



# NORWOOD NEWS

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**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:  
JOB NUMBERS | PG. 4**

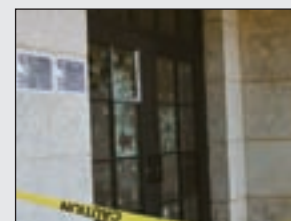


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# NORWOOD NEWS YEAR IN REVIEW



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MMCC | pg 9**

**By DAVID CRUZ**

Continuing a tradition established for at least five years, the *Norwood News* took a look back at its 25 editions it puts out every year to highlight stories that consistently stood in the main pages of the paper. These stories caused plenty of readers to pause and think. Among the recurring themes playing

out in 2016 was development of Norwood, which continues to be a hot commodity for wary developers. The stories were among the three following categories:

## Armory

The *Norwood News* opened 2016 with the front page headline, "Ice Project Thawing Out," referring to the Kings-

bridge National Ice Center to be built at the Kingsbridge Armory. These days, the project has entered the ice age, a year following plenty of ups and downs that wound up in the courts.

The year began with developers for the nine-rink center receiving a \$138 million loan approval from two state government entities, the Empire

State Development Corporation and Public Authorities Control Board. Developers needed the money for the first phase of the project, but it first needed to show the state it had a lease ready in hand. The city, which owns the landmark Armory, kept the lease in escrow until developers showed them the  
*(continued on page 15)*



**Out & About  
pg 14**



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## IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

# Judge: Armory on Ice Indefinitely

By **DAVID CRUZ**

A Bronx judge has thrown out a lawsuit filed by developers of the Kingsbridge National Ice Center against the city, effectively prolonging a redevelopment saga that's dragged on for nearly 20 years.

Bronx Supreme Court Judge Ruben Franco dismissed the lawsuit filed last March by Kingsbridge National Ice Center LLC (KNIC) against the city over claims the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the city's real estate arm, had violated its contract by activating a lease for KNIC. The development firm also accused the city of conspiring against developers from moving forward with the project, a nine-rink ice center to be built at the Kingsbridge Armory. His decision indefinitely suspends the project. A representative for KNIC did not return calls for comment over whether it plans to appeal.

"It pains me to write this decision, for, as I have told the attorneys for both sides on numerous occasions, a decision by the court in this case, rather than a resolution by agreement of the parties, will almost certainly result in an appeal, which will only serve to further seriously delay the completions of a much-anticipated development project which could greatly benefit the local community," Franco wrote in his ruling.

Councilman Fernando Cabrera, the presiding Council Member whose district covers the Armory, broke the news to Community Board 7 members at its Dec. 20 general board meeting. Community Board 7 was also made aware of the judge's decision the same day.

"Judge Franco's ruling essentially allows the Kingsbridge Armory to move forward," Cabrera said, via a statement. "The ruling appears to conform to the City's position and I look forward to the development of this unique asset into a productive facility that meets our community's needs."

The lawsuit was one of three cases



File Photo  
**STILL DORMANT AFTER** nearly 20 years, efforts to revitalize the Kingsbridge Armory have gone nowhere.

circulating around the project. The dismissed lawsuit focused on whether KNIC can move forward in building the first phase of the project simply by having a loan commitment from New York State.

The Armory is owned by the city which had awarded a lease to KNIC LLC in April 2013, with the New York City Council signing off on it via a vote in December the same year. NYCEDC was handling the real estate transaction between KNIC and the city. It had placed the lease in escrow until KNIC showed it had the necessary \$158 million funds for the first part of the project. KNIC has long stood by its argument that it has a \$130 million loan commitment from the state and private foundations to fund the project. City lawyers said a pledge is not enough; actual funds needed to be presented. Judge Franco agreed. "In considering the documents, the court

determines that the Escrow Condition has not been satisfied," Judge Franco wrote.

The news puts another dent in a contentious fight between developers and a city which, under a previous mayoral administration, had boosted the benefits of the project. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., perhaps one of the biggest supporters of the project, considered the project transformative for a borough on a continuous journey to redefining itself. The setback could cost Diaz politically, as he continues to mull a decision whether to run for higher office, framing his image as a legislator who helped usher a groundbreaking project to the Bronx.

The ruling also postpones a Community Benefits Agreement between developers and community stakeholders that's valued at \$99 million. Among the benefits was 50,000 square feet of community space at the lower level of the landmark armory.

In a statement, EDC spokesman Anthony Hoglebe kept the door open for a possible resolution down the line. "EDC is committed to activating the Kingsbridge Armory for the people of the Bronx, and this decision brings us one step closer to delivering on that commitment," Hoglebe said. He added the development firm should "stop wasting time on frivolous lawsuits and start securing the financing to get this project moving."

EDC does have the option of removing KNIC as leaseholder and effectively restarting the redevelopment plan from the beginning via a Request for Proposal.

In a statement from John DeSio, spokesman for Diaz, he said the two parties "need to come together and make this project happen." "The community has waited too long and worked too hard to accept anything less. We hope that the mayor and his administration are sincere in their desire to move this project forward," DeSio said.

## Public and Community Meetings

**COMMUNITY BOARD 7** will hold its general board meeting on Jan. 17 at the Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., at 6:30 p.m. CB7 committees are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Public Safety & Quality of Life Committee, Jan. 5; Education/Libraries & Youth Services Committee, Jan. 5 at 7:30 p.m.; Senior Services Committee, Jan. 11; Parks & Recreation, Jan. 11 at 7:15 p.m.; Traffic & Transportation, Jan. 12; and Veterans Committee, Jan. 12 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

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# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers if they believe the accuracy of the most current statewide jobless figure of 5.1 percent and whether these jobs pay enough for a person to pay their bills and grow into the job.



I don't think so. Maybe these jobs can pay a part of a month's rent. I mean, I'm a college student. They're not the kind of jobs you can sustain a life by yourself, but if you had a roommate or lived with family, it could help. A lot of these jobs seem like fast-food jobs. I've noticed that if you know someone, you can get a decent job that you can grow into, but if you don't know anyone you're screwed.

**Eddie Torres**  
Williamsbridge



I think there should be more opportunities for people to take vocational courses, so people can be trained. I work in the medical field and feel we are overworked, not so much as far as underpaid, but definitely overworked. We're given more responsibility. They're not hiring, and people are retiring or moving on to other fields and they're not replacing those jobs. So I find it hard to believe that the system is working. The government could work a little harder at training people vocationally for people to get in a door and learn a trade.

**Serafina Colon**  
Parkchester



I think there's a lot of jobs out here, but the fast food jobs are mostly for teenagers and now it's hard to get one of those jobs because there's a lot of competition. It's not easy out here. How can you survive on minimum wage?

**Emanuel Calef**  
Pelham Parkway



I'm a construction worker, so I'd say yes and no. Some of the jobs are good and some are not so good. It's going to take some time for things to start to balance out and it's time consuming. But nothing happens overnight. Day by day it's getting better. A couple of my friends just went back to work and they were looking for months.

**Kevin Dingle**  
Norwood



I'd say the unemployment rate is closer to 10 percent. My son can't find a job and he's been looking for about a year. He got a job at Barnes & Nobles, but that was for the Christmas season, and they're also moving. So he's worried right now because I'm about to turn the other screw. I'm not going to turn it, but I've got to keep him on his toes. I think it's BS; every election year it's the same thing. Let's see what happens now. Maybe things will get better.

**Raymond Torres**  
Bedford Park

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# Proposal to Downzone All of Mosholu Parkway Receives Community Support

By DAVID CRUZ

Anthony Riveccio, a community activist known to harangue developers chipping away at Bedford Park's past and present, has a surefire way to stem development: restricting building size.

That idea is already being examined by Community Board 7, which hired an urban planning consultant to gather testimonials on neighborhood needs, which appear to trend towards a more suburban-like setting. Her hiring was intended to follow up on a promise the New York City Department of City Planning made to the community in 2011, ensuring that it would revisit a proposal to downzone parts of Bedford Park, which include Mosholu Parkway, the stretch of road lined by narrow streets.

But Riveccio wants to take it a step further by asking that all of Mosholu Parkway be zoned an R5, including side streets linked to the roadway. So far he's received support from the community via letters that will be presented to CB7 to formally request the Board's hired urban planning consultant, Paula Caplan, to include all of Mosholu Parkway in the study. The proposal comes amid the city's plan to drive up building activity across the five boroughs.



Photo by David Cruz

**A HODGEPODGE OF** homes on East Mosholu Parkway North and East 206th Street range from private homes to eight-story structures, illustrating the varying building types that pepper the parkway.

"I'm hoping within that decision she will consider all of the draft letters she'll be receiving," Riveccio said, referring to Caplan, who's currently reviewing zoning feasibility for parts of Bedford Park and Kingsbridge Heights.

Mosholu Parkway, and its adjacent streets, are already built out and given various zoning distinctions that allow for a maximum of 14-story buildings. Riveccio's proposal would grandfather existing buildings but force new buildings to conform to an R5 distinction, or

buildings with four stories maximum, retreating back to a time when Mosholu Parkway stood dominated by six-story apartment buildings circa 1920s.

"This is a hope for what I call future protection of the Mosholu area," Riveccio said.

Over the last few years, the neighborhood has attracted developers, thanks to a comparatively low crime rate and abundance of public transportation. The area still remains rent burdened, with 36.7 percent of residents setting aside more than 30 percent of their take

home pay on rent, according to figures compiled by the NYU Furman Center, an urban housing research group.

Riveccio's taken to Facebook to get his message out. Among supporters favoring his proposal is the Bedford Mosholu Community Association.

Along the parkway, residents supported more building. While James Sasser said as long as developers "don't mess with" Mosholu Parkway's green spaces, a resident who only went by Michael called more building a "necessary thing." Meantime, Angie Perez, another resident walking to her home on Mosholu Parkway asked, "Why build two" when you can "build a building that's high enough" for everyone?

Councilman Andrew Cohen, the district legislator who favored the zoning study, is deferring to CB7 to decide whether it wants to expand the study, hoping the end result will "strike the right balance" and allow for "reasonable downzoning that will still permit development but will also try and preserve the character and the mobility of the neighborhood."

**Editor's Note:** Riveccio authors online personal finance articles for the Norwood News.

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# Signs of Life at Long-Abandoned Decatur Avenue Home

By WENDY JOAN  
BIDDLECOMBE

The long-abandoned two-family house at 3259 Decatur Ave., next to PS 56's recess yard and considered an eyesore for nearly a decade, is once again legally reoccupied, but is far from fixed up.

Elisabeth Von Uhl, a resident in the Norwood neighborhood, has been concerned for a while that the home is an unsafe property that could put school children in harm's way. Like other neighbors, she's called 311, and Von Uhl said she reached out to the police and wrote letters to local officials pleading they do something to address the neglected home.

A tenant has moved in since *Norwood News* wrote about the house in October. Von Uhl said a portion of the front porch has been painted pink, and said that whoever is occupying the house has put insulation over the broken windows, piled up garbage in

the front yard, and parked a car at the property.

"It's better that someone's living in there, so unsavory people can't take kids in the house," Von Uhl said.

Decatur Avenue neighbor Sirio Guerino said no one has lived in the home during the last 12 years he's lived on the block...until now. He said that in the past the garbage has piled up so significantly that he's cleaned up the property himself. "The guy's maintaining the property [now]," Guerino said, referring to the home's new tenant. "He told me that he's going to fix everything."

Several attempts to speak with the occupant, who was not identified, were unsuccessful.

City records list Luz Catano and Mercedes Galdamez as the owners of the 1920s-era home, purchased for \$640,000 in 2007. The value

of the home has decreased significantly since then, ac-

cording to city tax records, now listed at \$436,000 for the 2016-2017 tax year.

Tax bills from the New York City Department of Finance show that the home's property taxes have been paid on a regular basis. Property records show that a foreclosure auction was scheduled in September, but there are no foreclosure proceedings listed in Bronx clerk files against Catano.

In 2014, a Bronx court granted the city access to the property to install safety equipment to protect the home from construction at PS 56. Numerous attempts to contact Catano for her permission went unanswered in the months leading up to the ruling, according to court documents. Documents also show that the home's co-owner, Mercedes Galdamez, claims that she's never met Catano and that she never signed a mortgage for the property.



Photo by Wendy Joan Biddlecombe

**THE ABANDONED HOME** at 3259 Decatur Ave. is occupied again, according to neighbors. Renovations to the property are scant, but under way.

There have been 10 complaints to the Department of Buildings since Catano pur-

chased the home, according to city records and 27 complaints to 311 since 2010.

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## Howard Stern Personality, Joey Boots, Dies in Bedford Park Home



A radio personality known on the Howard Stern talk show as the edgy Joey Boots (pictured above) died mysteriously in his Bedford Park home, according to police.

Boots (real name Joseph Bassolino), 49, was found unconscious in his home on the Grand Concourse by Bedford Park Boulevard late Friday, Dec. 23.

Bassolino was regarded as one of Stern's Wolf Packers, which often performed edgy albeit obnoxious bits on unsuspecting people. Bassolino was known for the phrase "Baba Booeey" during radio bits.

"Tribute to the one and only Joey B in the new year. He will be missed. #BabaBooeeyHowardSternpenis," Howard Stern had tweeted on Christmas Eve.

Cause of death is not known.

--David Cruz

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Photo by Deborah Cruz

**A SHUTTERED GATE** at one side of Williamsbridge Oval Rec Center blocks visitors from entering through there after it was vandalized on Dec. 23.

## After Oval Rec Center Vandalized, Parks Steps Up Patrols

By DEBORAH CRUZ

The start of the holiday weekend was interrupted when the doors of the Williamsbridge Oval Park Recreation Center were vandalized during evening hours of operation.

The front doors of the Williamsbridge Oval Park Recreation Center were shattered when rocks and cinderblocks were thrown at the door, by what many believe to be adolescent thugs, leaving the entryways partially destroyed. The incident happened around 6 p.m. on Dec. 24.

While initially thought to be a direct attack to the center, a few people who asked not to be identified fearing reprisal said there appeared to be a fight between members of a few crews from the neighborhood, with the center serving as collateral damage. Staffers immediately called the 52nd Precinct. No arrests were made.

Mario Lopez, a spokesman from the New York City Department of Parks, said in a statement that the agency has dispatched "an extra mobile Parks Enforcement Patrol unit to the area during the evening hours." In the meantime, Parks "will continue to work closely with NYPD regarding related safety issues."

Concepcion Flores, 39, a center regular, said the neighborhood around the location has been growing hostile lately. "Around four weeks ago I was

picking up my kids from one of the programs they attend here, and while all the kids were coming out another group of older teenagers came across and slapped one of the children in the head," Flores recounted.

Flores brings her two children to many of the programs that the center offers and said there has been a lack of surveillance. "I don't feel so safe around here anymore," she said.

Many consider the center to be a safe haven in the community and find the attack to be unsettling.

A younger member of the center, Jahmeal Martin, 16, said he had never felt like it was an unsafe neighborhood. "Nothing bad has ever happened to me," said Jahmeal. "I just come lift [weights] and then go home."

Repairs are now under way.



Photo by Deborah Cruz

**VANDALS LEAVE THE** front doors to the center (pictured) damaged.



# Cashless Tolls Coming to Bx. Bridges in Fall

Toll attendants will be a thing of the past by the end of this year.

The MTA is expected to roll out cashless tolls for the Bronx's Whites-tone and Throggs Neck bridges in Fall 2017, applying even for drivers who don't use EZ-Pass to pay for a toll. Non-EZ-Pass drivers will have a bill mailed to them, a practice already in effect at the Henry Hudson Bridge. While non-EZ-Pass drivers pay the full rate, drivers with the tag get a reduced rate.

Toll beaters will be subject to stiffer fines starting in February, according to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Office.

—David Cruz

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# Celebrating Chanukah

Photo by Miriam Quinones

**THESE KIDS GET** into the spirit of the holiday during a Chanukah celebration at the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center on Dec. 27 through a good old fashioned game of dreidel. Their prize: a chocolate coin!

Photo by Miriam Quinones  
**ANYA RAYCHUK (LEFT)** shows off the raffle prize she won at the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center's Chanukah celebration on Dec. 27. She shares the moment with Neil Harrow, who chairs the group. Guests were entertained by a pianist and partook in holiday refreshments including potato latkes with sour cream and applesauce.



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# At MMCC, Baking Becomes a Yuletide Event for PS 94 Students

By DAVID CRUZ

The 15 students from PS 94 huddled around a kitchen eyeing the tray of holiday cookies ready for baking and decorating, its fresh cinnamon scent filling the air. For the kids, it was fun. For Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC) of Norwood, it was a giveback for the youngsters.

"I know that they don't have a kitchen where they're at, and maybe they don't have the opportunity to bake," Yuisa Santiago, director of MMCC's culinary arts program, said of the first-ever event.

The students are part of the MMCC afterschool program installed at PS 94, with funding through the city's Comprehensive After School System of NYC (COMPASS NYC), which offers academic- and recreation-based programming across city schools to encourage child development. The elementary school is five blocks away from MMCC's DeKalb Avenue annex. At the lower level is the kitchen where prepared food comes in and out for MMCC's myriad of young and old clients.

This time, MMCC head chef Dane McCarthy, sporting a Christmas cap to fit the occasion, showed off the best way to bake and decorate cookies. Usually, McCarthy works with young adults ages 18 to 24. But this time,

it was the younger children who got his attention. "I never worked with kids on this level, but it's always incredible," McCarthy said. "And they're really smart."

The raw materials, courtesy of a donation from Food Bazaar, stood at the ready. It wasn't hard for the kids to stick around hearing about the subject. They certainly ate up the material. "I could live here," Anneris Moyeno, 10, said as the aroma of cookie dough engulfed the kitchen.

Meantime, Luis Cruz, 10, had just finished crushing a cup's worth of candy canes. "[Dane] said not to crush them too much," Luis told the *Norwood News*. "I got to hit them with a pin. Pow! Pow! Pow! Pow! But it was fun!"

Over at the rolling station, Luigi Thode, another student, stood fully focused on kneading cookie dough. He soon shifted, heading to the mixing station where McCarthy's mother, Debra Barreto, was on hand to help students. "It's gonna hurt your hand, right?" asked Barreto as Luigi mixed a tough batch of flour.

Santiago hopes the event takes off again next year. Her plan is to target the neediest of neighborhoods. "Some individuals just don't have [a kitchen] and I said this is at least something they can do as a group and enjoy Christmas if they aren't able to do so at home," she said.



Photo by David Cruz

**STUDENTS DISPLAY A** baking sheet of holiday cookies they prepared at the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center during a Christmas cookie baking session under the supervision of head chef Dane McCarthy (in back row with beard).

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## Bedford Park Tenants Fought the Good Fight, and Left Scattered

By DAVID CRUZ

For the four families who once lived at 267 E. 202nd St., the year of turmoil is over.

After living through a year where they were nearly evicted from their home, battled their new landlord in court over repairs as a way to delay eviction proceedings, and ultimately forced out following a devastating three-alarm fire, the tenants have found new lodgings. They've also happened to settle their case against their landlord, Peter Fine.

Fine, who was in the middle of being sued when the home broke out in flames over the summer, settled the cases with tenants for an undisclosed sum of money. The tenants are now scattered, living outside the Bronx and relying on public assistance to get by. Many declined to discuss the terms of the settlement, fearing they would be taken away.

In many ways, the tenants were glad the days of shuffling to Housing Court every other week were over. Andrew Darcy, the pro bono attorney representing the families through MFY Legal Services, said his clients had little interest in moving back in anyway.

“It’s not that there was necessarily a connection with the building. It was affordable in a neighborhood that they liked,” Darcy said. But it wasn’t well-maintained. For years, I think they had been living with issues.”

Still, the news opens the door for Fine to likely demolish the building, opting to construct a 20-unit property that exploits the neighborhood’s current zoning laws. It was a move many suspected was in the works the moment Fine, an affordable and luxury housing developer, purchased the property, which abuts a parking lot. The tenants will miss the aftermath: a further congested Bedford Park that chips away at its suburban quality.

“This is one example that may be occurring in many neighborhoods, including neighborhoods close to Bedford Park. This is one little dot of a big painting that’s taken place over the last year,” Darcy said.

Darcy is aware of the double-edged sword. By helping his clients, Fine, who has not filed for any building permits, can build a much taller building. “I know that’s going to anger a lot of people, especially knowing their history with Peter Fine,” Darcy said. “However, you know that couldn’t affect our representation of these individuals.”

Fine’s purchase of the property continues the construction boom blanketing the Bronx. The trend is favored by the de Blasio administration, which, in attempting to fix the affordable housing and homelessness crisis simultaneously, has created a pro-building atmosphere for developers.

John Reilly, a resident who helped get tenants housing thanks to his background in affordable housing, said the city has now taken other considerations into account to encourage mindful development. “Efforts to create some mixed income housing as well as community needs such as transportation, parking, education and recreation space and other public and community facilities are now getting more consideration,” Reilly said.

Fine has been in the real estate business since the 1990s, having founded Atlantic Development Group with partner Marc Alheim. He has built luxury housing in Florida, and has since eyed Bedford Park for development. He may not get the warmest reception following the year of change for the tenants and the community at large. A spokesman for Fine was unavailable for comment.

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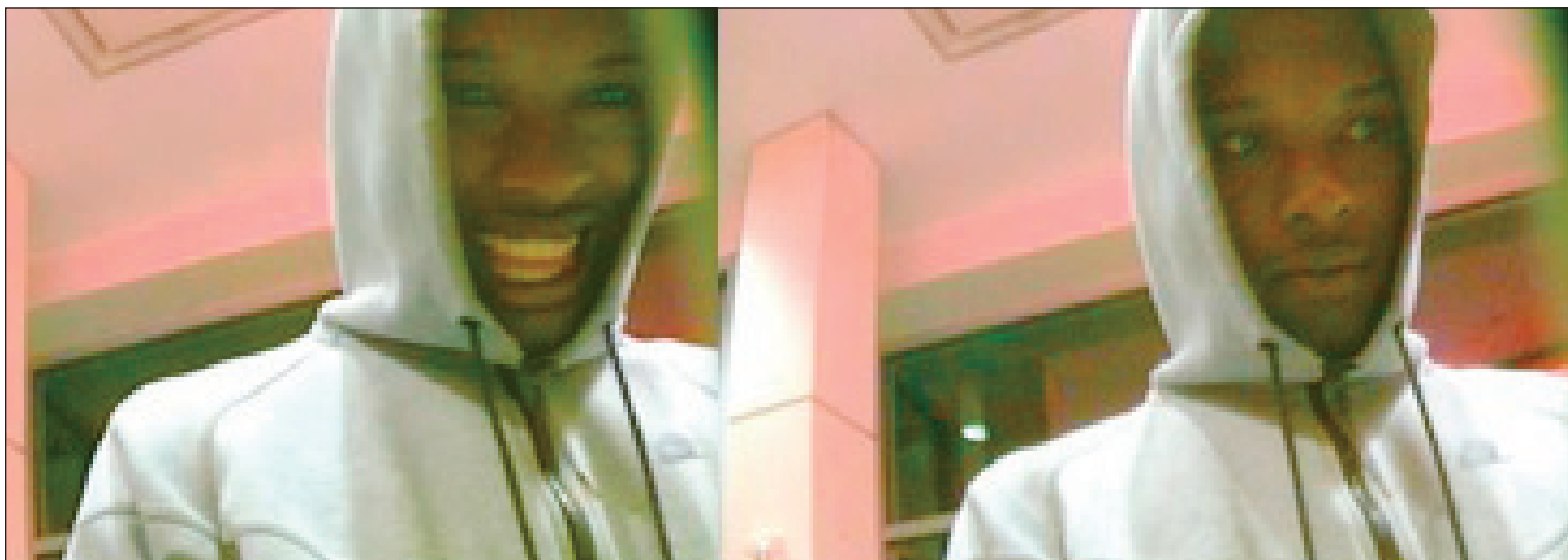


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# Thief Sought for Burglar Crime Pattern in 52nd Precinct



Images courtesy NYPD

**VIDEO FROM AN ATM** at a Bank of America captures the thief withdrawing cash from a victim's account.

**By DAVID CRUZ**

The 52nd Precinct needs help finding a burglary suspect who brazenly sneaks into fire escapes and makes off with victims' belongings.

Police say the thief was reported to have struck six times from Oct. 6 through Nov. 24. In each crime, the

thief enters the apartment through the fire escape, in some cases with the victims sleeping inside, and steals items. The thief snuck into apartments on Valentine Avenue and the Grand Concourse between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. In all, the thief made off with purses,

credit cards, sneakers, watches, Apple products, a Beats headphones set, video games, and game consoles. There have been no reported injuries with any time the burglar hit the homes.

Surveillance video from an ATM machine at a Bank of America shows

the suspected thief (pictured) withdrawing cash from a victim's bank account.

Anyone with information is asked to call the NYPD Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). Calls are kept confidential.

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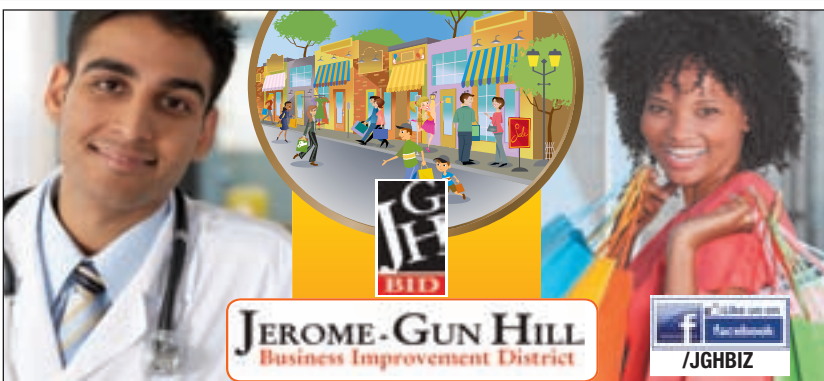
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#### HELP WANTED

**Senior Center Director** – Mosholu Montefiore Community Center seeks an experienced Program Director to run its Ft. Independence Senior Center. Duties include: maintaining oversight of daily congregational meal program, teaching group activities, marketing/promoting the center, conducting new member intakes, supervising staff, etc. A BA degree in Human Services or a related field and 3-5 years of relevant experience required. A NYC Food Handler's Certificate is preferred. We offer a competitive salary and benefits. Submit resume and cover letter including salary requirements to: [jobs@mmcc.org](mailto:jobs@mmcc.org).

#### LEGAL NOTICE

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF Sage Logistics, LLC.** Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 10/11/2016. Office location: Bronx County. SSNY has been designated as agent upon whom process against it may be served. The Post Office address to which the SSNY shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him/her is: 2255 Cruger Avenue, Apt. 2E, Bronx, N.Y. 10467, which is also the principal business location. Purpose: any lawful act or activity.



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## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

### “Treecycling”

Recycle your holiday tree to nourish parks throughout the city. Free mulch and collection bags will be provided at Van Cortlandt Park’s golf course at Bailey Avenue and Van Cortlandt Park South, Jan. 7 and 8, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Donors may bring trees until Jan. 8 to local drop-off sites for future recycling: Williamsbridge Oval Park, Kossuth Playground at Mosholu Parkway North and Kossuth Avenue, St. James Park at West 192nd Street and Jerome Avenue, or Poe Park at the Grand Concourse between East Kingsbridge Road and East 192nd Street. For more information and additional sites, visit [www.nyc.gov/dsny](http://www.nyc.gov/dsny) or [www.nyc.gov/greenyc](http://www.nyc.gov/greenyc).

### Women’s Self Defense Workshop

Free women’s self-defense classes for females age 10 and up are available at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center

for six Sundays from Jan. 15 until Feb. 19 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 543-8672 or email [sarah.bishow@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:sarah.bishow@parks.nyc.gov).

### Free Tax Filing Services

The Financial Advisors Group Free is offering free tax filings to anyone until Jan. 20. For more information or to make an appointment, call (347) 575-5045.

Free income tax preparation for qualifying residents is available at University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) on select Wednesdays and Saturdays starting Feb. 1 through Apr. 18 by appointment only. Tax preparers can also review your credit report, provide financial advice, and freeze your rent. Must have all tax documents available before meeting with tax preparer. To learn the qualifications and to schedule an appointment, call (718) 933-2539 or [www.unhp.org](http://www.unhp.org).

UNHP will host a Financial

Fitness Open House on Jan. 18 from 1 to 6 p.m. at Refuge House, 2715 Bainbridge Ave., near East 196th Street. Learn if you qualify for free tax preparation, get information on bank services, and receive a copy of your credit report and credit score.

### Snow Laborers Sought

NYC seeks emergency snow laborers to help remove snow and ice from bus stops, step streets, and other locations throughout the city this winter. Interested applicants must be at least 18, eligible to work in the USA and capable of performing heavy physical labor. Registration is at the DOT garage, Bronx Yard, Mosholu Avenue and Broadway (Van Cortlandt Park), weekdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bring two small photos (1-1/2” square), original and copy of two forms of ID, and SS card or Tax ID number. Hourly salary is \$15; and \$22.50 after 40 hours are worked

in a week.

### Apply to Kindergarten

Applications are now available for Kindergarten at New York City public schools for children born in 2012. Parents can apply by calling (718) 935-2400, online at [schools.nyc.gov/applyonline](http://schools.nyc.gov/applyonline), or by visiting the Department of Education’s Family Welcome Center at 1 Fordham Plaza, 7th floor (this site is for families enrolling their children into school districts 7, 9, and 10). The application deadline is Jan. 13.

### Free Composting

Repurpose food by bringing it to Lehman College’s Food Scrap Drop-Off location, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., Mondays from 8 to 10 a.m. when school is in session. The goal is to reduce the amount of compostable waste that goes into landfills. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Elvis Is in the House

The public is invited to go down memory lane with Elvis Presley in one of his best films, "Jailhouse Rock," on Jan. 7 at 2:30 p.m. at The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

## Onstage

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Sonido Costeño Trio**, Latin band, Jan. 14 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

Lehman College's Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents a **Reunion of Salsa** concert, Jan. 21 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$50 to \$125/VIP. VIP includes pre-concert wine and hors d'oeuvres reception at 6:30 p.m. and the best seats in the house. Also scheduled is **Fire and Ice**, featuring classical and Broadway music, free, Jan. 11 at 7 p.m. in the Lehman Art Gallery. Refreshments will be served. For more information and to RSVP, call (718) 960-8833.

The Bronx Arts Ensemble presents the **Ted Rosenthal Jazz Trio**, Jan. 21 at 8 p.m., at the Riverdale Y, 5625 Arlington Ave. For more information, call (718) 601-7399.

## Events

The New York Botanical Garden presents the **Holiday Train Show** exhibition in the

Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, through Jan. 16, featuring numerous NYC landmarks made from plant parts and large-scale model trains, New this year is the Coney Island roller coaster. Also scheduled is **Bar Car Nights**, 7 to 10 p.m., through Jan. 14 (call for schedule), for adults 21+ which includes street performers, ice sculpting demonstrations, stilt walking and a dance theatre. The Pine Tree Cafe hosts musicians (\$25/ members; \$35/non members, advance tickets recommended). For children, there is **Evergreen Express**, through Jan. 22, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden, to explore plant parts, make crafts, create a train puppet, join a musical marching parade, and more. Also, there is **All Aboard With Thomas & Friends**, through Jan. 22, a sing-along ride including professional photos offered. For more information or a detailed schedule, call (718) 817-8700.

**Wave Hill**, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Create Your Year - Hello 2017!, to make a calendar with personal plans, Jan. 7 and 8; and A Hand in Freedom, arts and crafts in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jan.



Image courtesy MGM Pictures

**THE FILM SCREENING** of "Jailhouse Rock" will play at the Bronx Library Center on Jan. 7 (see Editor's Pick for details).

14 and 15; both in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **concert**, I Go On Singing: Paul Robeson's Life in Song, Jan. 15 at 2 p.m. (tickets: \$28; \$22/WH member; \$15; \$12/ages 8 to 18; info: ext. 251), in the WH House at 2 p.m. Grounds admission is free until noon Saturdays and Tuesdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

## Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the following for children: **Hands-On Projects**: (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required), Mittens Making, Jan. 5; Snowflake Making, Jan. 12; Paper Plate Arctic Fox Making, Jan. 19; all at 4 p.m.; and Winter Art, Jan. 15 at 3:30 p.m. Also scheduled is **Goldfish Observation**: (ages 7 to 12; preregistration required), workshop on Jan. 10 at 4 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: **Maurice Sendak Party**: (ages 3 to 12), crafts and games, Jan. 6 at 3:30 p.m. (registration suggested); and **Jewelry Time**: (ages 5 to 12), create wearable art, Jan. 10 at 3:30 p.m. Teens/ young adults can attend **film**: "Pete's Dragon," Jan. 14 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can enjoy: **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**: (ages 5 to 12), dance moves on the Wii game console, Jan. 6 at 2:45 p.m.; and **Preschool Story Time and Craft at 11:15 a.m.**: (ages 3 to 5), featuring books, puppetry, dramatics, crafts and flannel boards, Jan. 12 and 19. 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 Jan. 9 for the next publication date of Jan 19, 2017.



Photo courtesy New York Botanical Garden

**THE HOLIDAY TRAIN** show at the New York Botanical Garden wraps up on Jan. 16 (check out details under Events).

# 2016 Year in Review

(continued from page 1)  
money. It didn't.

The two sides went to court. Even though Bronx Supreme Court Judge Ruben Franco favored the project, he ultimately sided with the city, ruling it had not breached any contract by not releasing the lease. The news sends the project in even deeper turmoil with no shovel on the ground in 2016, a blow to political stakeholders such as Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. who've depended on the project to bolster their image.

## Development

Once again development took center stage in Norwood and Bedford Park, with the two neighborhoods bracing for a population uptick. In some instances, that has already started, thanks to the opening of Concerned for Independent Living, an enormous supportive housing complex at the corner of Webster Avenue and East Gun Hill Road. Up the road, Webster Commons is set to wrap up on a huge, 484-unit affordable housing complex.

Webster Avenue is once again seeing previously mentioned projects

such as a supportive housing project by the Doe Fund and Norwood Gardens by The Stagg Group enter the first phase of their development projects. The Doe Fund was announced in 2015, though construction didn't begin until mid-2016. The same went for The Stagg Group.

Several blocks away, permits to build a hotel were filed by hotelier Nehalkumar Gandhi. Just what kind of hotel remains to be seen, though if history is any indicator, there may be a Howard Johnson's in the works given Gandhi's construction of one in New Jersey.

Webster Avenue was rezoned in 2011, with officials from the Department of City Planning (DCP) promising it would return to assess Bedford Park for rezoning. In a forum at Community Board 7 in May, a DCP official said rezoning Bedford Park is likely not going to happen. CB7 responded by hiring an urban planning consultant to conduct its own rezoning study that will later be presented to DCP.

Sparking the study was an eviction proceeding for tenants at 267 E. 202nd St. by an affordable and luxury hous-

ing developer, Peter Fine. Fine looked to remove the tenants of the existing two-story building so he could build a taller building, further congesting the neighborhood.

Tenants experienced even more instability after a fire ripped through the building over the summer, forcing them out for good. A settlement was eventually reached (see page 10 for more information) that saw a happy ending for tenants, but signaled an opening for Fine to begin razing the building and constructing a new one.

## Crime

The year saw the departure of 52nd Precinct commanding officer, Inspector Nilda Hofmann, who left the precinct to take a job at Police Headquarters in Lower Manhattan in May. She was replaced by Deputy Inspector Peter Fiorillo, a 25-year veteran who kept crime in a busy precinct relatively the same as it ended in 2015.

As of press time, overall violent crime was even, from 2,070 violent crimes in 2016 to the exact same number the same time the year before. Keeping officers busy is the number

of felony and misdemeanor assault cases, which went up 6.4 percent and 8.2 percent respectively throughout the year. Also hurting the policy is the number of so-called fishing scams, where thieves used string and glue to "fish" out mail from mailboxes.

Hofmann left right on the heels of the installation of the Neighborhood Coordination Officer Program, which dedicates beat cops to one particular neighborhood instead of bouncing them around from one call to another. The idea, according to the NCO's architect, NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill (an alum of the 52nd Precinct), is to forge better relations with the community, serving as a better set of eyes and ears for the Police Department.

Improving relationships remains a struggle. It was made tangible with the shooting death of Deborah Danner, a mentally ill elderly woman fatally shot by an NYPD sergeant. Danner was not armed, prompting Commissioner O'Neill to declare that the NYPD failed her.

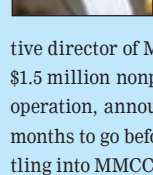
**Editor's Note:** *The Norwood News wishes everyone a great 2017!*

## Retirements and So Longs

Several folks familiar to Norwood and beyond announced their good-byes to their posts that made them regulars to it. Here are some notable names:



**Congressman Charles Rangel:** The Congressman who briefly represented Norwood thanks to gerrymandered political lines, finally ended his tenure as Congressman for the 13th Congressional District, which now goes to Congressman Adriano Espaillat.



**Don Bluestone:** Donald Bluestone, the executive director of Moshulu-Montefiore Community Center, taking a once \$1.5 million nonprofit and turning it into a \$26 million social services operation, announced his retirement for 2017. He's got a couple more months to go before handing it off completely to Rita Santelia, now settling into MMCC's day-to-day affairs.



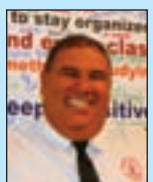
**Steven Bussell:** Steven Bussell said goodbye to several volunteer title roles, including vice president of the 52nd Precinct, member of Montefiore Health System's Community Advisory Board, and member of the Jewish Council, as he announced his retirement from public service. Bussell now lives in Florida.



**Eamonn "Eddie" McDwyer:** It was closing time for the proprietor of McDwyer's Pub, Eamonn "Eddie" McDwyer, who announced the closure of his 50-year-old bar of the same name in November after a dispute with the landlord. McDwyer's Pub was the last Irish bar in Norwood.



**Santiago Taveras:** DeWitt Clinton High School principal Santiago Taveras was let go from the community school after it was proven he doctored student grades to make them look good, creating the false impression the school's image improved.



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