio**, performing classical music, June 6 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).
- Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents **90s R&B Soul**, May 30 (\$75/VIP seating); and **Puerto Rican Masters**, featuring salsa by various performers, June 6; both at 8 p.m. (tickets for each are \$50 to \$65). For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

## Events

- Bronx Community Board 7 invites the public to a **Dog Day Giveaway**, May 30 from noon to 2 p.m., rain or shine, at St. James Park, 2530 Jerome Ave. (193rd Street). Bring your dog to the park and receive a free keychain pet bag dispenser. Homeowners will receive a free pet waste transmits disease sign. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.
- The Fordham Road Business Improvement District (BID) presents **Free Food Truck Extravaganza Weekend**, Bryan Park (East Fordham and Kingsbridge roads), May 28 to 30 from noon to 7 p.m. featuring a variety of cuisines. Events include live music and artistic activities. For more information, call (718) 562-2104.
- Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Telling Nature and Family Stories, to share WH stories and recreate them using mixed media, May 30 and 31; and Weather and Washes Outdoors, to view art, then make your own, June 6 and 7; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. 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.
- Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (165th Street), presents free

**First Friday**, June 5, 6 to 10 p.m. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

- The public is invited to ride the free **Bronx Culture Trolley**, which transports visitors on the first Wednesday of every month (except January and September), to free Bronx hot spots. 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. Next ride is on June 3. 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](http://www.bronxarts.org).

## 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), and **Toddler Play Time at noon**: (ages 18 to 36 months); both on May 28, June 4 and 11; **Hands-On Projects** (ages 7 to 12): Sun Making: May 28 at 4 p.m., Car Book Making: May 31 at 2 p.m., and Fish Making: June 11 at 4 p.m.; and **film**: May 31 at 3:30 p.m. In addition, **Spring Into Reading!**: Reading club participants can celebrate on May 31. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).
- The Moshulu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Toddler Story Time**: (ages 18 to 36 months), songs and rhymes, May 28 at 10:30 a.m.; Teens/young adults can attend: **Etch Your Own**: to make glass piece using stencils and various techniques, June 5 at 3 p.m.; and **film**: "Unbroken," June 6 at 2 p.m.; Adults can enjoy: **Beaded Jewelry**: May 28 at 11 a.m. (advance registration required); **film**: "Fury," May 30 at 1:30 p.m.; and **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.
- The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: **Get Active Fridays**: (ages 5 to 12), dance and zumba, May 29 at 3 p.m.;

and **Rhythm and Sound**: (ages 3 to 12), summer reading kick-off celebration. Workshop with percussionist and audience participation, June 8 at 5:30 p.m. 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 June 1 for the next publication date of June 11.

## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

### Address Community Needs

The High School for Teaching and the Professions hosts a free Community School Kick-Off Forum on May 30 from 2 to 5 p.m. at 2780 Reservoir Ave. to address needs of students, families and the community. Events include parent workshops, giveaways, lunch, raffles, games, music, and entertainment. For more information and to RSVP, call (718) 329-7380 ext. 1421 or 3337.

### See, Test & Treat

Free cervical and breast cancer screenings are available for low-income women on May 30 at the Montefiore Imaging Center, 3400 Bainbridge Ave., lower level suite #300, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event is part of Montefiore's "See, Test, & Treat" campaign. Women should expect to wait two to three hours for same-day test results and consultation. For more information and to register, call (718) 920-4600.

### Free Tutoring

Free tutoring in math, history, English and science is available for students ages 12 to 21 at Sistat & Brothers United, 103 E. 196th St., 3rd fl., Mondays to Fridays from 3 to 6 p.m. For more information,

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### Wave Hill Internships

Jobs and internships are available at Wave Hill. To learn more email [businessoffice@wavehill.org](mailto:businessoffice@wavehill.org).

### Small Business Workshops

Monroe College School of Business and Operation HOPE host free small business development workshops Wednesdays through July 29 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the college's Ustin Hall, 2375 Jerome Ave. (184th Street). Participants will learn how to start a business, build a business plan, and look for funding. For more information or to register, call (201) 381-8798 or email [pedro.barry@operationhope.org](mailto:pedro.barry@operationhope.org).

### Cleaning Services

Residents living in the 12th Council District, represented by Andy King, can submit requests for cleanup via social media--[District12BX@gmail.com](mailto:District12BX@gmail.com), or via Twitter through the handle [@AndyKingNYC](https://twitter.com/AndyKingNYC) with hashtag #D12OCS. Residents should include address and cross street that needs to be cleaned.



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# ILLEGAL BBQs INVADE PARKS

(continued from page 1)

cues.

"I'm talking about the battles with infestation that I already have in this building because of all this littering and loitering that is going on within the parkway," said Pabon.

But the illegal barbecues extend beyond the parkway. At nearby Sachkerah Woods, numerous barbecues invaded the park during Memorial Day, despite red signs at the entrance prohibiting open fires and barbecues.

Jonathan Arroyo, a resident working the grill at the playground with his uncle, noted that despite residents' awareness that barbecuing is illegal, they continue to host them on holidays since it's a special occasion. His uncle, acknowledging barbecuing is illegal, said he was prepared for a fine.

Still, concerns toward illegal barbecues range. While Pabon sees it purely as a nuisance, Elizabeth Quaranta, president of Friends of Mosholu Parkland, views illegal partying as an environmental hazard since leftover charcoal can contaminate trees and the water system.

With no coal disposal units in Mo-

sholu Parkway and Sachkerah Woods, and barely any trash bins, families tend to throw their burning, smoking coals towards the base of the trees, which have the potential of killing them.

But Quaranta said that many may be unaware of the no barbecue rule. Although there are signs that ban barbecuing on the parkland, the signs may be too interpretive or disregarded by people who do not speak English. She described one sign reading "No barbecuing in this area," leading some to think it's permitted in an area where there is no sign posted.

Miriam Torres, a resident barbecuing at Mosholu Parkway on Memorial Day, was surprised to learn that barbecuing on the parkway was illegal, blaming her ignorance on lack of signs.

"What signs? Not on this side...I didn't see no signs," said Torres, who does exercise caution by grilling away from a tree.

## Enforcement

Despite no barbecue pits along Mosholu Parkway and anti-barbecuing signs, Pabon feels that police officers from the 52nd Precinct are lax on en-

forcing the rules. At the May 6 Bedford Mosholu Community Association meeting, Pabon pleaded with an NYPD Community Affairs Officer to have fellow officers issue more summonses.

Officers can fine those hosting illegal barbecues, but only if the officer actually witnesses it, according to the Community Affairs officer. Even then the decision boils down to discretion.

The New York City Parks Department, which shares enforcement oversight of the park, also has Park Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers who can issue summonses on behalf of the Environmental Control Board. They do prefer education first, according to Lawrence Scoones, the newly-appointed Bronx Chief of Operations for the Parks Department.

"People who come out and barbecue are not horrible people that are criminals. They just want to enjoy themselves...We just want to redirect them to places where we think it's more appropriate to do that activity where we can," said Scoones, adding PEP officers usually let picnickers off with a warning.

## Finding Solutions

Quaranta, members of Community Board 7, and the Parks Department re-

cently walked the parkway to identify areas where the barbecues routinely occur, and determine how they could stop them.

With Bedford Park/Norwood home to a new wave of immigrants, all parties collaborated to identify areas that could use more multilingual, illustrative signs for non-English speaking families.

"There is a sign that we are advocating for. It's a green sign and it's got a picture of a barbecue pit and it's got a line going across with a big circle around it and on the bottom it says no fires, no barbecues," said Quaranta describing the new sign she hopes to see in the park.

The Parks Department is also willing to increase patrol of the parkway if the new signs do not do enough to minimize the issue.

"If the signs aren't working and we see problems continue to develop, we will focus more officers and more of their time on Mosholu Parkway. This is a condition unfortunately that is a very popular activity and it well outstrips the capacity of us to provide areas. The areas that people want to use aren't especially appropriate," said Scoones.

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