



NORWOOD NEWS

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BRONX NAACP SEES NEED FOR MORE VOTER EDUCATION

By DAVID GREENE & SILE MOLONEY

As officials from the Bronx office of the New York City Board of Elections were busy tallying votes at their Grand Concourse headquarters to determine the outcome of the District 11 and District 15 City Council special elections two weeks ago, the president of the Bronx NAACP, said that voter education is key to the future of a free and fair society. It may also be key to a more dynamic primary election season.

Biarni Burke, president of the Bronx chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of People of Color, told *Norwood News* in a telephone interview on Monday, April 12, "Long lines during presidential elections are fixtures for a host of reasons. We have a Board of Elections (BOE) that is still struggling to handle routine elections, and the only saving grace they have is that all too often, we have very low turnout, except every four years when there's an exciting presidential election."

Burke continued, "I think they may be making some progress. I'm going to remain an objective critic of the Board of Elections, but I do think that, as we move forward with early voting and more mail-in voting, we may have an opportunity to see improvement [with long lines and other issues]."



MEMBERS OF THE Bronx NAACP working to get out the vote during the March special election season in the Northwest Bronx.

As was widely reported, the State of Georgia recently changed certain laws which impact upon the voting process in that state, making it a crime to bring food or water to someone waiting in line to vote. Reflecting on this, Burke said the NAACP's work is never over. "Nearly our entire existence now is based on voter empowerment, and the

components of that will start with, obviously, voter registration, and voter education follows that," he said.

Assessing voting in the context of The Bronx and New York City generally, Burke said, "In fact, we don't have a voter registration problem in Bronx County," before adding, "of course, it's important to register

all eligible voters."

Burke went on to talk about other aspects of the voting process, saying, "What we have [in the Bronx] is a voter education problem, and voter participation problem, [as opposed to voter registration], and we see that in elections repeatedly."

He added, "For instance, we just finished two special elec-

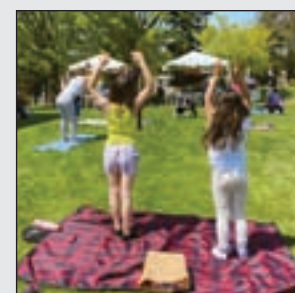
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Fordham Hill Residents Want Improved Street Lighting

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Car theft in the 52nd precinct rose by 29.3 percent between Jan. 1 and April 25, according to crime statistics recorded by the NYPD, and totals 53 incidents versus 41 for the same period last year. The precinct covers Norwood, Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Bronx Park, and University Heights,

Meanwhile, the 47th precinct, which covers Woodlawn, Wakefield, Williamsbridge, Baychester, Edenwald, Olinville, Fishbay, and Woodlawn Cemetery, has experienced a whopping 156.7 percent increase in car theft during the same period. The precinct recorded 154 car thefts as of April 25. Meanwhile, just 60 vehicles were stolen during the same period last year.

In the 50th precinct, which covers Riverdale, Fieldston, Kingsbridge, Marble Hill, Spuyten Duyvil, and includes Wave Hill and Van Cortlandt Park, as of April 25, 2021, a drop of 22 percent in Grand Larceny Auto crime has been seen, with only 28 car thefts recorded as of April 25, versus 36 during the same period last year.

Despite repeated reminders during Bronx Community Board 7 public safety meetings by the 52nd precinct, not to double-park and leave keys temporarily in the ignitions, it seems residents continue to do so. Deputy Inspector Thomas J. Alps said this was the main reason for high car theft rates across the borough.

However, University Heights residents at Fordham Hill Owners Corporation, billed the largest, privately financed co-operative apartment complex in the City of New York, believe there is more to it than that.

In a letter to residents and shareholders from the Co-op Board of Directors on April 16, the Board thanked their security chief, Clinton Robinson, and his colleagues for enhancing security measures



Photo courtesy of Blandon Casenave

AFTER INSTALLING IMPROVED lighting at their own cost in the vicinity of Fordham Hill Owners Corporation, residents now want the City to follow suit, and extend the lighting on the public land that stretches from the intersection of Bailey Avenue and Sedgwick Avenue down to Bailey Avenue and Heath Avenue.

both within and around the Fordham Hill complex.

"We trust that all of you are aware of the increased security lighting on the westside of Sedgwick Avenue adjacent to the Oval [park]," the letter read. "This increased lighting has significantly reduced, to almost zero, the amount of vandalism and theft of vehicles parked on Sedgwick Avenue."

The board said that the lighting measures taken also ensured greater safety of pedestrians and persons waiting at the bus stop, and that news of an increase in parking garage robberies had been brought to the attention of their security colleague.

On Tuesday, March 9, at around 2.55 a.m., at 2740 Webster Avenue, G & Sons Parking, in Fordham Manor, four people forced their way into the location's office. One man brandished a handgun, and the group tied up a 57-year-old male employee. They took \$180 from the victim, as well as his wallet. In addition, they stole three vehicles, a Honda CRV, a Toyota Camry, and a Porsche Panamera, part of a pattern of

auto thefts that have occurred in recent months across the borough.

"At this time, he is in the process of receiving bids for additional camera surveillance, signage and lighting, at and near the garage entrance," the letter continued. "These measures will continue to protect our community. Mr. Robinson will also be looking into the placement of surveillance cameras and lighting on the outside of the Kensington Building."

Since the board believes that increased lighting at the complex has played a role in reducing car theft, they are now calling on local government to increase the level of lighting on public land in the vicinity of Fordham Hill.

"The shareholders of Fordham Hill Owners Corporation paid for lighting along Sedgwick Avenue, between Bailey [Avenue] & Fordham Road," they said in a joint statement. "The increased lighting has improved safety for all who walk and park their vehicles at night. We hope that local government will follow our example, and do more to increase lighting and improve public safety, going north along Bailey Avenue."

Rachel Bradshaw, one of the co-op's board members, added that the area is full of squatters and trash, and that the City does little to maintain the area. She added that City officials were quick to issue parking tickets and other traffic violations, yet the revenues collected from such fines are, allegedly, not being channeled back into enhancing safety and security for local residents.

Norwood News reached out to the City for comment on the Board's request regarding more lighting in public spaces in the area. We did not receive an immediate response.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on the verdict in the George Floyd murder trial, and if they feel the verdict could be a turning point in police/community relations.



"I don't think it's right. The government has to be more careful now, because what they did to George [Floyd] was not right, because there was discrimination. I think we're all equal, everyone, White and Black and Spanish, all around the country, so I think the police officers have to care a little bit more about what's going on, and do what they're supposed to do. The verdict will help, because they did what they were supposed to do, put him in jail, and that means they care. They're working and it will prevent a lot of people from dying in the future."

Josephine Francisco,
Parkchester



"I'll tell you the truth. I hate to sound like a rat, but I would have to agree with the jury. I saw the video live. The officer was out of control. He went beyond what he should have. I know Mr Floyd had a record and all that, but that doesn't give the officer the right to do what he did. It's going to be a dividing line because of Antifa and Black Lives Matter. They don't care really. They just want to use an excuse to destroy. The best bet is to try and work with the community, have community policing like we had in the old days, and have officers work with the community, and the community with the police. We also have to protect the good cops from the bad cops."

Henry Uriarte,
Belmont



"Guilty! I mean, they came out with the right decision. What they did was right because what he did was wrong. He should have never treated that man... he should have never put his knee on his neck, for nine minutes. That's abuse! The decision could help police and community relations, yeah. I'm hopeful for that."

Hector Perez,
Norwood



"It was crap, to be honest with you. I mean, in my opinion, it was messed up what they did to the guy, George Floyd. He was an innocent person, and they shouldn't have done that to him. That's really wrong. He needs the death penalty for that. Yes, community and police relations can improve. I'm hoping the cops don't do anything wrong, stupid or anything. It's messed up what they did to him and it was wrong, because George Floyd is no longer with us on this earth. I think the cops and the community need to work together as a team and make the community better in the streets."

Calvin Shuler,
Olinville



"Listen, we need the officers. You know, we need officers because what happens [is] the first thing people say when they see they're in trouble, 'I'm going to call the cops.' There's good cops and there's bad cops, but it's sad that the good cops suffer for the bad cops. But they have to stop with that blue wall of silence. You're a good cop? You speak out.. All this racial profiling and young Black people dying at the hands of others, and God forbid, I have nephews and some of them are teenagers, and even my husband, I get scared. Oh please! I hope they just get back home every day, you know. When I was a kid, the police used to walk the beats and we used to meet them, and we had fun with them, and they laughed and asked our names and we had fun."

Patricia Smith,
Bedford Park



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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Vaccination Rates

The NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene confirms that as of April 26, 42 percent of The Bronx's population has been vaccinated against COVID-19. This compares with 46 percent in Brooklyn, 61 percent in Manhattan, 54 percent in Queens and 50 percent on Staten Island. The citywide average is 51 percent.

Locally, as of the same date, in ZIP code 10467, covering Allerton, Norwood, Pelham Parkway and Williamsbridge, 28 percent are fully vaccinated, and 40 percent have had at least one dose.

In ZIP code 10468, covering Fordham, Kingsbridge and University Heights, 27 percent are fully vaccinated, and 39 percent have had one dose. In ZIP code 10458, covering Belmont, Fordham University and Kingsbridge, 38 percent are fully vaccinated, and 25 percent have had one dose. In ZIP code 10453, covering Morris Heights, Mount Hope and University Heights, 39 percent are fully vaccinated and 26 have had one dose.

New Council Members Join Committees

Newly elected, District 15 councilman, Oswald Feliz, announced on April 22 that he has been selected to join both the City Council's education committee and the public housing committee. Meanwhile, District 11 councilman, Eric Dinowitz, is serving on the following committees: aging; civil service & labor; consumer affairs & business licensing; education; mental health, disabilities & addictions; oversight & investigations; parks & recreation; and small business.

SBA Simplifies Relief Process for Arts Organizations & Venues

The U.S. Small Business Association (SBA) relaunched its Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) application portal on Saturday, April 24. The portal is used by operators of live venues, live performing arts organizations, museums and movie theaters, as well as live venue promoters, theatrical producers and talent representatives to apply for economic relief. Technical issues were encountered when the portal was initially launched on April 8 but these have since been resolved. For more in-

Mayoral Candidate Dianne Morales Hosts Fordham Plaza Rally

by MIRIAM QUIÑONES & DAVID GREENE

Supporters of former teacher and former non-profit executive, Diana Morales, turned out for a rally in support of their candidate for mayor on Friday, April 23, at Fordham Plaza.

Morales' career progressed from the world of education into the non-profit world when she became executive director of The Door, a program assisting homeless teens, based in Manhattan. For the last decade, she has been working in the Bronx as the CEO of the social services non-profit, Phipps Neighborhood.

Addressing the Bronx crowd at the rally on Friday, Morales said, "My campaign is about you! My campaign is about centering and elevating and prioritizing the voices of the communities that have been historically left behind."

She continued, "I am not promising to take New York City back to normal. We know that normal wasn't working for us. The only thing that the COVID-19 pandemic did, was make sure that we were all particularly aware of all of the pandemics that pre-existed." She named these as racism, classism, and sexism, and said they represented all of the pandemics that have kept people down. "It's our time!" she exclaimed.

formation, and to view applicant resources, visit www.sba.gov/svagrant.

Jacobi "Stand Up to Violence" Honors

On Wednesday, April 21, the following people were honored as part of the NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi Stand Up to Violence program: Zoraida Diaz, who was presented with the Rev. Dr. Sidney Hargrave Clergy Award, Assistant Commissioner Ramon Garcia, who was given the Community Awareness Award, Det. Inspector Keon Ramsey, Officer James Graham, Officer Varnisha Hyman, Officer Jayson Soto, and Det. Dave Belle, who were given the

Community Partnership Law Enforcement Award, Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernández, who was given the Community Partnership Elected Official Award, Desirée Guzman, who was given the Hospital Partnership Award and Elder Patricia Iriebe, who was given the Stakeholders Appreciation Certificate.

Four Jewish Centers Vandalized in Northwest Bronx

Thirteen years after a foiled plot to blow up a synagogue in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, the NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying an individual wanted for question-

ing with regard to multiple acts of vandalism/criminal mischief, caught on video, which targeted four different Jewish centers and three parked cars in the Northwest Bronx over the course of the week ending Sunday, April 25.

SBA Launches Supplemental Loan Program for Small Businesses

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced on April 22, that it will provide \$5 billion in additional Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) assistance to one million small businesses and nonprofit organizations that have been most severely impacted by

the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SBA modified the existing EIDL loan application process to determine if businesses also qualify for an additional \$5,000 available under the new Supplemental Targeted Advance loan program. SBA will contact eligible businesses to apply, and applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. To qualify for the supplemental loan program, an eligible business must be based in a low-income community, it must have suffered greater than 50 percent economic loss, and must have ten or fewer employees. For more details, visit SBA.gov/eidl.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

DIANNE MORALES BRINGS her mayoral campaign to Fordham Plaza on Friday, April 23, 2021.

"It's good to be back here in the Bronx, where I spent the last 10 years of my career, before jumping into this race, working to support the working class, low-income, Black and brown, immigrants, LGBT and every other vulnerable member of our New York City community," she said.

Speaking of her years carrying out homeless outreach, Morales then recalled, "The reality of it is that no matter how successful I was at doing that, there were always lines of people. There was always a waiting list. There were always those that were still being left behind."

She concluded, "How do I bring all of my experiences to bear to help the most New Yorkers possible, to make

sure that all the vulnerable communities are finally centered?" she asked. "I decided that I was going to run for mayor."

Morales has thrown herself into the 2021 mayoral race that, at one point, had around 60 candidates. Some have since withdrawn. Among those with the most name recognition, or considered to be in serious contention are Eric Adams, Shaun Donovan, Kathryn Garcia, Barbara Kavovit, Fernando Mateo, Ray McGuire, Curtis Sliwa, Scott Stringer, Sara Tirschwell, Maya Wiley and Andrew Yang. Morales has raised over half a million dollars in private campaign funds to date. Ray McGuire leads in contributions with over \$7 million.



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Volunteers Host Cookout for 52nd Precinct Officers

by DAVID GREENE

It's been a long, emotional year for everyone, ever since the coronavirus pandemic hit our shores last spring. For the NYPD, policing compliance with the statewide lockdown took its toll, as public frustration mounted, bodies piled up, and PPE was initially in short supply.

That was before mass street protests took off in the wake of the horrific killing of George Floyd by now-convicted, former police officer, Derek Chauvin. Public condemnation and negative press ensued, as did new legislation, new procedures, more scrutiny, increased community outreach, more vitriol, and more pressure.

Throughout 2020 and into 2021, 54 members of the agency died from COVID-19, and more than 5,300 uniformed officers retired or submitted paperwork to start the retirement process. The latter represents a 75 percent spike in retirements from the previous year, according to a report by the New York Post based on departmental data.

Prior to the pandemic, ten officers were recorded as having taken their own life in 2019, and the agency con-



Photo by David Greene

MEMBERS OF SIMPLICITY Mission prepare to feed officers and detectives at the Webster Avenue stationhouse on Saturday, April 24, 2021.

tinues to cope with suicide and mental health issues among its ranks,

As a result, volunteers decided that their local police officers deserved a break, and recently hosted a cookout at the 52nd precinct stationhouse. On Saturday, April 24, volunteers from Simplicity Mission brought their mobile food truck to the station and prepared some ribs. Meanwhile, members

of Fordham Manor Church, located on Reservoir Avenue, fixed some plates, sang and played Christian-contemporary music, while officers finished their patrols and joined the group for some ribs.

According to Christopher Ko of Simplicity Mission, the event was a prelude to a week-long "National Police Appreciation Week," which is due

to be held from May 9 through May 16. Ko explained he normally visits homeless shelters and the poorest communities, and feeds anyone who visits the truck which is often stationed near St. Ann's Park in the South Bronx, or in East New York, Brooklyn.

"What we do is we have a food truck with this barbecue smoker, and we hold events at homeless shelters, low-income neighborhoods, and at community events," he said.

"We just wanted to come out and show them love," Ko continued. "You know, with everything going on in society right now, and everyone is kind of hating on them, I would say that a lot of people haven't taken the time to actually come to the station and talk to the officers and ask, 'How can we make a difference together?'"

During National Police Appreciation Week, Ko and his Christian volunteers plan to visit both the 40th precinct in Mott Haven and the 50th precinct in Kingsbridge. Ko said, "We just want to spend the whole week blessing them and recharge them, so they can, kind of, be encouraged, because being a cop

(continued on page 10)

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Tenants Receive Eviction Notice, Fear Long-term Future

By MIRIAM QUIÑONES,
DAVID GREENE & SILE
MOLONEY

Local elected officials and community leaders rallied alongside tenants at Grand Concourse and East Fordham Road in Fordham Heights, Saturday, March 27, demanding a solution to what they believe may be a wave of inevitable evictions of long-term tenants from one residential building, following the purchase of their apartments by a new owner.

Pierina Sanchez, local resident and District 14 City Council candidate, hosted the rally and was joined by Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15), State Assemblyman Kenny Burgos (A.D. 85) and Manhattan Councilwoman Carlina Rivera, to call attention to the issue and help prevent the building's residents from becoming homeless when their current leases expire.

During her address, Sanchez said that just after the New Year, she heard from several neighbors living at 2420 Morris Avenue, in Fordham Heights, who had received official letters from their landlord that stated that their leases would not be renewed. "Some of them were already living in substandard conditions," she said. "Some of them have been here for 10, 15, 20 years," she added.

Sanchez said that investment company, Glacier Equities, had purchased the co-operative apartments in the building, along with others at different locations across the Bronx and Upper Manhattan, apparently with plans to refurbish them, and "flip" or resell them at a profit.

"So, we are gathered here this morning to highlight a potential injustice, a *potential* injustice because *we can* turn this around," Sanchez said. During the rally, one tenant who appeared to be in his thirties was seen crying. He did not wish to disclose his name but spoke to the *Norwood News* about his fears for the future, following receipt of the lease non-renewal notice.

Sanchez, who is running for the city council seat held by Councilman Fernando Cabrera, who is term-limited and serving



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

(L TO R, front row) FAUSTO PINTO, GRANDSON of veteran, Juan Rodriguez, speaks at a tenants' rally in Fordham Heights on Saturday, March 27, 2021. Rodriguez, who has lived at 2420 Morris Avenue for 15 years, received a letter in the New Year, stating that his lease would not be renewed.

his final term, said, "Here in the community, over 2,500 families have been told... that they will have to go to housing court to defend their right to stay in this community." She asked the crowd, "Is that fair?" to which they shouted back, "No!"

Sanchez added, "These are our neighbors, the essential workers who have kept this city running throughout the pandemic: store clerks, firefighters, veterans, retired police officers, and professionals from all walks of life, living here in the community, who deserve to stay."

Fausto Pinto is the grandson of veteran, Juan Rodriguez, who has lived at 2420 Morris Avenue for the last 15 years. Pinto recalled, "Back in December, there was a leak in the apartment above him and he had the people come in, and they gutted the entire kitchen and living room, and they never came back." Pinto said his grandfather was forced to leave his home every morning just to take a shower.

On January 22, *Norwood News* reported that 255 apartment units in nine different buildings in the Bronx and Manhattan had been purchased by Glacier Equities, including in one Perry Avenue building in Norwood. A similar tenants' rally was held there at the time to protest the receipt of similar lease non-renewal notices, with a departure deadline of March 31 in that case. Negotiations have been ongoing between the landlord and the tenants since then.

We reached out to Glacier Equities for comment on the Morris Avenue situation and on Tuesday, April 27, Alex Horn, a partner at the firm, whose portfolio includes 2420 Morris Avenue, said, "I can tell you that, as far as the owner of the apartments, and the eviction notices, no one is getting evicted." He added, "It's a cooperative apartment building where free market leases are not being renewed in order to sell the units."

Horn went on to talk about, "homeowner opportunities for people in the neighborhood," and added, "The owner is working with each individual tenant to provide things like waving months of rent, reimbursing months of rent and providing extensions" on rental payments.

According to Horn, Glacier Equities is now offering residents an exclusive right to purchase apartments at a 30 percent discount and will also be offering low-cost financing. However, it is unclear if the impacted tenants can afford, or will be able to organize the purchase of their homes before their current leases expire.

Following the Morris Avenue tenants' rally, *Norwood News* checked back with some of the impacted tenants, to ask about the status of negotiations with the landlord, as well as asking when they are now required to leave their apartments. However, with the negotiations ongoing, they appeared hesitant to respond.

Meanwhile, according to the website, apartments.com, as of

April 27, there were no available units for rent at 2420 Morris Avenue, Unit 3G. A message to prospective renters reads, "Prices and availability subject to change without notice."

When it comes to apartment repairs, the Office of the New York State Attorney General (NYS AG) has issued regulations that govern the offer and sale of interests in cooperatives and condominiums, requiring owners to ensure that units are in good working order prior to sale. Asked about this required NYS AG approval in the context of the resale of the Morris Avenue apartments, Horn replied, "We actually received that approval a week or two weeks ago."

Despite such apparent protections for tenants impacted by the sale of co-operative apartments, the Morris Avenue tenants still seem unsure and fearful about their *long-term* housing fate. This is also despite the likely passage this week in Albany of an eviction moratorium extension beyond the current April 30 deadline.

On December 28, 2020, Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the COVID-19 Emergency Eviction Prevention Act of 2020, which prevented residential evictions and foreclosures amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Legislators are voting this week on a possible eviction moratorium extension until Aug. 31.

On April 23, Judith Goldiner of The Legal Aid Society, issued a statement in response to the introduction in Albany of the legislation, saying, "Acknowledging the reality that New York is still very much mired in a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic and answering the calls from struggling families throughout the state, the legislature has introduced a bill that will prevent the residential eviction moratorium, a literal lifeline for millions of New Yorkers, from expiring late next week," she said.

"Both the Senate and Assembly should pass this bill immediately, and Gov. Cuomo should sign it into law just as fast," Goldiner said. The Legal Aid Society applauded the legislature, especially Sen. Brian Kavanagh and Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, for introducing legislation that she said

would provide critical safeguards for tenants.

"However, the pandemic has proven to be unpredictable, and we must be ready to extend the protections afforded in this bill if the virus still poses a significant risk to public health and safety, come August," she said.

On Tuesday, April 27, Dinowitz, who represents A.D. 81 in the Northwest Bronx, confirmed the legislation had passed the requisite committees in the Assembly, and a vote is expected to take place on the House floor on Wednesday, April 28.

"Keeping people in their homes and stores must rightfully remain our top priority as legislators," Dinowitz said in a written statement. "I urge my colleagues to continue supporting these critical bills when they come to the floor for a full vote. I understand the concerns raised by advocates for both tenants and landlords about getting the billions of dollars in rent and mortgage relief payments into the hands of New Yorkers, and this legislation should create a sufficient window for New York State to get that program fully implemented."

Dinowitz added, "Without this legislation, I firmly believe our courts will be deluged with a mass of eviction and foreclosure filings – which does not help anybody. If landlords are serious about wanting their back-rent to be paid, then they should support this legislation too."

Norwood News asked Dinowitz if the pending legislation, if passed, would also protect those tenants whose leases may potentially expire prior to Aug. 31, at least in the short-term. A representative for the assemblyman replied, "The legislation will prevent all types of evictions until Aug. 31, if the hardship declaration form is submitted. There is a narrow exception in a small number of very specific cases (those where a tenant is presenting a danger to other residents or is damaging property)."

Meanwhile, Horn vowed that anyone in a Glacier Equities-owned apartment who needed repairs would have the repairs made.

Volunteers Host Cookout for 52nd Precinct Officers

(continued from page 8)

is a hard job.”

Explaining the origins of the food truck, Ko said, “We’re Christians. I’ve worked in churches for a long time, but I always had a love for the restaurant and food industry, and I thought, ‘How can we bring this together? How can we uplift the community and how can we bridge to make a change in the neighborhood?’” Answering his own questions, he said, “We try to feed them physically, but we also want to recharge them spiritually.”

During the event, Ko also teamed up with Massachusetts police officer, David Kim, who grew up in Queens and started his own nonprofit called “Bibles for LEO” (Law Enforcement Officers). Officers were presented with a Bible specifically made for police officers, as well as a challenge coin and prayer card.

Referring to his work with the nonprofit, Kim said, “I do this on the side to encourage first responders, so I made these kits.” He continued, “The main reason that we come out is to en-



Photo by David Greene

A SPECIAL CHALLENGE coin was handed out to police officers free during a cookout at the 52nd precinct on Saturday, April 24, 2021.

courage police officers as they’re going through challenging times and we feel like they need encouragement.”



Photo by David Greene

VOLUNTEERS JOIN POLICE officers for a cookout at the 52nd precinct on Saturday, April 24, 2021.

Kim, who will be joining Ko at next month’s events at the 40th and 50th precincts, concluded, “So we gathered together, we brought the kids, raised funds for all these events, because we want to provide the best for our law enforcement officers. That’s why we’re here.”

Hours after the event, 52nd precinct commander, Deputy Inspector Thomas Alps, tweeted, “We would like to thank @SimplicityMiss1 for stopping by the precinct yesterday. They are a nonprofit organization

that provides amazing meals, and does outstanding work in the community: great food, prayers, songs & people. Thank you!”

For more information on Simplicity Mission, visit their website at www.simplicitymission.org. For information on “Bibles for LEO,” visit their website at www.biblesforleo.org.

If you, or someone you know, is in crisis, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

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Woodlawn Cemetery Celebrates Earth Day!

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Woodlawn Cemetery held an “Earth Day Celebration” on Saturday, April 24, following the official Earth Day on Thursday, April 22. The event took place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and well over 200 people attended.

Both adults and children enjoyed trolley rides, tree carving, (small grey fox) tree planting workshops, tree identification walks, arts & crafts, yoga on the lawn, and a free hot dog lunch, complete with a bag of chips and bottled water.

Kids did not go empty-handed either

and received a goodie bag filled with the Woodlawn Arboretum coloring book and crayons as well as an activity sheet.

Earth Day is an annual event to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events

coordinated globally by EarthDay.org, involving 1 billion people in more than 193 countries.

“With the weather cooperating, it was an awesome day and was free to the community!” said cemetery director, Barbara Selesky.



Photo courtesy of Woodlawn Cemetery

WOODLAWN CEMETERY CELEBRATES Earth Day on Saturday, April 24, 2021.



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***Nota: La Loteria se llevara a cabo Abril 15, 2021, para solicitudes favor de vistar la pagina web www.ilchs.org**

Puede enviar su solicitud via email a Egonzalez@ilchs.org

**Tambien Puede enviar por correo a: International Leadership Charter High School
3030 Riverdale Avenue, Bronx NY 10463**

Fordham Anti-Racist Alumni Step Up Calls for Culture Change

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Fordham Anti-Racist Alumni Collective (FAAC) announced on Monday, April 26, that the group had compiled a list of student grievances against the faculty, administration, and staff of Fordham University, which were submitted from victims through the group's Instagram accounts.

"These powerful accounts of racism, sexism, classism, xenophobia, sexual harassment, lack of professionalism and institutional neglect expose Fordham University's record of failure to hold faculty, administrators and staff accountable for harm caused in the classroom and on campus," a statement from FAAC read.

The alumni group, which is committed to amplifying the demands of Black students at Fordham University, said that, overall, 162 complaints were submitted. "Each complaint represents harm caused to a student and solidifies a pattern of inaction in responding to student concerns on behalf of the university," the group wrote in a press release dated April 26.

Among the list of complaints, 29 percent (47) pertained to racism, and 9.8 percent (16) specifically addressed

a member of the faculty, though details of the nature of the complaint were not provided. *Norwood News* has asked FAAC for further clarification regarding the latter.

The complaints were submitted via the Instagram handles @BlackAtFordham and @LetsTalkAboutIt-Fordham on Instagram, and according to FAAC, they catalog patterns of discrimination at the university. Data pertaining to student grievances was first compiled last summer, at which time the group demanded a culture change be implemented at the university.

The anti-racism group said it is committed to keeping a record of these stories, which they said both students and alumni have courageously and vulnerably shared. They added that they are also working with faculty and administrators to hold offending individuals accountable. "Ultimately, FAAC's goals are to ensure that stories have not been shared in vain and to minimize further harm to students in the future."

Bob Howe, special adviser to Fordham president, Fr. Joseph Michael McShane SJ, responded to our request for

comment about the grievances, saying, "Father McShane first addressed the issues raised in the Instagram accounts almost a year ago, when he announced the *Fordham University Action Plan: Addressing Racism, Educating for Justice*."

An extract from that plan, which also dates back to last summer, reads, "In the course of the past few weeks, the members of the Board of Trustees, the administration, and I have watched and listened. We have read the many emails, petitions, and Instagram posts that have come from the University community."

The extract continued, "We have all been moved and dismayed by these statements and testimonials, and deeply saddened by the trauma that prompted them. Therefore, it is clear that the national awakening has come to Fordham. To be sure, we have, in the past, made strides in our efforts to create a more diverse, inclusive, and affirming community. But this moment has made it clear that we can and must do more. We all know this in our bones and in our hearts."

Howe said McShane and the university have been addressing the issue

of race and justice on a regular basis since that time, as has the Board of Trustees which, he said, also created a diversity fund. He said the chief diversity officer issued his annual report in September 2020 and added that anti-racism was the centerpiece of McShane's "State of the University" address, in September.

"In the past few months, Father McShane has communicated with the University community on Black History Month, and Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, addressed anti-Asian violence, and the conviction of Derek Chauvin in Minneapolis," said Howe, adding that "a lot more work" was being done on campus.

"Regarding the instances raised in the Instagram posts, as we've stated before, the University cannot address specific behaviors which were not reported through University channels, and in which either the complainant or the subject, or both, are anonymous," Howe said. When asked about the nature of the complaint directed at one specific member of faculty, Howe said, "We have no way to verify what the complainant is saying (or writing), nor any assurance of the poster's identity."

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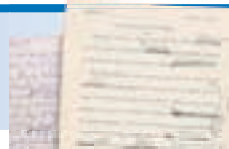
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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

Compiled by **SÍLE MOLONEY**



Opening of Lehman College Vaccination Site

On Tuesday, April 20, Lehman College, CUNY formally announced that it has partnered with the City to launch the Bronx's newest COVID-19 vaccination hub, located at the college's APEX Athletic Center at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West in the borough's Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood.

The site is being run by SOMOS Community Care, and will serve up to 300 people a day with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. The site is open to New Yorkers aged 16 or older, as well as to non-New York City residents aged 16 or older who work or study in the city. Eligible individuals aged 50 and over may walk-in without making an appointment, as long as they're able to show proof of age.

However, those aged 49 and under will not be seen without an appointment. Prospective attendees should visit the New York City Department of Health website for more details in this regard. To schedule a vaccine appointment, visit <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/locations/664> or call (877) 829-4692.

The following additional Bronx sites are now vaccinating New Yorkers aged 50 and older, without an appointment:

- Bronx Co-Op City Dreiser Community Center
- Northeast Bronx YMCA (Edenwald)
- South Bronx Educational Campus
- West Bronx Gymnasium
- Bathgate Contract Postal Station

Walk-up COVID-19 vaccinations for New Yorkers aged 50 years and older are now available at all City-run vaccine sites.

Homebound New Yorkers

New York City is providing in-home COVID-19 vaccinations (Johnson & Johnson) to eligible NYC residents who are fully homebound, have not already been vaccinated, and do not already have access to a vaccination program.

If you think you may be eligible for an in-home vaccination, fill out an interest form here: <https://forms.cityofnewyork.us/f/homebound>. The form does not set up an appointment, but it enables City officials to contact you to further discuss your eligibility.

Johnson & Johnson Vaccines Resumed

The administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was paused April 13, out of an abundance of caution, following CDC and FDA recommendations which followed news that blood clots were found in six women out of almost eight million Americans who had received the shot. An investigation was carried out and April 23, the CDC recommended lifting the pause, following the completion of the investigation. It concluded that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the risks of a blood clot. On April 26, City officials confirmed that in-home vaccinations of Johnson & Johnson have resumed.

The FDA Fact Sheet on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine has also been updated to note the rare blood clot cases. According to the

Fact Sheet, if you receive the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine and, within three weeks, experience the following symptoms, you should contact your health care provider:

- Severe headache
- Chest or abdominal pain
- Leg pain or swelling
- Shortness of breath
- Easy bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin at the site of injection

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Unless you are exempt, appointments are required to receive a vaccination. To determine your eligibility, access a list of nearby providers, and schedule your vaccination appointment, use New York State's "Am I Eligible" app. Prior to receiving your scheduled vaccination, you must complete the New York State COVID-19 Vaccine Form.

New York City: <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/> or 877-VAX-4-NYC (877-829-4692)

New York State: <https://ami-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/> or call 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829)

VaccineTogetherNY: <https://vaccinetogetherny.org/Pages/default.aspx> or call 646-697-VACC

To schedule an appointment, go to: <https://vax4nyc.nyc.gov/patient/s/>.

To find a vaccination site, go to: <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/locations>.

Your physician or local pharmacy may also have information on scheduling vaccine appointments.

If you need transportation to get your vaccine appointment, click this link for a list of options: <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/vaccine>.

For trustworthy information on the vaccines and the research behind them, go to: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccine-facts.page>.

The MTA announced that it has launched a new vaccination site locator on its live subway map. See the map here: <https://map.mta.info/#/40.70949,73.97853,14z>

More Help with Scheduling Vaccine Appointments

Epicenter-NYC is a volunteer group, assisting New Yorkers to find and schedule vaccine appointments, particularly the elderly, and anyone not adept at using the internet. More details can be found here:

<https://epicenter-nyc.com/epicenters-vaccine-resources/> or my emailing hello@epicenter-nyc.com.

The turbobox site, <https://www.turbobox.info/>, scans the websites of all providers offering the vaccine throughout the city and lists their available appointments.

Another volunteer group who go by the Twitter handle @VaccineschedNYC and Instagram handle @VaccineSchedulerNYC are also helping vulnerable populations like seniors and non-native English speakers to book vaccine appointments. For questions, contact VaccineSchedulerNYC@gmail.com or phone/text: 646-494-7029.

Bronx Rising Initiative, a nonprofit launched in 2020, has

launched a homebound vaccine initiative to help inoculate Bronx seniors where they live, in partnership with local community organizations which are already serving homebound seniors. Residents can sign-up at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/getvaccinated>.

Latest Updates on Vaccine Eligibility

Who is now eligible? The COVID-19 vaccine is now available to all New York residents 16 and older. People who live outside of the state but work or study in New York are also eligible to get vaccinated. People who are eligible based on employment include both paid and unpaid workers.

Note: People who are 16 or 17 years old are only eligible for the Pfizer vaccine.

Proof of eligibility is needed at your appointment. If you have questions, call the New York State COVID-19 hotline at 833-NYS-4-VAX (833-697-4829).

On April 23, the City confirmed that New Yorkers aged 16+ can now get their COVID-19 vaccine without an appointment at select sites across NYC: <http://on.nyc.gov/walkupvax>.

Other COVID-19 Updates

Effective May 1, indoor and outdoor graduation and commencement ceremonies will be allowed with limited capacity, depending on event size and location.

As of April 10, asymptomatic travelers will no longer be required to quarantine after entering New York.

The Open Enrollment Period for uninsured New Yorkers has been extended through December 31, 2021. New Yorkers can apply for coverage through NYS Department of Health or directly through insurers.

COVID-19 Testing Sites

For a full list of COVID-19 testing sites, text "COVID TEST" to 855-48 or go to:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/get-tested/covid-19-testing.page>.

Earth Day at Keeper's House Edible Garden

The Keeper's House Edible Garden, based at 3440 Reservoir Oval West in Norwood, is fast evolving. Spurred on by Earth Day, celebrated on April 22, the community garden's volunteers have now finished putting the shed together, a task which took two days of assembling 1,000 pieces. The volunteers are now getting a better feel for where the arches will go and are ready to start bringing in seedlings. They have also planted one of two apple trees. The group is currently concentrating on getting more compost, and though they received some donations recently from the Stagg Group, they are calling on anyone else who can drop off compost at the Keeper's House, to get in touch with them. Email: mosholuparkland@gmail.com or call (347) 371-3085.

Citi Bike Comes to Bedford Park

The Phase 3 expansion of the City's Citi Bike program in the Bronx was presented during the

March Bronx Community Board 7 Traffic & Transportation meeting. Citi Bike is a public bike share program, with bikes available 24/7 at hundreds of bike stations, each with a touch-screen kiosk and system map. To participate, riders must be 16 years or older, obtain annual membership or an access pass, and wear a helmet while riding.

A single, 30-minute ride costs \$3, a day pass costs \$15, a 3-day pass costs \$24 and annual membership costs \$179. A rate of \$5/month is available to NYCHA residents, SNAP recipients, and community development credit union members, subject to conditions. DOT and their partner, Lyft, ensure bikes are disinfected. Several bike station locations are planned in the next couple of months for Bedford Park, but not Norwood.

These include Goulden Avenue, adjacent to Lehman College; south sidewalk of Bedford Park Blvd West, east of Goulden Avenue; south sidewalk of Bedford Park Blvd West, west of Paul Avenue; east roadbed of Parkview Terrace at Jerome Avenue and East 198th Street; west sidewalk of Jerome Avenue, south of Bedford Park Boulevard West; east sidewalk of Goulden Avenue, north of West 205th Street; the west side of Paul Avenue, north of West 205th Street; south sidewalk of West Moshulu Parkway South, west of Goulden Avenue; east sidewalk of Risse Street, west of Paul Avenue; and the west sidewalk of Jerome Avenue, north of East Moshulu Parkway South.

The also include the east sidewalk of Grand Concourse, south of East Moshulu Parkway South; east side of East Moshulu Parkway South, south of Van Cortlandt Avenue East; west side of Grand Concourse, north of East 205th Street; east roadbed of East Moshulu Parkway South, north of East 204th Street; east roadbed of Grand Concourse, south of East 203rd Street; west sidewalk of Briggs Avenue, south of East 202nd Street; west sidewalk of Moshulu Parkway, north of Hill Avenue; and the east roadbed of Jerome Avenue, south of East 198th Street.

Phone (855) 245-3311 or email customerservice@citibikenyc.com for more information.

Free Summer Programs for Kids

The NYC Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Youth & Community Development will have free summer programs available for all children in New York City (K-12, as well as students with 12-month IEPs). The programs aim to help students catch up on academics if they have fallen behind amid remote learning, and also provide for social experiences fundamental to children's development.

Summer Rising High School is oriented towards the needs of older students and may be in-person or remote, depending on the "subject area and community needs." Below are some important dates:

- Grades K-5
Program runs July 6 to August 20 (except July 20), Mon-

day through Friday from 8am to 6pm. Enrollment begins Monday, April 26 through the DYCD website: <https://discoveredycd.dycdconnect.nyc/home>.

- Grades 6-8
Program runs July 6 to August 12 (except July 20), Monday through Thursday from 8am to 4pm. Enrollment begins Monday, April 26 through the DYCD <https://discoveredycd.dycdconnect.nyc/home>.
- Grades 9-12
Program runs July 6 to August 13 (except July 20), Monday through Friday, at hours throughout the day to accommodate the student's schedule. High schools will reach out to students in coming weeks to discuss participation.

- Students with 12-month IEPs (D75 and ESY)
Program runs July 2 to August 13 (except July 5 and 20), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. or 8:10 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. Students with 12-month IEPs will be contacted about participating in their IEP-recommended programs and about their learning preferences (remote or in person).

All New York City residents are eligible for Summer Rising programs, even if they do not attend a DOE school. Students who do not attend a DOE school should apply to a program that is in their neighborhood. For more details, and to see frequently asked questions, email summer@schools.nyc.gov, visit <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/summer>, or contact your local school.

University Heights Affordable Housing Lottery

An affordable housing lottery has launched for units at 2724 Heath Avenue, a seven-story, residential building in the University Heights section of The Bronx, as reported by YIMBY, the architecture, construction, and real estate website on Saturday, April 17.

The 51,610 square-foot development was designed by Marin Architects and developed by Stagg Group, and yields 64 units, available at different prices. Residences will have energy-efficient appliances and name-brand kitchen appliances. Additional amenities include a shared laundry room, gym, a community center, and six parking spaces.

Prospective renters must meet income and household size requirements to apply for these apartments. Applications must be postmarked or submitted online via <https://housing-connect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/details/2043>, no later than June 11, 2021.

Proposed Co-op Tax Increase Defeated

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz has confirmed that a proposed increase in the taxes paid by co-op building shareholders (called the capital base tax) has been defeated and cooperative housing corporations are exempt from this tax, starting in the 2021 tax year. The applicable rate for 2020 was already at 0.04 percent.



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Friday, March 5, 2021 12:00pm - 1:00pm | Thursday, March 18, 2021 5:00pm - 6:00pm
Friday, March 19, 2021 12:00pm - 1:00pm | Thursday, March 25, 2021 5:00pm - 6:00pm

*Note: The lottery will be held on April 15, 2021 For applications, please visit our website at www.ilchs.org

You can email the application to Egonzalez@ilchs.org
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Public and Community Meetings

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at 718-220-5824 for further details.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD** 7 meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next full Board meeting will be held in **May (date TBC)**. Zoom details will be circulated ahead of the meeting. Contact mirosario@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, May 5, at 8 p.m.** For further details, contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

CORRECTIONS

In the *Norwood News*, April 15-April 28 edition, on page 2, "Op-Ed: Rite of Spring, More than Six Decades as a Fan of the Greatest Sports Franchise," Roger Maris and Thurman Munson were incorrectly referenced as Hall of Famers. In the same op-ed, Brooklyn

Dodger, Johnny Podres,' name was spelled incorrectly.

In the same edition, on page 9, "Op-Ed: Arts Flourishing at PS/MS 95, Sheila Mencher School," Malak Kalaz was referenced incorrectly as "he" rather than "she." We apologize for these errors.

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CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE



University Heights Burglary & Assault

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying the man seen in the photograph above in connection to a robbery and assault that occurred in the 52nd precinct. On Sunday, April 18, at around 5 p.m., in front of 25 West 184th Street, in University Heights, the man approached a 39-year-old man, struck him in the face with a handgun, and removed his cell phone and wallet. Among the items in the wallet were credit and debit cards, as well as \$1,500 in cash. The individual fled the scene in a white Sport Utility Vehicle. The assailant is described as male, 22 to 25 years of age, Hispanic, about 6 feet tall, and was last seen wearing a black, hooded sweater, gray sweatpants, and white sneakers.



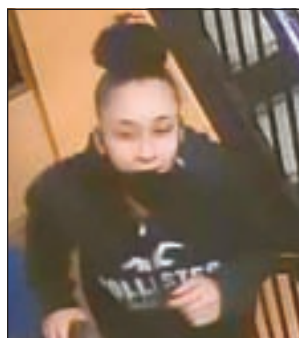
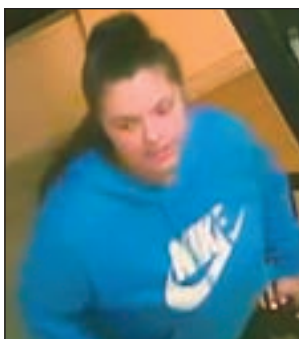
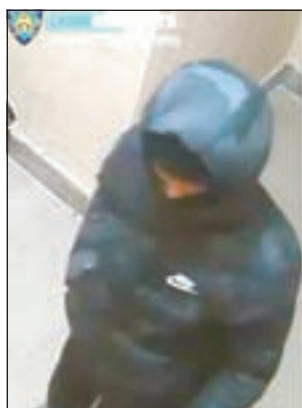
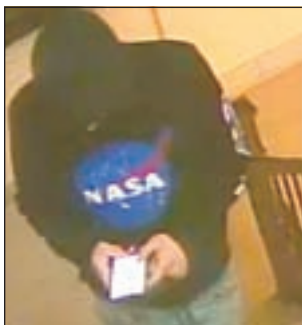
Bedford Park: MTA Driver Assaulted on BX41

The NYPD is seeking the public's help in locating the unidentified man seen in the above photo, who is sought in connection with an assault that occurred in the 52nd precinct. On Saturday, March 13, at 7.49 p.m., aboard a BX41 bus, at the intersection of East Bedford Park Boulevard and Webster Avenue, in Bedford Park, the assailant approached the on-duty bus driver, a 51-year-old, male MTA employee, punched him in the shoulder and spit in his face. The assailant fled on foot. The victim, who suffered pain and discomfort in his shoulder, refused medical attention.

Fordham Manor: Home Invasion at Gunpoint

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance identifying the individuals seen in the photos below and on the right who are sought in connection to a robbery (home invasion) that occurred in the 52nd precinct. On Monday, April 19, at approximately 1.30 a.m., the group entered an apartment building in the vicinity of Bainbridge Avenue and 193rd Street in Fordham Manor. Upon entering the building, they knocked on the door of an apartment, and when a 45-year-old man and 34-year-old woman answered, they forced their way inside.

Once inside, the group tied the two victims' hands with electrical tape, and one assailant displayed a firearm, while another displayed a knife. The male victim was slashed on the head and neck. The group then forcibly removed around \$22,000 in cash, jewelry and cellphones before fleeing on foot, northbound on Bainbridge Avenue. The victims refused medical attention. The photos are taken from the incident location.



Olinville: 25-Year-Old Man Shot Multiple Times

The NYPD confirmed a 25-year-old, unidentified man was shot multiple times in the head and chest on April 18, at 12.40 [in the afternoon], inside 3602 Holland Avenue in Olinville, shown on the top right. The victim was transported to Montefiore Hospital in critical condition. A helicopter search of the building's rooftop for the assailant, who remained at large, ensued.

In the 47th precinct, which covers Woodlawn, Wakefield, Williamsbridge, Baychester, Edenwald, Olinville, Fishbay, and Woodlawn Cemetery, two murders have been recorded in 2021, as of April 18, versus seven in 2020 during the same time period. Meanwhile, there have been 14 shooting victims in the precinct as of April 18, versus five during the same period last year.

In the 52nd precinct, which covers Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Norwood, Bronx Park, and University Heights, there has been one murder so far in 2021, while none were recorded during the same period in 2020. Meanwhile, there have been ten shooting victims in the precinct as of April 18,

versus three during the same period last year.

In the 50th precinct, which covers Riverdale, Fieldston, Kingsbridge, Marble Hill, and Spuyten Duyvil, and includes Wave Hill and Cortlandt Park, to date, there have been no murders in 2021, while one was recorded during the same period in 2020. There has been one shooting victim in the precinct, versus three during the same time period last year.

Anyone with information with regard to these incidents is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers website at WWW.NYPD-CRIMESTOPPERS.COM, or on Twitter @NYPDTips.

All calls are strictly confidential.



New NYS Guidelines for Vaccinated People

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Tuesday, April 27, that New York State will adopt the new CDC mask guidance for fully vaccinated people.

Fully vaccinated individuals can conduct outdoor activities or gather without wearing a mask outdoors except in certain crowded settings and venues. According to the CDC, if you've been fully vaccinated:

- You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask or staying 6 feet apart.

- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people of any age from one other household, e.g. visiting with relatives who all live together, without masks or staying 6 feet apart, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

- You can gather or conduct activities outdoors without wearing a mask except in certain crowded settings and venues.

- If you travel in the U.S., you do not need to get tested before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel.

- You need to pay close attention to the situation at your international destination before traveling outside the U.S.

tion before traveling outside the U.S.

- You do NOT need to get tested before leaving the U.S. unless your destination requires it.

- You still need to show a negative test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before boarding an international flight to the U.S.

- You should still get tested 3-5 days after international travel.

- You do NOT need to self-quarantine after arriving in the U.S.

- If you've been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms.

- However, if you live in a group setting (like a correctional or detention facility or group home) and are around someone who has COVID-19, you should still stay away from others for 14 days and get tested, even if you don't have symptoms.

If you have a condition or are taking medications that weaken your immune system, you may NOT be fully protected, even if you are fully vaccinated. Talk to your healthcare provider. Even after vaccination, you may need to continue taking all precautions.



Letters To The Editor

Editor's Note: We reserve the right to edit letters for space, clarity, civility and accuracy.

Forwards or Backwards?

As America vaults itself into a period of accelerated change in areas of culture, politics, religion (or lack thereof), marriage, health care, and a whole host of other arenas, the term we hear more and more from government, higher education, and business is the word "diversity." The purveyors of the diversity movement ask us to embrace the concept as a worthy goal and an important part of America's future. Should we join them?

The legalization of marijuana (or pot) is a big step backwards but is being done for diversity reasons which I will not go into at this time. Time has shown pot to be the gateway drug to

stronger and addictive narcotics. Not every person who smokes pot will end up as a heroin addict, but every heroin addict started off with pot.

But in an environment of accelerating change, we should remember that there is a downside to everything. Getting married means commitment. Landing a job means giving up other possibilities. Playing one sport means not playing others. Keeping life insurance means paying the premiums. So, what is the downside to the "diversity" agenda? Since all change involves giving up one thing in order to embrace something else, what are we giving up?

People who hold traditional views on mar-

riage and other issues are wrongly dismissed as bigoted, homophobic, or in need of being cured. I ask everyone in my Norwood community to embrace old-fashioned, traditional values and not be swept up in this misdirected diversity campaign.

**Richard Marias
Norwood**

The Case for Thurman Munson

Thurman Munson belongs in the baseball Hall of Fame, but contrary to what Michael Horowitz wrote [*Norwood News* edition dated April 15-April 28, 2021], he is not. Sportswriters who are not the brightest bulbs in the chandelier never came close to voting him in.

But sportswriters had no problem voting in Carlton Fisk, Munson's rival with the Boston Red Sox, who played even more years with the Chicago White Sox. Let's compare the stats. Munson played 10 years, nine full seasons, plus parts of two other seasons. Five times he batted over .300, including three years in a row in which he also had 100 or more RBI [run batted in]. Those were all years he had close to 600 at bats (one of those years he had over 600 at bats). The two .300 plus seasons he had before that, he had 453 at bats, and 511 at bats.

Munson was the Most Valuable Player in 1976 and was a three-time Gold Glove winner. His lifetime batting average is .292, his post-season average .357, and he batted .529 in the 1976 World Series.

In 24 years, Carlton Fisk had two 100-plus RBI seasons. He won one Gold Glove. He batted over .300 three times,

but only once as a regular. His first two .300-plus seasons were with 48 and 294 at bats. His lifetime batting average is .269. His lifetime post-season average is .259, .248 in the World Series. He never won a Most Valuable Player Award.

Since this letter is long enough just proving Munson's superiority to Fisk, I won't go into why Yankees, Bob Meusel, Mel Stottlemyre and Don Mattingly, also belong in the Hall, but you can Google their records.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

MTA Overtime Costs

The ongoing problems of excessive overtime for MTA employees of over \$1 billion annually, continues into 2021. This year will be the same unless real change is implemented.

Some overtime expenses are legitimate due to the impact of COVID-19. There is a difference between nec-

essary overtime due to malfunctioning equipment, accidents or adverse weather conditions when attempting to restore service versus other reasons.

There is still significant overtime abuse and out of control pensions. MTA union leadership has out-negotiated management when it comes to work rules and assignments, medical insurance contributions and pensions.

Too much recording of time and attendance still relies on an honor system. Installation of biometric time clocks still needs to be connected into the MTA Payroll System. How many supervisors continue signing off on overtime work hour abuses by employees and are not held accountable by their own supervisors? The same is true for those who manage agency budgets, along with MTA board members, the MTA senior management team, agency presidents and the MTA Chairman. Private sector business would have employed an up-to-date time, attendance and payroll system years ago. They would insist on documented justification for employee overtime pay.

The MTA must successfully negotiate future union contracts to include more flexible work assignments. Salary increases should match the consumer price index. Employees need to increase contributions toward medical insurance and retirement pensions, just as other government, private sector employees and commuters do. Future pensions must be calculated based on the final year's base salary, and not inflated by overtime.

Every dollar counts; be it generated by riders paying at the farebox, City, State or Federal Transit Administration grants. Taxpayers expect nothing less.

**Larry Penner
Great Neck**

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New Clinical Study To Help People Who Are Living With Chronic Pain

**Allen Burton, M.D.,
Medical Director,
Abbott Neuromodulation**

Abbott's DISTINCT Clinical Study is Here to Help People in Your Neighborhood Who are Living with Chronic Low Back Pain

Low back pain is the world's leading cause of years lost to disability, according to a study in *The Lancet*. And for 20 percent of patients, low back pain can become "chronic," which the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke defines as pain that persists for six months or more.

Now, a clinical study, which recently got underway at Montefiore Medical Center - Waters Place, Bronx, N.Y., is investigating a distinct new way to help treat people who suffer with chronic low back pain. The DISTINCT (Dorsal spinal cord STimulation vs mediCal management for the Treatment of low back pain) study, sponsored by Abbott, will compare the use of spinal cord stimulation (SCS) to standard medical care, which can include taking medicine. The goal of the study will be to determine how much a patient's level of pain, physical function and emotional well-being improves under each type of care.

SCS treats people living with chronic pain by using mild electrical pulses delivered by a small implant to change pain signals as they travel from the spi-

nal cord to the brain. The study will use Abbott's BurstDR SCS device, which has been used over the past five years to help those affected by back pain.

Currently, doctors do not have consistent treatment guidelines for chronic low back pain. Many patients start on a regimen of over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications and exercise or physical therapy. Some will eventually be prescribed opioids for the pain, while others might qualify for surgery. For those who are not able to have surgery, treatment options can be limited.

Findings from the study could answer questions healthcare providers have about how to treat low back pain in patients who are not able to have surgery and for whom there are limited treatment options. This could also help inform future standards of care, and provide insurance companies with the evidence necessary to demonstrate the benefit of SCS for patients who are not able to have surgery.

The DISTINCT study is now enrolling at up to 30 sites across the United States. Patients will be randomized to either SCS treatment or be treated with medication. Participants will be followed in-clinic and via telephone over a two-year period.

To see if you may be eligible for Abbott's DISTINCT study and to obtain more information on how to enroll, visit Neurostudies.abbott.

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Out & About

Compiled by RACHEL DALOO & SÍLE MOLONEY

Events

Are you interested in antique furniture? Join **The New York Botanical Garden** for the **Antique Garden Furniture Fair Preview Party** on April 29. This event features unique offerings from leading antique dealers, including classic furniture and fine garden antiques - some with a modern twist, both elegant and inspiring - for the home and garden. Proceeds support NYBG and its renowned horticultural programs. For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact Thao Phan at tphan@nybg.org or (718)-817-8774.

Join the staff of the **Van Cortlandt Library** for a fun, virtual game of trivia. Each month, the library staff play a trivia game based on a different category/theme and

provide book recommendations based on the category. The theme for May will be **"Pop Culture: 90s Edition,"** and the game will take place on May 6, from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Boost your knowledge, meet others, and get to know them! The event will take place over Google Meet. To sign up for the event, visit <https://www.nypl.org/events>.

Do you want to take part in a virtual yoga class? Then join **"Full Body Stretch with Darlene Carr,"** on Friday, April 30, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Stretching will increase flexibility and prevent injury. Stretching exercises allow for greater freedom of movement and improve posture. It also increases physical and mental relaxation. A yoga mat and yoga strap are needed for the activity. For more information, or to register, visit

<https://www.bronxarts.org/events>.

Art

Interested in learning about how working with art can help you cope through difficult times? Join the **Bronx Museum of the Arts** on April 29, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. for "What Does Art Do for You? A Youth-Centered Conversation About Art and Possibility." This youth-centered, panel conversation will bring together members of the Bronx Museum Teen Council and Recess: Assembly Peer Leaders to discuss how an arts practice helps us think and move, with and through hope, struggle, and despair. Moderated by artist and assembly co-founder, Shaun Leonardo, the panelists, representing youth of different ages, will share their lived experiences and explore the possibilities of art. To register, visit <http://www.bronxmuseum.org/events/>.

Music

Sunday Night at the Opera. Bronx Opera and BronxNet Community Cable present "Sunday Night at the Opera." Each Sunday, at 7 p.m. EST (beginning May 16), Bronx Opera will present a production from BronxNet's vault, and will add pre-show intros and intermission interviews with the cast and staff of each show. The series will run through June and into August. Tickets are free. For more information, visit <https://newyorkoperafest.org/events/bronxopera-2>.

Movement

To kick off the City Nature Challenge, join **NYC Parks** on April 30, from 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for a hike around Van Cortlandt Park, to view and make observations of the wonderfully diverse spring ephemerals on the western side of the park. Participants are advised to arrive 15 minutes early and to wear a face mask. Space is limited and registration is required. Volunteers under 18 must be accompanied by a chaperone. Registrants are encouraged to download the "iNaturalist" app onto their mobile device, prior to the event for an interactive experience. For more information, feel free to contact Stewardship@parks.nyc.gov.

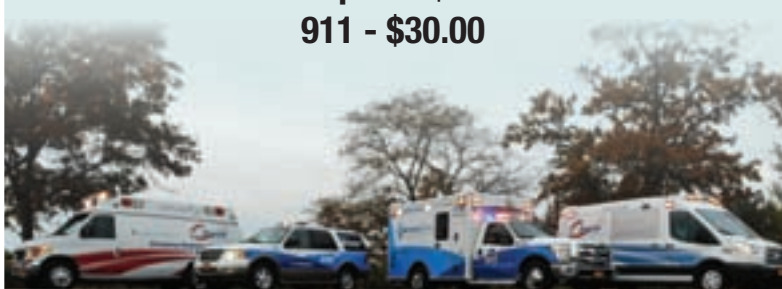
Shape up NYC presents **"Whine" fitness** (aerobic dance fitness) for teens, adults, and seniors each Friday from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., from April 16 to June 30, at Williamsbridge Oval Park. Join this Carnival-style workout, with easy-to-follow dance moves, and let the bass-driven music move you. Memorable time guaranteed! For everyone's safety, participants and instructors should wear a face covering and maintain social distancing of 10 feet during class. Wash your hands frequently and stay home, if sick. Carmen is the instructor. Sign up here for updates on this class: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/reg/shape-up-nyc/10697>.

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Restaurant Revitalization Fund

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Economic relief is available to restaurants and similar businesses via the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF). This program is open to the following entities which have experienced pandemic-related revenue loss:

- Restaurants
- Food stands, food trucks, food carts
- Caterers
- Bars, saloons, lounges, taverns
- Snack and non-alcoholic beverage bars
- Bakeries (on-site sales to the public comprise at least 33% of gross receipts)
- Brewpubs, tasting rooms, taprooms (on-site sales to the public comprise at least 33%

of gross receipts)

- Breweries and/or microbreweries (on-site sales to the public comprise at least 33% of gross receipts)
- Wineries and distilleries (on-site sales to the public comprise at least 33% of gross receipts)
- Inns (on-site sales of food and beverage to the public comprise at least 33% of gross receipts)
- Licensed facilities or premises of a beverage alcohol producer where the public may taste, sample, or purchase products

More details can be found at: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/covid-19-relief-options/restaurant-revitalization-fund>.

Bronx NAACP Sees Need for More Voter Education

(continued from page 1)

tions on March 23 [Districts 11 and 15], and another one on December 22 [District 12]. We tracked those, and we did a great deal of outreach," he said, adding that part of that outreach was including instructions for voters on the new ranked choice voting process.

Norwood News spoke to voters on election night on the ranked choice voting process at different polling sites. At JHS 80 The Mosholu Parkway in Norwood, Dionna Vargas said, "It was really easy. So, once I knew exactly where my voting place was, I walked in. There was a bunch of help ready as soon as I walked in." She added, "[They] assisted me with what table to go to, based on your address, and then the voting process was very simple."

The NAACP found that voter turnout accounted for 7.8 percent, 4.2 percent, and 7.5 percent of registered voters in those districts, respectively. [Burke said this was based on a snapshot of voter registration figures taken on a particular day. The numbers may vary since then.] The group is currently running an election season contest among City Council District voters to see which district will achieve the highest voter turnout. They publish updates as part of their voter outreach efforts.

According to the BOE, as of Feb. 21, 2021, there were 872,925 registered voters in The Bronx among its roughly 1.435 million residents, based on 2019 estimates, meaning 60.83 percent of the borough's residents were at least, *registered* to vote.

The borough's median age is the city's youngest at 34. This compares with a median age of 37 in Manhattan, 39 in Queens, 35 in Brooklyn and 40 on Staten Island. Many Bronx residents may not yet be of voting age. This may change over time, increasing the borough's percentage of registered voters.

Indeed, a review of Bronx city council district data shows that of those voters who are registered, the majority *do* vote. According to BOE data as of

Feb. 21, 2021, in District 8 which covers parts of the Bronx and Manhattan, there were 56,455 Bronx registered voters, of which 50,154 (88.83%) were deemed active and 6,301 (11.16%) were deemed inactive. Meanwhile, there were 102,617 registered voters in District 11. Of this total, 89,507 (87.22%) were deemed active, while 13,110 (12.77%) were deemed inactive.

In the recent District 11 special election, 9,555 people showed up at the polls, well short of the BOE active voter assessment of 89,507. Exhausted ballots accounted for 552. Lower than average voter turn-out is typical for special elections. However, according to now Councilman Eric Dinowitz, who won the race, the turnout was higher in the D11 special election than in the 2014, 2017, and 2019 Democratic primaries and in the 2019 Public Advocate special election.

The district had been unrepresented since Dec. 31, following former Councilman Andrew Cohen's resignation. He was elected as a judge to the Bronx Supreme Court bench in November 2020.

In District 12, as of Feb. 21, 2021, there were 112,477 registered voters, with 100,844 (89.65%) deemed active, and 11,633 (10.35%) deemed inactive. (This makes it the most active voting district in the borough, relative to the number of registered voters.)

In District 13, there were 100,602 registered voters as of Feb. 21, 2021, of which 90,079 (89.53%) were deemed active, and 10,523 (10.46%) deemed inactive. Meanwhile, in District 14, there were 94,515 registered voters as of the same date, with 83,317 (88.15%) deemed active, and 11,198 (11.85%) deemed inactive.

In District 15, there were 93,211 registered voters, of which 80,845 (86.73%) were deemed active, while 12,366 (13.26%) were deemed inactive. This district had been unrepresented since the recent resignation of Ritchie Torres, following his election to Congress in November 2020. He now represents Congressional District 15.

Total votes (both eligible and ineligible) in the District 15 special election amounted to 3,976 according to the BOE. Burke said turnout was around 4 percent, again, well below the BOE active voter assessment of 86.73 percent. "There are some 80,000 registered voters in the 15th, and the turnout was 3,400 [roughly]," Burke said. "So, our focus is to try and increase voter participation, and it is a struggle."

Again, it is acknowledged that lower voter turnout was expected in such a special election. *Norwood News* recently reported that Hostos adjunct professor and tenant lawyer, Oswald Feliz, emerged victorious in that race.

Meanwhile, in District 16, there were 100,060 registered voters as of Feb. 21, of which 88,954 (88.9%) were deemed active while 11,106 (11.09%) were deemed inactive. In District 17, there were 102,440 registered voters as of Feb. 21, with 90,568 (88.41%) deemed active and 11,872 (11.58%) deemed inactive.

In District 18, there were 110,532 registered voters as of the same date. Of these, 97,997 (88.65%) were deemed to be active, while 12,535 (11.34%) were deemed inactive. Finally,

in District 22, which straddles parts of The Bronx and Queens, there were 16 Bronx registered voters, of which 14 (87.5%) were deemed active and 2 (15%) deemed inactive.

To combat what he called "voter self-suppression," Burke said voters needed a concrete reason to vote. "That's part of our job at the [NAACP Bronx] branch," he said. "This is the biggest challenge: to help people make that concrete, tangible connection between their existence and that their lives are so linked to the decisions of elected folks at the local level."

Norwood News also spoke with some residents outside the Tracey Towers voting center in Norwood on election night, March 23. Most preferred not to give their names, and a good percentage said they were ineligible to vote. One young woman who was about 20 years old, who was at the bus-stop outside the towers said she was unaware that the election had taken place. "I do, I follow local media and watch the news and whatnot," she said, when asked if she followed any local media outlets. "I also work a lot, so...and I didn't see it in any schools or on any signs," she added.

The resident said she would have voted had she known about the election and outlined some of the issues that were of concern to her. "Definitely sanitation issues, especially with COVID... sanitation and somewhere for kids to go, like cleaner parks. Clean up the parks now that springtime is coming so that they can do normal things," she said. When asked if noise in the parks, late at night, in summertime, bothered her, she said too much noise, too late at night, was not good.

Meanwhile, Burke said that New York City must make the voting process easier. "Access to voting should be absolutely unimpeded in any way that anyone can imagine," he said. "That's just the responsibility of us all to ensure there's nothing that impedes access to voting."

On the topic of senior voters, and those with disabilities, Burke said, "We now have early voting, and we've got the write-in," he said, referring to mail-in ballots. "I think the write-in is here to stay in New York, and that's a good thing. Absentee voting has to stay in place."

"We need to ensure and look at the early voting and see if there's an opportunity to maybe expand it.

If we can get people more comfortable with the idea of mail-in ballots, that, I think, will certainly assist with our seniors and individuals who have some challenges making it to the polls."

Burke added, "For years, we did quite a bit with the absentee ballot voting before it became the norm with pre-COVID. When COVID came in, of course, that was the reasonable thing to do - go to the mail-in ballots."

In conclusion, Burke said anything that will make the process easier will help voter turnout in the primaries. Of the recent special elections, he said the impact of ranked choice voting was probably felt. "There are a number of votes that will be voided for some reason because maybe folks made some mistake on voting for one person all five times or something like that. You're going to get those incidents," he said. "We've got to drill down and get folks to engage in the election, understanding the value of their vote... that it has too much value for them to neglect it."

Formal confirmation of which candidates made the ballot in the June primaries has not yet been announced by the BOE.



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Kramer & Pollack, LLP is a team of tough, dedicated lawyers committed to obtaining the best settlements for our clients. We serve as trial counsel to the profession by whom we are highly esteemed. We PERSONALLY handle each and every case unlike others you may see advertising on TV.

Verdicts/Settlements

\$28,500,000.00 **\$16,687,615.91** **\$16,000,000.00** **\$15,000,000.00** **\$4,000,000.00** **\$3,700,000.00**

Placental Abruptio

Brain-Damage Baby

Pedestrian Hit By Bus

Construction Accident

Construction Accident

Construction Accident

PAST RESULTS ARE NOT A GUARANTEE OF FUTURE RESULTS

Kramer & Pollack, LLP Practice Areas:

- Accidents
- Animal & Dog Bites
- Automobile Accidents
- Aviation Accidents
- Bicycle Accidents
- Birth Injuries
- Boating Accidents
- Brain Injuries
- Burn Injuries
- Bus Accidents
- Construction Accidents
- Injuries to Minors & Children
- Medical Malpractice
- Motorcycle Accidents
- Nursing Home & Assisted Living Abuse
- Pedestrian Accidents
- Premises Liability
- Product Liability
- Slip, Trip & Fall Accidents
- Spinal Cord Injuries
- Truck Accidents
- Wrongful Death

