



NORWOOD NEWS

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:
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'SNOWVEMBER' TO REMEMBER IN THE BX.

Bronx crippled as city underestimates Nov. 15 snowstorm



Photo by David Greene

THIS ARTICULATED BUS sits completely immobile at the corner of East Fordham Road and Lorillard Avenue, effectively shutting down a critical thoroughfare in the Bronx the night of the Nov. 15 storm.

By **DAVID GREENE, JOSEPH KONIG, and DAVID CRUZ**

From the straight-shot roads of Mosholu Parkway, heavily traveled spurs on the Major Deegan Expressway, and the narrow roadways in Bedford Park, getting around the Bronx posed severe headaches for thousands of drivers during the Nov. 15 snowstorm. It was enough for Bronx

elected officials, including Norwood Councilman Andrew Cohen, to sign a letter calling for a multi-committee review into what exactly led to the city's handling of the snowstorm that snarled traffic for hours.

"While the City is still assessing the emergency conditions and chaos caused by yesterday's storm, there is very little doubt that de-

spite forecasts and advance warnings of an approaching storm, the various City departments and agencies meant to protect New Yorkers did not perform their basic responsibilities and duties," stated the letter which was written by Councilmember Mark Gjonaj.

The letter was sent to five New York City Council committees, including

the recently formed Oversight Hearing and Investigations Committee chaired by Fordham Councilman Ritchie Torres. It was also sent to the Sanitation, Public Safety, Fire and Emergency Management, and Parks committees.

Along with Gjonaj and Cohen, Bronx Council Members Ruben Diaz Sr.,

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3400 Reservoir Oval East
Bronx, New York 10467
Phone: 718 324 4998
Fax: 718 324 2917
E-mail: norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org
Web.: www.norwoodnews.org

Publisher

Mosholu Preservation Corporation

Senior Director of MPC

Melissa Cebollero

Executive Director of MPC

Jennifer Tausig

Editor-in-Chief, Norwood NewsDavid Cruz, dcruz@norwoodnews.org**Proofreader**

Judy Noy

InternsChristy Rae Ammons,
Jonathan Custodio, Joseph Konig**Regular Contributors**

David Greene, Adi Talwar

Contributors

Miriam Quinones, Shelby Daniel

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**IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST**

What Will a Blue Albany Look Like?

By JOSEPH KONIG

After a decade of playing footsy with the idea – delayed, in part, by the actions of legislators from the Norwood neck of the Bronx (see Pedro Espada and Jeff Klein) – New Yorkers voted definitively for a Democratic majority in the Senate, positioning state Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins of Yonkers to be the first woman and second African American in history to lead state senate. Statewide, Democrats swept every race and picked up key Congressional seats in Western New York, the Hudson Valley, and on Staten Island.

In the Bronx, the Democrats won every Senate and Assembly seat without breaking a sweat. In most cases, candidates running on Republican or third-party lines were placeholders or barely campaigned. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who is now the youngest woman elected to Congress in U.S. history, received nearly six times the vote total of her opponent.

Throughout the city, including many neighborhoods in the Bronx, problems with voting machines were reported thanks to high turnout, a longer-than-usual ballot, and what many elected officials believed to be incompetence on behalf of the city's Board of Elections (BOE). City Council Speaker Corey Johnson called on BOE officials to resign. Other city councilmen called for hearings on the issue.

The Agenda

The Democratic takeover was

telegraphed in September, when 32-year-old progressive Alessandra Biaggi won her primary against incumbent state Sen. Jeff Klein, the former leader of the breakaway Independent Democratic Conference. It seemed then, as it does now, that New Yorkers no longer had patience for Republican or bipartisan rule.

"The voters of the state are sending a clear message," state Sen. Gustavo Rivera told the *Norwood News*. "Whether we're talking about the Bronx or upstate New York or Long Island... There is deep want for a Democratic majority."

Rivera's future colleague, Biaggi, campaigned on single-payer healthcare, housing justice, and codifying Roe v. Wade in state law thorough a series of bills like the Reproductive Health Act. Now that Republicans can no longer block Democratic efforts on these fronts, Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie intend to usher in a liberal agenda on all sides.

Perhaps the Democrats know they cannot squander this opportunity. Twice in the last 10 years, a slim margin in the senate and parliamentary shenanigans turned over power to the Republicans.

"We have to govern effectively. That has to be our number one priority," Rivera said. "The Republicans tried to convince people – and obviously the electorate is way too smart for it – that the [incoming] Democratic conference ... will be the same one that was there in

2009. And nothing can be further from the truth."

Rivera would know. He took office in 2011, after defeating Pedro Espada, the man who triggered a leadership crisis in 2009 that ended Democratic rule after only six months.

Bronx Voter Turnout

In the Bronx, even in a year with a slate of un-competitive state and local races, voters turned out in larger numbers than previous midterm elections to support Democratic candidates in local and national races. Still, the Bronx had the lowest turnout of any borough, according to unofficial tallies from the state and city Board of Elections.

Unofficial vote tallies in Senate District 34 currently sit at 72,373, dwarfing the 41,143 votes cast in 2014, the only other midterm election after the new state Senate map was finalized in 2012. In Senate District 36, which includes parts of Norwood, Wakefield, and Mount Vernon, Jamaal Bailey received 40,000 more votes than his predecessor, Ruth Hassell-Thompson, received in 2014. Rivera, who represents parts of Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, and central Bronx, received 24,000 more votes than he did in 2014.

Rivera and Biaggi will join their Democratic colleagues in Albany as part of the majority for the first time since 2009. If this new majority holds for a year, Democrats are projected to hold at least 35 seats in the 63-seat legislature.

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: Economic Development & Long-Term Planning Committee meets on Nov. 28; and Education Youth & Libraries Committee meets on Dec. 5. For more information, call the board office at (718) 933-5650.

The **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meets Dec. 5 at 8 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. S. For more information, email bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

As Flock Pushes to Reinstate Bishop Jenik, Clergyman Offers Thanks in Exile

By DAVID GREENE

Forced to leave his church after 40 years of service to the Bedford Park and Kingsbridge communities after allegations of an inappropriate relationship with a minor decades ago, Bishop John Jenik offered thanks to some 300 supporters who held a rally in his honor—during a video call on a cellphone.

Marchers of all ages and races, including at least one elderly woman with a walker, quietly trudged towards the Grand Concourse in a steady, cold rain. Jenik often led similar marches against drugs and crime, that has plagued the area for years.

As former and current students and church members arrived for the Nov. 9 march, they were greeted by Robert Hoatson, a supporter of accuser Michael Meenan, 52, and member of the New Jersey-based sexual support group “Road to Recovery,” who held up a sign in bold letters, “Support Jenik’s Victim.”

Hoatson said he was waiting for the 52-year-old victim, who never arrived. Asked about the rally supporting Jenik, Hoatson said, “It victimizes Michael J. Meenan and we think it’s very inappropriate. They should be supporting the victim, not those who may have allegedly abused the victims.” Hoatson was last spotted protesting another priest outside of St. Raymond’s Church more than a decade ago.

“We’re hoping that Bishop Jenik never, ever return to this parish,” Hoatson said. “His case has been sent to the Vatican. We hope that Pope Francis will strip him of his title.”

As marchers began to return to Monsignor Nemec Hall, a shouting match broke out across East 196th Street, when Hoatson shouted out, “Cardinal Dolan said he was credibly accused.” One woman fired back, “Where’s your victim?” A second woman added, “He’s waiting for the money... is he going to come up with something another two years from now... and victimize someone else?”

In 2016, Meenan accused his Fordham Prep teacher of molesting him in 1984, which he reported to a school official, who never reported the alleged crime. Meenan was given an undisclosed out-of-court settlement and saw the teacher and school official dismissed.



Photo by José A. Giraldo

SUPPORTERS OF BISHOP John Jenik march across East 198th Street and Bainbridge Avenue in the Bedford Park neighborhood of the Bronx on Nov. 9. Jenik recently stepped down as pastor of Our Lady of Refuge Church amid allegations of sexual misconduct in the 1980s.

Longtime student and recent Our Lady of Refuge graduate Lisbeth Rodriguez, said of Jenik, “He’s a great person. He would pay the tuition for some students and on Thanksgiving and Christmas he’d make stuffing and he’d be here every year.” Rodriguez added that Jenik would also purchase pizza and donuts for all of the volunteers.

“He was a very helpful person,” said current student and Bedford Park resident Arlene Almonte, who added, “He helped people in the community and held events; he’d help cook the food. He would always be there. If you ever asked for a favor, he would give it to you. I’m shocked and I don’t believe it.”

Meenan recently told the *Norwood News*, “Jenik began a very inappropriate relationship with a 13-year-old boy (Meenan was referring to himself), that involved drinking alcohol, watching inappropriate movies that included boys that were inebriated and sharing a bed with me after a night of drinking, in which he began to touch me inappropriately.”

Meenan added, “John Jenik also knew I was coming after him and you

should find him and ask him that and see what he says... he has been in my sights for many, many years.”

Along with his duties as pastor, Jenik was also chair of the Fordham-Bedford Community Services, a social services non-profit. John Garcia, a parishioner and executive director of Fordham-Bedford Community Services, an affiliate of Fordham-Bedford Housing Corporation, was unequivocally supportive of Jenik and asked he be reinstated.

“[W]e stand with him and we pray for him,” said Garcia.

Jenik, 74, was removed from Our Lady of Refuge after leading the church for more than 30 years. Jenik was named parochial vicar of Our Lady of Refuge on Briggs Avenue by Cardinal Terrence Cooke in 1978, and later named vicar of the Northwest Bronx by Cardinal Edward Egan in 2006.

Jenik’s departure was announced via letter by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, telling parishioners, “I regret to once again having to be the bearer of bad news, but I write to inform you that the Archdiocese has received an allegation

of sexual abuse of a minor brought against Bishop John Jenik.” The letter went on to say, “and concluded that the evidence is sufficient to find the allegation credible and substantiated.”

Church members sent back a letter to Dolan on Nov. 3, that read in part, “We beg you to do all in your power to clear Bishop Jenik’s name, help remove the stigma of such an unjust charge.”

Members of the church have begun a letter campaign and are currently getting neighborhood residents to sign a petition that will be sent to the Vatican in Rome. There is also plans for another rally in support of Jenik outside of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, where Meenan first made the accusation.

As the crowd was warming from their march, Garcia pulled out his cellphone, where Jenik briefly appeared via video to thank supporters. The faithful rose to their feet, throwing their hands into the air and shouted with joy to see Jenik. Many began to chant, “No ha terminado,” Spanish for “It’s not over.”

Jenik is said to be recovering at a local rehabilitation center after undergoing recent hip surgery.

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers to describe their Thanksgiving, and what the holiday will likely look like.



My perfect Thanksgiving would be spending it with my ex-wife, who left 30 years ago. She's out in California. She's a doctor out there and she left. That would be my perfect Thanksgiving. I will spend it this year with a few friends. I'm a picky eater, so only plain turkey, no trimmings. I just like the plain white meat and a jar of Gulden's Mustard and I'm in business.

Victor DeRosa
Norwood



What I'd really want, which is never going to happen, but I would like to spend Thanksgiving with my grandmother again. But unfortunately she passed away. Actually, I don't know what I'll be doing this year. I will probably just spend it with my kids and that's about it. I won't be doing much traveling this year.

Eathen Moore
Bedford Park



My fantasy Thanksgiving would be to see the Macy's Day Parade sitting on the bleachers for once, instead of always standing. My reality will be the three C's: cooking, catering and cleaning after everyone in the home. Though it sounds like work, I'm grateful to be the person that looks after everyone on the holidays.

Elizabeth Quaranta
Norwood



I would say my perfect Thanksgiving would be spent exploring the music scene in Glasgow, Scotland. I haven't traveled much, but a lot of my favorite artists perform over there, so I would really like to go. I expect to eat dinner with my family, which is slightly less lively, but just as lovely.

Amelia Zaino
Co-Op City



My ideal Thanksgiving would be for my family and I on a nice vacation on a tropical beach, having a nice dinner with famous people performing on the beach with a bonfire. I will spend Thanksgiving with the entire family at the house and relaxing, playing some card games and then going to my boyfriend's family home and having desert and some wine with them.

Aryanna Nicole Bella
Pelham Bay



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Pair of Buildings, 229 Total Units, Could Change Bedford Park Landscape

By CHRISTY RAE AMMONS

In the coming months, affordable housing construction on two developments will begin in Bedford Park. The Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) discussed these projects coming to the neighborhood at their monthly meeting on Nov. 7.

"Unfortunately, we're losing a lot of our private homes in the area," said Barbara Stronczer, BMCA president, at the latest meeting.

The building will be built along a stretch of lots once belonging to one- and two-family homes. Among those lots is 267 E. 202nd Street, which had been a two-family home. Its owner, Peter Fine, knocked down the property along with two adjacent homes on East 202nd Street and two directly behind those lots on East 203rd Street. Tenants of the two-family home were in the middle of a lawsuit against Fine, who had evicted them. Coincidentally, the building burned down in the middle of the suit, with FDNY ruling it accidental.

Stronczer said that the nonprofit CAMBA Housing Ventures (CHV), will be building two large residential buildings on East 202nd and East 203rd streets between Briggs and Valentine avenues.



Renderings courtesy CAMBA

THESE TWO RENDERINGS show two 11-story buildings set to be built on East 202nd and East 203rd streets off Mosholu Parkway, both on relatively narrow streets.

They have already fenced off the area and commenced digging.

CHV was established in 2005 and since then has been establishing homes for low income, disabled, or homeless New York City residents mostly in Brooklyn. It's unclear whether Fine is partnering with CHV to build the homes or simply leasing the space.

Stronczer said the two buildings are supposed to contain a total of 229 units. Seventy percent of the units for one

building will be rented through a lottery system, and 50 percent of the lottery will be reserved for residents living within Community Board 7.

Five percent will be reserved for those with mobility disabilities, two percent for those with vision and hearing disabilities, and five percent for employees of the city. Out of the remaining units, 99 will be reserved for individuals or families who had been living in shelters.

The apartment buildings will have 24-hour front desk security, laundry facilities, and a place to lock bikes; however, there will be no parking lot. With parking already limited in the Bronx, the burden of finding a public spot is bound to increase.

"My concern is that these are very narrow streets, and not great," Stronczer said.

A spokesperson for CAMBA did not return a call seeking comment.

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New NCBH Ambulance Bays Part of Expanded Hospital Services

By DAVID CRUZ

North Central Bronx Hospital officials stood alongside elected officials in cutting the ribbon on two new ambulance bays near the entrance to its emergency room. The new bays represent some of the new expanded services to a hospital that had long been rumored to close.

“This effectively doubles our previous capacity from two ambulances to four ambulance spaces,” said Cristina Contreras, NCBH executive director, at a news conference on Nov. 16.

Contreras added the services could lessen the strain area emergency rooms have had to handle. Though Contreras, in a moment of diplomacy, declined to “name names,” she appeared to refer to Montefiore Health System, which made headlines after it was recently criticized for having its ER over capacity.

The news was hailed by Councilman Andrew Cohen and state Sen. Jamaal Bailey,

in attendance of the ribbon cutting. “There is an issue of capacity at emergency rooms in and around the Bronx, and this is a relatively modest way to make this emergency room more accessible to people in the Bronx,” said Cohen.

Dr. Mark Melrose, chief of the emergency department, said expanded ER services will limit the hospital’s use in entering into diversion, which calls for hospitals to turn away ambulances if the ER is over capacity. “Hopefully this will increase our ambulance traffic, increase our ability to serve the community, and I think we would all agree it’s a really great thing,” said Melrose.

The news adds more services to the hospital, as previously reported by the *Norwood News*.

“This is one small step today in all the big things that are being planned for the community,” said Chris Mastromano, CEO of Jacobi Medical Center, another city-owned hospital.



Photo by David Cruz

(L-R) NCBH ER CHIEF Dr. Mark Melrose, NCBH executive director Cristina Contreras, and FDNY Deputy Chief for Division 2 Vincent Wolla, cut the ribbon for two new ambulance spots at NCBH, while Jacobi Medical Center CEO Chris Mastromano looks on.

Food Carts and Trucks Will Soon Learn Their ABCs

By JONATHAN CUSTODIO

The city’s letter grading program on restaurants is now being applied to food carts and trucks, according to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Mobile food vendors will begin receiving grades this December and

will be subjected to a similar scoring system as restaurants, receiving points for violations that will add up to a total inspection score corresponding to a grade of “A,” “B,” or “C.”

Grades will be posted on the mobile food units and they will be equipped

with location-sharing devices to be easily trackable for inspection. Only Health Department agents or staff will have access to the location data, which will be deleted every 24 hours and solely used for inspection.

The city’s letter grading system began under the Bloomberg administration. In 2011, Mayor Michael Bloomberg sought to expand the grading system to food carts, but then-Health Commissioner Thomas Farley said tracking roving food trucks would make enforcement tough.

It is expected to take two years to grade the 5,500 authorized food carts and trucks, according to the Health Department. With 593 registered food trucks, the Bronx had the highest number of violations in the city of unlicensed or un-permitted mobile food vendors, according to numbers evaluated by the *Norwood News* using city data.

Acting Health Commissioner Dr.

Oxiris Barbot said, “Letter grades on food carts and trucks will help New Yorkers see how these businesses fared on their latest inspection, right when they want to place an order. Just as diners appreciate letter grading in restaurants, we expect this program to be popular among customers of food carts and trucks.”

Though the location data will be heavily protected and can only be accessible outside of the health department through court order, the GPS tracking device has created concerns for the privacy and well-being of mobile food vendors.

The Street Vendor Project, an organization part of the Urban Justice Center that provides legal assistance to New York City’s marginalized groups, said via twitter, “While vendors getting letter grades is good for everyone, tracking vendors’ movements with GPS devices could have severe consequences for our mostly immigrant communities.”

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Stan Lee, Marvel Comics Icon and DeWitt Clinton HS Alum, Dies at 95

By JOSEPH KONIG

Comic book pioneer and media mogul Stan Lee died at the age of 95 the morning of Nov. 12. He attended DeWitt Clinton High School in Bedford Park and spent much of his teenage years living in University Heights. His cause of death is not known.

One of the most prolific contributors to the American superhero pantheon, Lee remained active his entire life, executive producing and making cameo appearances in every Marvel Cinematic Universe film. He also made an appearance as himself in the popular TV show, "The Big Bang Theory." Less than a week before his death, Lee's official Twitter account tweeted out a class photo from his time at DeWitt Clinton High School in the 1930s.

Lee is one of many notable alumni from DeWitt Clinton High School, including comic book pioneer Will Eisner and Batman co-creators Bob Kane and Bill Finger, who both attended DeWitt Clinton a few years before Lee.

Born Stanley Martin Lieber in Manhattan's Upper West Side in 1922, Lee's family moved around the city several times before settling in the Bronx during his teenage years. While attending DeWitt Clinton High School, Lee lived on the third floor of a still-standing apartment building at 1720 University Ave.

Lee graduated from high school in 1939, a year early, at age 16, and began working for Timely Comics, a predecessor of Marvel Comics. By 1941, he was playing a role in the production of Captain America comics and, at age 19, was named editor-in-chief and art director of Timely Comics.

When America entered World War II in early 1942, Lee joined the Army and worked in the Signal Corps for a time repairing telegraph poles in New Jersey. He was eventually transferred to the Training Film Division in Astoria, Queens, where he would make training and propaganda materials through the end of the war in 1945.

Returning to comic books post-war, Lee worked with artists like Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko to create beloved Marvel characters like the Hulk, Thor, Iron Man, Spider-Man, Daredevil, Doctor Strange, and Black Panther. Lee's career also created

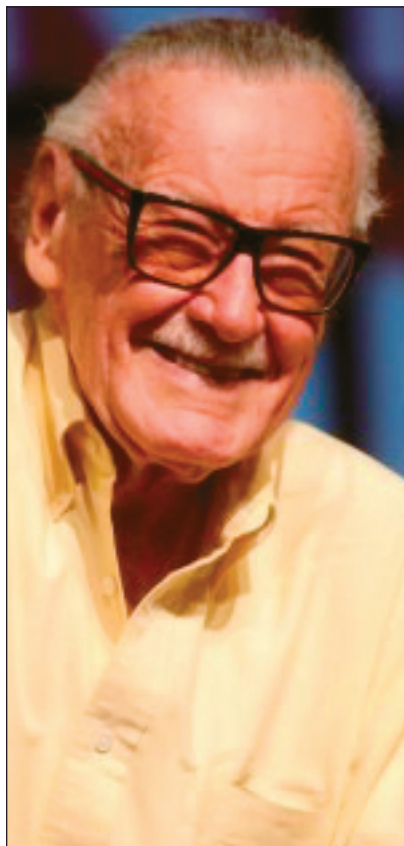


Photo courtesy Gage Skidmore

STAN LEE SPEAKS AT the 2014 Phoenix Comic Con at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

memorable superhero teams including the X-Men, the Fantastic Four, and the Avengers. By the 1970s, Lee was a star in his own right and the public face of Marvel. Through the course of his career, Lee would serve as publisher, president, chairman, editor-in-chief and, finally, chairman-emeritus of Marvel Comics. Lee was also known by signing off his letters with, "Excelsior!"

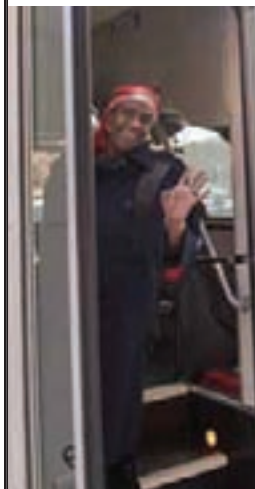
In recent years, Lee stayed active, posting videos online and appearing at public events, but internal conflict involving his family and estate became public following the death of his wife Joan, 95, in July 2017. The couple had been married for almost 70 years.

Battles over Lee's estate, estimated to be worth around \$50 million, produced accusations of elder abuse against his 68 year old daughter (which Lee dismissed in interviews) and the arrest of his longtime manager.

Lee is survived by his daughter, JC Lee.

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New Commanding Officer Announced at 52nd Precinct

The 52nd Precinct has a new commanding officer, a month after the previous commanding officer hinted at potential changes. The change was effective at midnight Thursday, Nov. 15, and made official on the precinct's active Twitter account.

Deputy Inspector Thomas Alps is the new commanding officer of the Five-Two precinct, succeeding Inspector Peter Fiorillo. Fiorillo was commanding officer of the precinct for a little over two years, replacing Chief Nilda Hofmann.

Prior to commanding the Five-Two precinct, Alps was the commanding officer of the local 49th Precinct covering the East Bronx, according to the NYPD's website. Alps replaced Keith Walton, who was accused and vindicated in a case of official misconduct. It's unclear whether Walton will be returning to the precinct.

It's unclear where Fiorillo is being transferred to. His departure comes after he was recently promoted to inspector.

Fiorillo leaves the precinct with major crime slightly up at 7.31 percent. Murder cases have contributed to the precinct's crime spike so far this year when com-



DEPUTY INSPECTOR THOMAS ALPS

pared to the same time period as last year when the precinct saw two murders instead of the five it's logged this year.

Alps was formally announced at the latest 52nd Precinct Community Council meeting at Serviam Gardens on Nov. 16, the night of the snowstorm, with only a handful of guests turning out.

Alps had worked a long shift his first day at the precinct, overseeing the precinct's efforts in handling traffic during the snowstorm.

—David Cruz

Bronx Community Board 7

Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony

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

Mixed Martial Arts Registration is 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

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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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NORWOOD NEWS

S N A P S H O T S



Photo by David Cruz

POLICE OFFICER CHRISTINA Moncion (2nd from left) of the 52nd Precinct's anti-crime unit holds her Cop of the Month award presented to her at a precinct event honoring the stationhouse's police officers. She's joined by (l-r) Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez, 52nd Precinct Community Council President Brenda Caldwell, and Councilman Andrew Cohen.



Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO (l-r) quadruplets Michael, Christian, John and Samuel Aidoo, who celebrated their one-year birthday at Montefiore Health System's Jack D. Weiler Neonatal Intensive Care Unit on Nov. 15. The boys are pictured with the doctors who cared for them for over two months after they were born 11 weeks early in November 2017. Quadruplets are extremely rare, with only around 250 sets born annually in the United States.



Photo courtesy Bronx Borough President's Office

DESPITE THE NOV. 15 snowstorm, several honorees of Puerto Rican descent came to Bronx Borough Hall to be presented with recognition awards at the Puerto Rican Heritage Celebration, singled out for contributing to the growth and promotion of their Puerto Rican community and culture. Holding recognition awards are (l-r) a representative for the late Lorraine Montenegro, co-founder of United Bronx Parents, Inc. and founder of La Casita; Hostos Community College president Dr. David Gomez; and BronxWorks executive director Eileen Torres. They stand with Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. (second from right) who presented the awards.



Photo by Miriam Quinones

EXPECTANT MOM MIKEELA Lewis (r) gets advice from North Central Bronx Hospital Breastfeeding Coordinator Indra Moran at the eighth annual Mommy to Bee Expo on Nov. 10. The event was sponsored by Marketing & Advertising Solutions and offered mommies-to-be health tips ahead of their due dates. Information on childcare, pregnancy and healthcare, apparel and accessories, and baby products were also offered.

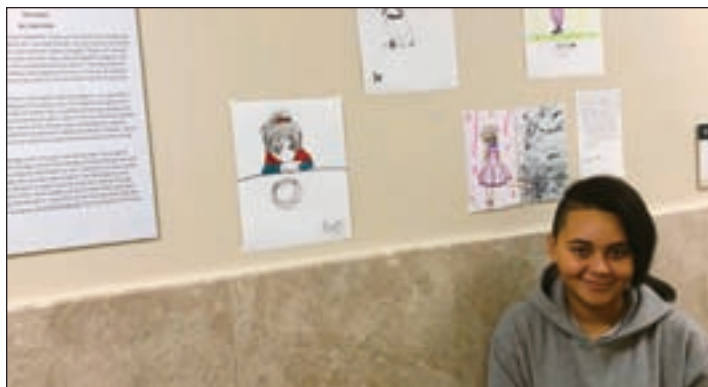


Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System

THIS YOUNG PARTICIPANT of Montefiore Health System's The YES Gallery stands next to their artwork on Nov. 7 during the grand opening of the gallery. The display at the Moses Campus was made possible through a collaboration between the hospital's art and psychiatry departments. It features 12 framed artworks, dozens of sketches, and interactive space for the Youth Empowerment Series (YES) at Montefiore's Child Outpatient Psychiatry Division. Local artist Lady K Fever served as a mentor and teacher.



Photo courtesy The Gardiner Foundation

(L-R) 52ND PRECINCT Neighborhood Coordinator Officer (NCO) Tara Convery, Jeff Korek, 52nd Precinct NCO Mark Preira, Michael Fruhling, 52nd Precinct NCO Brandon McMorrow, and Sherri and Dexter Gardiner, pose at a turkey giveaway event sponsored by Lawyertime.com and The Gardiner Foundation. The group was at the ninth annual event at St. James Park on Nov. 17, where volunteers gave away 1200 turkeys to needy families.



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BRONX CONNECTIONS: THE GANG IMPACT

PART 3 of 5

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

Amid War on Gangs, NYPD's Controversial Database Draws Critics

By SHELBY DANIEL of



Following the killing of 15-year-old Lesandro "Junior" Guzman-Feliz in the Belmont section of the Bronx, the NYPD quickly turned to its controversial gang database for help.

Since 2012, 17,000 people believed to be or affiliated with gangs have been added using a variety of identification methods, including social media. In the investigation into Lesandro's killing, 12 members tied to the Trinitarios gang were identified through the system and eventually arrested. The NYPD credited the database for the collars.

Social media plays a role in landing an individual on the database, with police examining the company an individual keeps along with the content of a posting. This has led to an unintended consequence that poses serious issues for them. In most cases, a person flashing a sign, even if they don't know it's often linked to gang culture, can be construed as a member.

"A lot of youth are using social media and don't even know they're being watched, even when they're throwing [gang] signs to feel like 'I'm cool,'" said Vidal Guzman, a community organizer at Justice Leadership USA, a group that combats issues of mass incarceration.

According to Guzman, young people flashing gang signs, posing with weapons, and engaging with other gang-related imagery on social media can be the result of searching for a sense of identity in communities often plagued by trauma, loss, and poverty. Making this search for identity public on social media can pose problems for youth, as social media posts serve as digital footprints that can be permanent.

In 2012, the NYPD launched "Operation Crew Cut," a play on the word crew, a term described by the NYPD as members of a low-level gang. The operation was launched by then-Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly with the goal of reducing the amount of violence among

young people ages 13 to 21.

As part of its operation, police closely monitor social media sites, which can lead to youth being placed on the gang database listing what gang they're affiliated with. A year after its implementation, homicides among the demographic fell 50.6 percent, from 84 to 43.

A growing chorus of critics have called for the dissolution of "Operation Crew Cut" and the disputed gang database, saying it unfairly monitors young people especially in communities of color. A New York City Council hearing on the matter found 90 percent of those on the database are minority.

Guzman has argued that young people not involved in gangs, but using gang-related imagery—such as throwing hand signals—just aren't aware of the repercussions of what they post. "Social media is not bad," said Guzman. "But there's other people who use social media that are young and don't know the dangers."

Guzman educates young people to use social media responsibly, and be on the lookout for their posts that feature gang-related imagery.

"It's clear there's surveilling going on behind the scenes, and then [the NYPD] uses that to increasingly harass people...to follow them, to surveil them, to inundate their communities and disrupt their lives," said Rebecca Kinsella, an attorney with Brooklyn Defender Services, which provides free legal representation.

Kinsella and Guzman believe the gang database should be abolished, and more funding be provided to groups that adopt the Cure Violence model, which emphasizes prevention and intervention efforts by the community to stop gang participation and violence before it happens.

"Data is not always good. It doesn't give you a human connection to the issues," said Guzman.

Additional reporting by David Cruz.

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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Holiday Tree Lighting

Bronx Community Board 7 presents its annual **Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony** on Dec. 6 at 6 p.m. on the Mosholu Parkway Lawn at the intersection of Mosholu Parkway and Bainbridge Avenue. Featured will be caroling, hot apple cider, holiday cookies, goodie bags giveaway and local elected officials. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

Onstage

Lehman College for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **José Feliciano in Feliz Navidad**, Dec. 8 at 8 p.m. (tickets: \$50 to \$65; \$100/VIP which includes pre-concert reception at 6:30 p.m.; \$10/to age 12); and **Soweto Gospel Choir**, Dec. 9 at 4 p.m., to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and President Nelson Mandela (tickets: \$25 to \$45; \$10/to age 12). For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

The Riverdale Coral Society presents **Music of Bach & Faure**, at the Christ Church Riverdale, 5030 Henry Hudson Pkwy. (West

252nd Street), with organ and orchestral accompaniment, Dec. 9 at 3 p.m. (\$25). For more information, call (718) 543-2219.

Bronx Arts Ensemble presents **Bronx Holiday With Manhattan Brass**, brass quintet performing jazzed up seasonal and other favorites, free with museum admission, at the Bartow Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd., Dec. 9 at 1 p.m. For more information, call (718) 885-1461.

Events

NYC Councilmember Andy King and the Mosholu Preservation Corporation present its **Holiday Street Lighting Celebration**,



File photo by Adi Talwar

LAST YEAR'S HOLIDAY lighting by Community Board 7 featured carolers, hot chocolate, and a surprise by Santa Claus. See Editor's Pick for more information on this year's tree lighting.

Dec. 4 from 6 to 8 p.m. in Williamsbridge Square, 3500 White Plains Rd. (at Gun Hill Road). Events include singing, dancing and free gift giving. For more information, email mpc@mpcbronx.org.

The New York Botanical Garden presents its annual **Holiday Train Show**, through Jan. 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**: Natural Weavings for Harvest Time, to weave together leaves, cones, pods and seed heads to create a wall hanging, Nov. 24 and 25; and The Wonder of the Warden Case, to make these cases, Dec. 1 and 2; both in the WH House, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also scheduled is **Concert: Dandy Wellington and His Band**, performing jazz music, Dec. 2 at 2 p.m. in the WH House (tickets: \$28/includes grounds admission; 10% discount/WH members; \$12/ages 8 to 18; info: ext. 251). 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, through 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: **Arts & Crafts**: (ages 5 to 12), hands-on projects (preregistration required), Nov. 25 at 3:30 p.m. Adults can enjoy **film**: "Into the Woods," Nov. 24 at 2:30 p.m. 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. 23 and 30; **STEM: Kids' Science at 3 p.m.**: (ages 5 to 12), "math," Nov. 27; and **Toddler Storytime**: (ages 18 months to 3 years), interactive stories, action songs, fingerplays, and crafts, Nov. 29 at 11 a.m. Adults can attend **Knitting Circle**: Thursdays at 3 p.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road, offers for children ages 5 to 12: **Thanksgiving PJ Party**: Come wearing pajamas for fun, craft, snacks and a movie, Nov. 24 at 2 p.m. (in person advance registration required). Adults can enjoy **Computer Basics**: Nov. 29 at noon. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

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NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Nov. 26 for the next publication date of Dec. 6.

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New Additions, and Some Great Oldies, at NYBG Train Show

By JOSEPH KONIG

An elevated train runs adjacent to Yankee Stadium. No, it is not the 4 train, but Thomas the Tank Engine chugging around a circular loop, situated above a wood-and-fungus recreation of the old Yankee Stadium.

This surreal model of the west Bronx can be found at the New York Botanical Garden's 27th Annual Holiday Train Show inside the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. The show runs through Jan. 21, but the *Norwood News* was invited to a media preview on Nov. 13.

Ranging from well-known landmarks and historic structures across the city to row houses in Washington Heights, over 150 buildings, bridges and monuments are crafted from forest debris and constructed by artisans who specialize in this very specific genre of agriculture art.

Beginning in 1992, Applied Imagination, a Kentucky-based company that produces garden railroads and "botanical architecture," set up the first Holiday Train Show at the New York Botanical Garden. Since then, the company has returned every year



Photo by Joseph Konig

A MODEL TRAIN (foreground) zips past this model of Manhattan's Park Avenue Armory at the New York Botanical Garden's Holiday Train Show.

with new ideas and new structures made of nuts, bark, seeds and other debris from Kentucky and the Botanical Garden itself.

The enormous and intricate exhibit takes two weeks to set up properly. At the preview event, Applied Imagination workers in striped, train-engineer suspenders (with matching cap) continued to make last-minute tweaks as media members walked through. This year, the show highlights Lower Manhattan, but includes replicas of structures from all five boroughs.

Like commuters to the real Lower Manhattan, attendees at the train show will enter the leaves-and-detritus Lower Manhattan by way of Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal. Though not scale models, the structures are easily recognizable and hard to miss – both stations are larger than nearly every replica in the exhibit.

Trains run both among the base of the plants and above attendees' heads, on replicas of New York City's many bridges, on over half-a-mile of track, according to a Botanical Gar-

den spokesperson. The exhibit snakes mostly through the Haupt Conservatory.

The exhibition's finale is a replica of Lower Manhattan that includes new additions like One World Trade Center, vintage ferry models, the Woolworth Building, and the Oculus station house. The ferry models sail across a pool of water – New York Bay – towards old stalwarts of the exhibit, replicas of the Statue of Liberty and the Ellis Island Immigration Center on Ellis Island.

Other than the now-demolished old Yankee Stadium, some of the Bronx buildings that are featured in the exhibit are Riverdale Bell Tower, Van Cortlandt House, the Valentine-Varian House on Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood, the Bartow-Pell Mansion in Pelham Bay, and a massive replica of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory.

The train show will be the site of many events over the course of its stay at the Botanical Garden, including several targeted at children and families. The exhibit will host family-friendly film nights, "train-inspired" educational programming,

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The public is cordially invited to the free Jerome Gun Hill BID's annual meeting on Monday, Dec. 3, 6 to 8 p.m. at El Caribe, 2 E. Gun Hill Rd. Complimentary dinner. RSVP required. Call (718) 324-4946.

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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

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Applications for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) for older adults and low- and middle-income New Yorkers will be accepted by local departments of social services. Eligibility is based on income, household size and how the home is heated. Residents can apply online at <https://on.ny.gov/2Fn062M> and mail it to NYC DSS/HRA/HEAP, P.O. Box 1401, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008. For more information, call (212) 331-3126.

IDNYC Pop-Up

Sign up for a free IDNYC card at the Community Board 7 office, 229A E. 204th St., weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed 1 to 2 p.m.) through Dec. 13. Cards are available for anyone 10 years old and up. Cards are available by appointment by going to <https://tinyurl.com/l4c8pgp> or by calling 311. For additional information, visit www.nyc.gov/IDNYC.

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. 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 tour with guides provided by the New York City Audubon Society and Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, is

scheduled for 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 walk is 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.

Coat Drive

Crunch Fitness Gym is collecting usable coats to be donated to military veterans. Coats can be dropped off at Crunch Fitness Gym, 3170 Webster Ave., during normal business hours—5 a.m. to 11 p.m. on weekdays, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. on weekends, and hours to be determined on Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving. For more information, call Emmanuel Martinez at (347) 909-0726.

Correction:

The *Norwood News* incorrectly placed a caption belonging to a photo featured in the previous edition's photo spread entitled, "Norwood News Hails 30 Years." The incorrect caption appears on page 12 at the bottom left. The caption should have read, "(L-R) FORMER MOSHOLU Montefiore Community Center Executive Director Don Bluestone (back to camera), State Sen. Jamaal Bailey, West Bronx Housing Executive Director Sally Dunford, and former Community Board 7 Chair Nora Feury chat at the event. Dunford received an honor from the *Norwood News*." The photo was taken by José A. Giralt. The correct caption and picture can be found on our website, www.norwoodnews.org.

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SNOWSTORM FROM

(continued from page 1)

Fernando Cabrera, Vanessa Gibson, Rafael Salamanca Jr., and Andy King also signed the letter.

In sum, the legislators look to determine how a snowstorm that produced a total of six inches of snow (a relatively small amount) could paralyze the city.

The day after the storm,

city officials, led by Mayor Bill de Blasio, were in full damage control mode, outlining a series of setbacks that led to the traffic snarls, including what they believe were unreliable forecasts, the timing of the storm coming at rush hour, and a 20-car pileup at the George Washington Bridge. Five highways cut

through the Bronx-The Major Deegan Expressway, I-95 (which splits between the Cross Bronx Expressway and the I-695), Bronx River Parkway, Henry Hudson Parkway, Hutchinson River Parkway—with four of them leading to the outbound side of the George Washington Bridge. The borough is largely laid

out in a grid pattern, with roads leading to the major highway entrances.

“I don’t remember the George Washington Bridge, outbound in rush hour, being knocked out before, one example. This had a huge cascading effect, no one could have predicted that,” said de Blasio, who was also stuck in traffic.

The congestion spilled out to the local streets as rush hour gave way to a large volume of vehicles that became stuck, the “cascading effect” in full swing. On East Gun Hill Road, buses were found stuck, causing several backups. On East Fordham Road, cars were bumper to bumper for hours.

Luci Morales, a mother of two who lives in Fordham and works in Norwood, said she was stuck on East Gun Hill Road for three hours trying to get her kids home from school.

“It’s ridiculous. The city should be ashamed,” Morales told the *Norwood News*. “If this is how the rest of the winter is gonna be, then we’re screwed.”

At the height of the storm in the Bronx, traffic stood at a standstill. Two traffic agents normally directing traffic around a construction project at Eastchester Road and Morris Park Avenue, were caught keeping dry under the awning of the Sahara Hookah Bar.

One driver reported, “I was stuck on the ice for two hours outside of Stop & Shop. Got it free and brought it home and I got stuck on the ice again and blocked traffic for another two hours.”

Another driver, now stuck behind an ambulance along East Moshulu Parkway North, reported his

trip from Lower Manhattan took him six hours.

That same driver watched in disbelief as a 4 x 4 drove up the embankment and in between two parked cars. He told the driver, “You were better off where you were,” pointing to the stopped ambulance sandwiched between his car and another stalled car.

One police officer directed traffic as best he could at the intersection of Webster Avenue and Bedford Park Boulevard. Problem being too many vehicles and not enough road.

Later in the evening, police closed off the Van Cortlandt Park exit of the Major Deegan Expressway after multiple cars stalled or broke down. A sea of tractor-trailers at West 230th Street was still at a standstill after midnight.

NYPD Chief of Police Terence Monahan, who was at the news conference, said 1,915 accidents were reported between noon on Nov. 15 to midnight the next day.

“[T]hat’s 1,200 more than in that same 12-hour period last year. So now that accident is preventing anyone from crossing those intersections and it kept going out and out. You would get one intersection cleared, people would be able to go a couple blocks, now a next intersection is blocked,” said Monahan. “I was in the Bronx for four hours, I was attempting to drive around during that storm, and you’d have to get out at every intersection and try to help people that were stuck.”

The storm came on a school day, with buses at the mercy of traffic. School kids who were bused did not come home for hours or were forced to return to

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HELL IN THE BRONX



Image courtesy NYC Office of the Mayor

(L-R) SANITATION COMMISSIONER KATHRYN Garcia, Mayor Bill de Blasio, and NYPD Chief of Police Terence Monahan, at a news conference the day after the storm.

school and sleep there. In some cases, parents had very little help in determining just where their child was, prompting questions over whether a tracking system for school buses should be in order. De Blasio is championing for such a system with “every conceivable form of communication and then linked back to a center that parents can call and get updated information.”

De Blasio declined to blame any of the city agencies. “I don’t think it’s fair to say that the city agencies could have stopped all this,” he said.

Kathryn Garcia, the city’s sanitation commissioner, said weather forecasts of moderate snow prompted the agency to prepare for such a snow event.

“I think that everyone was operating under information that we were looking at a one-inch storm and also where it was supposed to end by five o’clock with temperatures into the 40s,” said Garcia. “I don’t think any of them could have prepared for this storm which was very different...across the region.”

At least one Norwood resident was sympathetic to that excuse. John Curran, 80, said he didn’t think there was much the city could have done if they were not aware of the intensity of the storm beforehand. Instead, he had ire for the businesses along Bainbridge Avenue.

“Nobody cleans the side-

walk,” Curran told the *Norwood News* while waiting for a bus on East 207th Street and Bainbridge Avenue on Nov. 19. Business owners and landlords are responsible for clearing their sidewalks during snowstorms. Curran, who no longer has most of his left leg and relies on a wheelchair to travel, said the sidewalks between his home on East 204th Street and Montefiore Health System were in-navigable. “That’s not the city’s job, to clear the sidewalk. What were they supposed to do?”

Frustration over the response was also conveyed over the airwaves. On the Brian Lehrer Show on WNYC, where de Blasio was a guest the day after the storm (several hours before the news conference), a Bronx resident named George called to recount being stuck on East Gun Hill Road for four hours. He concluded that the city “dropped the ball.”

De Blasio countered that the storm’s handling was more complex. “I think this an example that is not as simple as people ‘dropping the ball’ because I look at the track record of the Sanitation Department which handles the snow removal, I look what they’ve done in the series of storms in recent years including the biggest one in New York City history a few years ago and they have done an amazing job. Something was different here,” said de Blasio.

No hearings have yet been scheduled.

SNOWSTORM HORROR STORIES

The Nov. 15 snowstorm was the talk of the comments section on the Norwood News website. Below are some statements underscoring frustration by Bronx residents.

This was inexcusable; the way that snow was coming down and Sanitation plows. I drove [from] Knox Place to Kossuth Avenue; it took 22 minutes. All the cars going through red lights so we got stuck behind stuck school buses until I [was] able to go around. I was heading to Parkchester to take someone home. With all the major roads congested [I] went through a side [road] and got [to] Fordham. Had to head back and Fordham Road was a parking lot, with all these stranded little cars. Went to Kingsbridge and Jerome and she went on the 4 train. I picked her up at 5:20 p.m., got [to] Kingsbridge at 7:10 p.m. We got home at 7:50 p.m. My wife’s friend, well, she got home at 9:30 p.m. In New York City, with the largest Sanitation Department in the world and we couldn’t tackle 2 inches or 3 inches of snow.

Carlos M. Pellecier Jr.

We will all forget this when it comes to these individuals running for office again and again and again.

Nissa Cintron

This was a huge failure of leadership and we demand answers. The response to this storm was a huge danger to public safety especially for those of us in the Bronx. Children stuck on buses for hours without food and bathrooms. Not a police or firefighter in sight to guide traffic. Cars were driving on the sidewalks trying to get around standstill traffic on Webster Avenue. Eight hours to drive along Webster Avenue from 152nd Street to Fordham Road and on to East Gun Hill Road. On East Gun Hill an additional huge delay due to buses [that] were stuck. We arrived home at 4:16 a.m. Never saw a sanitation truck, salt spreader, firefighter, and I saw maybe three police officers the entire night. Bronxites were left to fend for themselves.

Anonymous

Teachers had to stay at school for parent-teacher conferences till 7:30 p.m. or 8 p.m. No parents came after a certain time but we could not leave. Many teachers made it home by 1 a.m. to 3 a.m. Why were [parent-teacher conferences] not canceled? So add schools chancellor to the list of failures and this was not even mentioned in their wonderful press conference.

Linda

I live in Yonkers, work in the Bronx. My daughter goes to BMCC her freshman year. She made it to Nereid [Avenue] and White Plains Road to find people have been waiting since 3 p.m. for a Yonkers bus that never came. She got the last Lyft car out of the Bronx; she was stuck in traffic for two hours. She made it home at 9 p.m. They tried to charge her \$247 for a ride that normally takes 15 to 20 minutes. I, on the other hand, was waiting at Nereid Avenue and White Plains Road until 10:15 p.m. when I decided to take the 2 train downtown to 149th Street and Third Avenue. Walked to Morris Avenue and 149th Street to finally catch a cab to my mother’s house. I was cold, tired, hungry, and disgusted. It’s a shame and a disgrace how the city and the mayor handled the snowstorm. He needs to man up and take responsibility for this huge failure.

Miss Mae

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