

### **INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:** HATE IN AMERICA | PG. 4



### SEE PICTURES: NORWOOD NEWS ANNIVERSARY | PGS. 12-13

# NYPD'S BATTLE AGAINST MAILBOX FISHERS

Five-Two Precinct part of major offensive against mail thieves



Police Hunt Three In Norwood Halloween Stabbing | pg 6



Gloria Estefan Boosts DeWitt Clinton HS Urban Farm pg 9



Tribute for WWII Dominican Soldiers pg 16



Out & About

**OFFICER FRANK PACELLA (L),** the 52nd Precinct's Crime Prevention Officer, educates Antonio Casillas, 69, a retired MTA bus driver, on issues involving mailbox fishing.

#### **By JOSEPH KONIG**

Crime Prevention Officer Frank Pacella has spent much of the last few weeks visiting at least 60 U.S. Postal Service (USPS) mailboxes within the 52nd Precinct. At each stop, Pacella pulls out a clipboard and jots down the locations of nearby security cameras he's spotted. The initiative is the most recent step taken by the NYPD to combat mail fishing, a tactic thieves use to steal checks and commit identity fraud.

The order came down from the NYPD's Crime Prevention Division ahead of the start of the holiday season, when rates of mailbox fishing and other mail fraud typically increase.

"A couple weeks ago we got an email from the Crime Prevention Division and it basically tasked us with going out, going to each mailbox, and just kinda checking it out and looking basically for video," Pacella told the Norwood News. "Whether it be an [NYPD] Argus camera, whether it be a residential building, a commercial building, you know... it's going to eliminate some of the legwork [down the road]."

By logging the owners and

locations of cameras near USPS mailboxes, the NYPD hopes to expedite their investigations into these crimes. Oftentimes, even if police know which bank the check was cashed at, the bank will not turn over security footage until they are subpoenaed.

"There are certain corporations that are not police (continued on page 23)

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### **November General Election Seals Fate for September Primary Winners**

By JOSEPH KONIG

Punditry and speculation about winners and losers was rampant nationwide ahead of Tuesday's election. In the Bronx, however, virtually every race saw the winner of the September Democratic primary come out on top.

Democratic-socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez cruised to victory over Republican Anthony Pappas, an economics professor at St. John's University recently disavowed by the Bronx and Queens Republican parties after party officials learned of domestic violence allegations against Pappas (which he denies). Ocasio-Cortez, at age 28 and representing Congressional District 14, is the youngest woman ever elected to Congress. She officially beat her opponent, Congressman Joseph Crowley, who ran on the Working Families Party line.

Another rising progressive star, Alessandra Biaggi, won the Senate seat for District 34, easily dispatching her opponents on the Republican and Conservative lines, who essentially ran as placeholders. Sitting State Sen. Jeffrey Klein, who has not been seen in public since his Sept. 13 primary loss to Senator-elect Biaggi, was still on the ballot on the Independence Party line and garnered 31,661 votes.

Senate District 34 was the only senate seat in the Bronx up for election in 2018, but with victories elsewhere in the city and upstate, Democrats will return in January with a majority in the Senate for only the second time in the last 30 years. All 10 Bronx Assembly Members were re-elected in largely uncontested races to help Speaker Carl Heastie, who represents parts of Williamsbridge and Baychester, preserve a Democratic majority in the Assembly.

Statewide, Governor Andrew Cuomo secured a third term over Republican Duchess County executive Marc Molinaro. Both Cuomo and U.S. Senator Kristen Gillibrand, who beat her Republican challenger with ease, are reportedly considering runs in the 2020 Democratic Presidential Primary.

Democrats swept all the statewide offices, including lieutenant governor, attorney general, and comptroller. Letitia James, New York City's public advocate and now state attorney general-elect, is the first black woman elected to statewide office in New York. The New York attorney general's race took on increased national significance because whoever won would likely end up clashing with President Donald J. Trump at some point.

"The president of the United States has to worry about three things: Mueller, Cohen, and Tish James," James said during the primary. James campaigned on promises to pursue and investigate the President for any wrongdoing or misconduct he was involved with before and after he was elected in 2016.

Nationally, Rep. Elliot Engel (CD-16), Rep. Jose Serrano (CD-15), and Rep. Adriano Espaillat (CD-13) will head back to Washington D.C. as part of the first Democratic Congressional majority since 2010. At the time of publication, Republicans are poised to hold onto a slim majority in the Senate.

## EDITORIAL

## A Tough Task for the NYPD

It's difficult to quantify the large amounts of money lost from mailbox fishing, the subject of our front page story. The problem is not new. Mailbox fishing has victimized scores of people who depend on the mail to send out their rent check, money orders for utilities, or even a gift card for a loved one. Yet, it hasn't abated, and the NYPD continues to face a tough task in nailing mailbox fishers. The NYPD could be helped in curbing this kind of fraud that's blanketed the Bronx. Yet, when reading that a bank won't give up surveillance video of a suspect cashing a forged check, that's the kind of delay that could cost the NYPD their case, and a victim thousands of dollars. Days count in these types of investigations so it's critical for an institution to provide surveillance video at the ready, without a subpoena. It's time for the Bronx District Attorney's Office and federal prosecutors to step it up in combatting mailbox fishing. Form a task force, impose tougher penalties on suspects. Essentially, do something.

Cops can only be in so many places. And Bronx residents can only put so much faith in the US Postal Service before they begin turning their back on them.

# **Public and Community Meetings**

**COMMUNITY BOARD 7** will hold its general board meeting on Nov. 27 at 6:30 p.m. at North Central Bronx Hospital, 3424 Kossuth Ave. The following CB7 committee meetings will take place at the board office, 229A E. 204th St., unless otherwise noted: joint meeting of Public Safety & Quality of Life and Sanitation Committees on Nov. 8 at 7 p.m.; Housing, Land Use & Zoning Committee on Nov. 13; Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Committee on Nov. 14; Budget, Personnel & Ethics Committee on Nov. 19; Executive Committee on Nov. 20; and Health & Human Services Committee on Nov. 20. For more information, call the board office at (718) 933-5650.

The **52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meets Nov. 15 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Serviam Heights Hall, 2848 Bainbridge Ave. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.

# Who is Your Neighborhood Coordination Officer?

If you're reading the *Norwood News*, there's a good chance you live in the NYPD's 52nd Precinct. Within the precinct, there are four sectors (A, B, C, and D) and for each sector there are two "Neighborhood Coordination Officers" (NCOs). These officers "are your local problem solvers," according to the NYPD website.

Instead of being assigned to a patrol or waiting for one police call or another, NCOs are tasked with responding to community complaints and work with residents to resolve persistent problems. They are intended to provide a familiar face for residents and be reachable around the clock on their NYPD-issued phones.

Below, the *Norwood News* has listed each sector, the neighborhoods within that sector, and the contact information for each NCO. If an issue is urgent and the officers are not responding, the 52nd Precinct's phone number is (718) 220-5811. If an issue requires immediate law enforcement attention, dial 911.

**52nd Precinct NCO Supervisor:** Sgt. Jonathan Rivera – Jonathan.Rivera3@nypd. org

Sector 52A (University Heights, West Fordham Road): P.O. Mark Preira – (929) 285-8269 – Mark.Preira@nypd.org | P.O. Brendan McMorrow – (917) 865-0982 – Brendon.McMorrow@nypd.org

Sector 52B (East Fordham Road, Kingsbridge Heights): P.O. Jose Deleon-Sanchez – (917) 863-6442 – Jose Deleon Sanchez@nypd. org | P.O. Shawn Romero – (917) 209-5330 –Shawn.Romero@nypd.org

Sector 52C (Kingsbridge Heights, Bedford Park, Norwood's north side): P.O. Stephen Urbanowicz – (929) 284-0057 – Stephen. Urbanowicz@nypd.org | P.O. Tara Convery – (929) 334-8309

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

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request.

## **INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER**

**By DAVID GREENE** 



With the recent mass shooting at a Pittsburgh, PA synagogue and an individual sending package bombs around the country, this week we asked readers if society has reached a breaking point.



I think that everybody is frustrated and don't know what to do. I think that the minds of these men are just wicked and they want to kill people because they're sick and filled with hate. I don't follow the politics; I just know I vote. They got what they wanted: [President] Donald Trump was elected so I don't see what the problem is. Maybe they're frustrated by what he does. There's no peace, it's going to keep going on until the end of the world.

Stephanie Wright Foxhurst



The government is up to something; so someone above is organizing these things to happen in order for the government to get away with what's really going on. We're not seeing what's really going on. It just so happens that every time something's going on that's dirty in the government there's a distraction. I'm a realist and even though this is a great country, the government sucks, but I always vote. Ramon Torre Bedford Park

Regeis



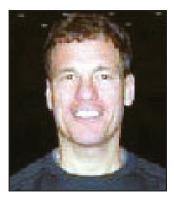
I don't think [the President's rhetoric is] the main cause, but people look up to the president and some of the things he says and it seems as though some of his rhetoric has fueled the flames of hatred. It really depends on who's voted into office. There's always hope. Yeah, got to have hope.

Mark Butts Bedford Park



A lot of people leave other people to do things for them and they don't get involved, and I think that everybody has to come out and get involved. If you get involved, you can make things happen. Of course there are those who are busy with work and trying to make ends meet, but we have to get involved in the schools, in the community. You just can't leave it to other people. Efrain Gozalez . It

Efrain Gonzalez, Jr. Fordham Hill



We live in a time of extreme change, it's very interesting. I believe the availability of information, social media, the ability for people to interact immediately, respond immediately, it's a whole new world than from the one I grew up in. I think we're headed in the right direction, but I think things will get worse before they get better. I think all the extremism will lead to cooler and smarter minds and an open dialogue where people will finally come to their senses. There's a lot of horrible things going on. As a comedian in these times, it's great to be able to make people forget about everything going on now, and it really makes me feel that I'm making a difference. People need to laugh. Johnny Sialiano Manhattan

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## On Halloween, a Stabbing at Norwood D Train Station

#### **By DAVID CRUZ**

Three men are wanted for stabbing a teen on Halloween in an incident that occurred at the Norwood/East 205th Street subway station.

Police said the incident happened at around 9:30 p.m. when the three suspects approached the victim as he was heading to the station. A chase ensued, with the victim entering the station's East 205th Street/Bainbridge Avenue entrance. The victim was stabbed multiple times in the stomach and upper right arm. The perpetrators then took off on foot. The victim was rushed to St. Barnabas Hospital and is listed in stable condition.

The three men were captured on surveillance footage by the MTA. All three were described as black men, all around 20 years old.

The first suspect (picture #1) was last seen wearing a black hooded sweater under a dark green jacket, dark pants, and seen holding a knife in his left hand.



THREE MEN (L-R), identified in accompanying article as individuals #1, #2, and #3, are wanted by the 52nd Precinct.

The second suspect (picture #2) was last seen wearing a light gray hooded sweater and black pants.

The third suspect (picture #3) was last seen wearing a black hooded sweater and black pants.

Anyone with information is asked to call CrimeStoppers at (800) 577-TIPS. All calls are kept confidential.

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## **Bedford Park Bishop Faces Decades-old Molestation Accusation**

#### By DAVID GREENE

The stunned community on the Bedford Park/Kingsbridge border remains shocked and left with many unanswered questions, less than a week after its beloved clergyman, Bishop John Jenik, 74, stepped down as pastor of Our Lady of Refuge Church, after an allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor was deemed "credible and substantiated" by an investigative body of the Catholic Church three decades later.

Jenik, one of four Auxiliary Bishops for the Archdiocese of New York, gained substantial notoriety in the late 1980s and 90s as the Bronx battled the crack epidemic. Jenik attracted media attention in the mid-1990s for wearing a bulletproof vest while walking along drug-infested neighborhoods of Bedford Park and Fordham.

"The Lay Review Board has carefully examined the allegation, which concerns incidents from decades ago, and concluded that this evidence is sufficient to find the allegation credible and substantiated," wrote Cardinal Timothy Dolan the day allegations surfaced.



Photo by David Greene

**BISHOP JOHN JENIK** (pictured rear) listens from the side of the room as police commissioner James O'Neil addresses the community during a public safety meeting last April.

Dolan's letter continued, "Although Bishop Jenik continues to deny the allegation, he has stepped aside from the public ministry and has moved out of his parish."

In a letter by Jenik, delivered to the church at the same time as Dolan's letter, Jenik stated, "I continue to steadfastly deny that I ever

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BRONX NY 10452 718.758.5901 abused anyone at any time. Therefore, I will ask the Vatican, which has ultimate jurisdiction over such cases to review the matter, with the hope of ultimately proving my innocence."

In a statement issued by Patrice O'Shaughnessy, spokesperson for the Bronx District Attorney's office, it stated, "The Archdiocese informed us about the allegation in October 2017 and we investigated. The alleged incident happened beyond the statute of limitations."

Michael Meenan, a reporter had freelanced for The who New York Times and NY1, came forward with the accusation. "John Jenik should never have had access to young boys," Meenan told the Norwood News shortly after holding a Nov. 1 news conference. "In fact, I don't think he should have been ordained because he has a disturbed and dangerous predilection for boys and that's not a winning solution for children who need support and guidance... especially when their parents are paying a fairly significant amount of money to go to Catholic school."

Meenan has remained silent about the alleged incident. However, he did try to speak up four years later when he says he was attacked again in 1984 at age 17, by religion teacher Fernand Beck at Fordham Prep. Meenan recalled, "I reported it to the headmaster and he actually broke the law," by not reporting it to *(continued on page 10)* 



Alvin Ailey Registration Starts: Monday, January 7th for Members Wednesday, January 9th for Non-Members Classes are 1x week for 8 weeks Prices Starting for Members: \$176

Mixed Martial Arts Registrationis Open: Registration ends on December 2nd Classes are 1x week for 8 weeks or 2x week for 8 weeks Prices Starting for Members: \$65

Capoeira Registration Starts: Monday,November 19th for Members Wednesday,November 21st for Non-Members Classes are 1x week for 8 weeks Prices Starting for Members: \$112





Swim Registration Starts: Monday, January 2nd for Members Wednesday, January 4th for Non-Members Classes are 1x week for 8 weeks Prices Starting for Members: \$80

STEM Registration is Open: Registration ends on February 9, 2019 Classes are 1x week for 8 Weeks Payment plan is available Prices start from \$450

Salsa Registration Starts: Monday, December 3rd for Members Wednesday, December 5th for Non-Members Classes are 1x week for 8 weeks Prices Starting for Members: \$96

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# **FROM INTERNSHIP TO JOB** *How MMCC Trains Young Workforce*

#### By CHRISTY RAE AMMONS

The modest basement room at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC) was packed with young people, some there to celebrate their accomplishments and some to congratulate their peers. The mothers who sat in the corner beamed with pride while they took photos on their phones of the ceremony.

After 12 weeks, this group of young adults, ages 17 to 24, was graduating from MMCC's Intern and Earn, a program funded by the city Department of Youth and Community Development.

Among the crowd was Peyton Wendell. After attending Mount Saint Michael Academy in Wakefield, Wendell was unsure if enrolling in college was what he wanted to do. During his time with Intern and Earn, Wendell worked for Biscuits and Bath Doggie Spa.

MMCC initiated the Intern and Earn program approximately six years ago, and benefits 135 young adults per year, completing three rounds of the program. Their goal is to assist young people who are not enrolled in school and unemployed to gain the skills they need to obtain a suitable job.

At the end of his internship, Wendell walked away with a job, something he wasn't sure he could get at the start of the program.

"I like to think that I changed coming here, because before I didn't really have a good work ethic," Wendell told his peers as he stood at the front of the room, sharing his experience at the graduation on Oct. 26.

According to the state Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate in the Bronx was 6.1 percent in July of 2018, while the city as a whole was 4.4 percent. With Bronx unemployment rates higher than the city average, Intern and Earn stresses the necessity of job readiness.

"I'm pretty sure some of you didn't think you'd make it this far," said Tyais Cunningham, MMCC's program director, to kick off the ceremony. The graduating class shook their heads in agreement. They were shocked that over such a seemingly short period of time, they were taught crucial lessons

Mosholu Montefiore Community Center.

while being paid. Some were completing the program with jobs, interviews for potential jobs, or the knowledge and experience they needed to look for jobs.

PEYTON WENDELL (L) ACCEPTS his certificate of completion of the Intern and Earn program through

The first two weeks of Intern and Earn are focused on job readiness. Participants are instructed on how to dress professionally, how to conduct oneself in an interview, and other general information about the working world. For the remainder of the program, they are placed into paid internships.

"You have to be disciplined. You have to be determined," MMCC's director of workforce development and continuing education, Liza Perez, reminded the group during their graduation ceremony.

Even after completing their internships, the participants will be provided with ongoing job placement assistance, opportunities for additional training programs, college advisement, and emotional support by MMCC

staffers.

Shemar Dallas, a young man graduating from the program, worked with computers at SUNY Bronx Educational Opportunity Center. "I got certified as a Microsoft specialist for free," Dallas told the *Norwood News*. While he plans to go into the U.S. Air Force, Dallas appreciated the skills he learned during his internship, and seemed proud of his accomplishment.

"He's more outgoing," explained Allison Wendell about her son, Peyton. "Now, he's like a pro."

"This program is good for everybody in the Bronx," said Denise West, mother of program graduate, Lanaija Hill. "My daughter enjoyed it so much."

Missy Murrell-Williams, who's thrilled Intern and Earn is helping her find a job, explained that the program does more than job readiness. "They teach you about life. They teach you how to be yourself," she said.



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## **Gloria Estefan, Music Icon, Touts DeWitt Clinton HS's Urban Farm**

#### **By JOSEPH KONIG**

Latin pop icon Gloria Estefan came to DeWitt Clinton High School on Oct. 30 to talk about an urban farming program she hopes to export to her hometown of Miami.

The Norwood campus has the largest student-run hydroponic farm in New York City, supported in part by Teens for Food Justice, a New York-based non-profit. Estefan is working with Teens for Food Justice to bring the program to public schools in Miami.

"I can envision this growing. I can only imagine how great it would be if all our public schools had some kind of [urban farming program]," Estefan said. "The fact [is] that the climate is changing so quickly. We don't know how it's going to affect our food supplies in the future."

Estefan was accompanied by supermodel Karolína Kurkova and two of Kurkova's children. Both celebrities were in town to be honored, alongside their respective husbands Emilio Estefan and Archie Drury, at a Teens for Food Justice gala on Tuesday night. Food



Photo by Joseph Konig

**GLORIA ESTEFAN TASTES** a sample of the lettuce grown at DeWitt Clinton High School's urban farm.

from the student farm was served at the gala.

Like most of the Bronx, large swaths of Miami are considered food deserts, urban areas with limited access to fresh food that is both affordable and nutritious. The farm at DeWitt Clinton is intended to combat food insecurity by using the fresh vegetables grown in the meals served at the school cafeteria each day.

"I knew what they were doing, but to see it in action, to actually walk in the room and be with the students who are doing such an amazing job...," Estefan said, before turning to the students beside her. "We're trusting you guys to come up with ideas because you're the future. You're the ones that [are] gonna make it happen."

The third floor, indoor farm is expected to produce 25,000 pounds in vegetables and herbs a year. The plants are grown under LED lights and uses a hydroponic system that requires minimal soil and water to grow the plants in an indoor environment. The produce is served fresh, daily at the cafeteria salad bar and is incorporated into larger recipes.

"Students know that this is coming from their fellow classmates," assistant principal Steven Deep said. "Most of the lettuces are the things that go downstairs [to the cafeteria]. We also have basil and cilantro that go into the dressings that are made by the kitchen staff."

Estefan said she chose to get involved with Teens for Food Justice because she was inspired by her mother, a teacher, to help educate (continued on page 11)

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## Bedford Park Bishop Faces Decades-old Molestation Accusation

## *(continued from page 7)* authorities.

In 2016, Meenan came forward with that accusation, that was also deemed as "credible" and Beck and the headmaster, Cornelius McCarthy were removed from the all-boys Jesuit school in Bedford Park.

Meenan said he was aware of a friendship between Jenik, Fr. Richard Gorman and a third person at the Archdiocese, calling it a "criminal conspiracy," on how they operated as sexual predators in a manner to remain undetected. Gorman was removed in the unrelated molestation case in January, 2016 and he died in January of this year.

Outside of Our Lady of Mercy, after the first Sunday mass since Jenik's departure, congregants were reserved and still in disbelief. One longtime parishioner remarked, "This guy that killed Fr. Jenik, he looks like he likes money because I hear that something happened with another teacher. I just don't believe it. Everything I hear is positive (about Jenik), nothing negative."

Jenik was appointed as parochial vicar at St. Jerome's Parish in September, 1970, by Cardinal Terrence Cooke. Jenik had a brief stint at St. Thomas Aquinas Church before moving to Our Lady of Refuge in 1978. He was promoted to pastor in 1985, and in 2006, Cardinal Edward Egan promoted Jenik to Vicar for the northwest Bronx.

Supporters of Jenik were busy planning a rally for Nov. 9 in hopes of reversing the Archdiocese decision. Meanwhile, a staffer at Our Lady of Refuge School stated that Fr. Jonathan Morris, the pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Belmont, had given mass on Oct. 5. Asked if Morris would be coming to Our Lady of Refuge, the staffer replied, "No. It hasn't been told to me."

Editor's Note: The church advises anyone with a similar claim to first call authorities before contacting the church's Safe Environment Program's New York State Hotline at (800) 342-3720.

## **Thousands Tour the Bronx**



Photo by David Greene

**RIDERS HEAD SOUTH** on the Grand Concourse by East 161st Street at the start of the 24th annual Tour de Bronx on Oct. 28. Homegrown and out-of-Bronx cyclists traversed either 40 or 25 miles worth of terrain around the borough. An estimated 6,000 bicyclists took to the streets during the tour. The free event, hosted by the Bronx Borough President's Office, ended at the New York Botanical Garden on Southern Boulevard. An 'after ride' festival was held shortly after the tour, with free pizza and live music. Montefiore Health System was the prime sponsor for the event.

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## Gloria Estefan, Music Icon, Touts DeWitt Clinton HS's Urban Farm

## *(continued from page 9)* the next generation.

"Before when I was in the craziness of the touring and all that I just simply didn't have the time to do as much as I wanted," Estefan said. "[I want to do] anything that has to do with educating and making life better for our kids. They're the future. It's the only way we're going to make things better."

Teens for Food Justice hopes to not only provide students with healthy produce, but also encourage them to think differently about the future of food production.

"This is the reality: we are running out of land, we are running out of water, and we cannot continue to produce food for a growing planet in the way that we have traditionally," Teens for Food Justice CEO Katherine Soll told the *Norwood News.* "Preparing our children to take those jobs and to be the leaders of a new, green economy is critical. That's really why we are doing this. It's finding a way to create a sustainable means of food production, that produces food that is healthy."

Soll's father graduated from De-Witt Clinton in 1931 and Soll said that the neighborhood is "the right community" for the program due to a "robust sustainability initiative" that dates back years. Unfortunately, it is also the right community because "there just isn't a lot of good quality fresh food here."

Estefan suggested the students should sing to the plants to help them grow.

"You don't sing to the plants?" the incredulous singer asked one of the students. "You gotta sing to the plants." Later, when a TV news reporter asked Estefan what she would sing to the plants, she recited a few lines from her hit song "Conga."

"I think that upbeat, rhythmic music would help them grow," Estefan said. "Ballads and slow music might just relax them."

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# **NORWOOD NEWS**

#### **By NORWOOD NEWS**

Past and present faces of the *Norwood News* came to break bread and hail the paper's 30-year milestone with a celebration at Lehman College on Nov. 1. The event drew roughly 130 guests to the college's Faculty Dining Room in the Music Building, which included an awards program and keynote address by Errol Louis of NY1. Opening the ceremony was Jennifer Tausig, executive director of Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC), the not-for-profit that produces the *Norwood News*. Dr. José Luis Cruz, president of Lehman College, and Dr. Peter Semczuk, executive director of Montefiore Health System's Moses Campus, spoke of the paper's impact for the Bronx since 1988. Semczuk is a fan of the paper, telling guests he never misses his copy at the campus' East Gun Hill Road entrance.

Proclamations were presented by elected officials or representatives. They included state Senators Jamaal Bailey and Gustavo Rivera; Council Members Andrew Cohen, Fernando Cabrera, Andy King, and Ritchie Torres; Assembly Members Jeffrey Dinowitz and Nathalia Fernandez; Comptroller Scott Stringer; Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.; and Congressman Adriano Espaillat. Lilliam Perez, Montefiore Health System's vice president of the Office of Community & Government Relations, ushered in each of the elected officials before introducing David Cruz, Norwood News' editor-in-chief.

"Tonight we celebrate 30 years the *Norwood News* became stitched



**THE SURPRISE HONOR** of the night went to longtime proofreader Judy Noy (r), who holds her award honoring her for her 30 years of service to the Norwood News.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER ERROL Louis takes a selfie with Norwood News Editor-in-Chief David Cruz (I).



**NORWOOD NEWS FOUNDER** Dart Westphal looks on during the program. Westphal received a standing ovation at the gala.



(R-L) HONOREE GARY AXELBANK, host of BronxTalk; Norwood News Editor-in-Chief David Cruz; and Gary's wife Suzanne Axelbank, share a moment at the event.



**FORMER MOSHOLU MONTEFIORE** Community Center Executive Director Don Bluestone (c) and former Community Board 7 Chair Nora Feury share a few laughs at the buffet table.



**(ABOVE) FORMER MOSHOLU** Montefiore Community Center Executive Director Don Bluestone (c) and former Community Board 7 Chair Nora Feury share a few laughs at the buffet table.

# HAILS 30 YEARS

to the neighborhood's historical fabric," said Cruz, in his prepared remarks.

At the end of his speech, Cruz asked the crowd to rise to offer a round of applause for *Norwood News*' founder, Dart Westphal, who began the paper in 1988. Westphal was in attendance alongside former editors-in-chief Jordan Moss and Alex Kratz. Errol Louis spoke on journalism's role in highlighting issues, including criminal justice reform. Among the biggest battles is the fight for bail reform, Louis said. He praised the paper as a "bulldog" in its reporting.

The paper presented honors to housing advocate Sally Dunford, local newsman Gary Axelbank, Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, and longtime *Norwood News* proofreader Judy Noy. Noy's award came as a surprise to her as the *Norwood News* kept her honor a surprise.

Guests walked away with a copy of *Norwood News*' 30th anniversary special edition, highlighting 30 years of the paper's top news stories through the years.

The *Norwood News* was established in 1988 by MPC, initially covering the Norwood section of the Bronx before expanding to cover Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge Heights, and University Heights. It also began as a black and white fourpage bi-monthly publication which today has become a 24-page full color bi-weekly paper.

Editor's Note: All photos were taken by José A. Giralt except as noted.



**MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION** Executive Director Jennifer Tausig (I) and Norwood News Editor-in-Chief David Cruz (c) accept a proclamation by Councilman Andrew Cohen (r). Cohen represents Norwood, which falls in the 11th Council District.



**PROCLAMATIONS, CITATIONS, AND** commendations from various elected officials from the Bronx and city were presented to the Norwood News.



**MOSHOLU MONTEFIORE COMMUNITY** Center Executive Director Rita Santelia (at mic) speaks after accepting an award presented to MMCC, whose flagship center is in Norwood. Looking on are Mosholu Preservation Corporation Executive Director Jennnifer Tausig (I) and Norwood News Editor-in-Chief David Cruz (c).



**(L-R) COMMUNITY ACTIVIST** and writer of the Financial Focus articles, Anthony Rivieccio, with Norwood News photographers Adi Talwar and Miriam Quinones.



**(L-R) FORMER NORWOOD** News Editor-in-Chief Jordan Moss reads a copy of the paper's special 30th anniversary edition alongside current Norwood News Editor-in-Chief David Cruz and Cruz's predecessor, Alex Kratz.



**SEVERAL PAST AND** present Norwood News faces share a moment shortly after the program wraps up. Photo courtesy Vivian Carter



LILLIAM PEREZ, MON-TEFIORE Health System's vice president for the Office of Community and Government Relations, introduced elected officials at the evening event.



**MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY BOARD 7** attend the event. Norwood News photographer Adi Talwar appears at the far right. Photo courtesy Facebook



**MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION'S** Office Manager Dawn McEvoy (I) and Norwood News intern Christy Rae Ammons work the registration table.

## **Norwood Store Vacancies Draw Interest From Potential Business Tenants**

#### **By JONATHAN CUSTODIO**

The Jerome Gun Hill Improvement District (JGHBID) recently led several prospective shop tenants across its commercial district, showcasing at least a dozen store vacancies while outlining needed services currently unavailable at the BID.

The commercial vacancy tour is the first for JGHBID. Shopkeepers first met at the Keeper's House, the BID's headquarters, with BID Executive Director, Jennifer Tausig, and Ariana Cipriani, the BID's community liaison.

Prospective business tenants surveyed locations like a former T-Mobile store with intrigue, evaluating the neighborhood, foot traffic, and empty storefronts.

"My business has been operating for over two years already. Right now, I'm just a single, one-person business trying to expand," said Aniusha Ortiz, who is enthusiastic about opening up a brick and mortar for her hair renewal and body waxing business, Brazis by Nush.

"I grew up in the neighborhood and I would actually like to give back and contribute to make it more feasible for people to stay in the neighborhood to get their needs met instead of having to go



Photo by Jonathan Custodio

**JGHBID COMMUNITY LIAISON** Ariana Cipriani (c) provides background on one of the tour's vacancies to prospective business tenants, capturing the attention of Anuisha Ortiz (l), owner of Brazis by Nush.

to the inner city to get exceptional service. It's not something we've had the luxury of getting in the Bronx at the moment," said Ortiz, who grew up on East Gun Hill Road and Decatur Avenue, attending MS 80 and DeWitt Clinton High School. She currently lives near Lehman College.

Joann Richards considered the tour interesting and pointed to Norwood's di-

versity. "[There are] a lot of restaurants but not a lot of vegetarian restaurants within the borough," said Richards, who's interested in opening a vegetarian restaurant she plans to call "The Boss."

A retail market analysis by an independent analyst group and community needs assessment report compiled by the BID was distributed to prospective merchants. The information is loaded with relevant data that includes demographics and the kinds of businesses current residents want at the BID.

Cipriani deemed the tour successful. "We directly show prospective merchants what the needs are in this community. Accessing that data is a huge benefit to people who want to open up a business here," she said.

Cipriani also notes that a couple of those on the tour have followed up with the BID. "We have two women who are setting up meetings with the Bronx Business Solutions Center."

Tausig was also pleased with the results. "I feel like we were able to spread the word about a couple different vacancies. We brought the horses to the water and hopefully, they can figure out how to drink."

Tausig hopes for more involvement from property owners in the future, and is considering another tour. "It'd be great if we could get more property owners to be open to showing their spaces," she said.

Editor's Note: The Jerome Gun Hill Improvement District is managed by Mosholu Preservation Corporation, which publishes the Norwood News.



# **Halloween in Norwood**



Photo by Adi Talwar

**CLOWING AROUND. THIS** young trick-or-treater already has a treat in hand during this year's Halloween, which saw families stop by residences and businesses around Norwood.

BRONX CONNECTIONS: THE GANGIMPACT

The Norwood News, WFUV Radio and BronxNet Television continue their five-part series on the impact of gangs in the Bronx

## A Cautionary Tale of Gang Life, Courtesy of an Ex-Gang Member

By MARINA KOPF of

Kareem Nelson used to live what he calls the "street life." He was involved in gang-like groups, sold marijuana and participated in gun violence. A gunshot wound paralyzed Nelson, but he still continued to work the streets.

It wasn't until after he did a stint in prison and was in a situation where he was forced to beg for his life, that he made the decision to change. In 2014, he created Wheelchairs Against Guns, using his experiences to serve as teachable moments to protect kids from gun violence, gangs, and bullying.

Nelson explained that the allure of gangs has infiltrated schools.

It's common practice for gangs to find new young members inside of schools. In New York City, middle schools and high schools are worried less about gang members getting in and more about all the kids who want join gangs.

"The kids are gang members," Nelson said. "They're already in the schools."

Nelson is contracted by the city to hold assemblies at schools and community centers, hoping his story will encourage students to go down a better path. Nelson teaches concepts that he believes schools are not offering students, such as conflict resolution strategies, critical thinking techniques, self-respect, and positive selfesteem.

"In the school system, they're not teaching them how to think. They're not giving them the tools to curb the gangs," Nelson said about the ability of schools to handle the situation alone.

Nelson suggests that the best way to combat gang activity in schools, is to bring in people who understand what students are going through and how gangs work. He believes the knowledge he brings to the table is much more useful in combatting gangs than that of administrators and teachers who did not grow up in a gang culture.

"It's different because I am them. I know what they're going through. I know what they want to do. I know the challenges



Video image by Steven DeCastro of BronxNet Television

KAREEM NELSON (PICTURED) gives a visual account of the consequences of gang life to students across the Bronx through his organization, Wheelchairs Against Guns.

they're facing," Nelson said.

Ron "Cook" Barrett, a gang specialist based in Albany, agrees with Nelson's assessment. Barrett pointed to the prison system as a point of origin for many gangs. One gang that came into the public spotlight after a series of high profile killings earlier this year, the Trinitarios, are a Dominican gang that was founded on Rikers Island in 1992. With such a high rate of imprisonment in cities like New York, it was only a matter of time before gangs seeped into the school system.

Along with the promise of protection and fraternity, Barrett said he has also seen young people drawn to gangs thanks to braggadocios portrayals in social media and the music industry. Barrett said that gangs advertise and show their pride by wearing certain colors or markers and post on social media to show their affiliation. This glamorization of the culture is what continues to attract new recruits.

Barrett wants administrators and teachers to practice zero tolerance policies,

while also offering alternative activities and positive diversions at school, providing the kind of inclusion students crave from gangs.

"That sense of protection and belonging is going to come from being involved in these groups that are doing positive things," Barrett said about offering a similar kind of affinity that gangs do, but through constructive activities.

Cure Violence, a non-profit organization, is one such alternative approach. It treats violence as a disease, using control methods to "treat it." In schools, they use violence interrupters – former gang members – to respond and defuse situations when violence breaks out on school grounds.

Charlie Ransford, Director of Science and Policy for Cure Violence, said that instead of calling the police to handle situations, schools have the option to call individuals who can moderate the situation, instead of waiting for it to play out.

"If a conflict is brewing you have somebody that you can reach out to mediate that conflict," said Ransford. "With a violence interrupter they can step in and do something beforehand that is much more preventative."

Sorai King, one of Kareem Nelson's mentees, was getting into trouble and was not focusing on his future before he met Nelson. He said that because of Nelson's guidance he now wants to do well in school and concentrate on basketball.

"I would get into trouble and he kept getting on my back, and saying 'get off the streets and play ball," King said.

Barrett said that kids stay in school for a number of reason. While some look at school as a place to graduate and socialize with friends, others see it as a means of keeping a low profile from police, a new drug deal market, and recruitment site.

"You have to show these kids and say, 'listen we know it's hard, but you're so resilient and if you can make it through what you're going through right now, the sky's the limit," Barrett said. You just have to get them to focus on using those skills in a positive way, and they can blossom."

## WWII Tribute for Dominican US Soldiers Unveiled at BCC

#### **By JOSEPH KONIG**

Bronx elected officials welcomed 10 diplomatic officials from the Dominican Republic at the Nov. 2 grand opening of the nation's first monument for Dominican veterans of World War II. The monument, funded in part by \$400,000 in state and local funding secured by Councilman Fernando Cabrera, is located on the campus of Bronx Community College (BCC) in University Heights.

"More than 300 Dominican men and women risked and sacrificed their lives for the United States during World War II," Cabrera, who is part Dominican, said. "These soldiers have been largely left out of U.S. history and I believed their rightful and public recognition was long past due."

The monument includes the names of 351 veterans of Dominican descent. One veteran was a Tuskegee Airman. Others were awarded bronze and silver stars for their heroism. The veterans were identified by "Dominicans in New York," a program started by BCC and the Dominican Studies Institute.

The grand opening began with a bilingual invocation and performances of the national anthems of the United States and the Dominican Republic. BCC President Thomas A. Isekenegbe hailed the monument as a well-deserved acknowledgement of the Bronx's Dominican population.

"Bronx Community College is a Hispanic serving institute," the president noted. "Given the role that BCC plays in the Bronx and our location in University Heights, home to many in New York City's thriving Dominican community, we are very pleased to be the site of this monument."

Descendants of the Dominican veterans were on-hand and spoke about the contributions of their immigrant relatives.

"Sometimes this country forgets the power and the contributions of the immigrant people," said Angelica Infante, the granddaughter of veteran Juan Infante, who enlisted to fight in World War II when he was almost 40. "We as Dominicans are extremely proud of our accomplishments. We are a mighty community. We too are Americans."

Other speakers included Congressman Adriano Espaillat, New York State Assembly Member Victor M. Pichardo, and a delegation of 10 Dominican and Dominican-American leaders, led by Carlos Castillo, Consul General of the Dominican Consulate in New York.



Photo courtesy Office of Councilman Fernando Cabrera

**COUNCILMAN FERNANDO CABRERA** (r) with Congressman Adriano Espaillat at the unveiling of a WWII tribute for Dominican-born soldiers on the Bronx Community College campus.

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T Dediooni				2 people	\$0 - \$ 41,750

<sup>1</sup> Tenant pays electric.

<sup>2</sup> Household size includes everyone who will live with you, including parents and children. Subject to occupancy criteria.

<sup>3</sup> Household earnings includes salary, hourly wages, tips, Social Security, child support, and other income. Income guidelines subject to change.

<sup>4</sup> Asset limits also apply.

#### How Do You Apply?

Apply online or through mail. To apply online, please go to <u>nyc.gov/housingconnect</u>. To request an application <u>by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to</u>: **1017 HOME Street Apartments c/o BronxPro Group 1605 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Bronx NY 10453**. Only send one application per development. Do not submit duplicate applications. Do not apply online and also send in a paper application. Applicants who submit more than one application may be disgualified.

#### When is the Deadline?

Applications must be postmarked or submitted online no later than January 9, 2019. Late applications will not be considered.

#### What Happens After You Submit an Application?

After the deadline, applications are selected for review through a lottery process. If yours is selected and you appear to qualify, you will be invited to an interview to continue the process of determining your eligibility. Interviews are usually scheduled from 2 to 10 months after the application deadline. You will be asked to bring documents that verify your household size, identity of members of your household, and your household income.

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Русский	Чтобы подать заявление через интернет, зайдите на сайт: <u>nyc.gov/housingconnect</u> . Для получения данного объявления и заявления на русском языке отправьте конверт с обратным адресом по адресу. <b>1017 HOME Street Apartments c/o Bronx Pro Group 1605 Dr.</b> <b>Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Bronx NY 10453</b> На задней стороне конверта напишите слово "RUSSIAN" на английском языке. Заявки должны быть поданы онлайн или отправлены по почте (согласно дате на почтовом штемпеле) не позднее 9 январь 2019.
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# **Domestic Violence Asserts Brutal Power Over Another**

HEALTH

CHECK



#### **By JOY SPRENGER**

Domestic violence (DV), also known as intimate partner violence (IPV), domestic abuse or relationship abuse, is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship.

Domestic violence does not discriminate! People of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender can be a victim – or perpetrator – of domestic violence. It can happen to people who are married, living together or who are dating. It affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

Unfortunately, Domestic Violence is very common. In fact, one in every four women and one in every 10 men will experience DV/IPV in their lifetime. The Department of Labor reports that victims of DV/IPV lose nearly eight million days of paid work per year. Eighty-five percent of DV/IPV victims are women. While 15% are men, this number is growing every year.

DV/IPV includes behaviors that physically harm, arouse fear, prevent a partner from doing what they wish or forcing them to behave in ways they do not want. It includes the use of physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional abuse and economic deprivation. Many of these different forms of domestic violence/ abuse can be occurring at any one time within the same intimate relationship.

DV/IPV is a very serious, and can be fatal. According to the 2017 NYC Fatality Review Committee, over the period of 2010 to 2016 the Bronx had the highest number of intimate partner homicides, as well as the highest per capita rate of intimate partner homicides. 2016 was the fourth consecutive year that the Bronx led the City with the highest number of intimate partner homicides. The rate of intimate partner homicide in the Bronx is more than double the rate in the rest of New York City.

If you or someone you know is in need of help, please contact the organizations below. All calls are confidential and services are offered in multiple languages.

Joy Sprenger is a project manager for the Diabetes Prevention Program via Montefiore Health System's Office of Community & Population Health.

Editor's Note: For 24/7 help, contact Safe Horizon at (800) 621-HOPE (4673) or the National Domestic Hotline at (800) 799-1233.





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### **NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES**

#### Bedford Park Photos Wanted

The Bedford Mosholu Community Association is accepting photos of the Bedford Park neighborhood to go with its application to the Historic Districts Council. The application seeks to begin an effort to preserve Bedford Park from further development. Photos can be sent to bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

#### **Canned Food Drive**

The office of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, 3107 Kingsbridge Ave., is accepting canned goods for its annual food drive. Thanksgiving donations will be accepted before Nov. 14; donations for the Chanukah, Christmas and Kwanzaa seasons will be accepted through Dec. 12. All proceeds will be delivered to Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and St. Frances of Rome Pantry. Some acceptable canned goods include fruits and vegetables, cereals, dried beans, tuna, pasta, rice and juice. For more information, call (718) 796-5345.

#### **Bird Walks**

Free bird walk tours with guides provided by the New York City Audubon Society and Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, are scheduled for every Saturday through Nov. 24 from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy. Meet at the VC Nature Center. For more information, contact Joseph McManus at mcmanus638@aol.com. The walks are made possible through a grant by Councilman Andrew Cohen

#### **Right to Counsel**

Right to Counsel (RTC)—which assigns a free attorney to those sued for eviction in housing court and in NYCHA termination of tenancy hearings and who are income eligible-is available to tenants who live in Bronx zip codes 10457, 10467, and 10468. If a tenant is not income-eligible, they have the right to a one-off legal consultation or advice session. Tenants facing eviction or harassment from management can call Nova Lucero at the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition for support at (917) 952-5494.

#### **Toy Drive**

Donate a new, unwrapped toy at the Bronx Zoo to receive a voucher for one free general admission ticket to the zoo

(maximum of four vouchersperfamily). Donations can be dropped off at the park entrance (no admission necessary) or inside the Bronx Zoo Store in specially designated bins during the hours of operation. Vouchers can be collected at the drop-off locations and are valid for redemption from Jan. 1 to June 1, 2019. The donations are being collected through Dec. 31 for families of veterans, military members on active duty, and NYC families in need. For more information, call (718) 220-5100 or go to www.bronxzoo. com/giveback.

#### Bronx Pet Adoption Event

Cat and dog adoptions will be available through the Animal Care Center's Bronx Resource Center at 464 E. Fordham Rd. on



Nov. 17 from noon to 4 p.m. Adoptions include vaccinations, spay/neuter, a pre-registered microchip, an identification tag, a collar and a certificate for a free initial exam at a participating veterinarian. For more information, visit www.nycacc. org/adoptionevents.

#### Stop and Swap

Bring clean, reusable, portable items such as housewares, clothing, electronics, books and toys to a free swap event on Nov. 17 at PS 108 Philip J. Abinanti School, 1166 Neill Ave. (between Yates and Hering avenues) from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free items will be available and there is no need to bring an item to exchange it for another. Certain limitations apply. For more information, call (212) 788-7964

## **Contract Financing** Loan Fund

Is your business working as a prime or subcontractor on a project with a City agency or City-funded entity?

Loans at a 3% annual interest rate are available to eligible businesses.

Loan repayment terms align with the contract payment schedule. Closing fees apply.



#### CALL 311 OR VISIT nyc.gov/contractfinancing

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## **EDITOR'S PICK**

## **Two Free Zingers Coming Up!**

Bronx Arts Ensemble pianist Pablo Zinger will make two free appearances performing from his Great Mexican Songbook featuring his piano as well as singers as follows:

Nov. 10 at 2:30 p.m. at the Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. (info: (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl. org).

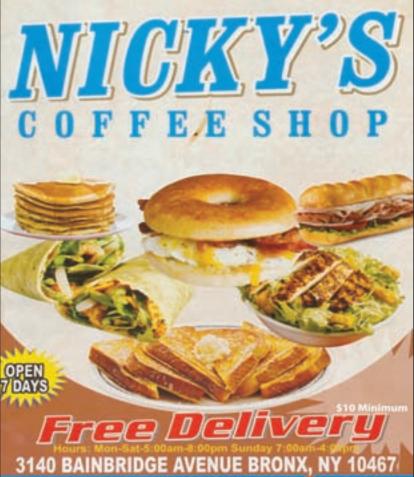
Nov. 18 at 4 p.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 627 E. 187th St. (info: (718) 601-7399).

#### Onstage

**Events** 

Lehman College for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **Eddie Palmieri & Lalo Rodriguez**, Nov. 10 at 8 p.m. (tickets: \$55 to \$85; \$100/VIP); and **Ballet Folklórico**, Nov. 18 at 4 p.m. (tickets: \$25 to \$45; \$10/ages to 12). VIP tickets include pre-concert reception at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 960-8833. Van Cortlandt Jewish Center, 3880 Sedgwick Ave., holds a free **bazaar/carnival**, Nov. 11 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Included are vendors, food, games for kids, prizes, raffles, and bric-a-brac. For more information, call (718) 884-6105.

The New York Botanical Garden presents its annual **Holiday Train Show,** Nov. 17 to Jan.



718-231-9



Photo Courtesy Wave Hill BE SURE TO check out the Dalí Quartet Concert at Wave Hill (see Events for more information).

21, 2019, featuring miniature replicas of many NYC building replicas made from natural materials including bark, twigs, fruit and pine cones. For more detailed information, show schedule, and rates, call (718) 817-8700.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers Family Art Projects: Local Birdies for Wave Hill House, to make bird drawings, Nov. 10 and 11; and Cornhusk Dolls, to hear Native American tales, then make cornhusk dolls, Nov. 17 and 18; both in the WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled are Dalí Quartet Concert, performing Latin American, classical and romantic music (tickets: \$28/includes grounds admission/WH members 10% discount; \$12/ages 8 to 18), Nov. 11 at 2 p.m. in the WH House (info: ext. 251); and Thunderbird American Indian Dancers, featuring traditional music from cultures across the American northeast, southwest and Great Plains, Nov. 18 from 1 to 2 p.m. in the WH House, Armor Hall. Grounds admission is free until noon Tuesdays and Saturdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200.

Bronx photographer Walter Pofeldt and his daughter Eileen present "**Kenya and Tanzania in Focus**" through Dec. 16 at Metropolitan College, 60 West St., on the sixth and seventh floors, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during normal business days. For more information, email pofeldtww@gmail.com.

#### **Exhibits**

The Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. (208th Street), presents **Women's Suffrage and New York City: A Centennial Celebration,** through April 11, 2019; and **His Muse: The Women of Edgar Allan Poe's Life,** through April 7, 2019. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (167th Street), presents **Image of an Image**, featuring the work of Bronx-born native Rochelle Feinstein, Nov. 7 (opening reception 6 to 8 p.m.) to March 3, 2019. For more information, call (718) 681-6000. Bronx River Art Center (BRAC), 1087 E. Tremont Ave., presents **River Rising**, through June 30, 2019, featuring an exposition of science, art and technology, located in Starlight Park. For more information, call (718) 589-5819.

#### **Library Events**

Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children: Bilingual Birdies - Spanish: (ages to 5 years), featuring live music, movement, dance, and puppetry, Nov. 17 at 2 p.m.; and Arts & Crafts: (ages 5 to 12), hands-on projects (preregistration required), Nov. 18 at 3:30 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy film: "Wonder Movie," Nov. 13 at 3 p.m.; and Chess Tournament: Nov. 14 at 4 p.m. Adults can attend **Microsoft** Word 2010 for Beginners: Nov. 9 at 2 p.m.; Computer Basics: Nov. 13 at 2 p.m.; film: "On the Town," Nov. 17 at 2:30 p.m.; and Rafael Hernandez Music Festival: Nov. 18 at 2 p.m., featuring Puerto Rican music. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: Crafty Fridays at 3 p.m.: (ages 5 to 12), crafts, Nov. 9 and 16.; STEM: Kids' Science at 3 p.m.: (ages 5 to 12), "math," Nov. 13 and 20; Little Irish Steppers: (ages 2 to 5), Irish pre-dance and movement class featuring upbeat traditional Irish music and songs, popular toddler songs, clapping, stamping and shakers, Nov. 14 at 11 a.m.; and Toddler Storytime: (ages 18 months to 3 years), interactive stories, action songs, fingerplays, and crafts, Nov. 15 at 11 a.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy: film: "Avengers: Infinity War." Nov. 16 at 2 p.m. Adults can attend Knitting Circle: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

**NOTE:** Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Nov. 12 for the next publication date of Nov. 22.

# **Battle Against Mailbox Fishers**

#### (continued from page 1)

friendly. You got to get a subpoena. It's company policy," Pacella said. "Once that check is cashed, you have to try to get subpoena records from the bank if they have video and it takes months."

Mailbox fishing is the practice of using glue or magnets on the end of a string to "fish" mail out of blue USPS mailboxes. Thieves then shuffle through the mail and find checks, money orders, and credit cards.

Checks found during these fishing expeditions are then altered using common household substances, like nail polish remover or rubbing alcohol, and readdressed to the thief or an accomplice. The mailbox fishers then go to a bank or a check cashing storefront to get their payoff.

"Once that check is cashed, you have to try to get subpoena records from the bank," Pacella said. "And more than likely, if you're smart, you get someone out on the street. 'Hey, you want to make \$20? Go cash this check.""

Pacella believes the best shot police have at reducing the rate of these crimes is by educating Bronx residents on the risks. Pacella, an oldfashioned cop who lamented the loss of "Broken Windows" and Stop and Frisk policing at a "Build the Block" meeting at P.S. 56, openly admits he is uncomfortable with "the online" and prefers writing checks to online transactions. But that might make him the perfect man to help educate potential victims, many of whom are elderly and unfamiliar with the Internet.

"Ilike to just go out and look. I think it's a good opportunity to bump into people and give them awareness of what's going on," Pacella said. "The elderly fall victim because they're still writing checks. They're not too tech-savvy as

## opposed to the younger generation."

"We went to each mailbox – I'd say practically every mailbox has some sort of sticky substance," Pacella said. "You can see remnants of the glue. It's kind of crazy."

Mailbox fishing became a growing focus of the NYPD and city officials in the last few years. In 2016, hundreds of mailboxes in the Bronx were removed in favor of newer models. After some delay, thousands of what Phil Bartlett, inspector in charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Services' (USPIS) New York Division, calls the "Cadillac of mailboxes" began to be installed across the city this spring. The new boxes replaced the opening tray with slit less than a halfinch high. Each box is also equipped with internal, antifishing protections.

Still, the problem persists. In July, the U.S. Attornev for the Southern District of New York announced that a ring of eight fraudsters were sentenced to various prison terms for a "long-running scheme to steal mail from Bronx mailboxes." The eight thieves were ordered to pay \$150,000 in restitution to their victims. Prosecutors said that between late 2015 and July 2018, USPIS and NYPD made over 50 arrests connected to \$750,000 in stolen checks and money orders in the Bronx alone.

"I had a friend at a different agency who was sitting on a wire that they were monitoring a conversation between known gang members and one of the guys was like 'why aren't you guys doing this?" Pacella said of mailbox fishing. "It's so much easier [than other crimes]. It's harder to get caught."

To avoid check washing schemes and identity theft, police recommend using alternative methods of transferring money. If the only option is to mail a check, police officials say Bronx residents should drop the envelope off at the post office, hand it directly to a mail carrier, or drop it in a mailbox as close to pickup time as possible.

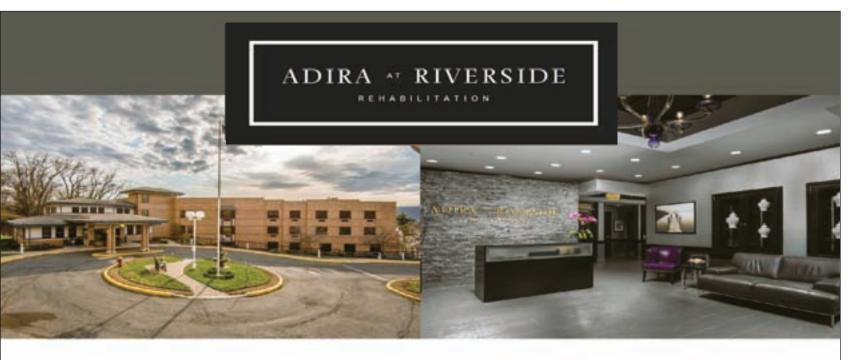
Even then, police recommend using pigmented ink that won't dissolve in acetone or other solvents. Most pens specified for drawing or art use pigmented ink and can be purchased at arts and crafts stores. Police also recommend monitoring one's bank balance and ensuring that the correct amount was cleared by the correct establishment.

Last year, the *Norwood News* obtained police data and mapped out 50 mailboxes in the 52nd Precinct that had been targeted by these fishing schemes. At least four of the mailboxes were targeted four times in the 15 months of data the *Norwood News* discovered.

"Whatever mail you're fishing out of the mailbox, you can use it for a variety of different crimes," Pacella said. "It all ties into identity theft and there are horror stories when it comes to identity theft."

Editor's Note: If you've been a victim of mailbox fishing, call the Norwood News at (718) 324-4998.





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## **Adira at Riverside**

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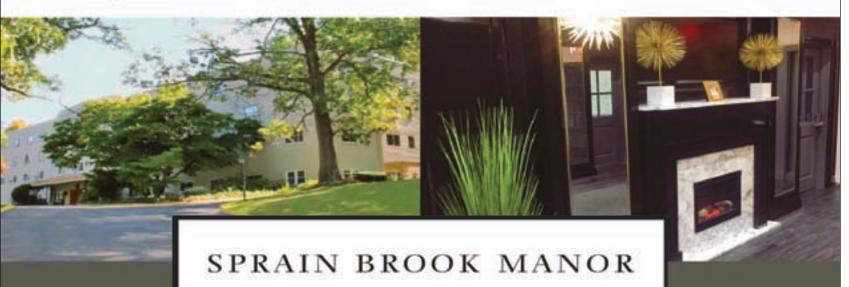
## **Sprain Brook Manor**

77 Jackson Avenue, Scarsdale, NY 10583 Sprain Brook is just four miles away from St. John's and is located right off the Sprain Brook Parkway

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REHABILITATION