



# NORWOOD NEWS

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**KINGSBRIDGE ARMORY NEWS:  
COVERAGE ON PGS. 8-9**



**ESPAILLAT WINS HISTORIC  
13TH CD RACE | PG. 2**

## FRAUD CHARGES FOR NORWOOD DELI

*Manhattan DA accuses halal deli of bilking fed gov't of \$296K*



Photo by David Greene

**IT'S BACK TO** business as usual for the AKS Halal Deli, whose owner and his associates stand accused of a \$296,000 welfare fraud scheme.

**By DAVID GREENE**

A popular deli in Norwood has reopened after being shuttered for six days following an alleged food stamp fraud scheme, shocking residents who frequent the eatery.

But the owner and his associates who are all related still face a slew of charges after several family members were arrested in an early morning raid on June 24, fol-

lowed by a second raid the following day at the man's home. The Manhattan District Attorney's office confirmed that five family members face grand larceny and conspiracy charges for allegedly bilking the federal government out of \$296,000 worth of food stamps.

Police stormed into the AKS Halal Deli and Grill at 319 E. 204th St. on June 24. The deli, popular in Norwood

thanks to its family-friendly atmosphere, is one of a few to boast a large spread of hot food that's purchased by regulars and passersby. Police say the owner, Ali Shahzad, 61, was taken into custody in the initial raid. Authorities later shut down the store, which remained closed until Thursday, June 30.

Neighbors were stunned to see the deli closed for days,

its storefront lights out. An orange sticker placed by the NYPD read the owners were charged with fraud. Many residents took to the *Norwood News'* comments section upon reading the online version of this article, with several well-wishers praising the deli.

"They have only provided stellar customer service and showed true care for their

*(continued on page 15)*



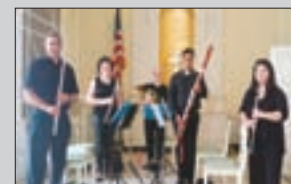
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**Montefiore**  
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ALBERT EINSTEIN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**EDITORIAL****Espallat Wins. Now Open That Bronx Office**

State Senator Adriano Espallat largely owes his primary victory in the Democratic 13th Congressional District race to the Bronx, which takes up 20 percent of the gerrymandered district that also covers Norwood. Mr. Espallat took in 15,735 votes over the presumptive frontrunner, Assemblyman Keith Wright, who took in 14,499 votes in a stunning upset. Mr. Espallat also won the Bronx by 853 votes.

Granted, June 28 did mark a primary, but with the district heavily Democratic, November's General Election will formally see Mr. Espallat ascend to the seat.

With that: Mr. Espallat, please open a Bronx constituent services office. After all, it's a trend every other congressional lawmaker in the Bronx has followed, and it could help you secure another term in 2018.

For four years, taking a complaint to Mr. Espallat's predecessor, the legendary Congressman Charles Rangel, meant trekking to his constituent services office at 163 W. 125th St. That didn't sound too good for the senior citizen relying on mass transit to get there, or the new immigrant just getting to know how the system works. Issues, unfortunately, were left unresolved.

Mr. Rangel tried to compensate by holding town hall meetings in the Bronx, though they were poorly publicized and didn't quite generate the attendance that would have benefitted him or his Bronx constituents. Too bad.

Finding an office could be easy for Mr. Espallat, thanks to the Members Representational Allowance (MRA), the official expense account for members of Congress. Last year, the MRA gave legislators a median allowance of \$1.2 million for office-related expenses, which includes rent for office space. Mr. Rangel blamed a Republican Congress for not allocating funds for an office during the 2013 debt-ceiling cri-



Photo courtesy Facebook

**STATE SENATOR ADRIANO** Espallat (center) should consider opening up a district office in the Bronx should he want another Congressional term.

sis. But perhaps he figured his retirement made it pointless to open a Bronx office. Too bad. A Bronx office would be money well spent.

While on the campaign trail, Mr. Espallat stressed his first priority as an elected Congressman would be to open a Bronx office, though no specifics were offered on when and where.

It's long been claimed that Harlem's electoral powerbase has whittled down some, thanks to changing demographics in the diverse yet somewhat segregated district. The influence has moved upward to Manhattan's Inwood and Washington Heights neighborhoods, which, like Mr. Espallat, is heavily Hispanic, much like the Bronx. A presence, therefore, is certainly needed.

For a constituent services office to succeed, it must be attuned to the issues that the federal government can fix. For the Bronx, issues that require a caseworker include immigration, housing, job recruit-

ment, local economic development, and even inconveniences at the local post office. A report by Office: MG, a think tank group, released a report shortly after the 2014 election and recommended "constituent issues surrounding topics of language" would make for a successful strategy. Bilingual services should also be available.

There's this prevailing notion that the Bronx is viewed as an afterthought, a borough that "gets no respect," to quote the late comedian, Rodney Dangerfield. The notion is quite the opposite. Rife with issues of unemployment, healthcare disparities, tenant displacement and hints of gentrification, the Bronx side of the 13th Congressional District is in desperate need of help. For the district to continue deprived of congressional representation would be abysmal.

One more thing about the Bronx: It does not forget. So Mr. Espallat, remember to open a Bronx office. Your opponents will keep you to your word.

**(Cut and Save)****Helpful Numbers****Emergencies: 911****Information: 411****NYC Government Information: 311****New York City Agencies**

NY Police Dept. 52nd Precinct, 3016 Webster Ave., (718) 220-5811

Inspector Peter Fiorillo, Commanding Officer

NY Fire Department, N. Bronx Firehouse, 2928 Briggs Ave., (718) 430-0279

NY Dept. of Sanitation Action Line, (212) 219-8090

NY Dept. of Environmental Protection Helpline (air, noise, hazardous materials, water – including open fire hydrants), (718) 337-4357

Community Board 7, 229A East 204th St., (718) 933-5650

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**Elected Representatives**

NY State Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, Dist. 81, 3107 Kingsbridge Ave., (718) 796-5345

NY State Assembly Member Mark Gjonaj, Dist. 86, 1126 Pelham Pkwy. So., (718) 409-0109

NY City Council Member Andrew Cohen, Dist. 11, 3450 DeKalb Ave., (718) 549-7300

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# Residents, Holding to Bedford Park Home, Plug Away

By DAVID CRUZ

For the past six months, the small band of tenants at 267 E. 202nd St., a 2-story apartment building, have dealt with an uncertainty that hasn't quite been resolved: are they staying or going?

It's a question that's been on the minds of these tenants who've built lives there for as long as 30 years.

"Everybody's been living in that building for so long," said Cynthia Garcia, a tenant and single mother of two children. "Everybody's like family."

The piece of property, resting at the tip of Briggs Avenue in a sleepy part of Bedford Park, remains a source of attention for a lawyer looking to keep tenants in their homes, a lawmaker who's kept an eye on developments, and housing advocates who balk at the ongoing urbanization of the neighborhood.

Together they've all set their sights on the new owner, Peter Fine, a housing developer who spent some years building homes in wealthy parts of Florida state. He's since been taken to court, propagating a situation that, at its core, is arguing the future look of Bedford Park. It's since inspired petitions demanding lawmakers downzone the district.

Fine is now answering a lawsuit originally filed against Genesis Realty, which had sent 30-day eviction notices to tenants in February. The original suit, filed by the tenants' attorney, Andrew Darcy, demanded repairs inside the building be made. The suit doubled as insurance to



Photo by David Cruz

**RESIDENTS OF 267 E. 202nd St.** hold a tenants association meeting on June 20 at West Bronx Housing.

keep the tenants in their homes. The two sides are expected in court in July to conference with the court over repairs.

For tenants, their fears seem rooted with one conclusion: Fine wants to clear the building so it could be bulldozed, making way for new housing. Just what kind of housing remains unclear.

The building occupies an R8 zone, a designation allowing any developer to build as high as eight stories or more. Should Fine succeed in acquiring the building, Fine could build even higher, thanks to the increase in the lot's available square footage.

## Double-Edge Sword

With adequate living conditions waning, tenants such as Nina Archeval, one of the more outspoken tenants against Fine, have given up. In the last week of June, Archeval accepted a buyout to relocate, leaving the remaining tenants to fight eviction.

"It's crazy that Nina just took the buyout like

that," said Garcia. "She was the first one to say, 'okay, this is what we're doing, we're going to file' and you're the first one to jump ship, it's like 'wow.' We thought we were tighter than that."

Leadership duties have since gone to tenant Marisol Jimenez, who routinely sends out updated emails on any hints of harassment. Those include a claim that employee vehicles continually block an emergency exit by Jimenez's apartment. Jimenez grew so fed up over cars blocking her entrance, she had a vehicle ticketed. Meantime, unsanitary conditions gone uncorrected by management include a layer of rust that covers her bathtub's ground space and the existence of mold. Jimenez has so far stayed positive even in the face of uncertainty.

A check on the New York City Housing Preservation and Development agency's website shows 146 violations have been filed against the building. Seven of those are considered C viola-

tions, the most heinous, ranging from lead paint to no window guards.

## Who is Peter Fine?

The son of immigrants, Fine was born in Queens, spending his early years living in public housing. After working in the non-profit sector in the early part of his career, Fine formed the Atlantic Development Group with partner Marc Alheim. Created in 1996, the company focused squarely on affordable housing development throughout the city. He also owns luxury properties in Miami, Florida.

An article by the *Norwood News* pointed to Fine's pattern of campaign contributions to political candidates and legislators as a method of garnering influence and clout. When former Governor George Pataki, a Republican, was in office, Fine and his spouse, gave \$65,341 towards his 2004 campaign. New York governors have executive privilege to appoint members to the state Housing Finance Agency, which offers financing to affordable and Mitchell Lama housing.

In the last few years, those contributions to

local politicians, which at one point had been in the thousands of dollars, have waned. A look at campaign finance records shows that Fine has donated a mere \$250, quite a low figure, to Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. In 2015, he donated heavily to "We the People, Not Washington," a super PAC that donates to Republican races.

For now, no legislator has stood on the side of Fine. Councilman Andrew Cohen, whose 11th Council District covers the neighborhood, told the *Norwood News*, "We are prepared to do whatever it takes to preserve the scale and character of Bedford Park."

In a response to questions from the *Norwood News*, a spokesman for Fine was not clear over whether Fine would ultimately seek to tear down the property in favor of a high-rise. Fine, through his company, To Better Days Development, admitted he is "considering options to develop the vacant portion but it's too soon to provide specifics."

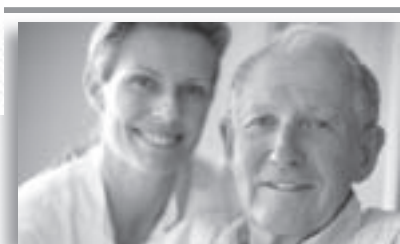
**Editor's Note:** An expanded article on this story can be found on [www.norwoodnews.org](http://www.norwoodnews.org).



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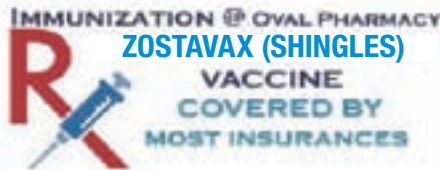




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# Steven Bussell, a Familiar Face In Bedford Park, Says So Long

By DAVID CRUZ

In the last three years, Steven Bussell's journey out of the Bronx has been piecemeal.

Now a Florida transplant, Bussell had dragged out his departure after finding it hard to let go of the Bronx. But for each trip he took to the Sunshine State, more personal effects followed.

On July 1, he made it official. His exit from the borough also signaled his retirement from local volunteerism, saying goodbye to the local 52nd Precinct, West Bronx Housing, and Montefiore Health Systems' Community Advisory Board (CAB). It also capped four decades living in a neighborhood he says has undergone sweeping changes.

"I've seen the good, the bad, and the ugly," said Bussell, 71, a bespectacled Bronxite with military-grade haircut and bushy eyebrows. "A lot has turned around."

Wearing a button T-shirt with the 52nd Precinct logo stitched to it, Bussell spoke to the *Norwood News* over lunch at Webster Café, two hours before he was to help at the precinct's Open House. The meet and greet event aimed at forging stronger bonds between community and police.

Bussell served 19 years on the 52nd Precinct Community Council, a civilian panel where residents hear directly from the precinct's commanding officer on crime trends while also airing any quality-of-life grievances. Bussell's role wasn't relegated to just sitting at the dais. As vice president, Bussell worked the phones to cobble funds for the council's yearly events such as National Night Out Against Crime. Procuring funds is a challenge, he notes, hoping his successor will take it on successfully.

"What's so great about Steve was the outstanding knowledge he had of the surrounding communities within the 52nd Precinct and of their issues past and present," said Brenda Caldwell, Community Council president. "Steve brought this forth at our meetings which helped break the ice between the person(s) attending the meetings and the commanding officer."

Bussell couldn't quite pinpoint why volunteering, which can make one feel invisible, appealed to him.



Photo by Daniela Beasley

STEVEN BUSSELL

"I'm very civic-minded, even in high school," said Bussell, whose first volunteer job was at the American Red Cross, working at the now closed Morristania Hospital. "Ultimately, someone has to do it."

Back then, he lived in Mt. Eden. Bussell moved up to Bedford Park some four decades ago after his mother was mugged.

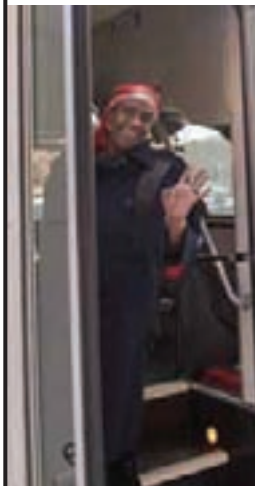
Relationship building appears to be Bussell's specialty. It came in handy at his job in the garment industry, where he traveled the world on his company's behalf. With globetrotting on his résumé, Bussell switched gears, becoming a travel agent.

He also squeezed in more volunteer work as president of West Bronx Housing, a tenant advocacy group and offshoot of the Bronx Jewish Community Council. The group sponsored Project H.O.P.E., a social services program where Bussell helped donate food packages to poor Jewish residents. Once a month, Bussell sat at Montefiore's CAB, airing concerns from the neighborhood. Sally Dunford, who worked closely with Bussell at the Jewish Council and CAB, said Bussell's exit is a "major loss to the community."

Volunteering won't end for Bussell. In Florida, he already sits on his condo board, shaming bad neighbors who violated the complex's rules. The Bronx, he says, won't quite leave him. "I'm only an email away."

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# Bedford Park Activist Enters Race for 78th AD District Leader

By WENDY JOAN BIDDLECOMBE

Lifelong Bronxite Samelys Lopez, former second vice chair at Bronx Community Board 7, is petitioning to become the Democratic Female District Leader for the 78th Assembly District, an area that covers Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights and Fordham.

The district leader is an elected and unpaid volunteer within both the Democratic and Republican parties, and responsibilities for the position include

hiring poll workers, listening to and advocating for community members' concerns and encouraging people to be involved in the local political process. There are two district leaders for each assembly district, one female and one male, who are voted in every two years. There are no term limits.

The position is currently held by Nilda Velazquez, a supporter of Assem-

blyman Jose Rivera of the 78th Assembly District.

"I want to concentrate on political empowerment," said Lopez, who is a Democrat but is running as an independent candidate for the position within the Democratic Party. "I wanted to run to show that you don't have to be anointed by the party, and that you don't have to ask anyone's permission to get involved."

Lopez, 36, who works for an afford-



Photo by Wendy Joan Biddlecombe

**WITH A CLIPBOARD** in hand, Samelys Lopez seeks signatures to put her on the Sept. 13 Democratic Primary for District Leader of the 78th Assembly District.

able housing developer, said she learned about the district leader position about a year ago, and decided to join the race about two months ago. She has spent most days since early June canvassing parks, train stops, supermarkets and other areas around the assembly district by bike. With a small group of volunteers, Lopez has been meeting community members and asking registered Democrats to sign the petition necessary to put her on the Sept. 13 primary ballot.

But her request is not automatic. Oftentimes, Lopez winds up explaining not only what the district leader's role is but how the petition process works and how a name ends up on a ballot in a general election.

"It's hard to give your signature out of nowhere if you don't understand what's going to happen with that signature," Lopez said. "Regardless of whether I win or lose, I think I'll come up the winner anyway because the point of it is to raise awareness about local politics."

Lopez is running what she calls a clean and grassroots campaign, and doesn't plan to raise money until after she makes the ballot. She has already passed the 500 necessary signatures to put her on the ballot well before the July 14 deadline.

Lopez was recently not reappointed to another term on Community Board 7 for reasons she said are still "unclear" to her, because she "made every meeting" and established workshops, such as the Livable Neighborhoods Program, in an effort to "empower residents and businesses to be civically engaged."

Multiple attempts were made to contact Nilda Velazquez before deadline with no success.

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# Celebrating Centenarians

*St. Patrick's Home holds annual tradition*

By **TATYANA TURNER**  
and **ADRIANNA LOMBARDO**

Family members and residents of St. Patrick's Home Rehabilitation and Health Care Center at 66 Van Cortlandt Pk., So., gathered to celebrate nine residents who can now call themselves centenarians.

Centenarians, those who are or over the age of 100, were honored at the Van Cortlandt Village home, with honorees all being women. Two of the honorees were aged 103.

So what's the secret to a long life? One centenarian, who only went by Catherine M., told the *Norwood News*, "My secret to living so long was having faith."

St. Patrick's Home has been celebrating centennial

birthdays for a decade. These events were inspired by a client who moved into the facility at 100 years of age. Since then, staffers wanted to celebrate the occasion with a birthday party held annually each June.

"It got bigger and bigger and bigger every year," said Janet Kibassa, director of recreation and coordinator for the birthday celebration at St. Patrick's Home.

Letters from President Barack Obama, Mayor Bill de Blasio, and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. were read and certificates of recognition were presented to each honoree.

"It's wonderful to celebrate these residents. They have gone through so many experiences, said Kibassa.



Photo by Adrianna Lombardo

**CATHERINE M. (SITTING, LEFT)**, age 103, who received a Citation of Merit, shares a moment with Sister Leda (standing, left), while Sister Bernadette Therese (standing, right), mission and privacy officer for St. Patrick's Home, stands behind Sister Benigna C. (sitting, right), who also received a Citation of Merit, and turns 100 in September. The three sisters are all from the Carmelite Order.

The birthday celebration concluded with guests eating birthday cake and enjoying dance performances and tunes as far back as 1913 to coincide with the years some of the centenarians were

born. St. Patrick's Home opened in 1931 by the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm under the leadership of Venerable Mary Angeline Teresa McCrory.

In the Bronx where the median age is 33 and the percentage of being 85 or older is a dismal 1.5 percent, approximately 21,000 people, it is quite an accomplishment to be considered a centenarian.

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By DAVID GREENE

## INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

This week we asked readers their thoughts on the delay of redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory into an ice skating center, and if they think the project will ever be completed. As of press time, it's been 940 days since the New York City Council approved the project.



I think an ice skating rink should be built there; it would be fun. There's not many over here. Most of them are far away, like Manhattan. I honestly think they want to build something else there, they don't want to build a skating rink. I heard some saying it was a waste of money, that once they build it, no one would go.

**Jahira Davis**  
Yonkers



I think this area deserves an ice skating rink; why change the plan? They can build up another school, but they should use this facility for more sports and activities for kids, other activities, not just ice skating.

**Salvatore Cottone**  
Bronxville



I don't think they're ever going to do it. The problem is they don't really have a sound economic development plan. A Kingsbridge skating rink is not going to bring the economy up. It's good for entertainment, but I don't think it will be good for the Bronx. We need more businesses. Make a business center hub with vocational training and create new entrepreneurs; something that will help grow the businesses that surround it.

**Alan Uloa**  
Norwood



It was supposed to be a skating rink, the world's largest. If they can section it off from the ice skating rink, I'm thinking maybe basketball courts or something, and make it more appealing to people. A gymnasium, maybe. We don't have that for the kids here. I attended a rodeo there a few years ago and it brought in a lot of people.

**Anna Marian**  
Norwood



I think I will skate inside there one day, but I think it should be a big flea market.

**Tara Walsh**  
Kingsbridge

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

## KNIC Suit Frozen as Judge Looks to Exit Case

By DANIELA BEASLEY

Negotiations between city officials and developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) were not only left at a standstill after a hearing on June 23, but likely without its presiding judge.

"This appears to be going nowhere, so let me just share something," said Bronx Supreme Court Judge Ruben Franco, a half hour into the proceeding. "This may be it for me on this case."

The two sides had returned to court after Franco recommended the lease to the Kingsbridge Armory, which would be home to the ice center, be temporarily released to KNIC so it can pursue construction-funding options.

Franco explained that

he has been asked to do other things within the judicial system and, although he feels strongly about the development, he told attorneys on both sides he's done arbitrating the case. "You guys will go on fighting and appealing and litigating and it goes nowhere," said Franco. "Nobody has come up with any other possibilities."

With Franco potentially out, the city's motion to dismiss the case now pending, and no future court date set, it seems unclear where the case will go from here.

The two sides have been at loggerheads over the terms of the Armory lease, which remains in escrow. While KNIC believes it has satisfied the terms of the lease thanks to a loan commitment by the



File Photo

**JUDGE RUBEN FRANCO**

state, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (CAB), which owns the property on behalf of the city, has repeatedly said the state's word

does not go far enough to release the lease.

A standby commitment for \$180 million has been secured, according to Bill Brewer, lead attorney representing KNIC, but told the *Norwood News*, "We need the lease or we are stuck." A week after the hearing, Brewer sent a letter to Franco asking the court to proceed with KNIC's request for a trial and dismissing EDC's motion to dismiss it.

KNIC has stood by its argument that if it can't show lenders that they have control over the lease, then they won't be able to officially get the funding needed to go ahead with the project.

Although KNIC has stated how confident they are that they can get all the funding necessary, their

lenders haven't made any official endorsements of the project, which is what the city wants in exchange for releasing the lease.

"All I hear is contingency on contingency," said Scott Bridge, lead attorney representing the NYC EDC, the city's realtor. "They want us to give them the lease based on the hope that they get other funding."

The city's biggest fear is that the project will stall halfway through construction because funding has dried up, presenting a major blow to the community.

"We never turn a shovel of dirt until we have the money," Brewer said in response to the city's concern.

No new court date has yet been set.



# Labor Unions to KNIC: Don't Forget About Us

By TATYANA TURNER

While plans for the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) are on a holding pattern pending lawsuits, Bronx residents affiliated with labor unions are making sure that jobs for the \$350 million project go to them.

Union representatives, community advocates, and residents marched around the Kingsbridge Armory, the expected home of KNIC, chanting "Let's Keep the Fight" in response to the pending decision of whether or not union jobs will be used to help repurpose the 750,000-square-foot space.

The Clean Slate, Rebuilding America, and Laborers International Union of North America were some of the unions represented at the protest on June 29. Together, they marched around the Kingsbridge Armory, a landmark that's sat vacant for the past 20 years.

The demonstration doubled as a springboard for candidates looking for support from labor unions in the upcoming primaries, with many unions typically offering critical support to candidates.

"The people in this community need



Photo by Daniela Beasley

**A GROUP OF** construction workers march around Kingsbridge Armory demanding developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center hire union-backed employees for the massive project.

jobs that will provide pensions," said Ischia Bravo, a candidate in the 78th Assembly District race. "We don't need temporary jobs; we need lifetime jobs."

Councilman Fernando Cabrera, a Democratic candidate for the 33rd Senate District race against incumbent Senator Gustavo Rivera and current legislator for the 14th Council District, stood in unison with the protestors who

were holding up signs such as "More Pay, Better Benefits" and "Union Jobs for Local Leaders."

"When we started the negotiations, the very first question I asked was if unions would be involved and I was told yes," said Cabrera, referring to the Community Benefits Agreement between community stakeholders and KNIC. "I am disap-

pointed that KNIC is now reneging on its promise to the community."

As it stands, KNIC has promised the project will create 890 construction jobs and 267 permanent jobs, with a majority of those jobs going to Bronx residents living in or near Kingsbridge Heights, where the Armory is located. At a town hall forum early this year, John Neary, a representative from KNIC, sidestepped questions over whether KNIC would be built with union labor.

"It's important to have unions because people have career opportunities," said Anthony Williamson who is a representative for Construction and General Building Laborers. "It's about building a family, having decent wages and benefits and building up the middle class in America."

Construction for KNIC should have begun this year, but has been marred with a lawsuit preventing the project from moving forward.

*Additional reporting by David Cruz.*

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## CUNY J School Gets \$1M Infusion For Expanded Workshops

By DAVID CRUZ

The CUNY School of Journalism, which oversees the Center for Community & Ethnic Media (CCEM), announced a \$1 million grant aimed at offering continuing education workshops to the city's trove of journalists covering community news with scant resources.

The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) made the announcement at the school's offices in midtown Manhattan. The office's commissioner, Julie Menin, announced the award aimed at creating multimedia-based classes that can help "stay ahead of the changes." CUNY J School Dean Sarah Bartlett, joining Menin, called the grant a "dream come true."

Menin was also joined by CCEM's

co-director, Jehangir Khattak, and Rong Xiaoqing, a reporter for the *Sing Tao Daily*, a Chinese language newspaper and CCEM member.

Details on the workshops are still being hammered out, though Khattak said some courses will likely focus on video production, social media engagement, podcasting, and broadcast skills training. Training sessions are expected to happen sometime in the fall with CCEM staffers reaching out to editors of community and ethnic press for input.

The *Norwood News* is a familiar paper at the CUNY J School, having been recognized by the journalism school with several Ippies Awards. The annual awards are given to community and ethnic media outlets.



Photo by David Cruz

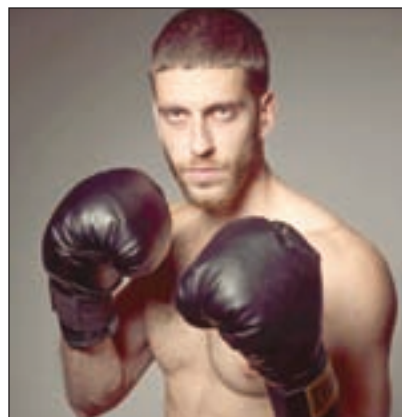
**(L-R) CCEM CO-DIRECTORS** Jehangir Khattak and Karen Pennar, Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment commissioner Julie Menin, CUNY J School Dean Sarah Bartlett and *Sing Tao Daily's* Rong Xiaoqing, following the announcement of the school's \$1 million grant.

## PASSAGES

### Gideon Noy in Award Winning Documentary

Norwood resident Gideon Noy appears as the boxing opponent in an award winning short documentary film, "The Champion," a true story about an Iraqi boxer. The film won seven awards including one for best documentary short.

Although Noy enjoys acting and has taken acting classes at Lehman College, he nevertheless still plans to keep his day job as a high school math teacher.



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## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

### Body Camera Survey

The NYPD wants your opinion on its officer body-worn cameras. Take the questionnaire or submit comments at [nypdbodycameras.org](http://nypdbodycameras.org).

### TV Production Training

Workshops on television production are available through BronxNet Television, the borough's official public access television station, from July 12 through Sept. 3, at either Mercy College or Lehman College. Registration fee is \$90 for in-studio training and \$100 for field production. For more information, call (718) 960-1181.

### Free Summer Meals

Free summer meals for children age 18 and under is available until Sept. 2 at public schools, community pool centers, New York City Housing Authority complexes, libraries and other locations around the city. No registration, documentation, or ID is required to receive breakfast or lunch. Nearest school loca-

tion is PS 8, 3010 Briggs Ave. Breakfast is 8 to 9:15 a.m. and lunch from 11 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. For additional locations and times, go to <http://bit.ly/UuevOA>.

### U.S. Citizenship

Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., hosts free legal and financial help services for those seeking U.S. citizenship, Fridays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. by appointment. Meet one-on-one with an attorney and financial counselor. For more information or to make an appointment, call 311 and say "Citizenship Appointment," or call (212) 514-4277.

### NYC High School Directory

The 2017 New York City High School Directory, a booklet profiling 160 high schools in the Bronx, is available online at <http://on.nyc.gov/1TTBW9> or by going to a Family Welcome Center, 1 Fordham Plaza, 7th floor, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. It's translated into nine languages. For more information, call (718) 741-8495.

### Reduced Parks Fees

As of June 1, annual membership fees for New York City Parks recreation centers for U.S. veterans and people with disabilities has been reduced to \$25. Fees for seniors and young adults remain at \$25, free for under age 18, and \$100 to \$150 for adults.

### Free Tenant Legal Advice

Free legal services for Housing Court cases for tenants who seek help with apartment issues including repairs, eviction, and Housing Court are available at 2432 Grand Concourse, suite 506, 5th floor, Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information and to schedule an appointment, call (718) 933-2034.

### MMCC Programs

The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center offers free programs for out of school youth ages 16 to 24, a food stamp assistance program, English as a Second Language, and Mosholu Day Camp. For more information, or to donate, call (718)

882-4000 or visit [www.mmcc.org](http://www.mmcc.org).

### Employment Bulletin

An Employer Guide for those looking for jobs is available. To pick a copy, go to 2432 Grand Concourse, 5th floor, suite 506. For more information, call (718) 933-2034.

### MetroCard Bus

MetroCards can be purchased through the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's buses every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month at the following locations: Fordham Road and Grand Concourse from noon to 2 p.m.; Fordham Plaza at Third Avenue and Fordham Road from 2:30 to 4 p.m.; and Van Cortlandt Village, 3887 Sedgwick Ave., from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Senior citizens wishing to get discounted MetroCard passes can go to Scott Towers, 3400 Paul Ave., every 4th Monday of each month, from 1 to 3 p.m. Services are unavailable on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

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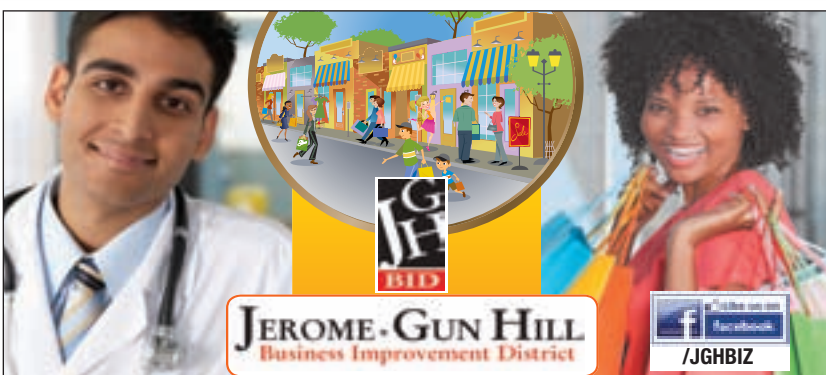


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### HELP WANTED

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**The Norwood News** seeks a qualified, freelance advertising sales rep to help grow the Bronx's best community newspaper. Applicants must be self-starters with some sales experience. Email résumé to [dcruz@norwoodnews.org](mailto:dcruz@norwoodnews.org).

### TRIPS

**Trip to Dorney Park and Wild Water Kingdom** in Pennsylvania on Saturday, July 9 from East 163rd Street and Southern Boulevard at 8 a.m. For more information, please contact Eddie at (718) 757-5485.

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# A Continued Push to Fix the Foreclosure Mess in the NE Bronx

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

With the northeast Bronx still facing the highest number of foreclosures in the borough, a local councilman proposes a plan that could stave off foreclosures, coinciding with a larger goal with city officials.

Councilman Andy King, representing the 11th Council District, is turning to extending the deadline on lien sales from one to two years. Liens, a collection of unpaid debts that could include water bills, are given at least one year to be paid off by the city Finance Department. As it stands, liens are typically sold to a lien servicing company after one year. The buyer can attach more fees, potentially putting the homeowner in a deeper hole and forcing them to use money originally earmarked for mortgages to satisfy the debt.

The proposal could stave off the foreclosure trend still sweeping the northeast Bronx, where properties remain on the market or distressed, creating instability in a neighborhood.

"The Bronx has an increase in foreclosure activity compared to the rest of the nation," said Daren Blomquist, an analyst with RealtyTrac, a think tank group that follows real estate trends.

Figures provided by RealtyTrac show the month of March 2016 saw 256 homes that were either in default, at auction or in possession of a bank that unsuccessfully tried to auction it. These numbers reflect trends happening in the zip codes of 10466, 10467, 10469, and 10470. The real estate picture is an improvement from March 2009, three months after the housing bubble burst, when a total of 340 homes were in default, at auction or under the bank's possession, according to figures.

Members of Community Board 12, which covers King's district, found many residents were scammed into subprime mortgages and placed into homes they could not afford, forcing many homeowners to put their property up for foreclosure. King notes that the northeast Bronx's working class demographics could not afford the high interest rates from these subprime mortgages.

Yet these houses are not completely out of the foreclosure process. In some cases, homeowners in default completely walk away from the home should a foreclosure notice come in the mail. Banks, fearing having to spend money to maintain a home's upkeep, classify the home as a so-called zombie property, leaving ownership of the property



Photo by Miriam Quinones

**FOR SALE SIGNS** like this one found on East 222nd Street in Williamsbridge dot the northeast Bronx landscape, a continued symptom of an unstable market in the area.

in limbo.

"The best thing to happen now is for properties to go through the foreclosure process. Once it is done with, then these properties can be in the arms of people who want to be homeowners," said Blomquist.

With homeowners teetering on foreclosure, a crop of home-buying advertisers have posted "We Buy Homes Quick" signs across the area, promising residents to relieve them of their distressed homes with no fuss. Usually these homes are sold at a reduced price than what a homeowner initially paid.

King's proposal is one of a few efforts to assist foreclosed homes. Among the most recent is the Community Restoration Program, where the City of New York looks to buy 12 homes across the borough that fall under the Federal Housing Administration. A total of \$13 million through city, state, federal and private financing will be used to refinance distressed homes, thus keeping them from going to auction and preventing homeowners from losing their homes.

"[The program] ensures that distressed mortgages don't end up in the hands of the highest bidders whose goal is to profit off other people's losses," said New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, whose office secured \$5 million from settlements banks made to the state following the 2008 Great Recession.

Meantime, Governor Andrew Cuomo has made \$100,000 available to

spruce up vacant properties and make them more available for potential homeowners.

"There are a lot of talks that are going to continue to happen. It's up to myself and other electeds who live in

this neighborhood and who are homeowners to protect this neighborhood so that we can get home ownership back to a place that families could be proud of, communities can thrive, and everyone's happy," said King.

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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Summer in the City

The public is invited to attend Summerstage, a variety of free performances, all at 10:30 a.m., presented by City Parks Foundation, in city parks (schedule is subject to change):

Van Cortlandt Park's Classic Playground, VC Park South and Orloff Avenue - Todd Rolle: Kids Day Out on July 7; and Chinese Acrobat Li Liu on July 14.

Van Cortlandt Park's Sachkerah Woods Playground at Jerome Avenue and Gun Hill Road - PuppetMobile's Puss in Boots on July 21; Marc Cary: The Harlem Sessions on July 28.

Poe Park, next to the bandstand, Grand Concourse at East 193rd Street - Janice Marie Robinson's Melodic Magic on July 22; LaRocque Bey Dance & Drum on July 29; and PuppetMobile's Puss in Boots on Aug. 5.

For more information, visit [www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts/summerstage-kids/](http://www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts/summerstage-kids/).

### Onstage

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and Bronx Council on the Arts host free concerts at 7 p.m.: **Gene DiNapoli Variety All-Star Show** at the Riverdale YM-YWHA, 5625 Arlington Ave., Riverdale, on July 19; and **John Benitez and his Latin Jazz Band** at the Amalgamated Train Park on July 21. For more information, call (718) 796-5345.

The Bardekova Ensemble will perform **"The Music of 400 Years,"** a free music concert at the Poe Park Visitor's Center, 2640 Grand Concourse, on July 7 at 2 p.m. (Call (917) 584-6626.) The quintet will also perform at the Woodlawn Cemetery Chapel, 501 E. 233rd St., on July 10 at 3 p.m. (Call (718) 408-5625.)



File Photo

**THE BARDEKOVA ENSEMBLE** is scheduled to hold free musical performances at Poe Park on July 7 at 2 p.m. and at Woodlawn Cemetery on July 10 at 3 p.m. (See Onstage for details.)



File Photo

**MOVIES ALONG THE** Fordham Road Business Improvement District are scheduled at various dates all summer. (See Events.)

### Events

Fordham Road BID presents **Fordham Film Festival**, at Bryan Park, East Fordham and East Kingsbridge roads. Events begin at 5 p.m. and include music, games and activities, and films begin at 8:30 p.m. July 22: "Roger Rabbit." For more information, visit [fordhamroad.nyc](http://fordhamroad.nyc).

The Family Learning Place at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore holds a **Family Picnic**, July 9 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at MMC's East Garden, 111 E. 210th St. For more information, call (718) 741-2357 or visit [flp@montefiore.org](mailto:flp@montefiore.org).

Montefiore Health System will hold a free workshop at 3400 Bainbridge Ave. in the Medical Arts Pavilion on the 2nd floor: **Treatment Options for Kidney Failure**, about hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, home dialysis, and supportive care, July 21 from 2 to 4 p.m. For more information, call (800) MD-MONTE.

**Wave Hill**, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Nature's Canvas Bag, to create a leafy impression on an everyday canvas bag to take anywhere, July 9 and 10; and Pop-In Landscape, to make landscape collages out of cracker wrappers, July 16 and 17; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **The Four Bags**, performing chamber music, July 13, and **Hilliard Greene & the Jazz Expressions**, quintet performing jazz, rock, blues and R&B; both from 7 to 8 p.m. on the Great Lawn. Bring chair or blanket. 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

Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse, presents **The Faces of Cuba**, a photo exhibition by Walter

Pofeldt, through July 31, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call (718) 365-5516.

### Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the following events for children: **films at 2 p.m.:** July 12 and 19; **Hands-On Projects at 2 p.m.:** (ages 7 to 12; pre-registration required), Sports Book Making, July 14, and Game Door Hanger, July 21; and **Puppet Show:** (ages 3 to 12), Tortoise and the Hare, July 16 at 2 p.m. Adults can attend **film:** "Purple Rain," featuring Prince, July 9 at 2:30 p.m.; **Chess at 3 p.m.:** July 15 and 29 (chess set provided); and **Microsoft Word 2010 for Beginners:** (online registration required), July 18 at 2 p.m. 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: **Greenhouse Exploration:** (ages 5 to 12), weather permitting, kids can hang out in the backyard to play and help maintain the branch garden. Plant seeds, do some composting, water plants or do crafts, July 12 and 19 at 2 p.m. Adults can attend **Free Computer Classes:** to learn email and basic computer information, Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for children: **Kids Get Active Fridays at 2 p.m.:** (ages 5 to 12), dance and zumba, July 8 and 15; **Afternoon Arts:** (ages 5 to 12), enjoy art related projects, July 11 at 4 p.m.; and **Toddler Storytime and Craft at 11:15 a.m.:** (ages 3 to 5), stories, songs and craft, July 14 and 21. 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 July 11 for the next publication date of July 21.



# Fraud charges for Norwood Deli

(continued from page 1)

neighbors,” read a post by a commenter going by AKS Deli Frequent Customer. “Thankfully, AKS Deli is open now, and if God wills, this won’t happen again.”

Another commenter who went by China said the news was “sad to hear.” “[M]y prayers go out to that family. But you do the crime, you pay.”

One source claimed a second raid was conducted in the early morning hours of June 25 at the family’s three-story home at 3014 Bainbridge Ave.

Also arrested was Atif Shahzad, 25; Saqib Shahzad, 29; Samina Shahzad, 55, and Kashif Shahzad, 31, all of 3014 Bainbridge Ave. According to NYPD officials, the five individuals were arrested, “in regard to an ongoing investigation involving the illegal use [of] electronic benefit transactions (EBT).”

Benefits usually come in the form of an EBT debit card pre-loaded with benefits with a monetary value that runs between hundreds or thousands of dollars that’s replenished each month. Stores are barred from exchanging

real cash for benefits that are debited upon swiping the card through an EBT reader. In the case of AKS Halal Deli, the deli had apparently been under suspicion since June 2012, with undercover officers making 14 visits to the store between May 2015 and May 2016 and buying some items not sanctioned for EBT purchase. Store clerks would illegally give the beneficiary a cash amount, somewhere between \$40 and \$60, in exchange for deducting a higher amount of benefits from their EBT card, according to the criminal complaint.

In one recorded transaction, an undercover officer had asked a clerk for \$60 in cash following a transaction, but agreed to accept a lower amount after another clerk warned such a “large quantity on EBT would raise suspicion.”

“The defendants knowingly used, transferred, acquired, altered, purchased, transported and possessed food stamp program coupons, cards and devices which entitle a person to food stamps in a manner not authorized,” read the complaint.

In many instances, police wait long enough to build a substantial case against a suspect before closing in on the suspected thieves. Before officials revealed details of its one-year investigation, one source explained that undercover authorities “may continue to investigate for up to a year and a half. They come many times and the money is recorded and the conversations are recorded.”

According to Joan Vollero of the Manhattan District Attorney’s office, the investigation was conducted by the New York County District Attorney’s Office Squad and all of the defendants were arraigned in Manhattan Criminal Court and all posted bail set between \$2,500 and \$25,000.

Vollero added that the Manhattan District Attorney was involved in the prosecution because, “the SNAP transactions were processed by financial institutions or credit card processing companies located in New York County.”

Neighborhood sources also reported that the store would also allow the purchase of beer with food stamps

until they stopped selling beer in 2013.

William Crowley, a spokesman for the State Liquor Authority (SLA) reported that Ali Shahzad was granted a license for beer sales at the A & S Grocery Store, but the license expired on Oct. 31, 2013, and the SLA had no reports of any violations.

When reached by telephone, Sam Shahzad, the owner’s son said, “The neighborhood is pretty happy we’re back,” adding, “We have customers that printed up T-shirts, and people are dancing in the store right now.”

“What’s done is done,” Shahzad continued, “The judge looked into these allegations and believed that they (the prosecution) went overboard in this case and he saw it like that and allowed us to reopen. But the case is ongoing.”

The five individuals who are all believed to have immigrated from Pakistan, face multiple counts of grand larceny, misuse of food stamp program coupons and conspiracy.

*Additional reporting by David Cruz.*

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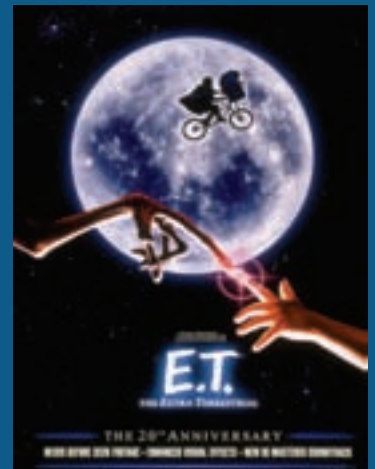
**FRIDAY JULY 22**  
Showtime 8:30pm



**FRIDAY AUG 19**  
Showtime 8pm



**SATURDAY AUG 20**  
Showtime 8pm



**FRIDAY SEPT 9**  
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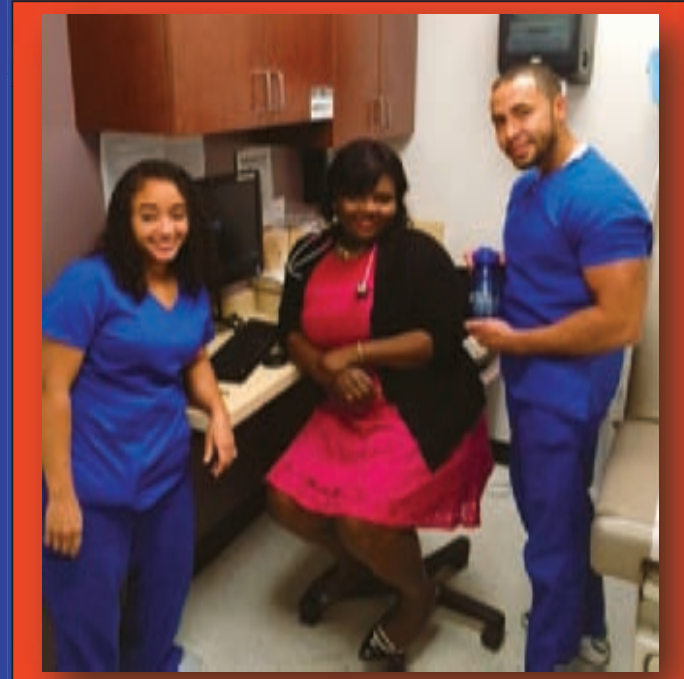
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