



# NORWOOD NEWS

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**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER:**  
**STATE OF THE BRONX REAX | PG. 4**



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## DECATUR AVENUE POSTAL WOE

*Foul odor to blame in troubled Van Cott Station's current closure*



Photo by David Greene

**A NORWOOD RESIDENT** attempts to enter the Van Cott Post Office at 3102 Decatur Ave. off East 204th Street on Feb. 21 which had closed its doors.

**By DAVID GREENE**

For the third time in three months the Van Cott Station of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) located at 3102 Decatur Ave. off East 204th Street closed, with a temporary mobile office providing limited services during the interim. The small, but popular post

office will remain closed indefinitely—and Norwood residents bracing for a longer walk to another nearby post office say this closure “stinks” to high heaven.

USPS spokesman Xavier Hernandez confirmed the temporary closure that began on Feb. 21, citing a concern

for “safety and sanitation.” In a follow-up email several days later, Hernandez did not elaborate what those safety and sanitation concerns were.

The day after the temporary closure, a USPS employee removing the day’s mail left at the temporary truck into the building, of-

fered, “No, it’s closed. I don’t know, it’s a smell.” Asked if an animal could have become trapped and died within the building’s walls, the worker replied, “I don’t know, they just told me it was a smell. It’s open with the mobile truck. That’s going to be the office

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## IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

## State of the Bronx Pores Over Decade of Change

By JOSEPH KONIG

With some subtle and not-so-subtle hints at his quest for City Hall, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. gave his 10th State of the Borough speech on Thursday, taking credit for nearly a decade of dramatic crime reduction and increased economic investment.

Diaz also cited the challenges of housing, transit, education and other issues that he said face both the borough and the city.

He also indirectly distanced himself from anti-gay comments recently made by his father, who did not attend the speech.

"The Bronx is thriving," the borough president proclaimed, recalling his first State of the Borough speech almost 10 years ago in which he spoke about "the need for better paying jobs, to fight crime in our streets, encouraging new development of all types, and the need to unite as one Bronx."

**Listing Accomplishments**

Speaking to supporters and elected officials at the campus of the former Samuel Gompers High School in Mott Haven, Diaz listed the delivery of his original promises, citing six straight years of less than 100 homicides, an unemployment rate slashed in half, and large-scale projects such as the planned East Bronx Metro-North access project and ongoing revitalization of Orchard Beach.

Still, with the opioid epidemic, NYCHA mismanagement and a floundering MTA, Diaz said there is still much work to be done. That includes "any money collected through congestion pricing" being earmarked for New York City Transit, as well as the city taking over the transit system from the state.

**Justice and Jails**

On criminal justice reform, he reaffirmed his support for ending cash bail and bringing reforms with the legalization of marijuana, including "the state



Photo by David Greene

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT** Ruben Diaz Jr. breaks down the progress made for the borough over the last nine years in his latest State of the Borough address.

pardoning and expunging marijuana convictions," and ensuring "that marginalized communities have a chance to profit from a new cannabis market."

With the gradual planned closing of the Rikers Island jail, Diaz also reiterated his support of the Mott Haven community's opposing the possible siting of a new jail at the NYPD tow pound there, pushing instead for building a new jail next to the Bronx Hall of Justice.

**Camp Junior**

Seated in the front row with guest speaker U.S. Senator Charles Schumer and most of the borough's delegation to Albany, including Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Bronx Democratic County Committee Chairman and Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, was Leandro Feliz, the mother of Lesandro "Junior" Guzman-Feliz.

In honor of the 15-year-old killed outside a Belmont bodega by Trinitario gang members last June, Diaz announced the creation of "Camp Junior,"

a summer sleep away camp in the Hudson Valley that will bring hundreds of kids upstate each year. Run by the not-for-profit Fresh Air Fund, funding for the camp will come from the Fund, Diaz's office and the New York State Department of Parks.

"His candle was dimmed too soon," Diaz said of the murdered youth, "but he can be a shining light for generations."

**The Odd Couple**

Noticeably absent was the borough president's father, City Councilman Reverend Ruben Diaz Sr., who lost his City Council committee chairmanship after saying earlier this month that the gay community controlled city politics. Diaz Sr. still refuses to apologize despite calls for him to resign. At the time, Diaz Jr. stopped short of asking his father to resign, but called on him to apologize.

The BP also made sure to mention the LGBTQ community minutes into his speech on Thursday, saying: "We are a colorful kaleidoscope of men, women, mothers and fathers, families, gay and straight, people who have spent their entire lives here, and new immigrants alike who are looking to build a better life."

**Bodega Boys Back Boro Boss**

One of the highlights of the event was a promotional video featuring the borough president, made by Desus Nice and Joel Martinez, known as The Kid Mero, two Bronx-based comedians who have leveraged their popular podcast, *Bodega Boys*, into multiple TV shows and a late-night talk show on the premium cable channel Showtime that debuted Feb. 21.

In the video, the comedians suggest Diaz might be interested in pursuing a run for the White House. "No," Diaz responds, "but I would like to go to another house perhaps on the East Side of New York City, called Gracie Mansion."

*With additional reporting by Bob Kappstatter*

## Public and Community Meetings

The **52ND PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meets Feb. 28 at 3400 Paul Ave. at 7 p.m. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.

The **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meets March 6 at 8 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., Apt. B1 (lobby floor). For more information, email [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

The **NYPD'S BUILD THE BLOCK** meeting for Fordham and University Heights residents living within the 52nd Precinct jurisdiction takes place March 7 at 6 p.m. at the Bronx Family Federation, 2628 Davidson Ave. For more information, call (718) 220-5824.



## EDITORIAL

# The Lessons Amazon Could've Learned from the Kingsbridge Armory Project

Much of the talk across the city has been focused on its failed attempt to keep Amazon locked into a deal that would have brought a state-of-the-art campus to Long Island City, Queens.

Critics wanted more than the estimated 25,000 jobs it promised to bring. The outright resentment over how the deal was rushed through with very little input from the existing residents who live in New York City, according to reports, riled progressive Democrats to organize. Hindsight being 20-20, perhaps Amazon's stakeholders could've headed to the northernmost borough in the city to find how communities are won over by massive projects.

It's in the Bronx where the Kingsbridge Armory is poised, albeit in the slowest possible manner, to become the world's largest ice skating rink, at least that's the last the paper has heard. Dubbed the Kingsbridge National

Ice Center (KNIC), the plan will ultimately see nine Olympic-size ice-skating rinks and a 5,000-seat arena built into the cavernous project. Total cost of the project runs \$355 million.

Skepticism surrounded the project, which was picked over another commercial project dubbed Mercado Mirabo. In the end, the KNIC project had won over the community, thanks to developer Kevin Parker's agreement to a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) pushed largely by the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition as a way of avoiding displacement while also offering existing residents, many who feared evictions in the long term, a chance to reap some of the proposed benefits. This included a living wage of \$10 (\$11 for those without insurance), and guaranteed jobs for Bronx residents. Amazon never outlined a comprehensive plan and was severely vil-

lainized for it.

It's the CBA, agreed upon well before the New York City Council approved the project in December 2013, that locked in existing community support. And it's intended to activate the moment the project is up and running.

It's clear that the KNIC project has been stuck in first gear for the last six years. In March 2018, Parker sent a letter to supporters telling them that the project would see shovels in the ground 8 to 10 months later. So far nothing's happened. But finances and progress aside, the project was embraced by the community, thanks to the CBA.

Amazon, one of the richest companies on the planet, could've offered some variation of this to appease the progressive movement that single-handedly reversed the deal. They slightly did through its payments in lieu of property taxes, where half the payments would be

placed in an infrastructure fund to improve streets and sidewalks surrounding the Amazon campus. But that agreement is not the same as a document directly outlining community needs.

But progressives take umbrage when big companies won't speak directly to the very people who live there, opting instead to talk to lawmakers whose aspirations for higher office meant they wanted to see this deal passed badly. Negotiating a deal in a smoke-filled room, especially in New York City, doesn't bode well. Bronx progressives can tell you that.

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## Letters To The Editor

### PA Office Useless?

Any public opinion poll can tell you that the average citizen believes taxpayers would be better off if the useless Office of Public Advocate was abolished. "Special Election for NYC Public Advocate's Race Set for 2/26" (In The Public Interest by Joseph Konig 2/14 - 2/27/19). It has only provided temporary employment for past public advocates Mark Green, Betsy Gotbaum, Bill de Blasio and most recently, Letitia James. All four used this office as a stepping stone to run for higher office, either New York Mayor or State Attorney General.

All engaged in a nonstop series of press conferences, news releases, issuance of various reports, letters to the editor, guest columns in newspapers and publicity stunts for years. All of this was at taxpayers' expense to raise

their respective name identification with voters and grease the wheels for running for another public office.

New York City will have a \$92 billion budget in fiscal year 2019 with over 230,000 employees. This is greater than most states and many nations. Members of each 59 community planning boards, their district managers, along with every municipal agency, provide better customer service to residents than any public advocate does. The same is true for New York City Council members, borough presidents and city comptroller who also periodically conduct audits of municipal agencies. The Office of Public Advocate just duplicates these functions with taxpayers paying twice for the same services.

No one would notice if the Office of Public Advocate was abolished. Life

for New York City residents would go on without any significant adverse impacts. Funding for the Office of Public Advocate would be better spent on more critical municipal services such as transportation, police, fire, sanitation or education.

**Larry Penner  
Long Island**

### Amazon Fallout

Governor Andrew Cuomo claims that "Losing Amazon was bad government. It makes me sick to my stomach." I have never voted for Cuomo for governor, nor would I give him a vote for president. The thought of doing so makes me sick to my stomach.

Senator Bernie Sanders introduced legislation last year calling on Amazon to pay living wages because their workers currently need federal assistance for food, housing and health care. Amazon responded with raises of 25 cents to 55 cents an hour. One worker who had not gotten a raise in years got a 40 cent jump up to \$13.15 an hour. Still a poverty wage.

But Amazon owner Jeff Bezos, who's the richest man in the world, needed a \$3 billion tax break to come here? He's fanatically anti-union and his warehouse workers have been known to [relieve themselves] in cups because they're not given enough time to go to the bathroom.

Amazon is at least as bad as Walmart. But since Bezos gives money to Democrats, that makes him okay?

Cuomo says of the failed Amazon deal, "What happened is the greatest tragedy that I have ever seen since I have been in government." Really? Worse than 9/11, the Iraq War or mass shootings?

Is it worse than 9/11 victims again having to beg Congress to provide adequate funding for the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund? Is it worse than all the veterans who are not getting the medical help they need? All other western democracies provide health care for all. We don't even take care of our heroes.

**Richard Warren  
Van Cortlandt Village**

**Get Results of NYC Public Advocate's Race at [www.norwoodnews.org](http://www.norwoodnews.org)**

# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week we asked readers their thoughts on Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.'s State of the Borough address and their thoughts on the borough's state.



The speech was good, but life in the borough could be better because in this borough there still are numerous train stations that still aren't wheelchair-accessible. There are some railroad stations that are wheelchair-accessible. He mentioned bringing the Metro-North New Haven Line to this borough. No. That should be a subway train line, not a railroad train line, because that means we will have to pay a premium fare. He also needs to advertise these events on his website. This [State of the Borough] event was e-mailed to me, but not advertised on his website.

**William Stamford, Jr.**  
Van Cortlandt Village



It's great that the Bronx is up, man. I've been a Bronx native most of my life. Still here and I'm glad the Bronx is moving up. That's the most important thing; that we're getting things done. I know my neighborhood is great. Things that he said, there's so much going on and we need more. Even though I'm in a safe neighborhood, I still would like to see more police on my block. There should be more of a presence at the train station and even though it's a low-crime area, they're still not there.

**Eugene Goldstein**  
Pelham Bay



I found it so inspiring. As a lifelong resident of the Bronx, I found the borough president's speech to be very enlightening, empowering and it just wants you to do more to give back to our community. Education is important and learning about the H.E.R.O. school [Health, Education and Research Occupation H.S.] and how the young people can spend six years to work on their associate's degree, I thought that was interesting. Also housing is a big problem, especially with NYCHA, especially the conditions that our neighbors live in and improvements that are required.

**Thalia Lindquist**  
Longwood



I thought it was an excellent speech. Our borough president has improved the Bronx in so many ways. I've been here for many years and when I travel through the Bronx, I'm proud to be in the Boogie Down Bronx. He's helping to improve NYCHA, he's working with the seniors and our children improving their education. He believes in education and that's the best part I love about him, because he knows that we must make it possible for the youth to know that it's possible that they can become something.

**Barbara Gibson-Lagrang**  
Williamsbridge



He gave a great speech because he described what the Bronx has gone through and how it's improving every day, especially how business and housing is expanding. One thing he said that was true: we don't need a jail here. We want to build more housing, have more businesses for people because it's important. We can build an Amazon, even though I was against it. It's better to have a business like that than a jail. The state of the Bronx is strong.

**Pascual Gomez**  
Hunts Point



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# NEWS BRIEFS

By **ALONDRA VASQUEZ**  
And **DAVID CRUZ**  
**Man Shot in Car**

According to the 52nd Precinct, on Feb. 16 a 27-year-old man was shot while sitting inside of his parked car. The incident happened on East 199th Street and the Grand Concourse in Bedford Park. NYPD needs help identifying the shooter, described as a Hispanic or white male, around 20 to 30 years old. The victim was taken to St. Barnabas Hospital in critical but stable condition.

If you have any information regarding this incident, call NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at (800) 577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, (888) 57-PISTA (74782). All calls are kept confidential.

## Hair Bias Illegal

The New York City Commission on Human Rights has made it illegal to discriminate against someone based on their hairstyle. The enforcement rules now "protects the rights of New Yorkers to maintain natural hair or hairstyles that are closely associated with their racial, ethnic or cultural identities." Anyone discriminating against someone with locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, and fades, commonly worn by persons of color, can now face fines upwards of \$250,000.

## Weiner Released in Bronx

*New York Post* reported Anthony Weiner, the 54-year-old ex-congressman, has been released from prison. After serving 15 months of his 21-month federal prison sentence for sexting with a 15-year-old, Weiner will now serve the next three months in a Fordham halfway house. He will be released on May 14 for good behavior, which took off three months of his sentence. In 2011 Weiner resigned from Congress after he was forced to admit he sent graphic photos to women he met online. In 2016 he had an online relationship with an underage teen from North Carolina, leading to a guilty plea that sent him to prison.



Photo by José A. Giralt

**CB7 CHAIRMAN JOHN SNIDER** (r) oversees a meeting of Community Board 7's Housing, Land Use, & Zoning Committee. The meeting was held inside CB7's office on Feb. 21.

## CB7, Serving as Mediator, Looks for Resolve in Stagg/Tenants Feud

By **JOSÉ A. GIRALT**

Community Board 7 is finding itself in the middle of a tug-of-war between tenants from 2985, 2987, and 2999 Webster avenues, collectively named The Bedford Park Manor, and its buildings' owner, the Stagg Group. At issue are conditions inside the properties that opened four years ago, leading the recent trend of major development for the Norwood/Bedford Park area.

At the last meeting of CB7's Housing, Land Use, & Zoning Committee meeting on Feb. 21, chairman John Snider made clear that tenants from the buildings have been heard from but representatives from the Stagg Group have yet to appear in person. "We need to hear from them [the Stagg Group], we want to hear from them," said Snider.

The meeting was to be held on Feb.

12 but was rescheduled because of a snowstorm that produced icy conditions. Even though both tenants and Stagg Group representatives were invited to the original meeting, no one showed up at the Feb. 21 gathering. Tenants hoped to address complaints they filed recently against the three properties, which included the presence of bedbugs, a growing mold problem, sporadic power outages, and the loss of heat and hot water.

In January, Shannon Terrell took her complaint of shoddy repairs to the Bronx Housing Court. Led by Zxavier Simpson, a tenant at 2985 Webster Ave., residents are organizing to increase pressure on the Stagg Group to improve their response to complaints. In an email to the *Norwood News*, Mark Stagg, owner of the Stagg Group, said all five HP actions filed by Terrell

and Simpson were dismissed in Bronx County Housing Court, with a judge saying the claims had no validity.

As a push for resolve grows, the Stagg Group sought to clarify some complaints published in previous articles by the *Norwood News*.

In a meeting with a *Norwood News* reporter on Feb. 22, three members from the Stagg Group explained that they are aware of the complaints, have responded to them, and look forward to attending the next meeting of CB7 housing committee in March.

Austin A. Graham, director of business development at the Stagg Group, emphasized that the real estate firm takes "complaints seriously. We always have our tenants' back."

The Stagg Group recently rolled out a web app to stay updated on mainte-

(continued on page 14)

## Norwood Dog Beater Sentenced

A Norwood man has been sentenced to two years in jail for beating a dog so badly it lost an eye while suffering severe injuries. Dwayne Smith, 28,

pled guilty to Aggravated Cruelty to Animals for the incident that happened Feb. 21, 2018 at the corner of Wayne Avenue and East Gun Hill Road in Norwood. Smith had gotten into an argument with the dog's owner and

family members, later punching the dog so hard it sent her up in the air and hitting a brick wall. Smith cannot own an animal for 10 years and must register with the New York City Animal Abuse Registry.



# Arrests Made in Teen's Stabbing Death, First Homicide for 52nd Pct. in '19

By **BOB KAPPSTATTER**

Two young men were under arrest as police hunted for a third suspect in connection with what police sources called a revenge stabbing death of a Fordham teenager earlier this month.

Seventeen-year-old Pompey "Blizz" Pernell became the 52nd Precinct's first homicide victim of the year after he was attacked by three young males shortly after 7 p.m. on Feb. 13, near East 193rd Street and Decatur Avenue, a known gang and narcotics sales area in the precinct.

Police said the three attackers surrounded Pompey and one of them stabbed him multiple times in the chest. He staggered down the block into a corner bodega where he collapsed. Pompey, of 2554 Marion Ave., was rushed by ambulance to St. Barnabas Medical Center, where he was

later pronounced dead.

Detectives believe the stabbing involved revenge against the victim, who was arrested in December for allegedly slashing another youth on the wrist and left hand. He was charged with assault and criminal possession of a knife, and was awaiting trial.

Hector Calderone, 20, and Jason Ramirez, 20, both of 215 E. 197th St., were arrested a few days after the attack on Pompey and charged with second degree murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a weapon. They were ordered held without bail at their arraignment in Bronx Criminal Court on Feb. 18.

A police source said Pompey's attackers are affiliated with the 94Bloods gang.

Police said they are still seeking Justin Flores, 19, of 315 E. 187th St., as a suspect in the attack. A police source

said Flores is believed to have been the actual stabber.

Pompey was killed where another teen was killed two blocks away. That killing was also gang-related, police said at the time.

It was also less than a mile away from where knife and machete-wielding suspects of the deadly Trinitarios gang members dragged Lesandro (Junior) Guzman-Feliz from a bodega last summer and stabbed and slashed him to death. The youth managed to stagger two blocks to St. Barnabas Medical Center, where he was later pronounced dead.

Pompey's death marks the first reported homicide for the precinct covering Norwood, Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge Heights, and University Heights. It comes two months earlier than last year's first homicide in the Five-Two, which happened on April 23 at 3152 Hull Ave., off East 204th Street.

## Homeless Man Missing From Norwood Shelter



**A HOMELESS MAN** living in a Norwood shelter was reported missing on Jan. 6 at 10 p.m. Clemente Garcia, 53, was last seen at 3600 Jerome Ave., a homeless shelter that opened more than a year ago. According to the 52nd Precinct, Garcia is described as Hispanic, 5'9" tall, and weighing 130 lbs. Anyone with information in regard to Garcia's disappearance can call NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at (800) 577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish (888) 57-PISTA (74782), or texting tips to hotline 274637. Calls are kept confidential.

**-SHA-NIA ALSTON**

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# BRONX CONNECTIONS: THE HEALTH IMPACT

## Part 1 of 5

*The Norwood News, WFUV Radio, and BronxNet Television present a five-part series on health-related struggles affecting residents of the Bronx.*

## At \$1200 a Month, Managing Diabetes Puts a Dent on Bronx Family's Budget

By THERESA SCHLIEP of



Elbia Cabral of Highbridge knows a lot about insulin. She knows the different kinds of long acting and short acting insulin, the cheap brands, and the pricier brands. It's been a year and a half since 12-year-old Elizabeth was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. And it's been an adjustment for the whole family. Now, Elbia worries about her daughter's health, and has plenty of questions on her management.

"[I]s she going to be doing her insulin herself?" asked Elbia, wondering if her daughter will forget her insulin pen if she goes out with friends.

Elizabeth has since gotten used to monitoring her blood sugar and pricking her finger. As an added way of ensuring she stays healthy, the family adopted a diabetes assist dog, Flower, who can smell scents in Elizabeth's blood sugar.

They've also had to adjust their lives to afford the insulin and medication Elizabeth needs. At around \$1200 a month, or \$14,400 a year, her care competes with the price of rent in some neighborhoods. So, the family downsized and cut corners. They moved out of their own apartment into their immediate family's apartment to save on rent. Elizabeth dropped tennis, piano lessons and cheerleading; she didn't mind the piano lessons or tennis, but does miss cheerleading. And Elbia perused eBay for cheaper testing strips.

"We overused our credit cards in the beginning. That was the only way," said Elbia. "So we ended up with a lot of debt for something that wasn't her fault, not our fault, nobody's fault. But there we were."

Insulin prices have gone up dramatically over the past decade. According to a report from a working



Image still by BronxNet Television

**ELIZABETH CABRAL AND** her mother Elbia inside their Highbridge home. Elbia holds several packs of insulin Elizabeth regularly takes.

group with the American Diabetes Association, insulin prices tripled from 2002 to 2013. And they've doubled again since then. Back when Elizabeth was diagnosed, she didn't have health insurance. The family paid roughly \$4000 a month for all of her supplies.

Elizabeth has health insurance now, and Elbia said she's grateful for the coverage. But even with the insurance—covering long- and short-acting insulin, lancets, testing strips, pumps, alcohol, lotions—the price of staying healthy is quite expensive. Elbia said this monthly expenditure has caused the family financial stress.

"It's frustrating. I was at a point where I was like, 'you know what, I can't,'" she said. She ended up taking a personal leave from work for three months.

The Cabrals aren't alone. She knows other Bronx parents of diabetics who have to reuse testing strips, or at least ration their insulin. A report in the *Journal of the American Medicine Association Internal Medicine* shows as many as one in four with diabetes in the United States have rationed their insulin.

Julianne Dimaio says she's seen diabetics struggle to afford insulin and other medications. She's the Diabetes Clinical Program Manager for the Institute for Family Health. They have offices throughout New York City and operate Bronx Health REACH, working to combat health disparities in black and Latino communities.

Dimaio and her team work to help patients navigate diabetes and managing their health. But she said it can be tricky for patients to get what they need.

"There are all these roadblocks for the patient to pick up the insulin, that then the office has to deal with," she said. "Meanwhile, the poor patient who wants to take the insulin and needs it, can't get it."

There are serious repercussions for those who do not or cannot take care of their diabetes. Type 2 diabetics who mismanage their treatment in the long-term frequently develop kidney, eyesight, and heart problems. This mismanagement can be the result of inaccessible treatment. One deadly consequence of insufficient insulin in the body is diabetic ketoacidosis, when acid builds up in

the bloodstream and the body essentially shuts down.

The Bronx has some of the highest rates of diabetes in the country. According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 16 percent of Bronx residents have been diagnosed with diabetes. Most people with diabetes in the borough have Type 2, which is less insulin-dependent but still requires routine maintenance and blood sugar testing.

Elbia said navigating health insurance policies makes managing diabetes even more difficult. She argues with representatives on the phone to get more insulin and other supplies because their insurance company underestimates what Elizabeth needs every month. Elizabeth has changed her insulin three different times to keep up with what her insurance company prefers.

"I don't think parents like to say how hard it is to have a child with diabetes, but it goes beyond what anyone can imagine," she said. "Having the right access to medication makes things better. It's not easy if you're running out of medication."

Some in Washington D.C. are concerned about the rising cost of insulin. The Congressional Diabetes Caucus has suggested a number of legislative actions to improve price transparency and promote competition amongst the producers of insulin. Minnesota filed a lawsuit last year against the three main producers of insulin for "deceptive" price hikes.

For now, many people with diabetes struggle to pay for the medication they need. Elbia says lower insulin prices are crucial to improving the lives of those living with diabetes.

"The way the rules are laid down are not humane," said Elbia. "Here is a parent with a child who has been given a lifelong diagnosis that now has to become a lawyer and fight back everyone to get what should already be given to these kids."



# DOE Mulls Another High School Within DeWitt Clinton H.S. Campus

By **DAVID CRUZ**  
And **ALONDRA VASQUEZ**

DeWitt Clinton High School's alumni association is troubled over a proposal by the city Department of Education to add a special education high school to the campus for the next school year. While the group doesn't object to the program, they're worried it will significantly diminish the Norwood school's presence as it begins to hit its stride.

DOE spokesman Doug Cohen confirmed to the *Norwood News* the agency's consideration, writing in a statement that it will "continue to work closely with the [Community Education Council] and the entire school community throughout this process to address any feedback and ensure we're meeting the needs of all our students."

This doesn't sit well with DeWitt Clinton Alumni Association Inc. President John Babarette, who, in a letter to the borough's Executive Superintendent for the Bronx, Meisha Ross Porter, outlined some concerns. Among them is the placement of 150 high-need students into the building that will automatically take up 16 classrooms in the building's first floor. Babarette said that classroom sizes for DeWitt Clinton High School—which shares its four-story building with Bronx Collaborative and World View High School—will go from 25 to 34 students. The classroom size would maximize the allowable number of students per high school class, according to the current

contract by the United Federation of Teachers with the City of New York.

"You are planning to put the program in [DeWitt Clinton] where staff, students, and parents have worked so hard to restore the school to visibility," wrote Babarette in his letter to Porter on Feb. 7. "DWC can only be hurt by curtailing its space."

Babarette has identified 37 schools around the Bronx that can easily take in more students, including Lehman High School, Longwood Preparatory Academy, and the School for Tourism and Hospitality.

The news comes as the storied school overlooking Mosholu Parkway South comes off receivership—those schools that rank in the top five percent of worst-performing schools—allowing the city to remove teachers or make them reapply for their jobs. The hope was to turn the school's reputation around, which narrowly succeeded, avoiding the city to turn control over to the state. Its graduation rate saw an increase of 62 percent, climbing 16 percentage points from 2017. Roughly 450 freshman students are expected to enroll next year, according to Babarette.

Co-located schools need to be approved by the Panel for Educational Policy. Over the last few years the need for District 75 seats in District 10 has grown. The DOE estimates there are 670 extra seats available.

*Additional reporting by Sha-Nia Alston*



Photo by Alondra Vasquez

**DEWITT CLINTON'S CAMPUS** could see a new high school within its four-story building (pictured) overlooking Mosholu Parkway South.

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# NORWOOD NEWS

## S N A P S H O T S



Photo by José A. Giralt

**(L-R) LORITA WATSON**, education director, and Elizabeth Quaranta, founding member of Friends of Mosholu Parkland, man a display table at the 25th annual Bronx Parks Speak Up community networking conference held inside the Music Building at Lehman College on Feb. 23. "We've secured over \$3 million in funding for improvements to Kossuth Playground. With this project we hope to keep making Mosholu Parkway cleaner and greener," said Quaranta.



Photo courtesy Bronx Roots in Motion

**(L-R) BOMBAYO**, **MILLIE** Foster, and Bronx Roots in Motion organizers Miriam Quiñones (a freelance photographer for the Norwood News) and Samelys Lopez, travel cheerfully along St. James Recreation Center during the third annual Kingsbridge Cultural Festival on Feb. 23. The daytime celebration started with a jam session on the stylings of Afro-Caribbean music before participants took to the streets, spreading musical joy around the neighborhood.



Photo by David Greene

**VOLUNTEERS CLEAN UP** at Williamsbridge Oval Park's Dog Run in Norwood while spending time with Norwood pet "Kid" Cudi, who enjoys a good run alongside the volunteers. The dog run was created five years ago. On Feb. 23, volunteers maintained the space by collectively picking up garbage with shovels and rakes and placing it into black bags.

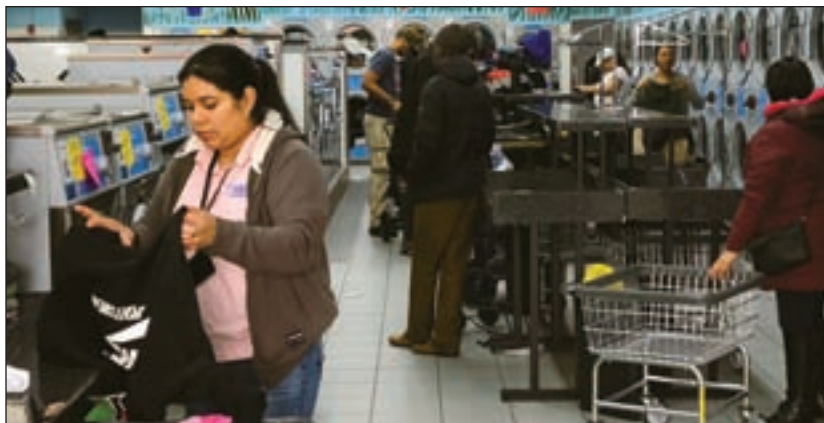


Photo courtesy Mosholu Preservation Corporation

**PATRONS AT THE** Giant Laundry at 2861 Webster Ave. got their first wash on the house, courtesy of Mosholu Preservation Corporation on Feb. 10. The promotional offer was intended to draw more customers to two merchant strips--the East 204th Street/Bainbridge Avenue Merchants Association and Webster Avenue Merchants Association--that cover Norwood and Bedford Park.



Photo courtesy Montefiore Health System

**THE PEDIATRIC HEART** Center at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM), providing treatment to children with heart conditions, recognized American Heart Month along with Harboring Hearts, celebrating past and present patients, and their families--celebrating life at an "Incredible Heart" party. Pictured are CHAM Pediatric Heart Center staff, and patients, Joe Guance-Sandoval (front center) and Gabriel Hernandez (r).



Photo courtesy Office of the Bronx Borough President

**BOROUGH PRESIDENT RUBEN** Diaz Jr. hosts his annual Sweethearts Luncheon on Feb. 14 at Villa Barone Manor honoring over 65 couples married for 50 years and more. Diaz Jr. (standing) poses with guests David and Delores Jenkins.



# Q&A With Desus & Mero



(L-R) KID MERO, Norwood News reporter Sha-Nia Alston, and Desus Nice at the Showtime premiere of "Desus & Mero" on Feb. 21.

## By SHA-NIA ALSTON

DeWitt Clinton High School alumnus Kid Mero of Morris Heights, whose birth name is Joel Martinez, and his co-host Desus Nice of Wakefield, whose birth name is Daniel Baker, have had a lot of success these days, branching from Twitter to their podcast, the "Bodega Boys," and now a late night television program on Showtime. *Norwood News* reporter Sha-Nia Alston sat down with the pair, ahead of their Showtime premiere Feb 21. for a brief Q&A that focused on their Bronx roots.

**NN: Who are Kid Mero and Desus Nice? Describe yourself.**

**DN:** We're just two guys from the Bronx talking about comedy and politics, keeping it real, bringing a little Bronx flavor to the world.

**KM:** We introducing the Bronx, there's no mask, there's no persona. It's just us.

**DN:** If you from the Bronx and heard us talk we sound very familiar.

**NN: What is something from the Bronx you want to share with your viewers?**

**DN:** Our attitude, especially in this political climate [is] you got to be a little cynical, you got to ask questions, you got to be like "wait a minute." As New Yorkers that's what we do best. As Bronx people, we definitely don't believe anything. A Bronx person could ask what color is the sky, you could be like "blue." A Bronx person be like, "are you sure?" That little skepticism helps with the relaying information piece.

**KM:** Don't beat around the bush. Tell me what you're trying to say straight up. That's what Bronx people do. We're not going to be like "here's a deodorant, maybe you should use it." They going to be like, "yo fam you stink. Maybe you should take a shower."

**NN to KM:** While you were at DeWitt Clinton High School, what is one of your craziest memories?

**KM:** You know how high school people have balloons for their birthdays? Shorty was feeling herself with her balloons and flowers and whatever. And Clinton has that long staircase, so she takes a wrong step on one. She fell down like 85 stairs. I asked her if she was good? She like, "I am fine." Meanwhile, your eyeball hanging out of your head.

**NN: What would you attribute your success to?**

**KM:** Not wanting to be poor anymore.

**NN: What would you tell those fans who are unhappy with their 9-5?**

**DN:** Consistency is key. If you're not at least trying you can't possibly get that big break. There's going to be something there out there for you.

**KM:** You got to keep doing what you're doing. Get in front of the right people, stay consistent, work your charm, work your angles, work your connects. Do not spam; that is the number one turnoff to anybody. If you have someone who might be interested in you and you're just spamming them, they're just going to blow you off. Let your product speak for itself.

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## FREE NORWOOD NEWS

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**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER: GOV'T. SHUTDOWN | PG. 4**

**STATE OF THE CITY: DE BLASIO OUTLINES PLANS FOR BX. | PG. 10**

### STAGG TENANTS BATTLE FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

*Vocal tenants ramp up demand for fixes at Webster Ave. bldgs.*

**Neighbors ZKXavier Simpson (l) and Shannon Terrell (r) inside Terrell's third floor apartment at 2985 Webster Ave. Terrell has filed papers at Bronx County Housing Court for an HP action, violations and alleged harassment against her landlord.**

**By DAVID CRUZ and JOSEPH KONIG**  
Residents of three fairly new buildings on Webster Ave.

The Stagg Group, a construction and development company with multiple ongoing projects, is currently fighting waged by tenants over conditions at the buildings at 2985, 2987, and 2989 Webster Ave. Since the Norwood Park Manor.

responsive and made improvements to the properties, known collectively as Bedford Park Manor.

**New 5-2 CO Attacks Crime Spike of '18 pg 2**

**Bodies found in Two Separate Norwood Incidents | pg 7**

**Achieving Student Balance at PS/MS 95 pg 8**

# For Tenants, a Bill to Question Rent Histories Beyond Four Years

By EMILY SUZANNE LEVER

Almost eight years ago, Norwood resident Iris Vega-Ortiz was reportedly awarded \$33,000 after the state housing agency found her landlord had overcharged her by \$400 a month on rent for several years.

A new bill proposed by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz might make Vega-Ortiz's case more of a common occurrence.

Dinowitz, a Democrat who represents Norwood, Riverdale, Kingsbridge, Wakefield and Woodlawn, has introduced a bill to change the state law when it comes to tenants who wish to file a rent overcharge complaint. Currently, tenants can request their rent history from the state Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and file a complaint if they see their rent was increased beyond the legal limit within the last four years.

Dinowitz's bill would remove that statute of limitations, making any rent overcharge, no matter how long ago the illegal rent increase happened, fair game.

"We've had too many cases

where it's abundantly clear that a landlord provided false information to DHCR," said Dinowitz. "It bothered me that a tenant had no right to seek justice."

Dinowitz added he was confident that the progressive coalition in the State Assembly would pass the bill—the latest in a series of attempts going back at least to 2016 to extend or remove the statute of limitations.

The assemblyman also sought to pre-empt criticism from landlords angry that the bill would retroactively make them legally responsible for a unit's entire rent history. He pointed out that a landlord in that situation would still be profiting from an illegal rent hike, even unknowingly.

"It's only just, it's not a punitive thing," he said. "Why should anyone be allowed to profit from fraud?"

The bill—which has been co-sponsored by Assemblywoman Karines Reyes, and is making its way through the Housing Committee, with no equivalent in the State Senate as yet—comes as tenant advocates and landlord advocates

brace for a legislative battle ahead of June, when many of New York State's rent laws are set to expire.

Andrew Laiosa, a tenant advocate for the Bedford Park-based group West Bronx Housing, said Dinowitz's bill was necessary but not quite enough, since the burden of proof remains on tenants.

When it comes to the current legislation, "any tenant would say four years is a joke," Laiosa said. "I cannot tell you the heartbreak that people are going through in our neighborhoods and it's totally related to this four-year statute of limitations."

But even if there were no statute of limitations, filing a rent overcharge complaint against your landlord isn't that simple, Laiosa cautioned.

"If they're being given a preferential rent, the last thing you want to do is challenge the landlord because upon lease renewal what's hanging over you is a noose," he said. "They may be undocumented, English may not be their first language—there are a million reasons why a new tenant would not challenge the rent. They're afraid."



Photo courtesy Office of Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz  
**ASSEMBLYMAN JEFF DINOWITZ** has introduced a bill that will make it easier for renters to recoup any rent overcharges beyond the current statute of limitations of four years.

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# CB7, Serving as Mediator, Looks for Resolve in Stagg/Tenants Feud

(continued from page 6)

nance complaints and their status. According to Michael Brabazon, marketing director and rental coordinator at the Stagg Group, employees can check immediately when a tenant files a complaint and follow through to its completion when the tenant signs off on the repair. Those without Internet access can also make regular complaints to the on-site super during business hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. “When they complain to the super it gets logged on to our system and we can track its progress,” Brabazon said.

It’s unclear who tenants without Internet access can file a complaint to after hours.

Graham isn’t the only one following the complaints’ status. Javier Monroy is the property manager for the buildings on Webster Avenue. “I’m always communicating with Michael and the super on maintenance requests,” said Monroy, showing his cellphone screen with an open order from a tenant. “All three of us stay connected through the repair process on our cell phones and we can even see a photo of the finished work that the tenant signs off on,” said Monroy.

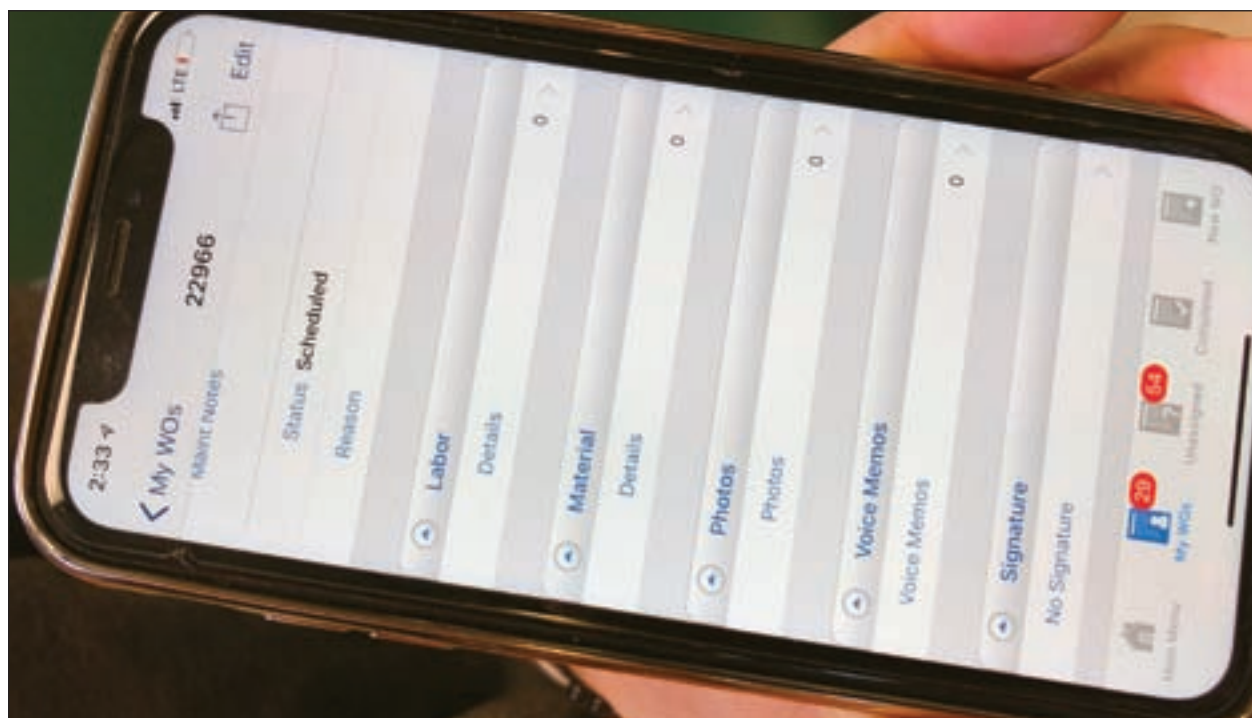


Photo by José A. Giralt

**JAVIER MONROY, PROPERTY** manager at the Bedford Park Manor at 2985, 2987, and 2999 Webster Aves., shows the app he uses to stay current with maintenance and repair requests in a meeting with the Norwood News on Feb. 22.

The *Norwood News* asked the Stagg Group for an on-site tour of the properties in order to see the maintenance request app in action and is awaiting a response.

Both the Stagg Group representatives and tenants have expressed their intent to attend the next CB7 Housing, Land Use & Zoning committee meeting on March 12. Meantime, tenants have

scheduled a March 1 meeting with Oswald J. Feliz, an attorney who doubles as the state committeeman for the 78th Assembly District, which covers Bedford Park.

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**Mixed Martial Arts  
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Monday, March 25th for Member  
Wednesday, March 27th for Non-Member  
Classes are 1x week or 2x week for 8 weeks  
Prices Starting for Member: \$65

**Group Swim Registration Starts:**

Registration ends on March 10th  
Classes are 1x week for 8 weeks  
Member: \$90; Non-Member: \$120

**Salsa Registration Starts:**

Monday, April 8th for Member  
Wednesday, April 10th for Non-Member  
Classes are 1x week for 8 weeks  
Member: \$96; Non-Member: \$144

**Alvin Ailey Dance  
Registration Starts:**

Monday, May 6th for Member  
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### Free Legal Services for Immigrants

Low-income immigrants can receive free legal advice from volunteer attorneys through the New York State Liberty Defense Project and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York. For more information, visit [CatholicCharitiesNYProBono.org](http://CatholicCharitiesNYProBono.org) or call (800) 566-7636. If you are interested in volunteering, visit [catholiccharitiesny.org](http://catholiccharitiesny.org).

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Children born in 2015 are eligible for free universal pre-K. Application deadline is March 15 for school year starting September 2019. Enroll your child at the Family Welcome Center at 1 Fordham Plaza on the 7th floor, or apply online with My Schools application at <https://www.myschools.nyc/en/>. For more information, call (718) 935-2009.

### 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) 823-4925.

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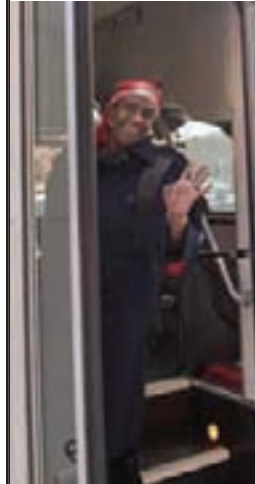
Individuals convicted of a crime committed more than 10 years ago are eligible to request their criminal records sealed through the New York State Unified Court System. Several forms must be filled out and not all convictions will be sealed. Requests must be made at the Bronx District Attorney's Office, 198 E. 161st St., 4th floor. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/2MsZlZl>.

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# Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

## EDITOR'S PICK

### Free Flea Market

Bedford Mosholu Community Association is sponsoring a free flea market at Saint Mary's Orthodox Church of India (corner of Bedford Park Boulevard and Decatur Avenue), March 9 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Available will be new and used items including gifts, china, bric-a-brac, jewelry, books, toys, housewares, electronics and more. Homemade cakes and cookies as well as a raffle will be available. For more information, visit [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

## Onstage

Lehman College's Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd., W., presents **Currents by Mayumana**, directly from Israel, March 3 at 4 p.m., inspired by battle of currents between Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla in their quest for finding energy resources for the world (tickets: \$25 to \$45; \$10/to age 12). For more information, call (718) 960-8833.

JASA Van Cortlandt Senior Center, 3880 Sedgwick Ave. presents **Make Up Sunday** with Perrin Grace Jazz Trio performing at 2 p.m. preceded by lunch at 1 p.m.; and **folksinger Laura Wetzler** performing a varied program of folk and international music at 1 p.m. preceded by lunch at 12:15 p.m. For more information, call (718) 549-4700.

## Events

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Mapping Histories Through Seeds, Beans and Grains, to map your family history and make a mosaic with seeds, legumes and grains, March 2 and 3; and Patch It Up – Nature Heals, to create patches by making stamps from upcycled Styrofoam, then pin them on your favorite jacket or iron them onto clothes, March 9 and 10; both in the WH House, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. 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.

The Bronx County Historical Society's Archives, 3309 Bainbridge Ave., presents **film**, "A Bronx Tale," March 1 at 7 pm. (\$5/donation). For more



**THE BRONX COUNTY** Historical Society presents a film screening of "A Bronx Tale," starring Chazz Palminteri and Robert DeNiro (see Events for details).

information, call (718) 881-8900.

## Exhibits

New York Botanical Garden presents **Annual Orchid Show**, in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, paying tribute to Singapore, through April 28. For more information, call (718) 817-8135.

Bronx Documentary Center, St. Mary's Annex, 364 E. 151st St., presents free **Where Love is Illegal**, through March 24, featuring stories of lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual and intersex individuals in locations where this is illegal. For more information and a detailed schedule, visit [www.bronxdoc.org](http://www.bronxdoc.org).

Bronx River Art Center (BRAC), 1087 E. Tremont Ave., presents **River Rising**, through June 30, featuring an exposition of science, art and technology, located in Starlight Park; and **Material With Meaning**, featuring NY artists whose international roots include Nigeria, Mexico, El Salvador, and China, through March 16. For more information, call (718) 589-5819.

The Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. (208th Street), presents **Women's Suffrage and New York City: A Centennial Celebration**, through April 11; and **His Muse: The Women of Edgar Allan Poe's Life**, through April 7. Also scheduled is **A History of the Bronx Latino**, ongoing. 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. For more information, call (718) 681-6000.

Cuban Art Show free exhibition, **We Have Ire: Afro-Cuban in the U.S.**, is scheduled through March 9, 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 adults: **film**: "Ant-Man & the Wasp," March 2 at 2:30 p.m. Children can enjoy: **Family Storytime at 3 p.m.**: (ages to 5 years), stories, songs, and dance, March 2, 3, 9 and 10. Teens/young adults can attend: **Creatures of the Night**, to see live owls, mammals, frogs, toads, and insects, March 14 at 4 p.m. Job seekers may visit the **Career Services Health Care & Maintenance Career Expo**: job fair (dress professionally and bring multiple copies of your resume), March 4 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (preregistration required; info: ext. 4260). For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org).

Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for children: **Crafty Fridays at 11 a.m.**: (ages 5 to 12), crafts, March 1 and 8; **Toddler Storytime at 11 a.m.**: (ages 18 months to 3 years), interactive stories, action songs, fingerplays, and crafts, March 7 and 14; and **Dr. Seuss Birthday Party**: (all ages), includes storytime and light refreshments, March 1 at 3 p.m. Teens/young adults can enjoy: **film**: "Mission Impossible: Fallout," March 8 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 adults: **Computer Basics at noon**: March 7 and 14. Children can enjoy: **Bilingual Birdies - Spanish**: (to ages 12 years), including live music, movement, dance and puppetry, March 8 at 11 a.m. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

**NOTE:** Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org), and should be received by March 4 for the next publication date of March 14, 2019.



File photo Adi Talwar

**THE BEDFORD MOSHOLU** Community Association will host its annual flea market on March 9 (see Editor's Pick for more information).



# Decatur Avenue's Postal Woes

(continued from page 1)

until they figure it out.”

An employee supervisor later said, “Some of the customers were getting sick, we were getting sick. I have asthma, so it was affecting my asthma.” The unidentified supervisor described the smell, explaining, “It’s a combination of like a dead animal and the sewage backed up or something like that. We’re not sure exactly, but some customers are saying it smells like dead animals, other customers are saying it smelled like sewage backup. People started saying they were getting sick as soon as they came into the building.”

The closure marks the third time the troubled Van Cott Station post office closed, with issues brewing as early as November when a roof collapsed, shutting it down for more than a week and causing mail to be diverted to the Williamsbridge Station at 711 E. Gun Hill Rd., a 20-minute walk from the Decatur Avenue site. Two other post offices—The Mosholu Post Office at 3464 Jerome Ave. and another at 2815 White Plains Rd. in Allerton—had also temporarily closed, putting added pressure to area post offices that were open. The Van Cott Station saw its doors once again closed on Jan. 22, following a burst water pipe.

Neighborhood resident Jim Hawkins dropped his letter in the mailbox positioned between the shuttered post office and the shuttered mobile office, before 4 p.m., the station’s normal closing time. Hawkins recalled, “I worked for the post office years ago and that’s why I stopped working for them. The bureaucracy and all kinds of s-t. It’s a lousy place to work and everyone was angry.”

Arthur Buggeln, 88, a regular visitor to the Van Cott Station was forced to walk to the Botanical station at 2963 Webster Ave. in Bedford Park, carrying a chair, only to return without the special protective envelopes he was looking to purchase. He’d learn that they would have to be ordered special. He asked, “Why do they even advertise it?”

On the Van Cott Station closing, Buggeln hoped the station’s problems will be behind it soon. “Oh no, this post office has to come back, they’ve got to. I’m hoping they reopen soon. I asked her [supervisor] when do you think you’ll reopen and she said, ‘one to two weeks.’ That’s how it was the last time at the end of

last year. I think it was like 10 days and then they reopened. Oh I hope they’ll return, it’s a wonderful station. I live right down the block,” he said.

Hernandez estimated that the building is expected re-open in early March.

Buggeln was among a group of locals who fought to keep the station open a decade ago when the federal government was looking to close some post offices due to budget cuts. “We need it. I mean, who could go to Gun Hill Road?” he asked.

Rakia King, another customer, found the post office closure inconvenient for heavy users. “[S]ome people can’t get to another post office, and say it’s something important like going to court or paying the rent, and the line is always so long,” she said, referencing the East Gun Hill Road post office. “It’s ridiculous,” she added, “I don’t know, sometimes they’re old in age, but the mind is underdeveloped.”

Another resident who arrived before the 4 p.m. closing time fumed. “If I get a package and it isn’t delivered it ends up at the Gun Hill Road post office. I’ve had to go there a couple of times and it’s a madhouse. Everybody was pissed off and yelling at the people behind the counter,” said the customer.

Another customer turned away by the locked door asked, “Huh? Is that why they’re closed?” The unidentified woman said, “No, this is the first time this has happened to me. Is it going to be closed for a long period of time? Are they selling stamps in the truck? I could go a little longer without stamps, but I’ve got to mail letters and a bunch of stuff. I just hope my letters get there, now I’m scared to trust this mailbox. I’ll go to another mailbox.”

A review of city building records shows that on April 13, 2018, workers hired by Claremon Lee 204th LLC of Long Island replaced a 50-foot, 1-inch gas line, running from the existing gas meter on the first-floor of the Van Cott station that connects to an existing HVAC unit on the roof, that had a reported leak the previous November.

Along with the Williamsbridge Station, customers have been advised to go to the Botanical Post Office or the Esplanade Post Office at 2488 Williamsbridge Road in Allerton.

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