

A NOTE FROM THE DISTRICT MANAGER

Dear Board Members:

You are not told often enough how much you are appreciated. Your time and energy make our communities better. Regardless of what motivated you to apply and be chosen as a Board Member, your continued presence, input, unique perspective and positive intention contribute to what make our neighborhoods great.

As we begin this new year, please know your unheralded commitment is the lifeblood that makes Community Board 13 a wonderful place to live, work, shop and dine.

Always remember when you leave your home and family to attend yet another meeting or event that it is not in vain; you truly are making a difference. Your service is in the grand tradition of America and being an American. Being a Community Board Member is much of what our Founding Fathers envisioned of citizen participation in government, and what our sixteenth President meant by, "... a government of the people, by the people and for the people." -- Mark

LAND USE NOTES

Update - BSA Cal. No. 120-93-BZ

Block 11323, Lot 1, 222-19 Linden Boulevard

The continued hearing is scheduled for January 10, 2017. At the previous hearing, the Board was concerned about a trailer located on the Premises. The trailer operated as an office for a used car sales business. The owner of the Premises is taking the necessary steps in facilitating the removal of the trailer and hopes to submit photographs and an affidavit to the Board prior to the continued hearing. ZR.

Public Hearing & Vote - BSA Cal. No. 2016-4472-BZ

Block 8659, Lot 1, 245-01-245-13 Jamaica Avenue

This application is filed pursuant to Section 72-21 of the Zoning Resolution of the City of New York, as amended (the "Zoning Resolution" or "ZR"), to request a variance pursuant to Section 72-21 in order to legalize the operation of a Physical Culture Establishment ("PCE") on a portion of the first and cellar floor levels of an existing one-story building at the Premises. The Board of Standards and Appeals (the "Board") previously granted a special permit in 1994 (BSA Cal No. 12-94-BZ) to permit the operation of a PCE at the site, but the special permit expired in 2004. This variance application is necessary because the term of the previously granted special permit cannot be extended as more than ten years have elapsed since its expiration. In addition, the Bellerose - Floral Park - Glen Oaks Rezoning in June 2013 changed the zoning of the Premises to the current CI-3/R4 zoning district, where the ZR§ 73-36 special permit is not available.

LIQUOR LICENSES

- > Antun's (Renewal) -96-43 Springfield Boulevard, Queens Village
- > Shap Restaurant Corp. d/b/a Carcini Restaurant Corp. (Renewal)
271-20 Union Turnpike, New Hyde Park
- > Rajdhani Indian Restaurant Inc. (Renewal) - 206-08 Hillside Avenue, Queens Village

BSA reform bills before City Council

Queens civics weary of rubberstamping, supportive of transparency measures

Sick of the Board of Standards and Appeals approving projects contrary to their wishes, members of Queens civic associations are highly supportive of a 10-bill package before the City Council to make the agency more transparent.

A hearing on the bills, some of which were introduced by Councilman Ben Kallos (D-Manhattan) this month and others of which were introduced before, was held on Dec. 14.

Some of the measures that stand out include a bill that would create a \$25,000 fine for lying on an application; one that would require the agency to reference arguments made by community and borough boards and the City Planning Commission in its decisions; and another that would mandate the creation of a map showing locations where variances and special permits have been granted.

One of the proposed laws, which was introduced by Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz (D-Forest Hills) two years ago, would require the agency — whose commissioners are appointed by the mayor — to provide an explanation when it votes against the recommendations made by a community or borough board.

"Well a lot of times they don't listen to us," Koslowitz told the Chronicle. "They do what they want to do and you know nobody knows the neighborhood more than the community board, the borough president and the council member."



A package of 10 bills to reform the Board of Standards and Appeals — which approved a controversial plan to build a mosque at this small lot at 46-05 Parsons Blvd. in Flushing earlier this year — is before the City Council.

Earlier this year, for example, the BSA approved a mosque in Flushing that violated a litany of area zoning ordinances and was opposed by the Kissena Park Civic Association, Community Board 7 and elected officials for the area.

"The issue with the community center is that they were going to be in egregious violation of major building code laws," KPCA Vice President Carsten Glaeser told the Chronicle. "And the BSA in the end ruled that it's OK if they violate these laws."

Variances for floor area ratio, parking and other building components were sought and approved with members of the civic association testifying about these issues and their belief the site is too small for its planned use before the BSA and feeling that the agency ignored their remarks.

Throughout Queens, other civic associations have had similar problems with the agency.

"We used to call them the 'board of rubber stamps and appeals' because they would rubber stamp things," Juniper Park Civic Association President Bob Holden said.

"They really need to actually listen to the community and they don't by and large."

"Quite often, communities have a different point of view," Community Board 13 District Manager Mark McMillan said. "Before you know it, you get a development that the community's against." He would broaden the scope of the \$25,000 fine, for one thing.

"The penalty should apply not just to the applicant but to the attorney or the architect," he said.

Councilman Donovan Richards (D-Laurelton), Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer (D-Sunnyside) and Koslowitz support the legislation to create the interactive map.

Another bill would require the hiring of a Department of City Planning coordinator for the BSA.

Claims of financial hardship from applicants would have to meet minimum requirements that would be codified, as would those of a zoning lot's physical uniqueness, if the measure which creates a \$25,000 fine for lying applicants is passed.

Another piece of legislation would require the agency's executive director to appoint a state-certified general appraiser skilled in auditing and examining investments in real estate.

Van Bramer introduced the bill to change how the BSA weighs community input, requiring the agency to refer to arguments presented to it — which are given by borough boards, community boards and the City Planning Commission — in its decisions.

Continued on next page

(Continued—BSA Reform bills before City Council)

Another bill would mandate the BSA to notify variance holders six months in advance of their variance's expiration. If they continue to use the lot for six months after that date, they would be subject to a \$500 penalty that is incurred again if another six-month period passes.

The 30-day period in which BSA decisions can be appealed in court would be extended to four months if one of the bills is passed

Another proposed law, introduced by Richards, would require the agency to notify Council members when it receives an application for a location in their district.

Kallos, who chairs the Committee on Governmental Operations, also introduced legislation to make the agency publish a detailed annual report about its permit and variance decisions. The report would have to state the length of time between the filing of an application and when a decision on it is reached, how many appeals are granted and other relevant information.

Not everyone supports the bills.

New York City Zoning Advisory Council President Sheldon Lobel, a land-use attorney who has worked on BSA applications for decades, voiced criticism of some of them at the hearing.

Lobel disputes the claim that the agency rubber-stamps applications — despite a 2012 analysis from the good government group Citizens Union that found the BSA decided as the applicant wished in 97 percent of a set of 108 cases, a portion of which were opposed by community boards. Lobel mentioned how in pre-application meetings with the board's chairperson, a requested variance can be dismissed so that filing an application is a non-starter.

"Right then, she says, 'I don't see it' or 'I see it,'" Lobel said, adding that many would-be cases do not come to the BSA for that reason.

Lobel added that the proposed \$25,000 penalty would discourage applicants who cannot handle such a loss from filing with the BSA at all. "Then no one'll be able to go for a variance," he said.

As not everyone with a case before

the agency is a wealthy developer — religious facilities and community centers also sometimes need variances — some ordinary people could be hurt by some of the bills penalties, Lobel explained.

The land-use lawyer is not opposed to the whole legislative package, however, citing the bill that would create a map of sites as a harmless one.

"I'm not against all of them," he said. "I'm just against those that would create more difficulties for the small business owners, the small property owners, churches and synagogues."

BSA Executive Director Ryan Singer expressed an openness to the legislation.

"The Board welcomes the efforts to increase transparency and rigour, both efforts are in line with the goals of Chair [Marjorie] Perlmutter," he said in an emailed statement. "We will continue to work with the City Council to achieve our shared goals within the constraints of our legal framework and budget."

by Ryan Brady, Associate Editor

Queens Chronicle

QUEENS CHRONICLE, Thursday, January 12, 2017 Page 2

City bag bill is back, starting on Feb. 15

Five-cent fee applies to most paper, plastic grocery totes after 4-mo. delay

by Michael Gannon
Editor

One of the hottest stories last spring was the City Council's close and contentious vote to charge customers five cents for almost every paper or plastic grocery bag they use while food shopping.

Originally set to be implemented last October, the fee was pushed back to Feb. 15 when the state Legislature threatened to ban such fees. The issue faded into obscurity under things like the presidential election.

That could change once the new session of the state Legislature goes into high gear in the coming weeks.

Three state senators from Queens — all of whom opposed the Council measure — told the Chronicle that Albany could well be reviving the bag bill ban.

"The reason the Council delayed it until February is because the Senate was considering taking up a bill," Sen. Joe Addabbo Jr. (D-Howard Beach). "They may make us do that again. I'm not against recycling or reducing litter. This isn't the way to do it."

Sen. Leroy Comrie (D-St. Albans) said while the session still is in its earliest phases, he is hearing that more action could be taken.

Comrie said last spring that the fee, which under statute is kept by the stores, would hit low-income residents the hardest, and that



Most grocery bags will start costing shoppers five cents apiece come Feb. 15 when a bill originally passed last spring goes into effect. Action in the state capital last year led to a four-month delay for the start date. And Albany could act again in the next few weeks. FILE PHOTO

many people in his district could feel the effect of even a few dollars per month. But he also is not jumping on a Senate ban bandwagon just yet.

"I want to see what a new bill looks like," he said in a telephone interview. "The last bill did nothing for people in my district."

Sen. Tony Avella (D-Bayside) said the fee makes no sense.

"When we began recycling, we didn't charge people," he said. "We gave people the bins. And when I put my newspapers out, I put them out in a plastic bag and the Department of Sanitation takes it. Why can't they

take other plastic bags?"

Sen. Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn), who sponsored the Senate measure last year, declined to comment. Assemblyman Michael Cusick (D-Staten Island), who sponsored the companion bill, could not be reached. Raul Contreras, a spokesman for Mayor de Blasio, said it still has City Hall's backing.

"The Council passed a bill that struck the right balance," he said. "It reduced reliance on single-use bags and incentivized the use of reusable bags while safeguarding consumers with logical exemptions to protect vulnerable New Yorkers. We are going to continue to work with our partners in the City Council and Albany on implementation of this legislation."

Jordan Christiansen, program coordinator with Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said she is encouraged by similar bills that have been passed or enacted in places like Suffolk County, Long Beach, LI and California, mostly modeled on an existing regulation in Washington, DC that has reduced bag usage by up to 80 percent. She said aside from removing trash from the waste stream, it makes economic sense by saving the cost of disposal.

"It's well-crafted," she said. "It also makes common sense. The bags were never free. This will reduce the number of paper and plastic bags and encourage people to bring their own."

DOT Talks Manual Design At Borough Hall

BY ARIEL HERNANDEZ

Department of Transportation assistant commissioner Wendy Feuer and project manager Patrick Smith presented the latest update of what the third edition of New York City's "Street Design Manual" would look like at the first Queens Borough Board meeting on Monday night.

"The 'Street Design Manual' is a menu or toolkit of options for what neighborhoods can request for street design to achieve the goals that we as business leaders kind of set for our system," said Smith. "It also provides some sort of high-level standards for different design treatments that are mainly useful for our internal staff as they are moving through these projects."

The very first edition of the "Street Design Manual" was created in 2009, with the second edition following shortly behind and printed in 2013. However, since then there have been major projects taking place at rapid speeds, so instead of designing a new manual for print, they came up with a 2.5 edition, which was solely online and was to update specifically on universal design and resiliency.

"Now we're going into the third edition of the 'Street Design Man-



Photo by Ariel Hernandez

The urban design team for the New York City Department of Transportation attended the first Queens Borough board meeting to discuss the latest updates on the third edition of the New York City "Street Design Manual."

ual," which was actually embraced by the city and communities," said Feuer. "It's out there to really help people understand what we [city organizations] do, how we do it and what we can do."

One of the changes that will be seen in the third edition that was put into the online 2.5 edition is some

element of how the DOT and city process work, which, according to Smith, "was added to the last version as an attempt to kind of demystify what the planning process looks like that the city goes through and how we finally arrived at our capital projects, as well as obviously a number of case studies and other resources

to jump off of."

One of the biggest components of designing the latest manual is servicing a larger audience, who are all interested in using the manual for different purposes. The manual will be broken down into seven chapters, in comparison to the 2.5 edition which is only six chapters.

When deciding to begin creating the third edition, Smith said they initiated the process with a user-feedback survey where they got a sense of who uses it, what they like about it and what could be improved. They were able to determine that the manual is primarily used as a "jumping-off resource."

Another major change is that up until now, the "Street Design Manual" has been a physical book. Although they do have a pdf version on the web, their goal is to make it more interactive online, such as the street manual in San Francisco and in Boston.

The third edition is projected to be released at the end of 2017. However, due to the several projects taking place concurrently, they want to make sure that they are all included in the manual.

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Qns. pols back State of the State policies

Guv from the borough unlikely to be obstructed by its Albany lawmakers



Gov. Cuomo, a Holliswood native, is unlikely to have trouble getting Queens' state lawmakers — all of whom are Democrats — to support the policy proposals outlined in his State of the State addresses. PHOTO COURTESY NYS

Although Gov. Cuomo will likely face opposition from the GOP-controlled state Senate to some of the progressive proposals outlined in his State of the State speeches, lawmakers in his native borough proba-

bly won't give him much trouble.

"There are some great things in there," Assemblyman David Weprin (D-Fresh Meadows) told the Chronicle, mentioning the governor's plan to make state colleges free to families that make less than \$125,000. "I particularly liked the Excelsior Scholarships. CUNY and SUNY are great systems."

Several other Queens state lawmakers, all of whom are Democrats, are pleased with the initiatives announced in the Holliswood native's addresses.

The policies proposed by Cuomo — who broke tradition to have a series of regional State of the State

speeches in different sections of the state; his New York City speech happened in Manhattan on Jan. 9. — would have a big impact on residents of the borough.

He has spoke about the revamping of JFK Airport; a renewed effort to create a state hate crimes task force after he could not get funding to make one last year; raising the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18; a plan to make automatic and same-day voter registration; changing bail so that it is set according to public risk and the defendant's financial status and other components.

Continued on next page

(Continued—Qns. pols back State of the State policies)

To state lawmakers in "The World's Borough," the proposals are unlikely to be opposed. But, as rookie Assemblyman Clyde Vanel (D-Queens Village) put it, "the devil's in the details."

"I'm always concerned about knowing that we are in a good financial position in the state," state Sen. Joe Addabbo Jr. (D-Howard Beach) said. "I listened to it with a cautious ear and embraced much of what he is saying."

The senator is glad that Cuomo's plan for modernizing JFK Airport does not include a runway expansion to accommodate more flights.

"We already have an issue of air traffic airplane traffic over the residents," he said. "We're already looking into the Part 150 study and seeing how we can reduce airplane noise."

Addabbo is also supportive of the economic boost that the airport initiative will have for his district.

"It means a vast amount of jobs, that's great," he said. "I'd like to see a bump in the post-construction jobs."

Much of the governor's plans pleased Assemblyman Ron Kim (D-Flushing).

"I think the overall macro message of reviving and focusing on the middle class is something that resonates with me," he said.

But if funding some of the governor's bigger initiatives results in more taxes, Kim added, small businesses could be harmed.

"With all these grand ideas that he's laid out in his first few speeches, he

hasn't gone into details about how he is going to finance them," the assemblyman said. "So it is irresponsible to get people's hopes up that these are the programs that he wants to deliver but then pass the buck to other people to put the money together."

Hashing out the budget details will happen more in the coming months in Albany.

"When we get to the dollars and cents and when he sends us things in writing and we have a proposed governors budget, we'll negotiate," Assemblyman Michael Den Dekker (D-Jackson Heights), an avid backer of the free tuition proposal, said. "And hopefully, come to an agreement on the policies and how we're gonna pay for them."

Weprin, who was recently appointed chairman of the Committee on Correction, is sanguine about Cuomo's announced criminal justice reform policies.

"I'm particularly excited about some of the governor's proposals in the correction area: reforming the parole system, raising the age from 16 to 18 for being reared as an adult, the Hate Crimes Task Force," he said.

Queens District Attorney Richard Brown expressed an openness to Cuomo's proposals.

"I share with the Governor his desire to create a fair system where the rights of the accused are properly balanced with concerns for public safety and look forward to the opportunity to review all of the Governor's legislative proposals in detail," he said.

In November, Bellerose resident Fariha Nizam was harassed on a Manhattan-bound bus and ordered to

remove her hijab; around the same time, St. Francis Prep students harassed minorities on another bus. An Islamophobic rant was also filmed in Astoria after the election and graffiti calling for gay people to die was also seen in the neighborhood last month.

When they get to the Republican-controlled upper chamber, the policies outlined in the State of the State addresses will likely face opposition. But they are not doomed, according to Weprin.

"Well, you know look, if the governor makes it a priority, he can be very persuasive," the assemblyman said. "He was able to persuade Republicans in the Senate to pass marriage equality when most of them were against it."

Cuomo will at least have a supporter in state Sen. Mike Gianaris (D-Astoria), the deputy Democratic Conference leader.

"The proposals set forth by the Governor mirror initiatives long supported by Senate Democrats, including my bills relating to automatically registering more than 2 million new voters and reforming the flawed bail system," he said in a prepared statement. "While I will work hard to see these policies enacted, it is undeniable that a Democratic Senate majority would be able to pass these measures much more easily."

by Ryan Brady, Associate Editor

Queens Chronicle

Thursday, January 12, 2017



Think tank proposes RBL to JFK Airport

One of five options released after governor's overhaul announcement

Following Gov. Cuomo's proposal to bring John F. Kennedy International Airport into the 21st Century, the influential think tank Regional Plan Association released five ways commuters could have a one-seat ride to and from the airport — including the ever-controversial Rockaway Beach Rail Line.

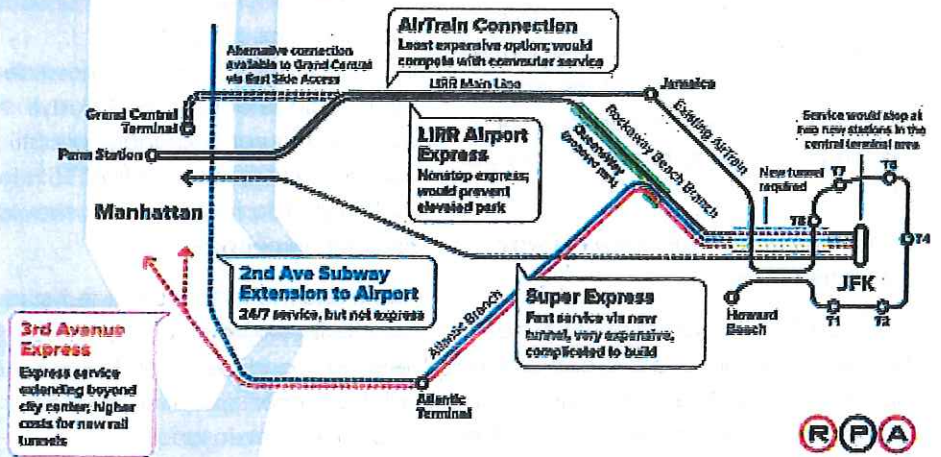
"Tens of thousands of Queens families endure the longest commutes in the city and I applaud the RPA for evaluating different transportation possibilities," said Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato (D-Rockaway Park) in a statement sent to the Chronicle. "Reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Rail Line, which I fully support, is the most beneficial option."

As always, the idea of bringing the rail back brought with it objections from those who want to see the abandoned right-of-way turned into parkland.

"The RPA report suggests a number of options for a one-seat ride including the possible reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Branch," said Travis Terry, Friends of the QueensWay Steering Committee member, in a statement. "It also rightfully points out that one of the cons of this option is the loss of the QueensWay, a potential 47-acre park that many residents and organizations citywide have strongly advocated for."

The RPA report offers few details on how reactivating the line — last used in the 1960s — would be accomplished. It does offer three different ways it could connect Manhattan to the airport, including running trains from Penn Station to the airport

One-Seat Ride Options to JFK



The Regional Plan Association released five proposals to offer one-seat rides to and from John F. Kennedy International Airport.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RPA

and running it along the LIRR main-line.

Larry Penner, a transportation historian and former official at the U.S. Department of Transportation, said the plan — along with the other four — are unlikely ever to come to fruition.

"There is no room to run additional trains into or out of Penn Station during either a.m. or p.m. rush hours," Penner said. "No new additional space at Penn Station will become available until the MTA LIRR East Side Access to Grand Central Terminal is complete. The most recent forecasted date is December 2023. Based upon past history, this could slip to 2024."

Still, Pheffer Amato believes the rail is desperately needed in her district.

"Not only will reactivation of the line create much-needed job opportunities, ease congestion, connect neighborhoods but will spur economic development in Southern

Queens and the Rockaway Communities — which has been ignored for too long," she said in her statement.

The MTA is in the process of conducting a feasibility study for bringing back the rail line, which is expected to be completed sometime in June. It's not the first such study to be conducted of the line.

Although the RPA suggests the line as a one-seat route to JFK, it notes the loss of the QueensWay would be a "con" of the plan.

"We would also note other harms to the community such as the closure of little leagues, reduction of existing park space and having a train run dangerously close to thousands of homes and a number of schools," Terry said in his statement. "Though the devil is in the details, we very much hope that any plan for a one-seat ride takes very strongly into consideration its impacts to those of us living in Queens."

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(Continued—Think tank proposes RBL to JFK airport)

Neither the MTA nor the Governor's Office responded to a request for comment by press time.

When he announced his plans to redo JFK, Cuomo said he would like to see a one-seat ride to and from the airport. He has asked the MTA and stakeholders in the airport to explore the feasibility of finding such a way to make that possible.

Penner doesn't think there's a way to accomplish that.

"It is a safe bet that there never has been and or will be a real one-seat ride," he said. "The only exception is one-stop express shuttle bus services from either Grand Central Terminal, Penn Station or World Trade Center directly to Kennedy Airport."

The Rockaway Beach Rail Line figures into two of the other RPA proposals, including a plan to extend the Second Avenue subway to Brooklyn — via tunnels under the East River — and connect

to the airport using portions of the Atlantic and Rockaway right-of-ways.

Penner doesn't think that would work out either.

"This would extend Second Avenue subway the full length to Hanover Square in the financial district," he said.

"Thousands of LIRR riders whose destinations include downtown Brooklyn, the Barclay Center and Financial District would have to change from LIRR to new subway at Jamaica. I doubt they would support this concept."

There's also the fact that the first phase of the Second Avenue Subway took decades and billions of dollars to complete, Penner said, so such an idea would take even longer.

That's the same reason, he said, the RPA's idea of connecting a new rail line along Third Avenue through the Atlantic and Rockaway Beach rights-of-ways would also not work.

"There isn't enough money and time in the world to build a competing subway on Third Avenue, let alone complete the

Second Avenue subway in the next 100 years," Penner said.

The retired transportation official called the idea to connect the JFK AirTrain to the LIRR main line at Jamaica, creating a one-seat ride from Penn Station and Grand Central to JFK, "dead on arrival as LIRR and AirTrain equipment are not compatible."

Finally, the RPA in its report proposed building a new tunnel between Manhattan and the airport.

Penner was not impressed.

"This could become a reality decades after completion of the Second and or Third Avenue subway," he said. "Again, there isn't enough money and time in the world, Do you really want to wait years after 2117?"

by Anthony O'Reilly, Associate Editor

Queens Chronicle
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High grades for Gov. Cuomo's tuition plan

Queens native stands beside U.S. Sen. Sanders to offer free college for many

by Anthony O'Reilly
Associate Editor

Standing with the man who popularized the idea of making college free of charge across the nation, Gov. Cuomo on Tuesday announced his proposal to offer hundreds of thousands of New York residents the chance to attend SUNY and CUNY four-year and community colleges without having to pay tuition.

"The rule of the game was everybody has a fair shot at success — that is America," Cuomo said at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City. "And when you take that away, you take away the spirit and the values that made this country this country ... College is a mandatory step if you really want to be a success."

The program, called the Excelsior Scholarship, would make it so full-time students from households making less than \$125,000 would not have to pay tuition. That threshold, however, would be \$100,000 at the start of the 2017-18 school year, \$110,000 the next and finally the \$125,000 starting in 2019.

The Queens native made his announcement alongside U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), who during his presidential campaign last year proposed making all colleges tuition free.

"If we are going to have an economy that creates the kinds of jobs that we need for our



Gov. Cuomo, left, introduces U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, center, at a press conference at LaGuardia Community College to propose free tuition at public universities in the state. They are joined by Bill Thompson, chairman of the CUNY Board of Trustees.

PHOTO COURTESY NYS

people, we must have the best-educated workforce in the world," Sanders said. "And today what Governor Cuomo is proposing is a revolutionary idea for higher education and it's an idea that is going to reverberate not only throughout the State of New York, but throughout this country."

The proposal, which requires legislative

approval, received high marks from Queens elected officials.

"In today's world, college has become not a privilege, but a necessary step for working individuals of all fields," said state Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Flushing), a member of the Education Committee who has previously sponsored similar legislation. "Unfor-

tunately, college comes with a price tag that few can afford without burdensome loans. The proposal presented by Governor Cuomo and supported by Senator Bernie Sanders is an important step toward equal access to higher education."

State Sen. Joe Addabbo Jr. (D-Howard Beach), also an Education Committee member, said "whenever we can drop the tuition costs, even make it free, that's great."

"Nothing pleases me more than free, quality education for our residents," he added.

If approved, the Excelsior Scholarship would be paid for using existing state admission aid programs, such as the Tuition Assistance Program — which already shells out close to \$1 billion in education aid per year. The state estimates that once in full effect, the scholarship will cost \$163 million per year. There are 940,000 households statewide with college-aged children who could apply for the program, according to Cuomo's office, which added that 80 percent of households make less than \$125,000 a year.

Although SUNY and CUNY colleges are considerably cheaper than private colleges — for example, a year at LaGuardia costs only \$4,800 with all fees included — they are still out of reach for many New Yorkers. In 2015, the average student loan debt in the

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Free tuition? It could happen under Gov. Cuomo's new plan

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Empire State was \$29,320, according to the Governor's Office.

"At a moment when college costs are rising, student debt is out of control and Americans are wary of what the future holds, New York State can re-set the national agenda for college education by enacting a fully funded investment in free public college education for low- and middle-income students," the Professional Staff Congress, the union representing thousands of CUNY faculty and staff members, said in a statement.

Cuomo's office added that the financial incentive will help students graduate on time, noting that only 38.7 percent of four-year public university students graduated when they were supposed to in 2013.

Addabbo said while the state could afford to take on such an initiative, due to being in good financial condition, it must also prepare for the days in which the budget is not so secure.

"We can always use these things when we're fiscally sound," Addabbo said. "Knowing that, we should also be prepared for those downturns in the economy."

One economist, though, predicts Cuomo's plan is already too overreaching.

"For me, the income threshold is too high," said Beth Akers, a member of the Manhattan Institute and co-author of "Game of Loans: The Rhetoric and Reality of Student Debt." "It's considerably progressive in its design."

Beyond that, Akers worries that eliminating tuition doesn't guarantee many low-income New Yorkers will be able to afford SUNY or



The tuition costs at LaGuardia Community College could be zero for many under Gov. Cuomo's proposal. (THE PHOENIX)

CUNY colleges

"They still have a pretty big sum to cover in terms of attendance fees or other costs," she said.

The economist said she could not think of a specific number Cuomo's program should have been set at, but added she would have liked to see more resources devoted to lowering the burden for very low-income residents, such as the costs of food and housing.

Similarly, CUNY Rising Alliance — a coalition looking for change in the system — wants to see the scholarship paired with "increased public investments in quality education at CUNY and SUNY."

"CUNY and SUNY students need free tuition, but they also need smaller classes,

improved course offerings, modern facilities, increased advisement and tutoring and the best faculty and staff," the group said in a statement, adding that the downward trend of full-time faculty members must be reversed.

Gail Mellow, president of LaGuardia Community College, believes those issues can be addressed as lawmakers work with the governor to get the program approved.

"That would be the next challenge," Mellow said. "We can look broadly at what it takes not only to get a student to college, but also through college."

When asked if the threshold for the program is too high, Mellow responded that New York should be setting bold goals.

"One of the things that made America great 100 years ago is when we made high school free," she said. "And we just didn't make it free for poor kids, we made it free for all kids. We have to be bold if America is going to regain its status as the No. 1 educated country in the world."

Supporters of Cuomo's announcement hope the program will inspire other states to pick up similar initiatives.

Mellow, a board member of the Heads Up America's College Promise Campaign, said there are some that are looking into it, though nothing as "bold as Cuomo's."

"Places like the states of Tennessee and Oregon are both looking at and working with free community colleges," she said. "There are sort of beginning programs to understand what might happen if you make college more affordable."

While many Democrats support the measure, at least one would like to see a substantive change to it.

Right now, the scholarship would only apply to New York residents and not undocumented immigrants.

Assemblyman Francisco Moya (D-Jackson Heights) wants to see that changed.

"They too must be made eligible for Excelsior, just as they are for current scholarships at our schools offer," Moya said in a prepared statement.

"I urge Governor Cuomo to stand behind New York's DREAMers," he added, referring to the DREAM Act, which would provide educational opportunities for those in New York without papers. "Now more than ever we must show that a Trump presidency doesn't mean a Trump New York, not in education and not in how we view our undocumented students."

CUNY Rising Alliance, in its statement, said it's waiting for details on how the Excelsior Scholarship "will apply to all students no matter their immigration status."

It's uncertain how the plan will fare in the Republican-held Senate, which has yet to say whether it will support the scholarship or not.

Addabbo believes it would be difficult not to support the initiative.

"It's hard to argue with free tuition, not at the expense of any other program," he said. "If we were doing this and cutting something else, I could understand that. But if you're not doing that, how do you justify going back to your constituents and telling your people you had the opportunity to do it and didn't take it?"

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Kim weighing bid for city comptroller

Assemblyman considering launching small business-centric campaign

by Ryan Brady
Associate Editor

The death of a small business is often a heartbreaking one. When a grocery store owned by his parents couldn't pay a surge in the rent after its lease expired, something was impressed upon Assemblyman Ron Kim (D-Flushing).

"We couldn't keep up with the renewed lease," he told the Chronicle. "The only businesses that can occupy that kind of space are chain stores, big corporations that have backing and can offset losses through other stores."

The lawmaker is weighing a campaign for city comptroller. His decision will be contingent upon whether City Comptroller Scott Stringer challenges Mayor de Blasio and whether he believes that he'll be able to raise the necessary funds.

"Once we get to the next point and see where we are financially, we'll make the right decision," he said.

He now has \$130,712 in a campaign account, according to the New York State Board of Elections website.

If Kim decides to run, helping small businesses will be his central campaign issue.

"My main platform that I'm pushing forward is to reverse this trend of being anti-small business as a city," the assemblyman said. "We're losing a lot of entrepreneurs and mom-and-pop stores who are closing down."

His contention that mom-and-pops are being strangled by regulation is reflected in the recent closure of China Fun, a popular Upper East Side eatery. The restaurant's owners posted a letter on its front door blaming the excessive city and state rules that small businesses must comply with for the move.

"In different boroughs, I've seen firsthand the ups and downs and difficulties of the small business community," he

said. "In the Assembly for the last four years, I tried to be a voice for the community. They've been falsely vilified and demonized by executives in our state."

In particular, he has been critical of Gov. Cuomo's crackdown on wage theft in nail salons, which he said unfairly targeted Asian-owned businesses.

Kim also advocated for the 149th Street bridge in Flushing to be rebuilt. The closure of the conduit (which was prolonged by faulty contractor work) suffocated demand for businesses in the area.

He said he would use the office of the comptroller to keep an eye on the issues faced by less-than-large businesses.

"When you increase the minimum wage overnight and target them with selective enforcement, you're essentially bankrupting them," he added. "That's one of the things that I would aggressively look at and use my power of auditing to make sure they're not selectively enforcing the law."

The assemblyman added that he would continue Stringer's Red Tape Commission, a group of regulatory experts, small business leaders and advocates dedicated to getting rid of superfluous roadblocks to business growth.

Pressures faced by small businesses, according to Kim, could result in them looking for better place to set up shop.

"Data shows that people will move to other cities or out of state," he said.

New York State lost more than 191,000 residents last year, according to the Empire Center for Public Policy. Factoring in new arrivals, a net population loss — which had not happened in the state since 2006 — of 1,894 people resulted.

Regardless of whether he runs for city office, the assemblyman might not be supporting de Blasio in his re-election.



Assemblyman Ron Kim is considering running for city comptroller. PHOTO BY PETER C. MASTROSIMONE

"I think the mayor has to make a stronger case to my constituents that the city is still a city of opportunity, of fair opportunity that doesn't punish entrepreneurs or small business owners," he said. Kim added that he would be open to supporting another candidate during the mayoral race.

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CEC seats are up for grabs

Here's how interested parents can run for a spot

by **Anthony O'Reilly**
Associate Editor

The Department of Education has announced key dates for the biennial election for seats on community and citywide education councils.

Parents of public school children interested in running for a spot on the councils — which offer guidance on educational policy and cast official votes on matters such as school zoning lines — should apply starting at NYC-ParentLeaders.org starting Feb. 9 and ending March 5, the DOE announced in a release Tuesday.

To run for a community education council seat, you must have a child enrolled in a public elementary or middle school within the district he or she is zoned in.

Anyone wishing to run for a citywide education council seat must have a child enrolled in a public high school.

There are also citywide council seats for special education programs.

There are 32 community education councils in the five bor-

oughs and four citywide panels.

Each term, which starts on July 1, is two years.

There will be a series of forums educating candidates on the roles and responsibilities of CEC members, the first one being Feb. 13 at 6 p.m. at the Tweed Courthouse, 52 Chambers St. in Manhattan.

Although almost anyone with a child in school can run for a seat, very few get to vote on the candidates.

Ballots are cast by officers of each school's parent or parent-teacher association on April 23 and May 9.

The results are posted at NYC-ParentLeaders.org on May 15.

Education officials and politicians are hoping for as many parents as possible to sign up for a chance to serve. In 2015, 1,290 parents signed up compared to 729 and 511 in 2013 and 2011, respectively.

"Community and Citywide Education Councils offer parents an opportunity to make a long-lasting impact in the education of



Parents have the opportunity to run for a seat on community education councils. FILE PHOTO

their children and thousands of other children in their community," Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña said in a statement. "I encourage every parent to consider applying for a Council seat regardless of the language they speak or where they live, and to help other families get involved, gain invaluable knowledge, and strengthen family and community ties along the way."

"As a mom of two young boys,

I can attest firsthand to the impact that parental involvement has on our education system. Queens parents are some of the most active, vocal and effective in the city, and the difference is clear," Queens Borough President Melinda Katz said in a statement issued by the DOE. "The nexus of collaboration between families, educators and the surrounding community is the key to the success of our schools."

MARTIN VAN BUREN HS • SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

STUDENT PROFILE: RIDDLECHY REGIS



Two years ago Riddlechy Regis came to our country from Haiti and is now ready to graduate from Martin Van Buren High School in Queens Village and study business administration at Banuch College in the fall.

Academically, she has passed six Regents examinations and has maintained an 88 average during the past two years. She has taken English and government honors classes plus College Now business organization and management, English communication I, speech communications and math classes through a joint program with Queensborough Community College. Next term, she plans to take chemistry and another math College Now class.

At MVB, Regis is captain of the varsity girls soccer team, vice-president of the Multicultural Club, helps Mr. Brian Greenspan in the Student Government Office, is a monitor in the College Office and tutors fellow students in Algebra I and History, plus tutors students who are in S.O.A.R., which is a counseling program as part of her duties in the Scholars Institute. She was offered a soccer scholarship from Monroe College but they do not have the Business courses she wants to study, so she declined it.

She is the first person in her family to speak English and who is going to college. Naturally, she did receive a grade of 98 in her native French at MVB.

Photo and all stories by Bob Harris



COLLEGE MARCH: The school band is enlisted to call attention to the annual College March around the school. College Advisor Christine Stamburg gathers all the students who have received college acceptance letters and marches them and staff members around carrying signs so other student are encouraged to apply to college. Photos by Christine Stamburg



BLOOD DRIVE: The New York Blood Center held a drive at Martin Van Buren High School, Queens Village, with 40 pints of blood collected from students, left, and staff. This annual event was coordinate by Mr. Greenspan. Junior Christine Olibrice, right, is shown donating blood. She is an engineering student, in the Scholars Institute and on the girls volleyball team, while juggling a college-level class load. Photo by Bob Harris



WACKY COSTUMES: Student Davion Reeves is dressed as a squid, left. On the right, four girls dressed up for Spirit Week's Wacky Wednesday. These fun events, coordinated by Mr. Greenspan, the yearbook advisor, create memories of the students' high school years and the pictures are perfect for the school yearbook. Photos by Brian Greenspan



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: KENLEY NICOLAS

With the term over at Queens College, Kenley Nicolas came back to visit his favorite teachers at Martin Van Buren HS just prior to their holiday vacation.

In the Scholars room he visited with the advisor Ms. Pamela Fried, whom he praised and who praised him.

Nicholas praised the MVB guidance counselors with whom he did service and who helped him in many ways. He spoke of the Scholars Institute helping him "obtain a sense of time utilization and to do projects effectively within the time available." He also felt that "he was exposed to things outside the school during his community service and his meeting alumni such as John Bauman during Celebration Day at the school."

Ms. Fried praised Nicolas as "someone who came to the Scholars Office daily to do what he could to help." He remembers the good times he had being technical advisor for the Scholars Institute, helping out the Robotics Team and helping in the Student Government Office. He is studying computer science at Queens College. Photo by Bob Harris



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Guest Op-Ed

America's Schools Need to Think Small



SIRI FISKE

About 27 kids sit in the average public school classroom. For a new crop of education entrepreneurs, that number is nearly perfect - for an entire school.

These entrepreneurs are rebelling against the educational status quo by bringing the centuries-old one-room schoolhouse into the 21st century.

They maintain new "micro schools" leverage technology to give students a personalized learning experience in radically small classes at a fraction of private school tuition rates.

There's mounting evidence that they're right.

Small classes have well-known benefits. They improve student performance and pay off in future social and educational capital, especially for minority and low-income students.

Studies associate small classes with lower juvenile crime and teenage pregnancy rates, as well as higher high school graduation and college enrollment rates. Small classes even correlate with longer lives.

They're so effective partially because they enable teachers to tailor instruction to each student's needs. Modern technology makes such learning a lot more feasible and scalable.

A recent study examined "personalized learning" at public and charter schools. Researchers discovered an array of innovative teaching methods across schools.

One student channeled his musical talent to compose an imaginary country's national anthem. Story time took a variety of forms; some students read the story aloud, while others followed the book while listening to headphones.

In two years, these schools caught up with - and began to surpass - national math and reading averages. Elementary school students gained 13 percentile points on average in standardized math tests and eight on reading.

Micro-schools take these promising research recommendations and turn them up a notch. Instead of sticking to fixed curriculums, they're customizing lessons to each child's strengths, learning style, and existing knowledge.

Some micro-school students only receive two-and-a-half hours of direct instruction a day, mostly online. They may spend their re-

maining time in Socratic-style discussions, building drones or doing yoga.

At my Maryland-based micro school, Mysa School, a sports-obsessed student might receive a math lesson built around baseball statistics. A student who loves horses may spend her English time reading "Black Beauty" and her science time with an equine veterinarian.

This creative approach fuels students' curiosity and desire to learn.

Micro-schools draw on cutting-edge technology to personalize the classroom experience. My school is about to turn the student "menu" - a customized list of weekly projects children complete at their own pace - into an app.

AltSchool, a Silicon Valley-based micro-school network, gives students "playlists," or digital flashcards detailing tailored tasks, like drawing a jellyfish or completing keyboard exercises.

The app lets teachers update parents on their kids' progress instantaneously. Teachers can snap a creative art project or insightful written response to parents right away.

Many micro-schools group students of different ages, enabling them to learn from one another. It's helpful for younger and older children to interact because studies show "they may be operating in overlapping cognitive domains."

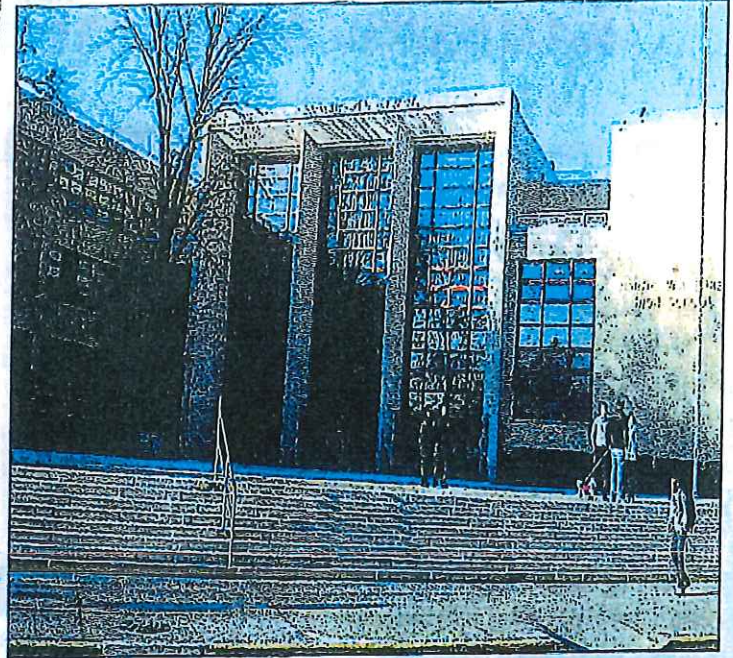
But can micro-schools measurably improve student performance? Undoubtedly.

Consider Texas's Acton Academy. Founded in 2009, this micro-school draws on a variety of techniques: personalized online learning, Socratic seminars, game play. The school's first class completed an astounding 2.5 grades in less than a year.

Unlike private schools, micro-schools don't have college price tags. AltSchool's tuition is 15 percent cheaper than comparable San Francisco private schools.

The American educational status quo isn't one-size-fits-all. Micro-schools are an alternative, and prove education leaders can deliver big gains in student performance by thinking small.

Siri Fiske is the founder and head of Mysa School.



Martin Van Buren was honored Tuesday for showing the progress that its principal vowed was coming when he arrived at the troubled school in 2012. FILE PHOTO

City says Van Buren is on its way back

Turnaround gains in all categories

by Michael Gannon
Editor

When Sam Sochet took over as principal at Bellerose's Martin Van Buren High School in 2012 it was classified as persistently struggling; a year ago it was designated as a renewal school, or one in dire need of improvement in short order.

Forgive Sochet if he indulges in a little bit of "I told you so" in the wake of Van Buren being cited by Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña as having made "marked improvement" in 10 categories of assessment, including attendance, four-year graduation rates and Regents completion rates.

Sochet, his staff and students were honored at a function on Tuesday organized by Councilman Barry Grodenchik (D-Oakland Gardens).

"The remarkable improvements shown at Martin Van Buren High School reflects the dedication of Principal Sam Sochet and his

staff to providing a world-class education to their students," Grodenchik said in a statement issued by his office. "Their hard work has not gone unnoticed."

State Sen. Leroy Comrie (D-St. Albans) said the gains of the past year are a testament to the power of community involvement with its schools. Assemblyman David Weprin (D-Fresh Meadows) said he believes the school is quickly becoming one of the better schools in Queens.

Many civic leaders and parents had accused the administration of former Mayor Mike Bloomberg with attempting to undermine the school for a decade, both before and after Sochet arrived, and close it as happened with Jamaica High School

But the principal actively cultivated the community connection Comrie spoke of, and several times welcomed DOE officials from the past and present administrations to town hall-style meetings to discuss an approach, vowing to turn the ship around. □

Campus Magnet HS honors 'The Coach'

Gym where Chuck Granby molded young men renamed in his honor

In 45 years as a high school basketball coach, Chuck Granby was universally praised not only for his legendary winning tradition, but for the time and care he invested influencing teenage boys and young adults for life after basketball and school.

Last Thursday, the Campus Magnet High School community made sure "The Coach" will always be around to inspire future generations of students.

The school, which was Andrew Jackson High School when Granby joined as a teacher and coach in 1971, named in his honor the gym where he won so many games and shaped hundreds of lives.

Those who filled the gym included current and former players, elected officials, leaders from the school and Public School Athletic League, and a family contingent led by his daughter, Robyn Granby-Poole, who unveiled a plaque that will be placed above the gym's entrance in the near future.

All were given a green ribbon adorned with an instantly recognizable photo of Granby in his element — hands together on the sideline in the gym in his omnipresent green sweatsuit with white trim.

Granby's 722 victories were the second-most in New York City history when he retired in 2015. But perhaps his finest epitaph upon his death last March came from long-time rival and friend Ron Naclerio of Cardozo High School.



Robyn Granby-Poole and her husband Reggie display the plaque that soon will be on display at the newly named Chuck Granby Gym at Campus Magnet High School. Chuck Granby became a city legend during his 45 years as the school's basketball coach. PHOTO BY MICHAEL GANNON



PHOTO BY MICHAEL GANNON

"I'm sure there has to be 50 to 100 kids that would be dead or in jail now if it weren't for Coach Granby," he told the Chronicle last year.

Ronald St. John, the former long-time head coach at York College, served as master of ceremonies on Thursday. Though they never coached with or against each other,

the two hoops heavy-weights still worked together.

"When you're coaching young men, you need to lead them in the direction where you want them to go," St. John said. "Chuck Granby taught me a great deal about that."

The tribute included performances by the school's dance team and cheerleaders. Just before the plaque's unveiling, some former cheerleaders sang a few lines from old Andrew

Jackson HS fight songs.

Councilman Daneek Miller (D-St. Albans) and Assemblyman Clyde Vanel (D-Queens Village) both spoke briefly.

"It was not just basketball," Miller said. "If you entered this building, you benefitted from his presence.

"But the most prominent politician was Councilman Robert Cornegy Jr., (D-Brooklyn), who played for Granby.

The 6 foot, 11 inch-tall Cornegy — "The Tree," according to current Campus Magnet coach and former player Alvis Brown — recalled their first meeting.

"I was walking in that hallway," Cornegy said, pointing to the gym's main entrance. "I was heading to band practice when he stuck his head out the gym door. He asked, 'Where are you going, young man?' I said 'To band practice.' He said, 'No, you're not.'"

Continued on next page



Robin Granby-Poole, right, is joined by her husband, Reggie, near left, and City Councilman Robert Cornegy Jr., center, as Campus Magnet High School renames its gym for her father, legendary boys basketball coach Chuck Granby. Cornegy was a former star center on some of Granby's dynasty teams. The coach, who strode the gym's sidelines for 45 years, passed away last year.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL GANNON

Current New York Knick Kyle O'Quinn eventually made it to the NBA. Cornegy both earned a college degree and played basketball abroad.

"He told us all the time that we all have a better chance of becoming brain surgeons than playing in the NBA," he said. "He wanted it to be about more than basketball. He has had police officers come out of his program, businessmen, fathers — the great coaches are invested in you as a total person."

Robyn Granby-Poole, with her husband, Reggie, was near tears several times as Brown, Cornegy and others shared stories and warm embraces.

Brown, who succeeded his teacher and mentor, also was choked up when it came his time to speak, perhaps thinking about how history was repeating itself.

"Thirty-one years ago, your father put a ball in my hands and said, 'Lead my team,'" he said.

Reggie Poole said he never played for Granby, but played

Granby did not lose a home game. He said the Bulldogs usually had great help from the Sixth Man.

"It could be really unpleasant — no visiting team wanted to play here, mostly because of the crowd," Cornegy said, waving his hand around the full gym.

"This place was full every night," he said. "When you wanted to inbound the ball you had to ask fans to move. It was like 'Friday Night Lights.' There was no better place in all of Queens to play — if you played for us."

Still, the councilman did not need to think when asked about a Coach Granby drill that he is grateful he will never have to go through again.

"Suicides," he said of the time-honored drill in which players run from the end line to each successive line on the court and back. "Twenty-two times in each set. I don't know why. It just seemed to be a magic number."

Cornegy said even in times when he and The Coach were nominally out of touch, Granby still always

seemed to be able to keep tabs.

enough when he attended John Adams High School.

Cornegy said that was a source of misery for many a player in PSAL history, particularly in the 13-year stretch when

"He always seemed to have some intelligence, some way knowing how things had been going in my life." And the councilman was honored to have Granby present when he was inaugurated in January 2014.

"I have six children," he said. "He met my daughter and said, 'She's beautiful.' I had to explain his Ugly Life story to her. I told him she's going to college, that she's a 4.0 student, a member of the National Honor Society. I think he was more impressed with that than any other achievement I've had."

Robyn Granby-Poole beamed with pride before the ceremony discussing how the plaque to be unveiled would soon hang above the gymnasium door.

She admitted afterward that there was still a sense of mixed emotions for her and her family.

"We're still mourning," she acknowledged.

But she was all smiles when she concluded the speakers' portion of the ceremony to get to the plaque unveiling at about 5:50 p.m., given the scheduled 6 p.m. starting time of Campus Magnet's game against Martin Van Buren.

"I have to move it along," she said. "The Coach was always about game time."

by Michael Gannon, Editor
Queens Chronicle
Thursday, January 12, 2017

When one Southeast Queens student is asked how LGBTQ stereotypes effect bullying, she doesn't have to think about it for too long.

Fourteen-year-old Kyanna Ali, an LGBTQ ally and a member of the only LGBTQ teen club in Cambria Heights, says her family accuses her of being gay. Ali, who is most comfortable wearing sweatpants and other articles of clothing typically considered "boyish," said she had to change her wardrobe to include crop tops and skinny jeans in eighth grade just to avoid the rumors.

"I'm a tomboy. I like to play basketball, but it doesn't mean I'm gay," said Ali, who attends John Adams High School in Ozone Park. "I would always think to myself 'what is my appearance doing wrong? So I decided to change my outfits."

But the taunting didn't stop. Ali's parents and classmates continued to falsely disclose her sexuality to others.

"I felt hurt," said Ali, who identifies as heterosexual. "I don't know how to make them believe that I'm not [gay]. People to this day look at me in a different way and even call me names."

For now, Ali fends off the false accusations with confessing her male crushes. As a woman who identified as straight, she often shares sympathy for young members of the LGBTQ community, considering the actions of her own parents.

"If I was bisexual or gay, why are you going to abandon your child?" asked Ali. "Spreading rumors that are not true are going to hurt me."

Every month, Ali is joined by about a dozen students who struggle with LGBTQ micro-aggressions, daily slights of discrimination, as a result of their sexual identity. The Cambria Heights Library is the first branch in Queens to offer a safe space to LGBTQ students and their allies.

For more than a year, Amber Loveless, a young adult librarian, has organized student led discussions about high school crushes, building confidence and finding a local LGBTQ role model.

"We haven't talked about coming out [yet], but it probably will be a topic in the future," Loveless said. "I'm here as a moderator. They come up with the monthly topics."

Jasmine, 15, whose last name is not provided to protect her privacy, said she does not label her sexuality. She likes "anyone with a good heart." Raised in a Moroccan household, Jasmine says her family believes being gay is a "strict sin."

"It was a complete no-no in



TEENS

Speak Out in Southeast Queens

First Queens Library LGBTQ club in Cambria Heights helps teens cope with bullying related to their sexuality

By Jetrana Bellamy-Walker

my mother's country," said Jasmine, a student at the Humanities and The Arts Magnet High School in Cambria Heights. "She says 'you know you can go to hell for that. The only reason people are gay is because they have some kind of issue'."

If Jasmine were to disclose her sexuality, she fears being disowned by her family.

"I know if I defend [myself], I'm going to make it seem obvious," Jasmine said. "I know in my family. They're never going to accept it. My mom would be embarrassed."

A friend of Jasmine's recently transferred schools after being bullied for their sexuality.

"They laughed at him and asked

him if he likes girls," Jasmine said. "It made me feel sad. No one should go through that just for being themselves."

For the students at the LGBTQ center, the club is a haven for self-expression and freedom. News and pop culture are frequent topics at the meetings. After the Pulse Night Club shooting in Orlando, Florida last June, one student recalled being afraid to reveal the truth about their sexuality.

"It made me feel like I can't be accepted in this world. They can accept everyone else so why can't they accept me?" asked Adeejah, 14, who identifies as bi-curious. "My brother was scared that something like this

could happen in New York that can endanger him and his spouse."

Adeejah added, "My brother started to cry. I never felt so bad."

Currently, Adeejah is waiting until she's an adult to come out about her sexuality.

According to the True Colors Fund, a housing advocacy program for LGBTQ youth, about 40 percent of LGBTQ youths experience homelessness. Considering that LGBTQ youth account for only seven percent of the population, these statistics are disproportionately high. The report said that homeless LGBTQ youth are at a greater risk of unsafe sexual practices, victimization, and mental trauma.

The Queens Library Teen Advisory Board (TAB), a peer-mentoring program which offers opportunities for civic engagement, said they counsel students who are struggling with their identity.

"Be courageous and stand up for yourself," said Benjamin Hogarth, 17, to one teen. "Be mindful of who you are surrounding yourself with."

Hogarth added, "Bullying really starts with social media. People on social media are the ones to say stuff about you."

According to the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) and BullyingStatistics.org, 42 percent of LGBTQ youth have experienced cyberbullying. At least 35 percent of LGBTQ youth have received online threats, according to the report.

The president of TAB, Jennifer Ulcena, 17, of the Young Women's Leadership School in Queens added, "There are a lot of pages on social media that can support [LGBTQ students]. For example, the male make-up artist that is now on Cover Girl can be an inspiration."

Jaszmyne B., 16, of Hempstead, said her mom discovered she was gay while she was talking on the phone with a girlfriend. Jaszmyne's mom is supportive, but some of her friends are not as lucky.

Jaszmyne recalled her male friend being called a "f****t" for wearing hair extensions.

"Everyone was bothering him and messing with his hair," Jaszmyne said. "He cried. His parents came [to the school] and I never saw him again."

"Just let people live their life," she thought wishfully.

Those who would like to or may know someone that would like to take part in the monthly meetings, contact at Queens Library Cambria Heights branch, by calling (718) 528-3535. The library is located at 218-13 Linden Blvd. The group meets once a month on a Wednesday.



Leanne Waldron, Benjamin Hogarth, Isaiah Peters, Alex Hamilton, Jennifer Ulcena, Ashley McBurnie. Leaders from the Teen Advisory Board counsel LGBTQ students who face bullying about their identity.



Queens Ledger
Brooklyn Star

ENTERTAINMENT

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

BOROUGH CON

NEW POP CULTURE EXPO TO CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE OF THE QUEENS, NYC NERD CULTURE

Here are five reasons to plan your Memorial Day weekend around BoroughCon, the first pop culture convention to embrace and celebrate the Outer Boroughs.

1. You can't beat the timing or location. St. John's University will host BoroughCon May 27-29. Tickets go on sale next month and will be available through the convention's web site, boroughcon.com.

The event is expected to draw more than 20,000 attendees.

2. It'll be star-studded. Voice actors, comic book illustrators, cosplayers, e-sports athletes — all famous within their genres — will join household names to sign autographs, participate in panel discussions, present their works-in-progress and respond to fans' questions. At present, BoroughCon has commitments from cosplay stars Monika Lee, Riki "Riddle" LeCotey, Mikomi Chan and Dan "Danquish" Sarkar. A major announcement of live-action film and episodic stars will precede next month's ticket sales.

3. There's something for everyone. Conventions often focus on a narrow band of interests — just gaming or just anime, for example. BoroughCon will feature programming tracks dedicated to both those interests, and they will further be joined by tracks for cosplay, comics and manga, and live-action film, television and streaming.

4. You get something for your door charge. Sometimes, it seems that pop culture conventions are just pop-up flea markets, and you pay at the gate for the privilege of walking through a vendors' room and an artists' alley. BoroughCon

will have these facilities on prominent display, but another dozen rooms will be in constant use for screenings, panels, Q&A sessions and workshops.

Cultural exhibits celebrating the Four Boroughs' diversity will be set up throughout the St. John's campus. Special attractions for children and science-and-technology enthusiasts will be featured, and wandering entertainers will distract attendees from the inevitable waits on line. That will all be available to everyone with a ticket.

In the meantime, boroughcon.com presents fresh-daily free content in the form of reviews, blog posts, the "Nerd Yorker" events calendar and news updates.

5. The BoroughCon team has done this before. The core team of managers, artists and programming track leads first assembled eight years ago in Orlando, Fla., as the founders of the anime convention KnightroKon. Key members of that team relocated to New York and met up with local pop culture enthusiasts plugged into the Northeast convention scene and this confluence of experience forged a team of professionals that intend for BoroughCon to be a permanent part of the Outer Boroughs' spring calendar.



BOROUGHCON | ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY | MAY 27, 28, 29 2017

AGE

Queens Library Looks To The Future

BY TRONE DOWD

Like many people traditionally do at the turn of the new year, the Queens Library is looking to make a few New Year resolutions of its own over the next 12 months, using feedback from just about every user of the more than 100-year-old institution.

News of the plan came out early Tuesday morning when library CEO Dennis Walcott published a letter on the Queens Library website outlining these plans.

"To ensure that the Library can be as meaningful and effective as possible in these increasingly complex times, we have embarked on a strategic planning process that will guide the Library for the next five years," Walcott wrote. "The success of this process depends on your engagement."

In a phone interview with the *PRESS of Southeast Queens*, Walcott elaborated on what exactly the library was hoping to accomplish in the new year. Much of this idea

stemmed from a staff meeting held at York College back in October.

"It was a really powerful two-hour meeting together talking about our next steps," Walcott said. "We also had the various constituent groups also speak from the stage. We had customers, different components of the staff, union members and more. It really was an inclusive environment."

Following the meeting, staff members took part in a staff-wide survey to best understand the needs of the libraries through its caretakers. Hoping to apply that kind of productivity to the general public, Walcott decided to turn the library's attention to the most important aspect of the institution: its users.

For the first time in the institution's history, the library will be collecting feedback from everyday users on a borough wide scale. Through the use of both online and paper surveys, users will be able to voice what they would like to see from the system.

"One of the many things that we have done is ask people to identify

their priority needs," Walcott said.

These top priorities include the need to increase the amount of available technology per branch such as laptops and computers, utilizing space more efficiently, extending hours where advantageous to the branches corresponding neighborhood, and the incorporation of new programs.

"We're looking at all the different types of areas from collections to programs, to hours, to facilitate to new branches," said Walcott. "We have people that are good space planners, such as having SWAT teams go out to the various libraries to take a look at how we can utilize the existing space as a better and more efficient way to serve the needs of the customers."

Walcott says that the library is working with elected officials and Queens Community Boards to get the word out about the survey ensuring that they'll get as much feedback from the public as they can.

"We'll pull it together and present a report to the board by June," Wal-

cott explained.

As of Tuesday, just 24-hours after the survey went up, over one thousand users took part in the online survey.

"Our goal is to make sure we find a variety of ways to expand services to our customers," said Walcott. "That can be through expanded programs and expanded hours, to making sure that we respond to the needs that the customers and staff identify with, and making sure that we have the funding to support those initiatives as well. We are a high-demand place and we service the needs of people for free. We need to make sure that we can continue to do that and offer quality as well."

Those interested in taking the survey are encouraged to go to QueensLibrary.org and look for the tabs labelled "SHAPE THE FUTURE OF QUEENS LIBRARY!" Let them know what you would like to see at your local branch!

Reach Trone Dowd at (718) 357-7400 x123 tdowd@queenspress.com or [@theloniusly](https://twitter.com/theloniusly)

QUEENS CHRONICLE, Thursday, January 5, 2017 Page 4



SOUTHEAST QUEENS NEWS

A relief for NYC Sikh police officers

NYPD will now allow officers to wear religious turbans, beards

by Anthony O'Reilly
Associate Editor

The Sikh Officers Association has 160 members — a number that might be much higher were it not for the longstanding policy that previously banned officers from wearing turbans while on patrol.

"A lot of people wanted to sign up and serve their city, but at the same time they wanted to be able to stay true to their religion," said Gurbinder Singh, a Glen Oaks resident who serves as president of the Sikh Officers Association.

The policy was changed last Wednesday when Police Commissioner James O'Neill announced Sikhs can wear a turban with the NYPD insignia on it, in addition to growing their beards up to half an inch long. Previously, beards could only be up to a millimeter in length. That policy still applies for officers growing beards not for religious reasons. For those wishing to have their facial hair up to half an inch long, approval must be granted by NYPD brass.

"We want to make the NYPD as diverse as possible, and I think this is going to go a long way to help us with that," O'Neill said at a press conference.

Before last Wednesday's announcement,



NYPD officers belonging to the Sikh religion join Police Commissioner James O'Neill, center, with the new turbans allowed by the force.
PHOTO COURTESY SIKH OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Sikh officers had to wear their turbans underneath their NYPD-mandated caps.

Singh, who works in the Community Affairs bureau, said with the change, the

NYPD should expect an influx of new officers.

"You will have a lot more Sikhs trying to get into the Police Department," he said.

The Glen Oaks resident and other Sikh officials have been fighting for the change in policy for years.

"I believe no one should have to choose between their religion and profession; and all Americans of all faiths should be allowed to freely exercise and display their religious choice at their place of employment," said Assemblyman David Weprin (D-Fresh Meadows), whose district includes many Sikhs.

Weprin has sponsored legislation seeking similar policy changes upstate via the Religious Garb Bill, which would allow Sikhs and members of other religions to wear any item of clothing at their workplace.

The Sikh Coalition issued a statement expressing what it called "cautious optimism" of the policy change, praising the allowance of turbans but calling for officers to have their beards at full length.

"The devil is in the details and we hope the NYPD recognizes that any trimming of the Sikh beard is in direct violation of the Sikh faith and would continue a policy that forces officers to make the false choice between their religion and service to our great city," Sikh Coalition Legal Director Harsimran Kaur said in a statement.

Smoking banned at North Shore Towers

Rule went into effect on New Year's Day

by **Ryan Brady**
Associate Editor

The North Shore Towers and Country Club has banned smoking, a rule that went into effect on Jan. 1.

Phil Konigsberg of the Queens Tobacco Control Coalition is pleased with the decision.

"It seems to be the health and safety concern of many people, I'm just so thrilled," he said. "Although there's still a lot more apartment buildings that need to take that step forward."

The decision was decided by a vote of the co-op, which was overwhelmingly in favor.

The co-op complex, which is located in the Glen Oaks-Floral Park area near the Nassau County border, has 1,844 residential units.

"That's a tremendous indication that smoke-free apartment living is really the way to go at this point," Konigsberg, who is a member of Community Board 7 and the third vice president of the Bay Terrace Community Alliance, said.

Audrey Silk, the founder of NYC Citizens Against Smoking Harassment, says that the vote is a step in the wrong direction.

"I think it's absolutely wrong," she said. "It's taking communities down the wrong path in terms of where do you draw the line on what bothers somebody else."

She added that the rule might pit neighbors against neighbors.

"The only way to enforce that is through snitching," Silk said.

A fire at the co-op complex in 2004 was determined to have been caused by an elderly woman smoking in bed.

In a separate move, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recently announced that smoking would be banned in all of its housing complexes, a rule which will prevent the thousands of people who live at the Queensbridge Houses, Pomonok Houses and other New York City Housing Authority developments in "The World's Borough" from lighting up at home.

The US Surgeon General has said, "Smoking cessation [stopping smoking] represents the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives." It's hard to quit smoking, but you can do it.

To have the best chance of quitting and staying a non-smoker, you need to know what you're up against, what your options are, and where to go for help.

Call 866-NY-QUITS or visit the state health department and create a Quit Plan.

You can also Sign up for our Text NYC Quits program (available in English or Spanish). Text NYC Quits provides smokers and recent quitters with real-time, around-the-clock advice, support, tips and encouragement. To sign up, text NYC QUITTS to 877-877 (Español: envíe el mensaje de texto DEJE DE FUMAR al 877877). Message and data rates may apply. Text STOP to quit, HELP for more information.

For the latest news visit qchron.com

PAGE 6 JAN. 13-19, 2017

TRIBUNE/PRESS REAL ESTATE MARKETPLACE

Increase In Wealthy Renters And Homeowners

BY **ARIEL HERNANDEZ** Staff Writer

Affordable housing is a recurring concern for New York City as a whole, with the major question being "What is affordable housing?"

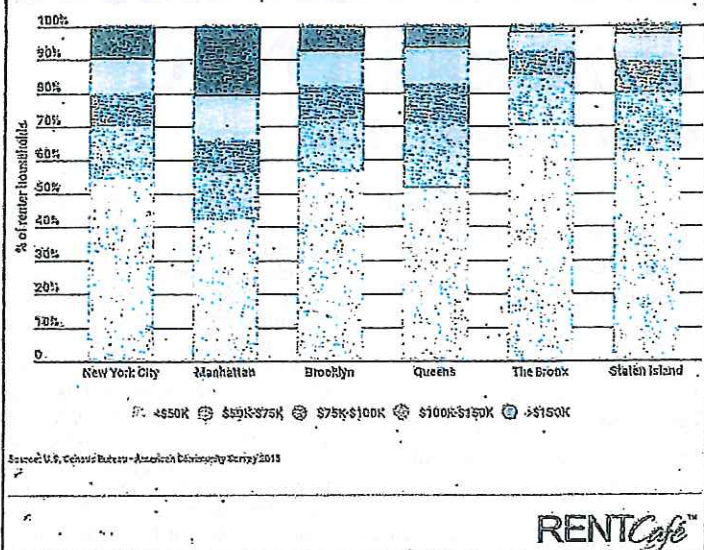
Last week RENTCafé, a nationwide apartment search website, released the findings from its most recent study where it looked at all five boroughs within New York City to see how the idea of homeownership is evolving among the top-earning households.

According to its findings, the number of affluent renters-by-choice in Queens has soared by 247 percent, from 8,500 in 2005 to 29,500 in 2015. By comparison, though there are more than twice as many owner-occupied households that earn over \$150,000 a year in Queens, their numbers only increased by 11 percent over the 10-year period.

The study showed that Queens saw the second-highest influx of rich renters in the last decade, compared to Brooklyn's 324 percent increase.

While the majority of the New

Share of Renters by Income in New York City vs. all 5



York City population is struggling with high rents, this study shows that there are those who don't. According to RENTCafé, New York City has more high-income renters than all the affluent renters in San

Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, San Jose and San Diego combined. Reach Ariel Hernandez at (718) 357-7400 x144 or ahernandez@queenstribune.com

RENTCafé

Online Tools For A Mortgage That Fits

Whether you're a first-time or experienced homebuyer, chances are a good portion of your real estate journey will take place online. In fact, four in 10 homebuyers start their house-hunting with an online search, according to the National Association of REALTORS.

It's easy to understand why: Online tools and apps can make the homebuying experience - including finding a mortgage - easier and more enjoyable.

If you'll be shopping for a home, use the tools homebuyers find most useful, according to the Bank of America Homebuyer Insights Report:

- **Mortgage calculators** - It's important you're as comfortable with

your mortgage terms and lender as you are with the home you're paying for. An affordable mortgage helps homebuyers reap the full benefits of home ownership, including building equity and long-term financial security. A mortgage calculator can help you understand what you would pay each month, as well as estimate monthly mortgage payments and rate options.

- **Finance websites** - Home shoppers can learn a lot about mortgage options and a bank's customer service through websites that feature reviews of mortgage loan officers and lending institutions. More than a third (36 percent) of first-time homebuyers and more than a quarter (28 percent) of experienced homebuyers use bank apps or websites to research reviews of lenders and loan officers.

- **Loan status portals** - Applying for a mortgage can sometimes be overwhelming, but real-time loan status information is transforming the process. For example, Bank of America's Home Loan Navigator allows mortgage applicants to securely upload, submit and sign documents, get real-time status updates on their application and loan, receive important documents and disclosures and communicate with experts via secure messaging.

- **Mobile real estate listings** - With many home listing websites available, it can be difficult to narrow down online searches to homes

that meet all your criteria in your location of choice. Using a bank's online real estate center can help you refine your home search or, if you're selling, it can help you determine your home's estimated value.

- **Down payment sources** - Saving for a down payment can be one of the most challenging tasks of buying a house. Tools like Bank of America's Down Payment Resource Center offer a searchable database of more than 1,000 local and national assistance programs that may be able to save you money on your down payment.

- **Home design apps** - With inspiration in hand, homebuyers can use home design apps to put their ideas into virtual reality. These apps allow you to take and store room measurements, make notes on design ideas and see virtual representations of what your decor plans will look like in your home.

To learn more about home buying and mortgages, visit Bank of America - Home Loans.

-Brandpoint

REAL ESTATE PROFILE:



Lisa Owen

PAGE 4 JAN. 13-19, 2017

Queens At The Top Of Foreclosed Homes In NYC

BY ARIEL HERNANDEZ Staff Writer

In a recent study done by Property Shark, leading real estate data provider, data show that of the 2,202 first-time foreclosures scheduled in 2016, 933 were in Queens, leaving the borough accountable for 42 percent of the city's first-time auctions.

The study was conducted by taking into account foreclosed residential properties—either single-family or two-family homes, and condo or co-op units—that were scheduled to auction for the first time in 2016. By evaluating properties that received at least one *lis pendens* filing in

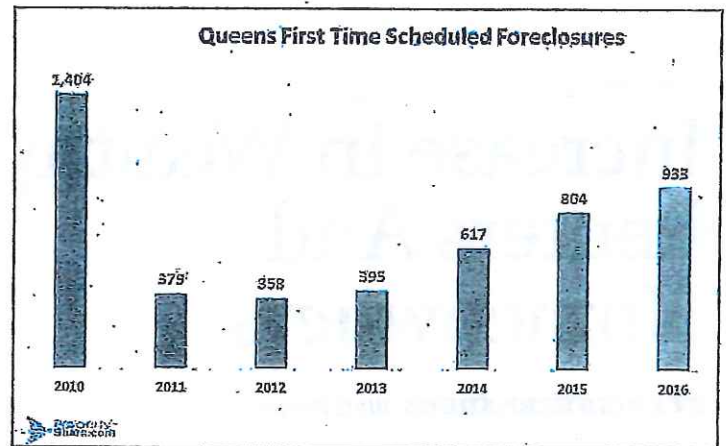
2016—either first-time filing or a re-filing—it was able to determine that as a whole, New York City first-time foreclosures increased 18 percent compared to 2015.

While first-time time foreclosures happened to increase this year, since 2013 *lis pendens* filings in New York City have been following a descending trend, with a recorded 7 percent year-to-year decrease. Although the 12,573 filings may appear to be good news for the city, it's disappointing news for Queens, which had 4,903 filings, making it the highest number of filings compared to the other boroughs.

When Property Shark evaluated the borough by zip code, they found that 11434, which is accountable for much of Southeast Queens, continues to be what it calls "a foreclosure

TSINY Breaks Ground

TRIBUNE/PRESS REAL ESTATE MARKETPLACE



Zip Codes with the highest number of new foreclosures (by borough)

Bo.	Zip Code	Borough	Neighborhood	New foreclosures
1	11434	Queens	Jamaica, South Jamaica, Hollis, St. Albans	84
2	10466	Brooklyn	Williamsbridge, Baychester, Woodlawn, Wakefield, Eastchester	65
3	10462	Brooklyn	Morris Park, Pelham Parkway, Bayside, Van Nest, Lincroft	65
4	11235	Brooklyn	Canarsie, Flatlands, Marine Park, Mill Basin, Bergen Beach	55
5	10304	Staten Island	North Island	28
6	10036	Manhattan	Chelsea, Clinton	25

hotspot." In Jamaica, South Jamaica, Hollis and St. Albans alone, there were a total of 84 homes scheduled to be auctioned in 2016.

Overall, the study shows that Queens still has the highest number of homes scheduled of all boroughs,

and with 933 properties, it accounted for almost half of the total foreclosures and registered a 16 percent year-over-year increase.

Reach Ariel Hernandez at (718) 357-7400 x144 or aherandez@queenstribune.com



Scams, Fraud & Cyber Safety

Queens Interagency Council On Aging



Drawing: Bruce Cunningham

Wednesday, February 1, 2017 from 9:00 to 11:00am
Queens Borough Hall, 120-55 Queens Blvd., Rm 213

Free & Open To The Public:
Seniors, Service Professionals and Government
Representatives Are Cordially Invited To Attend.
Continental Breakfast Provided.
Limited Seating-Pre-Registration Advised.
PLEASE RSVP QICA: (718)-268-5954/E-MAIL: qicany@aol.com

**Assemblyman Edward C. Braunstein
and The Law Offices of Ann-Margaret Carrozza
are proud to sponsor the**

21st Annual Valentines for Vets



Will you be their valentine?

Your donation of a card, candy (sugar-free a plus!), playing cards, puzzles, shaving cream, toothbrushes, toothpaste, or new clothing items such as pajamas, robes, slippers, and socks will show hospitalized and disabled veterans how much we appreciate the sacrifices they made for us.

Please drop off donations by Wednesday, February 8, 2017 to:

Assemblyman Edward C. Braunstein's office
213-33 39th Avenue, Suite 238
718-357-3588

Law Offices of Ann-Margaret Carrozza
213-38 40th Avenue
718-224-4746

Community Board 11
46-21 Little Neck Parkway
718-225-1054

If you have any questions about our Valentines for Vets program, please contact Assemblyman Braunstein's office at 718-357-3588.

Press Release

For More Information Contact Front Desk of APEC (718) 229-4000

Get Your Zen On!

DATE: Saturday, January 28
TIME: 9:15 am – 10:15 am
PLACE: Alley Pond Environmental Center
 228-06 Northern Blvd.
 Douglaston, NY 11362
 718-229-4000
 www.alleypond.com
AGES: adults
FEE: \$16

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Please pre-register by visiting www.alleypond.com

Certified master yoga instructor, Mike Mancini, will lead this one hour yoga experience. This adaptable approach is suitable for beginners to experienced students. Yoga promotes good health through breath and movement. Bring your own mat, towel, water bottle. Sign up for one class or all three per session. Limited to 8 participants. This program for adults will take place at APEC at 228-06 Northern Blvd. in Douglaston on Saturday, January 28 from 9:15 am – 10:15 am and is \$16 per adult.





228-06 NORTHERN BOULEVARD • DOUGLASTON, NY 11362-1068
(718) 229-4000 Fax: (718) 229-0376 www.alleypond.com

Press Release

For More Information Contact Front Desk of APEC (718) 229-4000

Vet Tech 201

DATE: Saturday, January 28
TIME: 9:30 am - 11:30 am
PLACE: Alley Pond Environmental Center
228-06 Northern Blvd.
Douglaston, NY 11362
718-229-4000
www.alleypond.com
AGES: 11-15**
FEE: \$32

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Please pre-register by visiting www.alleypond.com

Come see and learn from a licensed Veterinarian Technician as we delve deeper into the science of animal care. Students will get to work with the Vet Tech one on one using tools and techniques at a more advanced level than in Vet Tech 101. From testing heartrates and examining animal x-rays or bones, to using stethoscopes and viewing slides, all our Vet Tech 201 students will learn the invaluable techniques for in-depth animal examination. Lab coats and stethoscopes included. Students will earn a Vet Tech certificate of achievement. Limited to 6 participants. **Prerequisite Requirement: Participation in a prior Vet Tech 101 program is a must in order to qualify for Vet Tech 201 (Please do not register if you have not participated in Vet Tech 101; contact Katie at Ext. 202 for further assistance). This program for ages 11-15** will take place at APEC at 228-06 Northern Blvd. in Douglaston on Saturday, January 28 from 9:30 am - 11:30 am and is \$32 per child.



STATE OF THE BOROUGH

JANUARY 27, 2017
10AM • YORK COLLEGE

RSVP at
queensbp.org/rsvp
or 718.286.2661



Jan. 28, 2017
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Central Park Bandshell

Free equipment rentals for
all ages and skill levels.

- Snowshoeing
- Arctic Golf
- Sledding
- Learn to Ski
- Learn to Snowboard

For more information, visit
nyc.gov/parks or call 311.

For accessibility information, contact William Morrison
at (718) 361-8213 or William.Morrison@nyc.gov
by Jan. 21.



SPONSORED BY



SAVE THE DATE

New York City Department of Environmental Protection
invites you to participate in the

31st Annual

Water Resources Art & Poetry Contest

Start date: Thursday, January 12, 2017

Second through 12th grade students from New York City and watershed schools are invited to submit artwork (including media such as paintings, photos, digital art and videos) and poetry that creatively express knowledge, appreciation and understanding of New York's shared water resources.

View contest guidelines and learn about NYC water resources and STEM connections at nyc.gov/dep.

Contact DEP at educationoffice@dep.nyc.gov for additional information. Thank you.

Contest Themes:

- Water: A Precious Resource
- New York City Drinking Water
- New York City Wastewater Treatment System
- Harbor Water Quality and Healthy Marine Ecosystems
- Water Stewardship and Climate Change



DEP Advises New Yorkers to Take Steps to Protect Water Meters and Pipes from Freezing

PROTECT YOUR WATER METER

Water meters can be damaged by freezing conditions. If your meter freezes because you neglected to take simple steps to protect it from the cold, DEP will repair or replace the meter at your expense.

- Check the temperature of your meter by placing a thermometer close to the meter to obtain an accurate reading; remember it's colder near the floor and along foundation walls.
- Repair broken or cracked windows and walls; install storm windows on basement windows.
- Close windows and doors to the outside tightly. Insulate outside walls, and eliminate drafts from crawl spaces.
- If your meter is located outdoors or in an unheated garage, take extra care to make sure the meter is insulated; check with your local plumbing service supplier about insulating materials.

PROTECT YOUR PIPES

If service lines or pipes freeze, it is the homeowners' responsibility to have them repaired. Homeowners can take the following precautions to keep water in pipes from freezing:

- Insulate your pipes. If a sink is installed against an outside wall, insulate the wall; open cabinets beneath the sink to allow warm air to reach the pipes.
- Remove water hoses from outside connections; turn off water to outdoor faucets and, when possible, drain the pipes.

IF YOUR METER FREEZES

To thaw a frozen meter or pipe, use a small space heater to warm the area or aim a hair dryer or heat lamp at the frozen area. Never thaw a frozen meter or pipe with an open flame. It is a fire hazard and can create a steam explosion. If you are unsuccessful at thawing and your meter or pipes appear to be damaged, contact a licensed plumber or call DEP's 24-hour Help Center at (718)DEP-HELP.

Dear President Obama,

The last eight years has had it's ups and downs, many smiles and frowns. Though we may have different views, there are a few things that are undeniable.



Many Americans came together to make history by electing you the first Black President. For many, you were more than just that. You were a twinkle of hope in a world in which many felt at times to dark. You were a model that we looked at on how to carry ourselves with elegance, eloquence and even temperament.

As we go forward into the next Presidential term with a candidate who's views conflict with yours, you have left us with what you have exemplified throughout your Presidency, hope. In your farewell address, you inspired promise for the future saying, "I believe in this country. I believe in the American people. I believe that people are more good than bad."

In the spirit of the 44th President, I want to encourage our community to believe in each other, to come together and work to make the 13.2 square miles of Community Board 13, the place that we call home, the best that it can be.— By Corey Ince, Community Associate

"I'm asking you to believe. Not in my ability to bring about change—but in yours."

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

Teachers Matter!

NYC MEN TEACH believes that a well-supported educator results in a better learning experience for all students. Our recruitment and retention strategy provides support aimed at keeping teachers of color in schools for at least three years. Currently, we are building out our Principals and Mentor Networks, are seeking counsel on culturally-relevant professional and leadership workshops, and are identifying unique opportunities for community participants to change the education landscape. NYC MEN TEACH is not only about students. We are also invested in YOU!

NYC

MEN

TEACH

Mayor Bill de Blasio, in conjunction with New York City's Young Men's Initiative, made a bold pledge: NYC will develop new initiatives and programs aiming to put an additional 1,000 men of color on course to become NYC public school teachers over the next three years.

The Young Men's Initiative, together with Department of Education, City University of New York, Center for Economic Opportunity, and Teach for America, excitedly announces the launch of NYC Men Teach to recruit and unite Black, Latino and Asian men committed to educating today's diverse student population; supporting each other's professional and leadership development; and to empowering the communities they serve.



**Queens
Community Board 13**
219-41 Jamaica Avenue
Queens Village, NY 11428
718.464.9700
Fax: 718.254.2739
qcb13.org



Melinda Katz
Borough President

Vicky Moraes-Casella
Director of
Community Boards

Bryan J. Block
Chairman

Mark McMillan
District Manager

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT – January 2017

Meetings Canceled:

Transportation Committee
Seniors & Special Needs Committee
Economic Development Committee
Parks & Environmental Committee

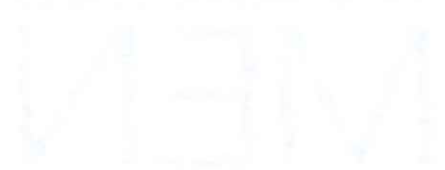
Events/Meetings Attended:

- **December 19, 2016:** Attend Press Conference at North Shore Towers announcing that it had become a "smoke free" facility. **City Council Member Barry Grodenchik** was also in attendance.
- **December 20, 2016:** Attend Queens Community Board 13 Holiday Party at Mateus' Restaurant.
- **December 21, 2016:** Host District Service Cabinet Meeting.
- **January 4, 2017:** Attend ABNY Luncheon at the New York Hilton featuring **Governor Andrew Cuomo**. This was his New York City Region "State of the State" presentation which focused on the billion dollar upgrades to LaGuardia and Kennedy Airports. **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz** was also in attendance.
- Attend and participate in the Public Safety Committee Meeting Chaired by **Clive Williams**. Details will be shared in his report.
- **January 5, 2017:** Speak at the 218th Street Block Association Meeting in Laurelton.
- **January 9, 2017:** Attend and participate in the Land Use Committee Meeting Chaired by **Rich Hellenbrecht**. Details will be shared in his report.
- **January 10, 2017:** Attend and participate in Youth and Education Committee Meeting Chaired by **Rhonda Kontner**. Details will be shared in her report.
- **January 18, 2017:** Host District Service Cabinet Meeting.
- **January 19, 2017:** Attend and participate in Health Committee Meeting Chaired by **Dr. Ashok Satkalmi** and **Bonnie Huie**. Details will be shared in their report.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark McMillan

Mark McMillan
District Manager
Queens Community Board 13



STAFF

Mark McMillan, District Manager: mmcmillan@qcb13.org
Maxine Brannon, Community Coordinator: mbrannon@qcb13.org
Corey Ince, Community Associate: cince@qcb13.org

PUBLIC SAFETY NOTES

January 4, 2017

Public Safety Committee:

- > Detective Jovoda Cooper presents the 105 Precinct's monthly CompStat Report.
 - > Discussion of random vehicles being parked on certain streets (that could be stolen) and how to have them removed.
-

YOUTH & EDUCATION NOTES

January 17, 2017

Youth & Education Committee:

- > Martin Van Buren High School has met of all 10 benchmarks as required by Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
 - > The perception of schools in Districts 26 and 29 does not match the reality of the data.
 - > An event is being planned conjunction with the Seniors & Special Needs Committee for the early spring on educational services for young adults with special needs.
-

HEALTH NOTES

January 19, 2017

Health Committee:

- > A need to clarify a "Mission Statement" to have a direct effect on communities within the Board area.
 - > A discussion of mental health issues – anxiety, depression, anger management — as needing to be addressed alongside the 4 top diseases (as detailed by DOHMH) of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke.
 - > The need for more people to do "End-of-Life" planning including wills, living wills and power of attorney designations.
 - > Partnering with Zucker Hillside Hospital on various initiatives.
-

Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik is once again bringing participatory budgeting (PB) to council district 23 this year. PB allows residents to vote on how the council member allocates 1.5 million dollars on local projects. During September and October, the council member hosted over a dozen neighborhood assemblies at which local residents submitted hundreds of ideas for projects. In addition, residents volunteered to serve as budget delegates. The budget delegates put together over a dozen projects on which the community can vote. The residents of council district 23 are invited to cast their votes from March 25 to April 2. If you are interested in helping to get out the vote or in volunteering to work at a poll site, please call (718) 468-0137.

BOARD MEMBERS

Bellaire

Anup Ramanuth

Bellerose

Angela Auguagliaro
Corey Berak
James Delaney
Richard Hellenbrecht
Michael O'Keeffe
Ashok Sakalmi
Jerry Wind

Cambria Heights

Terence Banks
Bryan Block
Tanya Cruz
Jonathan Logan
Celeste Powers
Clive Williams

Floral Park

Charles Farruggia
Seymour Finklestein
Rhonda Kontner

Glen Oaks

Anthony Kuncheria
Mathew Thomas

Laurelton

Alain Berrouet
Verdell Boncoeur
Daisy Carew
Bess DeBetham
Robert Glover
Bonnie Huie
Jackie Wilson

New Hyde Park

Pritpal Singh Walia

Rosedale

Kyle Bragg
Delroy Dawkins
Jackie Campbell
Delroy Dawkins
Terry DeMendonca
Samuel Elliot
Vernal Holder
Kangela Moore
Marcia O'Brien
Derrick Warmington
Lorraine Gittens-Bridges
Tameka Pierre-Louis

North Shore Towers

Felice Hannah

Queens Village

Isa Avery
Mohamood Ishmael
Peter Richards
Sanu Thomas
Nagassar Ramgarib
Wilson Thomas

Springfield Gardens

Fay Hill

2017 GENERAL BOARD MEETING DATES & LOCATIONS

Monday, February 27, 2017 — TBD

Monday March 27, 2017 — TBD

Monday April 24, 2017 — Bellerose Assembly of God

Monday May 22, 2017 — Bellerose Assembly of God

Monday June 26, 2017 — Bellerose Assembly of God

No Meetings in July & August 2017

Monday, September 25, 2017 — Bellerose Assembly of God

Monday, October 23, 2017 — TBD

Monday, November 20, 2017 - TBD

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bryan J. Block, Chairperson: bblock@qcb13.org

Angela Augugliaro, First Vice Chairperson

Verdell Boncoeur, Second Vice Chairperson

Anup Ramnauth, Treasurer

Jerry Wind, Executive Secretary