



NORWOOD NEWS

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
WEIGHING IN ON RIKERS | PG. 4



**SEE PICS: LOCALS "FALL" FOR
JEROME-GUN HILL BID FALL FEST | PG. 8**

KNIC TO CITY: WE WANT TO BUY ARMORY

Vacant Armory purchase price assessed at \$17 million, says KNIC



Photo by Adi Talwar

STILL DORMANT AFTER 20 years, efforts to revitalize the Kingsbridge Armory (pictured in background) have gone south.

By DAVID CRUZ

In the last year, progress at the Kingsbridge Armory, which was expected to house a large ice skating complex by next year, has stalled with nary a shovel in the ground.

A lawsuit by developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) against the New York City Economic Development Corporation prompted the stall. Attorneys for KNIC have since regrouped with a

new tactic to settle the case: an offer to buy the landmark Armory.

In a two-page letter obtained by the *Norwood News*, KNIC, the developer picked by the city in 2012 to repurpose the Armory into an ice skating center complete with nine rinks and a 5,000-seat arena, explained its latest proposal to NYCEDC can "jumpstart the Armory project so the significant benefits on the com-

munity can finally be underway."

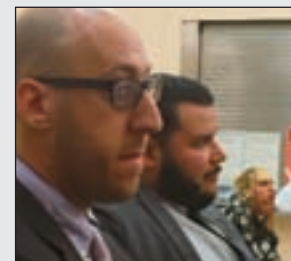
Developers have appraised the market value of the property at \$17.6 million. The project's budget is still projected to cost \$350 million, and would not lift the Armory's landmark status, confining KNIC to only remodel what's inside the Armory.

"We are confident that EDC appreciates what a generous offer this is, and how

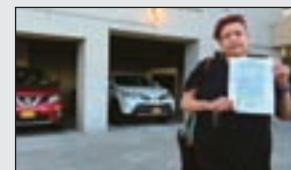
an outright purchase simplifies things regarding project development and administration going forward," wrote William A. Brewer III, lead attorney for KNIC.

By buying the property, KNIC frees itself up from the ongoing court drama with NYCEDC. Since March, the two sides have argued over finances tied to the project. Earlier this year, two state agen-

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IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Job of CB7 DM, the Fourth in Four Years, in Jeopardy



Photo by David Cruz

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 members, raising their hands, approve a motion to extend the probationary period of its newest district manager, Andrew Sandler.

By DAVID CRUZ

Community Board 7 opened its fall session with a shocker as members held off firing its latest district manager, continuing a pattern of hostility between executive members and DMs that's ended in the resignations of three DMs in just over three years.

With a vote of 26 to 1 at the latest general board meeting, CB7 members voted to extend the probationary period of Andrew Sandler, who was hired by the Board nine months ago after its previous DM, Dustin Engelken, resigned. On its surface, Engelken left after his wife accepted a job abroad, though members said Engelken left because of an internal feud with its chair, Adaline Walker-Santiago. Engelken had held the job for a year and eight months, succeeding Socrates Caba, who after six months also resigned. Sources told the *Norwood News* that the two had run-ins with Walker-Santiago. The Board usually determines the length of a probationary period, though in most cases they last for six months.

Members cited several alleged infractions against Sandler that led to a motion proposing to dismiss him. That included a unilateral decision to offer an office laptop to a CB7 employee so she can work from home and tend to a personal matter. Sandler declined to speak to the *Norwood News* shortly after the decision was made.

Sandler's probationary period now extends to Oct. 18, the date of the next general board meeting where members will decide

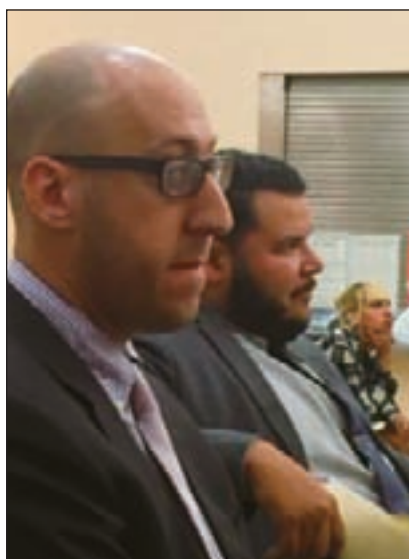


Photo by David Cruz

ANDREW SANDLER (LEFT) hears the motion to extend his probation another 30 days.

whether he stays or goes. Meanwhile, board members voted to hire Linda Johnson Consultants at a fee of \$1600 to consult with Sandler on the Board's rules and procedures, an unprecedented move in the Board's history. On its website, the consulting firm offers "executive coaching and team building" experience, having been hired by the city Administration for Children's Services and Department of Probation.

"I do not understand why after an extensive search, and I believe it was a two-month search for a district manager, that less than nine months later they would hire a consultant to teach him how to be a district manager," Anthony Rivieccio, a community resident attending the Board meeting, said.

The votes were cast after an hour-long closed-door session, unusually longer than most private meetings. As members hashed out its decisions inside the Sister Annunciata Senior Center, Sandler calmly paced outside, speaking to supporters, which included Fernando Tirado, another former DM of CB7 who also resigned following differences he had with members of CB7's executive board.

"It's a witch hunt," Tirado said of the Board's charges against Sandler. "It would be a very unfortunate recurrence if they force out another district manager."

The latest development at CB7 underscores the varied relationship between DMs and its board members. DMs are salaried employees paid by the City of New York but officially hired by board members, who are unpaid. The term "manager" is somewhat of a misnomer since DMs usually take their cues from a board's chair, who is effectively the DM's boss. DMs serve as liaisons between the community and City of New York, resolving community issues by reaching out to appropriate city agencies.

The ability of DMs to make decisions differs from board to board, with some DMs given carte blanche to execute decisions without consultation while others require a chair's final approval on decisions. In normal circumstances, DMs usually last five years or more, with a median starting salary of around \$70,000.

Sandler declined to comment to the *Norwood News* on the latest developments.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



With recent convictions of several guards at the Rikers Island prison, we asked readers their thoughts on the troubled prison and its suspected culture of corruption.



I've been at Rikers before and it's not a good place. I was held there for like two days and what I saw in those two days, it's not good. And I feel like they need to stop all of it. Shut the whole thing down. They should move all the prisoners out and build up a whole new jail with a whole new staff, everything. They have female COs bringing in contraband to people that are locked up, and that should not be happening and that's why people are getting hurt.

Jarad Searles
Norwood



I don't know if this is widespread, but the way I understand it is the prisoners are getting a lot of drugs by the guards bringing in stuff. I know they implemented some more stringent measures where they (guards) can't opt out from being searched. They're probably not doing enough because they're still doing it. Another problem is it's so overpopulated because our government is really silly about who they incarcerate. Personal drug use should not land you in jail.

Ralph Martell
Norwood



How do you stop the corruption? That's a good question. I don't want to say more security, because the staff is causing as much problems as the inmates. It's a tough question. Maybe better background checks, find out where they're coming from. I think of Rikers Island and I think stabbings, there's a lot of stabbings there, COs having sex with the inmates and the food in there is terrible. They also shouldn't put young kids in with violent offenders.

Michael Lastra
Bedford Park



The solution is that wherever the crime is they need to stop it. First they need to take action. It's not only about the person going to jail and eating three times and coming back outside and doing the same crime. They need to stop the drugs from coming into the country. You can't stop the people from doing it, so you need to stop them bringing it in. That's how we can make the environment clean and we'll be good... criminals aren't afraid of Rikers Island.

Ali Faizan
Parkchester



They should treat people the way people need to be treated, especially the inmates. The way they treat them should be with dignity. And just do the right thing. The officers shouldn't have to get hit or be punished for the inmates and vice-versa.

Maria Claudio
Morris Park

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Mail Fishing Continues, and Here's What Police Are Doing About It

By JALEESA BAULKMAN

Residents living within the 52nd Precinct are on alert as the “mail fishing” trend continues despite police efforts to crack down on so-called “fishers.”

Mail fishing involves perpetrators using shoestring and a bottle covered in glue (oftentimes a sticky mouse trap) to insert it into a drop-off mailbox and snag mail the glue comes in contact with. It's a quick crime that allows thieves to walk away with mail holding checks or gift cards. In most cases, rent checks have been fished out of boxes, putting residents behind.

Over the year, mail theft has increased within the 52nd Precinct, which covers Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, parts of Fordham, and University Heights. In January, officers arrested three fishers who were targeting mailboxes at night in Bedford Park and Norwood. The five-two precinct began staking out targeted mailboxes, conducting 14 joint overnight operations with postal police to crack down on these fishers which resulted in about 22 to 24 arrests so far, according to Lt.



Photo courtesy NYPD

MAILBOX FISHERS COMMONLY use shoestring and glue traps like this one pictured to reel in mail holding checks.

Kevin Maloney of the 52nd Precinct. However, even though cops are making more arrests, mail fishing doesn't look like it'll be going away anytime soon, especially in areas from 196th Street upwards to East Gun Hill Road.

“Last week alone on one night we made three separate arrests for mailbox fishing,” Maloney told residents at the 52nd Community Council meeting on Sept. 22.

“Three separate mailboxes, three separate locations, it's getting bigger. So we do need your help there.”

Among the suspected thieves was a repeat offender who was busted in late August. After getting out of jail, the alleged thief committed the same crime, according to one police source.

The U.S. Postal Service has tried to combat mail fishing by modify-

ing some mailboxes with single letter slots. But this seems to have only made the problem worse, because “instead of fishing for mail, they are trying to bend it out with crowbars,” Maloney added.

Some precautions residents can take to prevent becoming a victim according to police, include:

Mailing important documents at the post office instead of street mailboxes.

If using a street mailbox, mail letters during the day before last pickup.

Avoid mailing letters at night or over the weekend so that your mail won't be sitting in the mailbox overnight.

When writing checks, use gel ink pen to make it difficult for thieves to alter and cash checks.

Maloney added that cops can effectively combat mail theft with the help of watchful residents.

“Our biggest ally [are residents] looking outside the window and calling 911 with the description,” he said. “Probably about 50 percent of the arrests we made so far are with [residents'] help.”

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Former NN Designer Pens Book

Neil deMause, a former longtime layout designer for the *Norwood News*, has once again authored a book, this time focusing on that borough that sits diagonally across from the Bronx: Brooklyn.

The word “Brooklyn” has come to represent cutting-edge cuisine, a vibrant music and literary culture, and the epitome of hip. But most of the world doesn’t see the price that local residents pay as their neighborhoods are swallowed by change.

In *The Brooklyn Wars*, deMause, a masterful storyteller and award-winning journalist, turns a spotlight on the borough’s transformation. Through the stories of neighborhoods from Coney Island to Bushwick to downtown and Atlantic Yards, *The Brooklyn Wars* investigates how the New Brooklyn came to be, who shaped it — and the winners and losers when “urban renaissance” comes to town.

About the Author: Neil deMause is a regular contributor to the *Village Voice*, *VICE*, and *City Limits*, and a former columnist for *Metro New York*. His work reporting on New York’s housing crisis received a New York Press Club award for best continuing internet coverage, and he received an Independent Press Award for his *City Limits* article “One Woman’s Plan to Beat Poverty.”

He is also co-author of *Field of Schemes: How the Great Stadium Swindle Turns Public Money Into Private Profit* (University of Nebraska Press, 2008) and operates the website fieldofschemes.com. He lives in Brooklyn.

The Brooklyn Wars: The Stories Behind The Remaking of New York’s Most Celebrated Borough

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Nicky’s Coffee Shop Gets a Facelift



The polished décor of Nicky’s Coffee Shop now has an exterior to match, with a vibrant new awning (pictured) on the corner of Bainbridge Avenue and 206th Street.

“The sign was just old looking, but it’s been the only change,” said Nicky Manias, owner of the restaurant for more than 31 years. “Since we rebuilt from the fire, everything

inside is still brand new.”

In September of 2012 a fire forced the diner to close its doors for 6 months, while repairs took place. The Manias family also used this time to revive the restaurant’s interior adding new lights, wood detailing, countertops and an overall revamp on the inside appearance.

During renovations, locals questioned why they

were going to such great lengths for the appearance of their restaurant, when the places in the area didn’t carry too much aesthetic appeal to begin with, according to Manias. The reopening occurred in March 2013 and after more than three years, the family is still making improvements.

“We needed to upgrade,” explained Manias,

“to keep the outside looking nice. It’s what people see.”

Sporting Greece’s national colors, the bright blue and white sign pays tribute to the family’s Greek Orthodox heritage. The brand new awnings can be seen on both front and side entrances of the family-run diner at 3140 Bainbridge Ave.

—Daniela Beasley

Cardinal Hayes HS Student Honored With National Award

By DAVID CRUZ

A model student at a Bronx Catholic high school is being recognized for his scholastic achievements in the nation’s capital.

Christian Martinez, a student at Cardinal Hayes High School and an alum of *Bronx Youth Heard*, the *Norwood News*’s afterschool journalism program publication, is being awarded the Seton Award by the National Catholic Educational Association. The award doubles as a \$2000 scholarship.

“Christian is a perfect example and model student for

Catholic education,” said Fr. Joseph Tierney, president of Cardinal Hayes High School. “He represents thousands and thousands of young men and women who have these core values that make them great human beings in the community.”

Christian, meantime, said he’s “honored and humbled” to be recognized.

It is a great blessing to me and my family to be recognized with such a distinguished award, named for a saint of the Church, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,” said Christian, in a state-



CHRISTIAN MARTINEZ

ment. “I know that in accepting this award, I represent thousands of other students and

teachers in Catholic schools throughout our Archdiocese, and I am proud to repre-

sent them.”

The award is given to students whose academic triumphs are matched with their community service. Christian is a senior, with dreams of becoming a lawyer. When he’s not hitting the books, he is volunteering with the NYPD Explorers.

Christian will be honored on Oct. 3, the same night the Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese of New York will receive the 2016 Catholic Educational Association Seton Scholar Award for its consistent promotion to Catholic education.

Decatur Avenue Resident Crusades Against Parking Hike

By DAVID CRUZ

Emily Flores' conviction is so strong she's willing to take on injustices all on her own.

So when she saw that her building management company initially stood ready to jack up her monthly parking bill 84 percent with not much notice or discussion, she mobilized...herself.

"I gotta take the bull by the horns because I'm not having it," Flores said.

It took management some convincing to bring the rate down from its original monthly charge of \$280, a fee Flores thought was just way too high for Norwood's working class. It was a good thing then that the management company found a middle ground, bringing the rate down to \$235. This came after Flores harangued the management companies, Wavecrest Management and White Plains Realty, distributed fliers for drivers unaware of the increase, and attending the latest Community Board 7 meeting to share her plight.

The building at 3322 Decatur Ave. off East Gun Hill Road, a spacious 13-story residence partly financed through the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the New York City Housing Development Corporation, opened six years ago. When Flores first moved in, the parking fee was a modest \$150, manageable for the lower middle-income families carving a life there. Now, the rate will be \$235 for drivers in good standing and \$250 for non-residents or delinquent accounts. Carolina Geronimo, a building resident, still considered the

rates too high.

"We barely can afford what we're paying right now because the prices, I think, are upscale for this neighborhood," Geronimo said.

"More like Riverdale, right?" Flores asked Geronimo.

"Riverdale is not that bad. I know people who pay \$185," Geronimo said.

Rates at other neighboring garages by Norwood are slightly cheaper. The one owned by the New York City Botanical Garden, for instance, charges a monthly \$200 fee for drivers (\$225 for the first month), while the garage near Community Board 7's office at East 204th Street charges \$230.

As it stands, building owners, even those sponsoring affordable housing units, can unilaterally raise garage fees without HPD's approval. In the case of Flores' building, the parking fee, considered non-residential income, had been underwritten to help keep the units affordable.

It wasn't long before Flores attracted attention from managers. A representative for the building owner told the *Norwood News* that the company came to a compromise on the rate change. "People reach out and you have to come to the middle," said the rep. The existing rate had been in place since 2013. New revenue from parking fees is expected to cover the building's operational costs.

But Flores, despite claiming some victory, is still thrown off by the rules of a city-funded property.

"It still doesn't make sense how they could raise the rate at will," she said.

The rate hike takes effect Nov. 1.



Photo by David Cruz

EMILY FLORES HOLDS a copy of the original HPD notice on the building of the new apartments.

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JEROME-GUN HILL Business Improvement District *Fall Festival*

The Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District celebrated its 15th Annual Fall Festival, attracting hundreds to the festivities that put a spotlight on some 200 stores open for business at the BID. HealthFirst was a major sponsor.

All photos courtesy Jerome-Gun Hill BID



EARNING ACCOLADES FROM the Jerome-Gun Hill BID organizers are (l-r), BID Board member Sally Caldwell (l), (posing with Melissa Cebollero, executive director of Mosholu Preservation Corporation); Community Board 7 District Manager Andrew Sandler, and Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark.



MASTER OF CEREMONIES, DJ Krazy Rob (right) cheers on this youngster showing off his hula hoop skills onstage at the Fall Festival.



THE FALL FESTIVAL allows for shoppers like these to check out flashy attire at Too Hot clothier.



NYC SYMPHONY CHORUS encompassing singers as well as musicians, demonstrates its musical talents at the Fall Festival, one of five scheduled acts at the annual event.



AN OFFICIAL VOLUNTEER with Montefiore Health System works the raffle table, encouraging this attendee to try her luck.



SENIORS AND OTHER attendees hide from the afternoon rays under this canopy provided by HealthFirst.

SALSA PERFORMER EXTRAORDINAIRE Michael Stuart (pictured at left) closes out the Fall Festival with a fiery jam.



New NYPD Top Cop Has Police Roots in Norwood

By DAVID CRUZ

The new police commissioner is no stranger to the Bronx, as are a major number of high ranking brass now helping him run the department.

Days before he was named by outgoing Police Commissioner Bill Bratton to succeed him, then NYPD Chief of Department James O'Neill stood before a convention of community and ethnic press invited to hear from him.

Asked about noise issues in Norwood, he quickly smiled and revealed he knew Norwood well. He had been the second in command at its precinct. "I was the captain of the Five-Two in 1998," O'Neill said, referring to his time as the precinct's executive officer. "I had quite a few interactions with Bishop [John] Jenik. A guy who really cares about his community."

For O'Neill, the architect behind the Neighborhood Coordination Officer program, the transition has appeared smooth. He relieves Bill Bratton whose crime fighting approach reflected O'Neill's, a reason why O'Neill was groomed as the next top cop. In prepared remarks after being sworn in, O'Neill said the crime fighting "profession is no longer just about law enforcement." "For too long, this department was focused on how many arrests individual cops had made, and how many summonses they'd written," O'Neill said. "No longer."

The road to O'Neill's prestigious post included a stint at the Five-Two, a busy precinct where some troubled neighborhoods outnumber quieter areas of the precinct. It's nothing compared to the 44th Precinct, where O'Neill served as its commanding officer.

Indeed, the Bronx is responsible



Photo by David Cruz

NEW POLICE COMMISSIONER James O'Neill speaks to reporters from the ethnic and community press on Sept. 14 at One Police Plaza.

for the rise of a number of NYPD brass who have spent a couple of tours in the borough.

O'Neill's replacement as chief of department is Carlos Gomez, whose success in knocking down crime as Bronx Borough Commander helped him rise to chief of patrol and up to the new post. Besides O'Neill and Gomez, two deputy commissioners and five bureau chiefs now running the NYPD rose from the Bronx.

That includes Deputy Commissioner for Internal Affairs Joseph Reznick, formerly head of Bronx detectives, and Deputy Commissioner Dermot Shea, deputy commissioner for operations.

Add two other former Bronx Bor-

ough commanders - Tom Purtell, chief of citywide operations, and Joanne Jaffe, chief of community af-

fairs, as well as former chief of Bronx detectives Robert Boyce, now chief of citywide detectives.

Rounding out the list of former Bronx commanders are newly named chief of patrol Terrence Monahan, and Thomas Galati, chief of intelligence.

"It has gotten to the point where 1 Police Plaza has become Bronx Borough South," Mike Bosak, retired NYPD sergeant and unofficial NYPD historian, said. "It seems the Bronx has become the training ground for rising stars in the department."

Most of those borough alumni who rose to the top, Bosak added, ran Bronx commands when crime was still in the higher numbers in the borough, "though it was also seeing dramatic decreases. You can give a lot of credit to these commanders for the jobs they did back then."

O'Neill was officially sworn in to the post on Sept. 19 relieving Bill Bratton. His sentiments reflected Bratton's perception of crime fighting.

With additional reporting by Bob Kappstatter



Photo courtesy Office of the Mayor

JAMES O'NEILL (RIGHT) is sworn in as NYPD Commissioner by Mayor Bill de Blasio (left), succeeding Bill Bratton.



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CRIME FILE

Fire Escape Burglars

A laptop and \$20 in cash was stolen from a 30-year-old woman's apartment on Sept. 20 at around 1 a.m. The NYPD is hoping the public helps identify two suspects captured on video and linked to the burglary.

The suspects crept through the victim's unlocked fire escape window by Briggs Avenue and East 196th Street,

later fleeing from the same fire escape after lifting her items. Both individuals (pictured below) are male; the first male was last seen wearing a hooded sweatshirt, light colored pants and black sneakers. The second male was last seen wearing a dark colored long sleeved shirt and dark colored pants.

Photo still courtesy NYPD.



Assault on Jerome Avenue

The NYPD needs help tracking three suspects wanted for an assault that occurred on Sept. 20.

The assault took place inside of the Paya Grocery store at 2587 Jerome Ave. at around 8:30 p.m. The 35-year-old victim was kicked, punched, and stabbed in the arm and back, resulting in a collapsed lung. He was rushed to Saint Barnabas Hospital for treatment.

All three individuals were described as three

males in their 20s. The first male was said to be Hispanic, with a ponytail, wearing black shorts and a black and grey shirt. The second male was wearing a black and blue hat, a white T-shirt and tan shorts. The third male was wearing a black and white T-shirt and black jeans. The second and third individuals were captured on a security camera leaving the store (pictured above).

Photo still courtesy NYPD.

Daytime Thief Sought

The NYPD needs help finding Isaiah Macuilt (pictured below), wanted for a daytime burglary that took place on Sept. 13. The suspect entered through a window at 3525 Perry Ave. just after 12 p.m. and removed property from the victim's apartment.

Macuilt is a 20-year-old white Hispanic male, 6 feet tall, brown

eyes and weighs 150 lbs. His last known address is 275 E. Gun Hill Rd.

The police are asking anyone with information regarding Isaiah Macuilt, or the burglary, to contact Detective Alex Lugo at (718) 220-5836 or the Bronx's Detective Bureau at (718) 378-8083.

Photo still courtesy NYPD.



Who Are Your Neighborhood Coordination Officers?



The Neighborhood Coordination Officer Program, which assigns officers to a specific sector instead of having them respond to one police call after another, has settled into the 52nd Precinct. These officers are embedded into the communities, serving as a familiar face for the NYPD. Each officer is equipped with an NYPD-issued phone intended to call them when a nagging issue arises.

Each precinct taking part in the NCO program is now divided into four sectors: A, B, C, and D as indicated on the map to the left. Below is a list of each sector, the neighborhoods they cover, and the names and phone numbers of each NCO officer patrolling that respective sector should there be a problem brewing in the neighborhood they cover.

Sector 52A (University Heights, West Fordham Road): P.O. Reuben Shaw, (917) 863-2914 and P.O. Sean Kinane, (917) 863-7653.

Sector 52B (East Fordham Road, Kingsbridge Heights): P.O. Joseph Ross, (917) 863-5822 and P.O. Eric Salisbury, (917) 863-6832.

Sector 52C (Kingsbridge Heights, Bedford Park, Norwood's north side): P.O. Patrick Horkan, (917) 689-9640 and P.O. Mc-Morrow (917) 865-0982.

Sector 52D (virtually all of Norwood): P.O. Marie Reilly-Derasmo, (929) 499-7027, and P.O. Paul White, (917) 863-6795.

Officers are not working around the clock, so there will be a little bit of waiting to get in touch with them. The 52nd Precinct's phone number is (718) 220-5811.

—David Cruz

Explosion at Alleged Marijuana Grow House Kills Firefighter, Injures 12

By DAVID GREENE

A firefighter chief is dead and 12 others were injured following an explosion of a home in Kingsbridge, which is now under suspicion for housing a so-called "grow house."

Meantime, a person in connection with the explosion has reportedly been arrested. News reports state one of the home's occupants, Julio Salcedo, was arrested in Cliffs Park, NJ, shortly after fleeing the home just before it exploded. It's unclear what the charges are as of press time.

Killed at the scene was Battalion Chief Michael Fahy, a 17-year veteran with the FDNY, who was struck with debris from the exploding home at 300 W. 234th St. as he directed operations from outside the home.

"It's a terrible loss for the family, for the Fahy family," FDNY Commissioner Daniel Nigro said at a news conference at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, where Fahy was rushed to. "It's a loss for the Fire Department family. We are a family. We feel it deeply."

News that the two-story home was suspected of holding a grow house that cultivated marijuana was determined an hour after Con Edison was called at



DEBRIS FROM A Kingsbridge home is strewn about the street. The explosion, which revealed a suspected drug grow house, killed a firefighter and injured 12 others.

Photo courtesy Edwin Soto

just before 7 a.m. on Sept. 27 for an odor of gas. The NYPD had preliminary information for weeks that the home was a suspected lab, and it had been in the middle of investigating it, according to NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill.

The explosion was heard as far

away as Kingsbridge Road and Riverdale, with debris catapulting towards neighboring homes yards away. "When I looked at it, you could see the roof and a hole and then it all capsized," a resident who went by Sheila said. She added that young people had occupied

the house for years. "They were probably college students."

Residents described the sound as a "big bang" with sound comparable to a "thunderstorm."

"We heard a big bang," said one resident of West 232nd Street, a full block away from the wreckage. "I was actually on the toilet and it rocked the toilet, it was very powerful. It shook the house."

Another resident said of the firefighters, "I just saw a bunch of them walking back this way and they looked very distraught, so now I guess I know why; they lost one of theirs. It's very sad. It's a tragedy."

A freshman at Manhattan College commented, "I just moved to New York and my first reaction was like, this is something really bad, like terrorism. So I'm slightly relieved to know that [it's not]. But it's a little terrifying to be new to the neighborhood and this happening."

It's believed that all of the injured were removed to New York-Presbyterian Hospital on Broadway.

Additional reporting by David Cruz.

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Positive Change Blooms at Mosholu Parkway's Playgrounds

By ELIZABETH QUARANTA

This year was a turning point for the Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP), which managed to organize two community visioning sessions on Mosholu Parkway's only two on-site playgrounds.

Now we have our first annual Fall Festival on the parkway, not to be con-

fused with the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District's Annual Fall Festival, which celebrated its 15th year on Sept. 17 (see pictures on page 8).

The effort and summary of the Kossuth visioning led to its funding of \$1.4 million towards the Kossuth Playground upgrades.

The visioning of the Mosholu Playground at the corner of East Mosholu Parkway South and Bainbridge Avenue near PS 8 led to a newly painted comfort station, fresh park flags and the installation of a three-wall park mural under the playground with nature scenes and park elements complementing the Mosholu area.

Resident Fred Karlton commented, "I saw the wall today, blends right into area, thank you."

Monique Nagyfejeo, another resident, wrote, "Our family loves it. Thank you," on FOMP's Facebook page.

I think it's exciting that residents in the community can actively participate as the murals are being installed. It's an activity where everyone can be involved daily and the local artist helps put our concerns on to those walls while beautifying the neighborhood. With the controversy of the flowering Dogwood trees and their placement, one wall of the mural will have those Dogwood trees flowering for years to come.

A Neighborhood Grant received from Citizens Committee and a Capacity Fund Grant for \$1800 by Partnerships for Parks, a program of City Parks Foundation and the New York City Parks Department, made the three-wall mural possible. The funds will also be used to create a sidewalk garden in between the benches near the murals and add that extra garden experience as residents and visitors come to look at the murals and walk along the sidewalk.

Elizabeth Quaranta is president of Friends of Mosholu Parkland.

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Made possible by the City Parks Foundation, thanks to Councilman Andrew Cohen and the Parks Equity Initiative of the New York City Council under the leadership of Speaker Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito



Photo courtesy Friends of Mosholu Parkland
LOCAL ARTIST KATHLEENA HOWIE, a.k.a. "Lady K Fever," touches up her latest mural found at the perimeter walls of Mosholu Playground.

Students Take 'Commit to Graduate' Pledge at DeWitt Clinton HS

By JALEESA BAULKMAN

DeWitt Clinton High School held its first annual "Commit to Graduate" event to increase student motivation by emphasizing the value of a high school diploma and the steps needed to complete their secondary studies, all in a major effort to reverse low graduation rates.

"Every single day we make decisions," Principal Santiago Taveras told his students at the pep rally-style announcement. "And when you make decisions, they have consequences."

During the campaign launch on Sept. 23, students spent the majority of their school day learning about graduation requirements, the college application process, and the importance of school attendance. "Commit to Graduate" was capped off with a school assembly in which students received inspirational messages from Taveras and faculty members who encouraged them to commit to finishing high school as it is essentially a springboard that will determine the next stage of life.

"I try to always do things that are fun for the students because I don't remember liking school when I was in school," Taveras told *Norwood News*. "So you



Photo courtesy Monroe College
SANTIAGO TAVERAS, PRINCIPAL of DeWitt Clinton High School, stands in front of banner filled with signatures of students committed to graduate high school in four years. Monroe College helped introduce the initiative at the school.

have to continue to motivate them, inspire them, engage them, show them what they can do if they succeed and celebrate their accomplishments."

Taveras was inspired to launch Commit to Graduate after seeing the success of a similar initiative, "Commit to Complete," that was implemented at Monroe College in 2015. Like Monroe College, Clinton students also signed a "Commit to Graduate" banner signifying that

they've made a commitment to attain their high school diploma.

"One of the things that I've witnessed today, that we've seen also at [Monroe College], is that a student came back and said 'ooh I want to remember where my name is [on the banner] because when I graduate I want to come back here and look at that and say I completed my goal.'" Gary Axelbank, community relations director for Monroe College

told *Norwood News*. "That is a tremendous notion to put in a high schooler's head who's never had the idea that there was any continuity to what they do as a freshman, as a senior and ultimately in college and in life."

Nicknamed the "Castle on Mosholu Parkway," for its size and proximity to Mosholu Parkway, the 21-acre high school has an illustrious history producing influential and pioneering graduates that included Congressman Charles Rangel, comic book icon Stan Lee, and fashion designer Ralph Lauren. But in recent years, the school has garnered a reputation of being one of the lowest-performing schools in the city.

Although high school dropout rates in New York City have plummeted--with just 9.7 percent of people dropping out of school in 2014 compared to 18.8 percent in 2005, according to Citizens Committee for Children of New York--DeWitt Clinton High School touts a four-year graduation rate of only 46 percent. Meantime, the Bronx's high school dropout rate is higher than the citywide average at 14.4 percent. But Taveras believes this initiative will help DeWitt Clinton achieve the goal of becoming "the high school of choice for all families in the Bronx."

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EDITORIAL

Participatory Budgeting Could Work If Only It Weren't So Slow

The premise is deceptively simple: If you were given \$1 million of taxpayer money to build a project for the city, what would it be?

With Participatory Budgeting, an initiative that's become cornerstone to many New York City Council legislators, including Norwood Councilman Andrew Cohen, that wish could indeed come true. The initiative is once again under way, and council members want your help.

But in the three years since it's been instituted in the Norwood side of Cohen's district, what's really been lacking in PB is participants. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't exactly make them drink. It seems time is a valuable resource that's too precious for working class Norwood. And the city oftentimes doesn't see it. After all, how can families scraping by really put a civic dent on civic matters? In the last couple of sessions, a literal handful of people in Norwood (there were 10 people at one session) saw to that. The turnout seems to reflect the neighborhood's low voter turnout (figures by the New York City Board of Elections show Norwood's 2015 voter participation at 6 percent). It's a shame. PB, after all, is attempting to be as inclusive and direct as possible, even including those barred from electoral voting, who often feel marginalized.

On the flip side, when one begins to peel the layers of its process, participating can be time consuming.

Sure, on its surface, PB just involves the public's input on ideas. But the premise doesn't end there: the city is asking you to put your urban planning hat on to devise a capital project, which involves a project that builds upon or improves the city's infrastructure. Any capital project needs to be thoroughly vetted, and it could take months to see a project assessed by city agencies and ultimately voted on by the public.

Once a capital project is picked, however, it will take another five years to see the capital funds. This means that the project you want to see happen after spending months on it will not really happen until five years from now, or more. De-

lays, depending on the city agency, can languish, meaning that project you spent time conceiving in 2016, may not actually start until 2022. By then, your interest has drifted elsewhere. PB, it seems, only sheds light in the bureaucracy that is New York City government. Admittedly, the projects, including bus count-down clocks, are pretty decent additions.

Perhaps it's best to alert the fickle that PB takes times and should be prepared to take it on for the long haul. Perhaps it's better that the citizenry actually be asked for help in deciding where the other type of discretionary funding, the ones that can be doled out during the existing fiscal year, should be earmarked. Isn't this one of the reasons why citizens grow so fed up with government? They have no say over where their taxpayer money goes. It could just come down to voting where certain discretionary funds can go. Now there's an efficient way of getting the public involved.



File Photo

COUNCILMAN ANDREW COHEN runs down winners of Participatory Budgeting during the 2015-16 cycle.

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committee meetings are held on the following dates at the board office, 229 E. 204th St., at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Executive Committee meets on Oct. 6 at 6 p.m.; Public Safety & Quality of Life Committee meets on Oct. 6 at 7:15 p.m.; Education, Youth & Libraries meets on Oct. 6 at 7:30 p.m.; and Health & Hospitals Committee meets on Oct. 11 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call the Board office at (718) 933-5650.

THE BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION meets Oct. 5 at 400 E. Mosholu Parkway S., apt. B1, at 8pm.

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4	Highbridge and Concourse	(718) 299-0800
5	Morris Heights, University Heights, Fordham, and Mount Hope	(718) 364-2030
6	East Tremont, Bathgate, Belmont, and West Farms	(718) 579-6990
7	Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham, and University Heights	(718) 933-5650
8	Fieldston, Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Riverdale, Spuyten Duyvil, and Van Cortlandt Village	(718) 884-3959
9	Soundview, Castle Hill, Union Port, and Parkchester	(718) 823-3034
10	Throgs Neck, Pelham Bay, Co-Op City, Westchester Square, and City Island	(718) 892-1161
11	Allerton, Morris Park, Pelham Gardens, Pelham Parkway, and Van Nest	(718) 892-6262
12	Williamsbridge, Baychester, Woodlawn, Wakefield, and Eastchester	(718) 881-4455

OPINION

Let's Do More to Assist Rent-Burdened Bronx Seniors

By CATHERINE CLARKE

Community-based groups in the northwest Bronx care for their senior citizens! Significant local efforts to assist low-income seniors include the creation of new affordable housing for seniors, the promotion of city programs to keep rents affordable to seniors and a wide array of health, social and recreational services offered by religious institutions, community groups and senior centers.

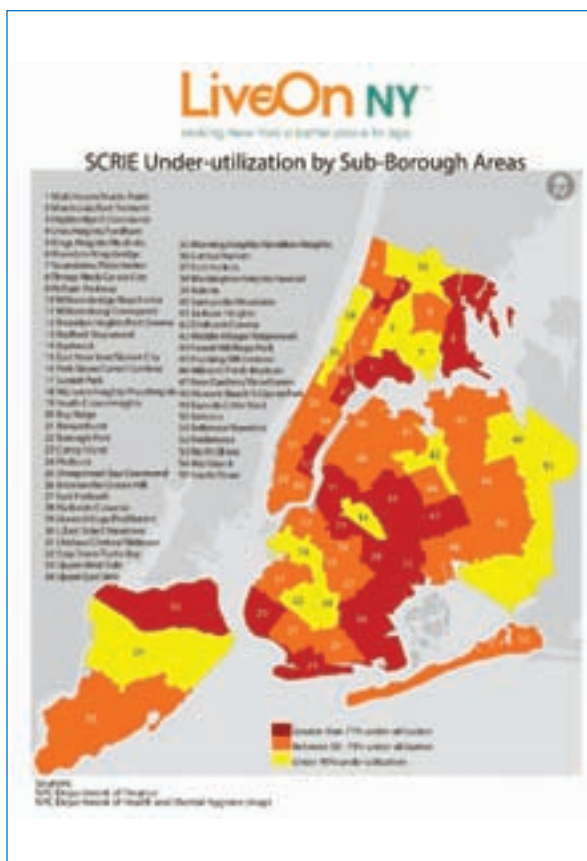
New York City recently increased the income limits for its NYC Rent Freeze Program also known as SCRIE (Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption) and DRIE (Disabled Rent Increase Exemption), run by the NYC Department of Finance (DOF) and has been actively partnering with elected officials and community groups to increase enrollment. The program can freeze the rent of a senior and exempt them from future increases. In an effort to address under-utilization of the program (see map), University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP), Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation (FBHC), West Bronx Housing, POTS and CSS recently worked with the DOF to sponsor a SCRIE event and assisted over 60 seniors.

Hundreds of affordable housing units for low-income seniors have been built in the northwest Bronx using HUD's Section 202 program by community-based developers, including Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation, the largest community-based developer in NYC and UNHP. These developments are handicap accessible, provide community space, as well as on-site recreational and social services. Unfortunately, this program has essentially been discontinued, despite high demand, according to LiveOn NY, over 100,000 seniors are on waiting lists for HUD 202 housing in NYC. The need for affordable senior housing will only continue to grow in the years ahead as

the number of senior renters nationally is expected to more than double from 5.8 million in 2010 to 12.2 million in 2030 (Urban Institute). Currently in NYC, more than 65 percent of seniors are severely rent burdened, paying more than half of their incomes on rent (Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.).

Government at all levels must make a substantial investment to keep seniors in their rental units, and to create new developments with services for seniors to be prepared for the upcoming "Silver Tsunami." Let's do more to assist struggling seniors restore and expand the Federal HUD 202 program, create a new State supported senior housing programs and on the City level, continue outreach around the SCRIE and DRIE programs and increase the level of subsidy to reduce senior rent to 30 percent of their incomes.

Catherine Clarke works for UNHP, a community-based group working to create and preserve affordable housing and bring resources to the northwest Bronx. If you are a senior (62 and older) or a person who is disabled (18 and over and on SSI/SSD), and live in rent regulated apartment, UNHP can review your eligibility and help you enroll in SCRIE or DRIE (718) 933-2539. Freeze your rent today!



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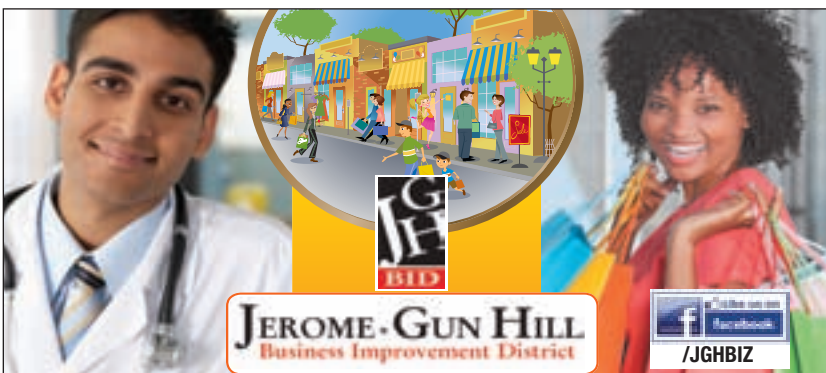
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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Tenant Assistance

The Office of Senator Gustavo Rivera offers assistance on tenant-related issues every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. by appointment at 2432 Grand Concourse. For more information or to make an appointment, call (718) 933-2034.

Free Flu Shots

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Montefiore Health System, Walgreens Pharmacy, and others, are sponsoring free flu shots at Vladeck Hall, 74 Van Cortlandt Pk. So. on Oct. 6 and at the Riverdale YM-YWHA, 5625 Arlington Ave. on Oct. 27. Members of the community must be 18 years of age or older to participate, and cannot be allergic to eggs. For more information, call Dinowitz's office at (718) 796-5345. Residents MUST call to guarantee a flu shot.

C.O.V.E. Seeks Interns

Community Organized with a Vision of Excellence at 3418 Gates Pl. (basement) is seeking paid interns ages 14 to 18 to work at the after school program. For more information, call (718) 405-1312.

Free Breast Exam

North Central Bronx Hospital, 3424

Kossuth Ave., offers Breast Health Day, Oct. 1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., in their Radiology Department on the 2nd floor, room 2G. Women age 40 and older are encouraged to attend. Those eligible will receive a free screening mammogram in addition to a clinical breast exam. For more information, call (718) 519-3086.

First-time Homebuyer Fast-Track Series

University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) is sponsoring three homeownership workshops. Learn the essentials of buying a home and fast-track your path to homeownership. Understand the roles of key players (realtor, attorney, inspector, etc.) and what the process entails. Participants who attend all three workshops receive a completion certificate, valid for closing grants. Attendees will receive a Market Guide, a useful tool to track housing trends. Schedule is as follows: Thursday, Oct. 6 and Tuesday, Oct. 18, both at 6 to 8 p.m. at Concourse House, 2751 Grand Concourse, (entrance on East 196th Street); and Saturday, Oct. 15 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Refuge House, 2715 Bainbridge Ave. (corner of East 196th Street). For more information, call (718) 933-3101.

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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Fall Festival Fun (again)

Friends of Mosholu Parkland presents its 1st annual fall festival on Oct. 8 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Kossuth Playground, East Mosholu Parkway North between Jerome and Van Cortlandt avenues. Activities include a giant spider web obstacle, games, crafts and prizes, daffodil planting, and guitar by Steve Oates. All are welcome.

Onstage

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Rafael Hernandez Music Festival**, Oct. 9 at 2 p.m., featuring music performed by various Latin artists. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance (BAAD), 2474 Westchester Ave., presents **Let's Go Crazy: Dance Tribute to Prince**, Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 at 8 p.m. (\$20) featuring short works inspired by the music and legacy of Prince. After the show, the audience is invited to dance to a Prince super mix. For more information and tickets, call (718) 918-2110 or visit www.BAADBronx.org.

Events

Montefiore Medical Center's Healing Arts & Caregiver Center offers **5 Rhythms for Caregivers**, dance/movement class offering some relief from caring for your loved one, that

promotes physical and emotional well-being, releasing tension and stress, by free-form dancing, for all ages and physical abilities, Oct. 5, 19 and Nov. 2, 5 to 7 p.m., in the Grand Hall of the Tishman Learning Center at Moses Campus, 111 E. 210th St. No dance experience or sense of rhythm necessary. For more information or to register, call (718) 920-8434 or 8080.

Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance (BAAD), 2474 Westchester Ave., presents **Periodic Solution: A Dance Film (premiere)**, Oct. 6 at 7 p.m. (free). BAAD's dancer/choreographer Arthur Aviles celebrates 30th year anniversary of "Periodic Solution," a solo choreographed by one of his first dance teachers when he was her student. He will dance the piece first, followed by the movie. Receptions begin and follow the screening with a post-show Q&A with the artists. For more information, call (718) 918-2110 or visit www.BAADBronx.org.

The New York Botanical Garden presents **From the Heartland to Horror**, featuring larger than life



Photo courtesy Joshua Bright

BE A BEE at Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis (See Events for details).

sculptures of scarecrows crafted from natural materials; and **Pumpkins: Playful & Plentiful**, featuring rare and unusual pumpkins and gourds in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden, plus daily hands-on activities featuring a puppet playhouse, and on weekends, interactive demonstrations featuring bats and other creepy creatures; all through Oct. 30. Also offered is **Kiku Evenings**, a viewing of The Art of the Japanese Garden with a complimentary sake cocktail and traditional Japanese music, then dinner at Hudson Garden Grill featuring Japanese menu (special ticket required). For more information, call (718) 817-8700.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Be a Bee, to wear wings, antennae, a pollen cup and a kazoo, then join bee parade at 12:30 p.m. (weather permitting), and do a bee dance, Oct. 1 and 2, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; both followed by **Bees and Beekeeping Information Station**, to chat with beekeepers, try on beekeeping gear, peek inside a hive, and learn fascinating facts about honeybees from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and **Raptors in the Autumn Sky**, to make a raptor puppet to be included in a group puppet project, Oct. 8 and 9; from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (all programs in the WH House). Also scheduled: **Falconry Presentation: Skyhunters in Flight**, to watch hawks, falcons and owls during an outdoor flight demonstration, learn about falconry, and meet live raptors from around the world, Oct. 10 from 1 to 2:30 p.m., on the grounds. 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.

Friends of Van Cortlandt Park presents **Hike-Toberfest**, Oct. 1. Hike begins at 2 p.m., Oktoberfest from 4 to 7 p.m. Meet at VC House Museum (enter park at Broadway and West 246th Street). For more information or to purchase

a ticket, call (718) 601-1460 or visit www.vancortlandt.org.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the following for children: **Preschool Story Time**: (ages 3 to 4), to enjoy picture books with librarian, Sept. 29 at 11 a.m.; and **Animal Book Making**: (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required), hands-on project, Sept. 29 at 4 p.m. Adults can enjoy: **Chess**: chess set provided, Sept. 30 at 3 p.m., room C22; **film**: "The Milagro Beanfield War," Oct. 1 at 2:30 p.m.; and **Microsoft Word 2010 for Beginners**: Oct. 4 at 2 p.m. (online registration required, opens Sept. 30 at 1 p.m.). For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for kids: **Family Storytime**: (ages 3 to 12), stories and crafts, Sept. 29 at 4 p.m.; **Baby Storytime**: (ages birth to 18 months), books, songs, and rhymes, Sept. 30 at 10:30 a.m.; and **Backyard Exploration**: (ages 5 to 12), to hang out in the backyard, help with the garden, play, write with chalk, read, etc., Oct. 11 at 4 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **film**: "Race," Oct. 8 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Free Computer Classes**: to learn email and basic computer information, Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.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 children: **Kids Get Active Fridays at 3 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12), dance moves on the Wii game console, Sept. 30 and Oct. 7. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Oct. 3 for the next publication date of Oct. 13.



Photo courtesy Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance

BRONX ACADEMY OF Arts & Dance presents Let's Go Crazy: Dance Tribute to Prince, Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 at 8 p.m. (\$20) featuring short works inspired by the music and legacy of Prince (See Onstage for details).

KNIC to City: We Want to Buy Armory

(continued from page 1)

cies approved a \$138 million loan to KNIC so it can begin building the first half of the ice center. The funds came in the form of a loan commitment, which raised red flags for NYCEDC, the city's realtor, which wanted the full \$158 million needed to fully fund the first phase. At present, KNIC has received \$15 million from the state. The Empire State Development Corporation (ESD) and Public Authorities Control Board, the two panels that okayed the loan, need to see an active lease before it can disburse the funds, according to KNIC's attorneys.

According to the KNIC's escrow-locked lease, a stipulation exists allowing KNIC to purchase the building outright. But that provision is contingent upon the activation of the lease. One of the original terms in the agreement was KNIC paying the city rent of \$1 plus a portion of yearly revenue KNIC would produce.

Should the city continue its aggressive stance on keeping the property in its portfolio, it would have to issue another Request for Proposals, putting the property out for bid while adding

another layer of delay for development. The RFP could go out to other bidders who may be interested in purchasing the property. It would also have to go through another Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, a process that takes months and involves approvals of the community board, borough president and New York City Council Member whose district covers the property.

Or the NYCEDC may release the lease, activating it and allowing KNIC to purchase the property altogether.

The last time the two sides met in Bronx Supreme Court, presiding judge Ruben Franco told attorneys he was unsure if he could continue hearing the case. Still, both sides have met outside of court to negotiate a way to mutually advance the project. The city has not budged over its position of releasing KNIC's lease, which remains in escrow.

Anthony Hogrebe, a spokesman for NYCEDC, declined to comment over whether the city would consider KNIC's proposal because of ongoing litigation.

The proposal hasn't quite been met with much outright support from leg-

islators who had once swooned over the prospect of an ice center, viewing it as a major game changer for the Bronx.

A spokesperson for Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., a booster of the Armory project whose support has toned down over the last year, merely said he would evaluate the proposal if they saw it. The same went for Senator Gustavo Rivera, another strong supporter of the Armory, whose 33rd Senate District overlaps with the Armory, according to his spokesperson.

A spokesperson for Councilman Fernando Cabrera, whose 14th Coun-

cil District also overlaps with the Armory, declined comment. Cabrera these days has been a vocal opponent of the Armory. During his run for the 33rd Senate District currently occupied by Rivera, Cabrera expressed in a televised debate his preference to see the project re-start.

"If [KNIC] cannot come up with the funding...then it should be opened up again," Cabrera said. "Don't hold back the community."

As of press time, it's been 1,024 days since the New York City Council approved the Armory be turned into an ice center.



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