NORWOOD NEWS

YEAR IN REVIEW

By DAVID CRUZ

The Top Stories

This Norwood News’ Year in Review saw continued development in the Bronx, political newcomers combatting giants, and a troubling violent crime trend for the local precinct.

The paper pored through all 25 editions of 2018 that graced the stands, stores, and other locations in the Bronx, sifting through repeat stories that had, from an editorial standpoint, the greatest impact. Here are the highlights:

Homicides in Norwood

The Norwood News was there to report on the rise in homicides happening in Norwood and the surrounding areas that comprise the 52nd Precinct. The body count went from a total of two homicides in 2017 to eight in 2018, rising a whopping 250 percent. The year’s first three reported homicides unfortunately happened in Norwood.

It’s inside an apartment at 3152 Hull Ave. where the body of Rommel Goode of Brooklyn was found with bullet holes in his body on April 23. Police said the homicide stemmed from a domestic violence that turned bloody. Police would later charge Darick Johnson for his death.

Nine days later, about a block and half from where Goode died, police were investigating a killing on Perry Avenue. It’s at the corner of Perry Avenue and East 209th Street where Queens local Dwayne said the homicide stemmed from.

(continued on page 18)
IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Diaz to Amtrak: Get on Board Metro-North Expansion in the Bronx

By DAVID CRUZ

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., enlisting a cadre of legislators, wants Amtrak to get on board with the long-awaited plan to bring Metro-North service to the East Bronx, which was supposed to have begun in April.

In a joint news conference with Westchester County Executive George Latimer, given the mutually beneficial interest in ushering more Metro-North service to the East Bronx, Diaz labeled Amtrak a Scrooge for the holdup.

“This is not a new idea,” said Diaz of the project. “This is an idea that’s been kicked around for the better half of the last three decades. We have done scoping sessions. They’ve been well-attended. Everyone knows that this is a good idea for commuters.”

The project, dubbed Penn Station Access, would divert the new trains to Penn Station instead of Grand Central Terminal, laying them on existing Amtrak lines via the Hell’s Gate line. Co-Op City, Morris Park, Parkchester and Hunts Point sections of the Bronx would each receive a station. Talked about for years, the plan would solve the “transit desert” that is the East Bronx. It also stands at raising property values across the corridor, according to officials.

For Diaz, the completion or even start of the project would add another feather in his cap as his quest for New York City mayor gets under way. Diaz, who once touted the Kingsbridge Transportation Authority (MTA) which owns the tracks. Negotiations between Amtrak and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) have stalled over the assignment of expenses related to the project.

“Every time they come to the table it’s something else,” Diaz told the Norwood News. “All they do is tell the media, ‘well we’re working on this, we’re working this,’ but what they’re not telling folks is that behind closed doors once MTA gives a little bit and gives them a little bit more they always ask for more.”

Diaz pointed to a small bridge at Bronxdale and East Tremont avenues as one example of Amtrak’s grab for more MTA-funded projects.

“That bridge has to be redone with or without those four Metro-North stations. And yet when MTA who is in negotiations with them, they want to go and pay for a portion of that bridge, Amtrak now says, ‘No you got to pay 100 percent of the bridge,’” said Diaz. “So that is not fair.”

Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez, whose 80th Assembly District stretches from Norwood to Morris Park, said “enough is enough.”

Even if Amtrak sought to advance the project, the plan can’t proceed until the completion of the East Side Access plan that would build a terminal for Long Island Rail Road trains at Grand Central Terminal. Without the spaces at Grand Central Terminal, LIRR can’t move its trains out of Penn Station.

In a statement recently given, Amtrak said the agency and “MTA executives have met frequently in recent months to try to reach agreement on a number of key issues regarding design, construction and ultimately train operation of this project, in order to ensure that the proposed expansion of Metro-North service does not adversely impact Amtrak intercity passenger rail operation, which will see a significant expansion in 2021 with the introduction of expanded Acela Express service between New York and Boston.”

EDITORIAL

Good Luck to Albany’s Freshman Class

There’s a certain level of feverish anticipation over how the new progressive Democratic majority will manage Albany in 2019. Our hope is with dignity and the chance to rein in Albany’s image as a vestige of dysfunction and opportunism.

The wish list is vast for Democrats: from single-payer healthcare to stronger rent laws favoring tenants to settling the question of banning outside income. Then there’s the question of whether New York State should become the largest state to legalize recreational use of marijuana. There’s only a few months to hammer out that controversial proposal (lawmakers look to vote on it sometime in April) that somehow found a champion in Governor Andrew Cuomo. Last year the governor called it a “gateway drug.” All we ask is consider the consequences.

With all the issues in play, the Norwood News says good luck to Albany’s newest progressive lawmakers, including the Bronx’s Senator Alessandra Biaggi. No doubt the country will be looking at your records to determine whether progressivism, seen as a light in the horizon, albeit cautiously, can really achieve equity.
By MARTIKA ORNELLA

The friendly rivalry between youth football teams in the Bronx and Harlem took a contentious turn thanks to one online petition.

Keith Spivey Jr., coach of the Bronx Buccaneers, a Norwood-based youth football program with players ranging in age from 8 to 14 years-old, created the petition to drum up support over the team’s removal from their usual Saturday practice time at Williamsbridge Oval Park. In the petition, Spivey claims the Buccaneers were pushed out by the field’s current permit holder, Richard Hernandez, for the sake of the Manhattan-based Harlem Jets.

Hernandez, once affiliated with the Buccaneers, left the team to partner with the Harlem Jets. Together the two formed the Bronx Jets. Hernandez attempted to negotiate with the Buccaneers by offering them to be absorbed by the Jets to maintain the same field access. Talks between the two teams fell apart, with the Buccaneers ultimately declining Hernandez’s offer.

“They feel that they are being removed, which isn’t the case,” Hernandez said. “I have access to a field that I once gave to the Buccaneers when I was affiliated with them. I am no longer affiliated with them.”

Much of the Buccaneers’ worries over the use of Oval Park stem largely from recruitment, which sustains their program.

The Buccaneers have practiced at Williamsbridge Oval Park for seven seasons, during the spring and summer months. Their usual Saturday practice time, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., is prime recruiting hours. They were offered the option of practicing at the Oval on Monday and Wednesday nights. Spivey declined, arguing school nights would be disorientating for their players and their families, who are accustomed to the Saturday morning fanfare at the Oval.

“The Williamsbridge Oval is a central location and it is essential to our recruiting efforts,” Spivey said. “We already share the field with another team and we recruit the same age groups. So we’re fighting for the same kids in the same area already.”

Spivey fears the impending Bronx Jets would attract more potential players, adding, “If you add a third team to that equation, somebody’s not going to survive that recruitment process.”

Jamel Wright, president of the Harlem Jets, says the move is not intended to displace Bronx footballers, arguing that a third of his players are from the Bronx. He says his primary goal is to expand a beneficial Harlem program further north.

“What you’ve done here has been okay, but things have evolved and you should be able to do a lot more for the kids in the community,” Wright said. “It’s actually very disheartening, because we at the Harlem Jets have no hidden agenda.”

Wright added that the Harlem Jets program offers team members ACT and SAT prep, grade monitoring, and critical resources that extend beyond the field. He explained, “We are absolutely in the business of trying to save lives, by helping boys turn into men,” said Wright. “I’m not saying that the other organizations don’t do that, but we put a point of emphasis on figuring out the needs of the children that we’re providing services for.”

The Buccaneers’ general manager, Tasha Andrews, also believes the stakes are higher than the game. “We teach these children about community, responsibility, having a family-orientated environment. So, it’s not just football,” she said.

Having been denied permits to practice at Allerton Ballfield, Frank Frisch Field and Harris Park, the Buccaneers’ next option would be DeWitt Clinton High School’s field, which they already utilize during the darker, fall months when Oval Park is under-lit. But according to Spivey, the high school is a recruiting nightmare for the Buccaneers.

“Clinton is closed off,” Spivey explained. “If you drive by Clinton, there’s a big gate [around the field]. You just can’t go in there, it’s on a dead street.”

The cost of using a field licensed by the Department of Education (DOE) would also be pricier for the Buccaneers. Spivey said, “I’ve been with the Bucs seven years coming, and the only place I know that the Buccaneers practice is the Williamsbridge Oval.”

“We just want to keep our home,” Andrews said. “We want the opportunity to affect the children in our community. We’ve rescued so many kids out there because we know them.”
This week we asked readers for their New Year’s resolutions and hopes for 2019.

I will try and be a better person and make better decisions and, I guess, get better at school and make my mom proud. Hopefully, the Bronx can become a cleaner place and we can reduce the pollution.
Chicago Smith
Morris Park

I’m not really giving up anything for the new year, but I guess I’d like people to be better to each other and be more friendly to each other instead of being bad. I hope the Bronx becomes a better place to live in; safer. I know it’s not that bad, but it could be better.
Nicholas Capadanno
Morris Park

I don’t have a New Year’s resolution. I just want to build upon what I did in 2018 for 2019. I think 2018 had its ups and downs. But you know what? I’m still here, so it can only. The Bronx is getting... kind of violent. I watch a lot of news and I see the different things going on, and in this day and age where there’re cameras everywhere, I can’t believe that people still try and do petty crimes and rob people’s stuff. So, my hope for the Bronx is for people in the Bronx to just love each other and not try and harm each other.
Damon Tutein
Bedford Park

My first New Year’s resolution is to stop smoking so much weed. Sorry, I just feel my picture—that I will automatically look high. I might as well be honest. Definitely cut back on the snacks. I’m actually training for a fight so I should stop smoking. I’d also like to bring more peace into the world than I do chaos. I hope in 2019 we have a more peaceful police presence because the police have been out here so heavily, and they’re shaking everybody down for guns, and I don’t know who has all these guns that they’re looking for, but I feel like it’s a disarmament of the minority community.
Aaron Miranda
Norwood

I typically do not make New Year’s resolutions, because primarily I have targets set throughout the entire year, broken up into period fragment—like quarterly, weekly and daily. And I am constantly reviewing my goals and targets and ramp up the work and adjust as needed. This is also broken down further to various avenues of my life, from my financial career to boxing, of which I have coaches for almost everything to guide and push me. I hope that someday the political and financial madness will end, but that’s a massive stretch and pretty much a dream at this point.
Uyen Nguyen
Brooklyn

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER
By DAVID GREENE

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Espaillat, Engel Keep Offices Open As Fed Gov’t. Shutdown Persists

By DAVID CRUZ

With a partial federal government shutdown under way, there will be some changes in service should it continue, but at least two Congressional representative offices will be open during the interim.

Congressman Adriano Espaillat, whose 13th Congressional District covers Norwood, will have his Fordham office open as he and congressional members attempt to hammer out a spending bill without President Donald Trump’s pledge for a $5 billion border wall.

Meantime, a spokeswoman for Espaillat said under no circumstances will he vote for a spending bill that includes funding for a border wall, which he absolutely opposes.

Espaillat’s colleague in the House of Representatives, Congressman Eliot Engel, who represents the north Bronx and parts of lower Westchester County, will also have his office open as the shutdown continues. Engel’s offices at 3655 Johnson Ave. and 177 Dreiser Loop, both in the Bronx, will operate without any disruption, according to a spokesman.

Staffers, tasked to handle constituent services, won’t see a paycheck until the federal government reopens.

“Those folks are hurting right now,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio in an impromptu press conference Dec. 22. “We have enough cash flow to get us a few weeks. But if it goes a month or more we’re going to have some very tough choices to make,” said de Blasio.

Jerome Park Fences Going to the Birds

Major work along the perimeter of the Jerome Park Reservoir is now under way, with crews expected to install a third fence to ward off pigeons.

Crews have been at the reservoir since mid-December, tearing through the reservoir’s internal fence, which will be replaced with a 12-foot fence, according to a person familiar with the project. A third fence will be erected, with crews expected to attach several wires that will crisscross the scenic reservoir. Officials with the city Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) said the wires will keep birds from landing on the water, thereby keeping pollutants out of the waterbody.

The reservoir holds unfiltered water that’s then diverted to the Croton Water Filtration Plant and to the faucets of millions of New Yorkers.

The project was introduced to the community in 2016, with members of Community Board 8 lambasting most of the design and overall purpose. A large portion of the plant falls within CB8’s borders, with Community Board 7 sharing it partially. CB7 deferred to CB8 on whether the project would receive community support. It didn’t.

The reservoir remains closed to the public, save for a few days when the DEP opens it up for public use, albeit with armed guards at the gates and no access to cameras or cell phones.

--David Cruz

Dog Found Tied to a Hydrant in the Cold, Owner Sought

Police at the 52nd Precinct are trying to locate the owner of a dog left tied to a hydrant in Norwood.

The precinct posted a picture of the pooch on Twitter pleading for anyone to find its owner. The dog was found with a fitted coat over its back at the corner of Tryon Avenue and East 211th Street just near Williamsbridge Oval Park sometime during the day. Temperature highs on Christmas Eve were in the mid-40s.

Anyone with information is asked the call the 52nd Precinct at (718) 220-5811.

--David Cruz

Photo by David Cruz

Photo courtesy 52nd Precinct
Sprain Brook Manor: 5-Star Rehab with Personalized Service

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Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committee meetings will take place at the board office, 229A E. 204th St., as follows unless otherwise noted: Education, Youth & Libraries Committee meets on Jan. 3 at Fordham Hill Oval Cooperatives, Kensington Building, 2455 Sedgwick Ave.; Traffic & Transportation Committee meets on Jan. 3; Housing, Land Use & Zoning Committee meets on Jan. 8; Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Committee meets on Jan. 9; a joint Public Safety & Quality of Life and Environmental Sanitation committees meet on Jan. 10 at 7 p.m.; Health & Human Services Committee meets on Jan. 16; Public Relations Committee meets Jan. 16; and the Executive Committee meets on Jan. 17. For more information, call the board office at (718) 933-5650.
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Stop Work Orders Issued at 2 of 4 New Norwood Projects

By JOSEPH KONIG

Ahead of what Democrats say will be an historically active legislative session in Albany, here are some notable new laws coming to the Bronx at the beginning of 2019.

Tobacco Sale Banned in Pharmacies

As part of a bill passed in 2017, New York City pharmacies will no longer sell tobacco products. The nation’s largest pharmacy chain, CVS, famously stopped selling tobacco products in 2014, but now all New York City pharmacies will join them. The law will also affect big box stores and supermarkets with pharmacy departments. According to Councilman Brad Lander, the pharmacy ban and heavy taxation of tobacco products will lead to 160,000 fewer smokers over the next three years.

New Labor Laws

In 2019, employees will now be able to take off up to 10 weeks a year to care for a new child, a sick family member or when a family member is deployed on active military service. Employees will receive 55 percent of weekly wages during their hiatus.

The scheduled minimum wage increases continue, as they will until 2021. On Dec. 31, 2018, New York City businesses with 11 or more employees were now required to pay an hourly wage of at least $15, up from the current $13 an hour. Employees at city businesses with 10 or fewer employees will see their hourly wages go up from $12 to $13.50. Outside of the five boroughs, minimum wage will go up from $11 to $12 an hour on Long Island and in Westchester County, and from $10.40 to $11.10 an hour in all other counties.

Employees of the state government and state contractors are now required to undergo annual sexual harassment prevention training.

Free Prostate Screenings

Beginning Jan. 1, health insurers in New York will be required to offer free prostate screenings to men with a prior history of prostate cancer, men age 40 and older with a family history of prostate cancer, and men 50 and over who are asymptomatic.

Prostate cancer is commonplace as cancers go (11.2 percent of men will be diagnosed, according to the federal government’s National Cancer Institute) and can be easily treatable if caught early. According to the NCI, an estimated 164,690 new cases were identified nationwide in 2018 and an estimated 29,430 men died from prostate cancer in 2018.

And the rest...

• All new, publicly accessible bathrooms in New York will now have to include diaper changing tables, including men’s restrooms.
• Beginning on Jan. 30, New York prisons will be authorized to use body scanners that detect non-metallic weapons hidden on inmates bodies.
• Volunteer firefighters with five years of service time and certain types of cancer will receive state disability coverage and death benefits. The measure is not retroactive.
• Drugstores and mail-order pharmacies will now be required to allow returns of unused prescription drugs for free. The “Drug Take Back Act,” co-sponsored by three Bronx state senators, intends to decrease prescription drug abuse and prevent improperly discarded drugs from ending up in the water supply.
Irene Ureña Perez, who was accidentally shot by Police Officer Juan Gomez of the 52nd Precinct as he was chasing down a suspect in University Heights, is suing the NYPD following the Dec. 5 shooting.

Perez, 46, who hails from Mexico, spoke inside her University Heights apartment through an interpreter alongside famed personal injury attorney Sanford Rubenstein, who announced the $10 million lawsuit.

Recuperating at home, she told reporters she underwent three surgeries. “My liver has a cut, my pancreas, my lungs—[the bullet] went through the side of my stomach, I have a lot of pain, from my chest to the bottom of my stomach. My family is devastated. I came here to work. This is a process that is huge. I feel real bad. My daughter came to study, she couldn’t even take her exam at her university. I’m going back to the hospital because I can’t breathe right.”

Perez, a daycare worker, was walking home with her mother and a small child near University Avenue and West 183rd Street, when the stray bullet pierced her abdomen, damaging several organs, according to the criminal complaint.

A roving gunfight ensued, with Gomez firing 27 shots, with many of those bullets hitting buildings and parked cars. Castillo-Concepcion exchanged gunfire, later tossing a .25 caliber semi-automatic handgun into a pile of garbage.

“The issue clearly was a reckless firing, 27 shots under the circumstances, putting innocent bystanders at risk, that’s the issue here,” said Rubenstein. “The fact of the matter is the public should not be put at risk by reckless firing by a police officer engaged in a situation in which he very well did not have to fire that many shots. Firing while running, firing shots that hit the neighboring cars, the buildings, the sidewalk as well as two innocent bystanders, a 12-year-old girl and my client. This should not be happening in this city.”

Gomez successfully fired at Castillo-Concepcion, who laid sprawled in front of a Fordham bar. Two kilograms of cocaine were found in his backpack, according to police.

Castillo-Concepcion was later charged with attempted murder and drug possession.

Gomez had struck Perez, 12-year-old girl Gabriella Hayes, and several parked cars. The little girl was released from the hospital last week.

The Police Department and Bronx District Attorney’s Office is investigating the shooting. Gomez, meantime, remains an active duty officer but has been stripped of his gun as an investigation by the NYPD’s Force Investigation Unit continues.
Hailing the Holidays at the Five-Two

The 52nd Precinct Community Council capped its year of forging community and police relations with a holiday party at Rulay Lounge on Webster Avenue, drawing residents, elected officials, and community stakeholders. The party also paid tribute to Inspector Peter Fiorillo, the Five-Two’s previous commanding officer who’s been reassigned, and retiring Police Officer Yvette Palermo-Ortega. Photos by David Cruz.

Former 52nd Precinct Commanding Officer, Inspector Peter Fiorillo (r), receives an appropriate send-off with a proclamation from Councilman Fernando Cabrera (l).

Officer John Teleca (2nd from left) is in his dress blues as he receives a citation from Councilman Fernando Cabrera (l). Crime Prevention Officer Frank Pacella (r) snaps a photo.

52nd Precinct Officer Christina Moncion (2nd from left) accepts a citation from Councilman Fernando Cabrera (l) as Crime Prevention Officer Frank Pacella takes a picture.

52nd Precinct Community Affairs Officer Crystal Reveron (l) gives a heartfelt thanks to retiring Police Officer Yvette Palermo-Ortega (r), where the two were partners at one point.

Barbara Stronczer, President of the Bedford Mosholu Community Association (r), pays tribute with flowers to retiring Police Officer Yvette Palermo-Ortega (l) for her years of community service.

Some of the kids from the NYPD’s Explorers Program join retiring Police Officer Yvette Palermo-Ortega at the holiday party celebrating her retirement. Palermo-Ortega ran the program while on active duty.

Retiring Officer Yvette Palermo-Ortega (r in both photos) receives a proclamation from Councilman Fernando Cabrera (l), and citation and flowers from 52nd Precinct Community Council President Brenda Caldwell (l), both honoring her for her years of service.

52nd Precinct Community Council President Brenda Caldwell (l) speaks to guests at the holiday party alongside Deputy Inspector Thomas Alps (c).
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**How to Start on a Plant-Based Diet**

By JESSICA SHAPIRO, MS RD CDN CDE

A plant-based diet is a way of eating that focuses on eating vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, beans and legumes; with few or no animal products such as fish, milk, cheese, eggs, or meat.

Choosing to follow a plant-based diet, and how strict to be, is a personal choice. Some people decide to follow a plant-based, or vegan, diet and do not eat any animal-based foods. Others take a more flexible approach and just have a few meat-free meals during the week.

Research has shown plant-based diets can boost your health, decrease risk of heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers, while helping you stay within a healthy weight. In addition to improving your health, eating fewer animal products can also benefit the environment.

If this is something you want to try, below is an easy way to switch to a more plant-based diet:

The more plants you eat; the more benefits you will receive. Instead of bacon with breakfast, have a slice of avocado. Or, for lunch you can have a salad with vegetables. For dinner, try a new whole grain, such as barley.

Make plant foods the main event of your meal. Try having vegetables with a side of meat instead of meat with a side of vegetables.

Join the Meatless Mondays movement by replacing one meal a week.

For more information, check out www.meatlessmondays.com, and for plant-based recipes visit www.forks-overknives.com.

Cook more often at home. Revise your favorite recipes to make them plant-based. One example is replacing the meat in your famous chili with beans.

Set yourself up for success by taking small steps, and setting up an appointment with a registered dietitian nutritionist for personal assistance on how a plant-based plan can work for you.

Jessica Shapiro is a dietician with Montefiore Health System’s Office of Community & Population Health.

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**Fired Up for the Holidays at CHAM**

**Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System**

FIREFIGHTERS FROM ENGINE 62, Ladder 32 on East Gun Hill Road delivered toys and shared some holiday spirit with patients at the Children’s Hospital at Montefiore during their annual visit on Dec. 17. Santa Claus also made an appearance at the yearly tradition.

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OUT & ABOUT

EDITOR'S PICK

Free Fitness Fun

The Williamsbridge Oval presents the following free classes during January. A lock is required. For more information, call (718) 817-8700.

Bodywork Details - Tuesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., for teens, adults and seniors. Includes use of barbells and weights. Each week focuses on a different body part. Equipment is provided.

Zumba - Sundays from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., for all ages. Includes Latin, international and popular music to create dance routines.

Onstage

Lehman College’s Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents Ballet Hispánico, Jan. 19 at 8 p.m., featuring contemporary dance with a Latin program. Tickets are $25 to $55; $75/VIP; $10/to age 12. VIP tickets include pre-concert reception at 6:30 p.m. with wine and hors d’oeuvres. For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

Exhibits

The New York Botanical Garden offers its annual Holiday Train Show, featuring miniature replicas of many NYC building replicas made from natural materials including bark, twigs, fruit and pine cones; and All Aboard With Thomas & Friends, featuring a fun-filled sing-along mini-performance adventure (two to four performances daily); both through Jan. 21. For more detailed information, show schedule, rates, and tickets, call (718) 817-8700.

The Bronx County Historical Society presents a mid-winter event, Jan. 22 followed by cocktails and dinner from 6 to 9 p.m. at Zero Otto Nove, 2357 Arthur Ave. $25 will benefit the Society collection and historic preservation. For more information and to RSVP, call (718) 881-8900 by Jan. 14.

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.

Cuban Art Show free exhibition, We Have Ire: Afro-Cuban in the U.S., is scheduled through March 9, 2019 at the Casita Maria Gallery, 928 Simpson St., 6th floor, weekdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. It documents the stories of four Cuban artists, focusing on their influences and dreams. A live performance of excerpts will be held on March 9 from 2 to 2:45 p.m. combined with a Family Storytelling Workshop from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 589-2230.

Library Events

Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children ages 5 to 12: (preregistration required):

Library Events will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 15: Kids Science at 3 p.m.

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Library Events

Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents for children ages 5 to 12 (preregistration required):

- Arts & Crafts at 3:30 p.m.: Hands on projects using a variety of skills, Jan. 6 and 13. Adults can enjoy Computer Basics: Jan. 10 at 2 p.m.; and films at 2:30 p.m.: “Chappaquiddick,” on Jan. 5 and “Edge of Tomorrow,” on Jan. 12. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

Moshulu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: Crafty Fridays at 3 p.m.: (ages 5 to 12), crafts, Jan. 4 and 11; STEM: Kids Science at 3 p.m.: Colors, Jan. 8 and 15; and Toddler Storytime at 11 a.m.: (ages 18 months to 3 years), interactive stories, action songs, fingerplays, and crafts, Jan. 10 and 17. Teens/young adults can enjoy: film: “Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation,” on Jan. 12 at 1:30 p.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 Afternoon Arts: (ages 6 to 12), arts & crafts project, Jan. 7 at 3:30 p.m.; and City’s First Readers (Literacy Inc.): (ages 5 years), parent workshop, read aloud and singing; receive copy of the featured book and craft and resource guide, Jan. 17 at 10:30 a.m. Adults can enjoy: Computer Basics at noon: Jan. 3, 10 and 17. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Jan. 7 for the next publication date of Jan. 17.
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Free Oven Safe Knob Covers
The Office of Councilman Ritchie Torres is giving away free safe oven knob covers to prevent accidental fires in apartments. Free knob covers can be picked up at 2546 Hoffman St., weekdays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. while supplies last. For more information, call the office at (718) 842-8100.

Mulchfest
Live Christmas trees can be recycled at the following locations from Jan. 4 to 13 as part of the New City Parks Department’s annual Mulchfest: Williamsbridge Oval Park, Reservoir Oval and Reservoir Place; Kossuth Playground, Moshulu Parkway North and Kossuth Avenue; and Poe Park, Grand Concourse and East 193rd Street. A free bag of mulch can be picked up if tree is dropped off at Van Cortlandt Park Golf Course, Bailey Avenue and Van Cortlandt Park South, on Jan. 12 or 13 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, call 311.

Nonprofit Grants Now Available
Resident-led groups in low-income communities and Title I public schools can apply for a Neighborhood Grant of up to $3,000. A workshop in how to fill out the application correctly takes place on Jan. 8 at 6 p.m. at 4035 White Plains Rd. For more information, call (718) 547-8884 or go to the Citizens Committee website at www.citizensnyc.org/grants.

Heating Assistance
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/2Fm062M 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.

Excelsior Scholarship
Applications for the spring 2019 term for tuition-free college at a CUNY or SUNY school are available through Jan. 14. To qualify, students must be pursuing an undergraduate degree at CUNY or SUNY, be enrolled in at least 12 credits per semester, and live in a combined federal adjusted gross income of $110,000 or less. To apply, go to https://on.ny.gov/2o6ZOzL, or call (318) 473-1574.

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.

Crime Victims Support
Crime Victims Support Services, a 501(c)3 group at 1138 Neill Ave., offers victims help in navigating the criminal justice system. Free confidential services include claim assistance, case follow-up, crisis counseling, and victim advocacy. The group accepts donations. For more information, call (718) 823-4955.

Tenant Support Unit
The Mayor’s Tenant Support Unit, which helps New Yorkers at risk of eviction, will be available for assistance at the following dates, times, and locations: Jan. 3, 10, and 17 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Office of Assemblyman Victor Pichardo, 2175 Jerome Ave.; Jan. 3 and 17 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at UNHP Refuge House, 2715 Bainbridge Ave.; and Jan. 4 and 18 from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Office of Assemblyman Jose Rivera, 1 Fordham Plaza.
Saunders was found shot. Tyrone Franks, a Norwood resident living near where Saunders was found, was charged in the fatal shooting. Franks was no stranger to police, having been a registered sex offender since 2004.

Death once again came to Norwood on May 29, when 18-year-old Damion C. Gilbert, Jr., a lifelong Norwood resident, was stabbed to death following a nighttime barbecue. A makeshift memorial was set up in front of where Gilbert drew his final breaths at the corner of East 211th and DeKalb Avenue. Police later charged Roshawn Pine with murder, manslaughter, and weapons charges.

Five more homicides were reported in 2018, the most recent happening on Dec. 10 when 17-year-old Angel Reyes-Godoy was pushed into oncoming traffic near 2670 Bainbridge Ave., killing him. Police later determined that Angel was the unintended victim of the Trinitarios gang, which gained greater notoriety early this year for another killing of an unintended target.

The killings contributed to a rise in overall serious crime, rising 5.91 percent as of press time.

Trinitarios
Gang violence became front and center at the midway mark in 2018, when 15-year-old Lesandro “Junior” Guzman-Feliz was killed in an incident that stunned the world. Junior, a baby-faced teen from Belmont, was repeatedly stabbed outside Cruz and Chiky Grocery on June 20 allegedly by members of the Trinitarios. The police ruled Junior was the victim of mistaken identity.

The horrific incident was captured on surveillance video, putting the gross reality of gang violence on the forefront of the public’s conscience. Periods of mourning by the community was soon followed by outrage. Residents sought justice for the young man, becoming a popular Twitter hashtag thousands of times. Elected officials sounded the alarm on the dangers of gangs, prompting Councilman Ritchie Torres to pump $1 million in funding towards anti-gang measures.

Meantime, police launched an aggressive pursuit in finding suspects responsible for the teen’s death, eventually rounding up 14 members of the Trinitarios. They faced numerous charges, including murder. Police later determined that a feud between two Trinitario subsets sparked the violence, with Junior becoming the unintended victim. The incident became the inspiration for a five-part series by the Norwood News, WFUV Radio, and BronxNet Television dubbed “Bronx Connections: The Gang Impact,” which examined the community’s impact on gang violence in the Bronx.

Change of the Political Guard
It was certainly the year of the woman for the borough’s political spectrum, with two heavyweights Democrats toppled by newcomers in what’s been viewed as a referendum of the old way of politics.

Locally, Nathalia Fernandez, chief of staff to Mark Gjonaj, ascended to her old boss’s 80th Assembly District seat to become the new Assemblywoman representing Norwood. Fernandez locked in her nomination ahead of the April 24 special election where she became the interim Assemblywoman. She proved her mettle in the September Democratic Primary, beating challenger Gene DeFrancis.

Over in the East Bronx, in a cautionary tale a la the “Tortoise vs. Hare,” political newcomer Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez defeated Congressman Joe Crowley in a contest that sent shockwaves across the Bronx and to the other side of the country. Ocasio-Cortez had given it her all in her race against Crowley, who was considered a successor to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and appeared to underestimate his opponent.

But on the night of the June 26 congressional primary, a stunned Ocasio-Cortez beat Crowley for the 14th Congressional District seat in what was viewed as a David vs. Goliath defeat. Crowley’s defeat lines up to the big-
gest defeat of them all—state Sen. Jeff Klein, whose deal with the Republicans in 2011 came back to bite him. Klein, leader of the Independent Democratic Conference, a group of seven breakaway Democrats who caucused with the Republicans, an unusual setup, was defeated by Alessandra Biaggi. Biaggi, granddaughter of the late Bronx Congressman Mario Biaggi, ran on a platform that sought to turn the 34th Senate District into a true-blue Democratic stronghold.

With a fraction of Klein's $3 million campaign war chest, the millennial Biaggi utilized social media to amplify her message. In the end, voters gave Biaggi a chance, unseating Klein 17,243 to 15,736. Riverdale swung the election, effectively ending Klein's 20-year political career. His future plans have so far been kept under wraps. Following the election, Klein made no public statements or appearances for months.

The defeat capped a year of headaches for Klein, who was accused of sexual harassment by a former staffer. Klein's finish forced the Bronx Democratic Party to shift gears some, scrapping its original plan to put Councilman Andrew Cohen on the path to a judgeship. Behind the scenes, Klein had unsuccessfully lobbied for the job following his loss, which would have opened up Cohen's 11th Council District seat. The seat was eyed by Riverdale community advocates Eric Dinowitz and Daniel Padernacht, with the latter already considering a run and the former just seriously considering it. In the end, things were kept exactly where they were.

Developement

Bedford Park became the target of intense real estate speculation, as more and more homes were put up for sale, with developers offering lucrative buyouts to homeowners. Their presence was plainly evident along East 202nd Street, where a massive building is slated to go up, once again chipping away at Bedford Park's small-town feel. The plan by CAMBA has drawn fierce criticism by Community Board 7, who believed high-rise developments simply didn't belong in Bedford Park. The proposal by CAMBA is still open in the area, and it's only in 2019 when the community will learn the fate of those projects.

Norwood News' Milestone

The Norwood News achieved a milestone, hitting the 30-year mark in providing news coverage to the northwest Bronx. A gala took place at Lehman College on Nov. 1, with past and present faces breaking bread and showing their support for the community paper.

Four awards were handed out to various people and one institution that have made the paper a bedrock of the community. They went to Bronx journalist Gary Axelbank, housing advocate Sally Dunford, Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, and longtime Norwood News proofreader Judy Noy, in what was a surprise honor for Noy.

The Norwood News will be here next year, recapping the major stories for 2019.

Neighborhood Natives Lost

The latter half of 2018 saw the loss of two cultural giants with roots in the Norwood area. Stan Lee, the comic book pioneer and media mogul, died from cardiac arrest caused by congestive heart failure in November at the age of 95.

Known for his New York-native superheroes (although notably never a Bronx-based one), Lee grew up in University Heights and attended DeWitt Clinton High School at the same time as fellow comic book giants Will Eisner and Bob Kane.

Then, with two weeks left in the year, Bronx icon Penny Marshall, who grew up at 3235 Grand Concourse and attended Kingsbridge's Walton High School, died at age 75 from complications of diabetes.

Marshall was known for her co-starring role in the 1970s TV sitcom, "Laverne & Shirley," and her ground-breaking directorial career that included 1988's "Big" and 1992's "A League of Their Own."
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