Ravenswood man gunned down

Aunt mourns loss of Shaka Ryan after fatal shooting in neighborhood liquor store

BY REBECCA HENELY

Ravenswood Houses resident Sandra Davis said she was wondering how she would pay for the burial of her nephew, 37-year-old Shaka Ryan, after he was shot in a liquor store a few blocks away Saturday night.

“When he got up, he said, ‘Aunt Sandra, Uncle Jay, I’ll be right back,’” Davis said.

Davis said when her son told her soon after that Ryan had died, Davis thought he had gone to bed. After responding to a 911 call at 7:15 p.m., NYPD officers found Ryan inside the Solomon Z Liquor Store, at 24-04 34th Ave., with bullet wounds in his torso and left leg, authorities said. The EMS workers who arrived on scene took Ryan to Mount Sinai Queens Hospital in Astoria, where he was later pronounced dead, police said.

Continued on Page 14
Sunnyside groper déjà vu
Lawmakers respond to another series of sexual assaults in area

BY REBECCA HENELY

In a replay of the response to earlier sexual assaults in the area, the attack on a woman in Sunnyside Gardens Easter Sunday brought City Council Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan) and Sunnyside’s elected officials back to the No. 7 46th Street Bliss Street subway stop Tuesday morning to alert the community.

“It’s very unfortunate that we are at the corner once again,” Quinn said.

On Sunday at 5:45 a.m., a Hispanic man in his late 20s jumped on and sexually assaulted a 30-year-old Sunnyside woman on 46th Street near 39th Avenue. Mike Novak, who lives nearby, heard her cries from outside his window.

“She was screaming, ‘Help! Get off me! Stop! Stop!’” Novak said.

Thinking the woman was his wife in trouble, Novak ran out and saw the perpetrator on top of the woman in the bushes. The man ran away when Novak saw him. Novak tried to chase him, but was unable to overtake him since he was not wearing shoes.

“I was just outraged that this was happening outside my window,” Novak said.

A police spokesman described the perpetrator as Hispanic, about 5-foot-9 and about 190 pounds.

In response to the attack, Quinn, Novak, Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer (D-Sunnyside) and civic leader George Stamatiades said they are determined to fight two spats in the Dutch Kills area they suspect of being illegal businesses.

“It’s contrary to everything else that is happening in the Dutch Kills-Long Island City community,” Van Bramer said.

The councilman’s office said the community was concerned with two spas, one on 37th Avenue called Smile Dawa, and another on 38th Avenue called Asian Body Work. They said these parlors may be fronts for prostitution or other illegal sex activities.

“It’s a situation where it’s a quality of life issue and we have to address it,” Stamatiades said.

The voice mailbox for Smile Dawa was full when TimesLedger Newspapers called. The manager for Asian Body Work was not available for comment.

Some Dutch Kills residents say illegal activities occur at this massage parlor.

Continued on Page 16

Van Bramer says spas in LIC may be illegal

BY REBECCA HENELY

City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer (D-Sunnyside) and civic leader George Stamatiades said prostitution in the area, the councilman’s office said the community was concerned with two spas, one on 37th Avenue called Smile Dawa, and another on 38th Avenue called Asian Body Work. They said these parlors may be fronts for prostitution or other illegal sex activities.

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Some Dutch Kills residents say illegal activities occur at this massage parlor.

Continued on Page 16
Woodside nonprofit plans gala in order to help children

The Child Center of NY will use funds for borough’s at-risk kids and to expand beyond Queens

BY REBECCA HENELY

Woodside’s The Child Center of NY will be holding a $550-a-plate fund-raiser gala April 18 at Gustavino’s in Manhattan.

Laura Schenone, spokeswoman for the center, said the gala will help raise funds for the at-risk children in Queens the center serves, but also enable it to grow its operations further beyond the borough.

“We want to expand our reach, but we’re still committed to Queens,” Schenone said.

The Child Center’s central office is at 60-02 Queens Blvd., but, after beginning in 1953 as a mental health counseling center, the organization now works out of 70 locations throughout the borough and a high school in Brooklyn, offering programs in early childhood education, counseling for individuals and families, child abuse prevention and youth development.

These programs can include anything from child care to parenting classes to substance abuse treatment to college and job preparation. The center, which has a staff that speaks 35 languages collectively, serves about 17,000 Queens kids every year.

“Our mission today is to help at-risk children and youth succeed in life,” Schenone said.

The gala, which will be at 409 E. 59th St. in Manhattan April 18, will help the center fund its programs, celebrate the center’s 60th anniversary and honor three men who have done exceptional work for at-risk children.

“To be an honoree, their commitment to the community and their commitment to the Child Center of NY is the big thing,” Schenone said.

The gala, which will begin at 6 p.m. with a cocktail hour and will include a silent auction, dinner and an awards ceremony.

Schenone said the center is committed to expanding in the slow-to-recover economy.

“The gala begins at 6 p.m. with a cocktail hour and will include a silent auction, dinner and an awards ceremony,” Schenone said of the center.

The Impact Award will also be given to Roslyn Savings Bank President Jack Bransfield, who is a part of many nonprofits. The honor is given to those who have brought both innovation to business and service to disadvantaged kids.

James Pi, chairman of Chinese cruise company Victoria Cruises and a supporter of many philanthropic organizations, will be given the Generation One Award. This award goes to people who act as entrepreneurs and giving role models to young people.

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Building boom recasts LIC

Neighborhood sheds industrial past as new culture transforms waterfront

BY REBECCA HENELY

Before Michael Bloomberg became mayor, he visited Queens in 2001 and told residents that he wanted to see skyscrapers in Long Island City. Ten years later, he held a news conference on anti-smoking measures at the city Department of Health’s new home, the latest skyscraper in the neighborhood.

Even before the glass and steel structure at 2 Gotham Center was complete, the neighborhood’s elected officials and leaders praised the city for moving the government agency from Manhattan to Long Island City.

With the opening of the new corporate home of JetBlue Airways last week, the officials continue to paint the same portrait of the neighborhood: hot, growing and a far cry from its past as a manufacturing-industrial area and haven for prostitution.

“You’re so close to the water. You’re one stop away from Manhattan. There’s great restaurants in the area. The [108th] precinct has the lowest crime rate of anywhere in New York City,” said Joseph Conley, chairman of Community Board 2, “so it’s just a great place to live and work.”

It is rare to listen to a discussion about development, commerce or culture in Queens and not hear the neighborhood’s name come up. Yet the tourist or newcomer to the borough may find it hard to determine its borders.

Natives usually call it the area between the East River, Van Dam Street, Queens Plaza and the Brooklyn border, but older maps place its northern border as high as Ditmars Boulevard in Astoria, and addresses in Astoria or Sunnyside can be listed under “Long Island City.”

Besides the name, which may make the neophyte believe it is on eastern Long Island, Long Island City is usually said to encompass multiple sub-neighborhoods: Hunters Point between Queens Plaza and Jackson Avenue; Dutch Kills between 36th Avenue, Northern Boulevard, Queens Plaza and 21st Street; Blissville near Calvary Cemetery; and the Queensbridge and Ravenswood public housing complexes.

“The last 10 years have brought an amazing transformation to Long Island City,” he said. “Specifically in the Hunters Point area, a new residential neighborhood has taken root in what was once abandoned industrial property along the waterfront.”

Yet the most exciting residential development in the area remains Hunters Point South, a project of the city Economic Development Corp. This massive mixed-use development will include 5,000 dwelling units — both affordable and market-rate housing — a 1,100-seat intermediate school and high school, 11 acres of waterfront, 100,000 square feet of...
HISTORY

The current state of Queens Plaza is a drastic change from a decade ago. Walsh said that in the past prostitution and organized crime had a large presence in the area, but now the crime rate has dropped dramatically. Walsh, a longtime resident of Dutch Kills, credited the work of the 108th and 114th precincts, which cover the south and north sides of the plaza, former City Councilman William McCaffrey and Queens District Attorney Richard Brown.

“You can walk the neighborhood today,” he said. “The safety’s there. It’s not like 10 years ago. You were scared.”

While the Q100 bus to and from Rikers Island still drops off former inmates in Queens Plaza, the neighborhood is now more often associated with hotels than crime.

On a recent visit to Long Island City, Bloomberg said in a time of booming tourism, the neighborhood has 17 hotels with five more to come.

Walsh said most of the new hotels have been good neighbors as well as very busy.

“Dutch Kills is known all over the world,” Walsh said. “We have people walk-
Continued on Page 44
BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

As the first Korean-American to make the finals for Season 11 of Fox's "American Idol," 22-year-old Flushing resident Heejun Han's journey to fame began with an audition in Pittsburgh back in January, when he belted out Michael Bolton’s version of "How Am I Supposed to Live Without You?"

Han's performance brought judge Jennifer Lopez to tears, while judge and Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler remarked, “I think you’re really great — you could be the American Idol.”

Although he was ultimately eliminated from the competition March 30, he was still able to catch the national spotlight. He even got to take center stage at one of the borough's main attractions.

Last Thursday, Han sang "God Bless America" to a cheering crowd during the seventh inning stretch at the New York Mets opener at Citi Field. In a brief phone interview prior to performing, he thanked Queens and TimesLedger Newspapers’ readers “for supporting me,” adding, “This is not the end of the rope for me — just stay tuned.”

After getting his chance to sing in front of Tyler and Lopez and being lusted after by hundreds of "Idol" hopefuls, Han advanced to Hollywood to compete among the finalists. In an introductory interview on americandidol.com he told his fans, “I couldn’t believe it — I had to pinch myself,” adding, “I think I'm the next American Idol because I'm a very hot singer.”

Han said he was inspired to do the show because he wanted to prove to the children he used to work with at Milal Mission, a Korean missionary school in Flushing for those with special needs, that if you really want something and if you believe in it, you can become someone.

Han said he used to suffer from emotional depression and credited the youngsters for helping him recover from his illness. He has also said they motivated him to audition for the show.

Seeking a better life, Han immigrated with his parents from South Korea to Queens when he was 12, and in 2005 attended Francis Lewis High School in Fresh Meadows, graduating in 2007.

His teacher, Sook Hee Son, who has been with Francis Lewis for 21 years, said she taught him Korean language arts.

"Heejun had great leadership skills and was a member of the Korean Club," she said. "He was one of my best students."

Surprisingly, Han never joined the chorus, and his parents were stunned when they found out he could sing.

In a final effort to stay in the competition at the Top 8 results show Mar. 29, Han performed the same song, "A Song For You" by Donny Hathaway, that got him a standing ovation by the judges at the Top 9 show the night before, when Randy Jackson remarked, "Finally, the Heejun we selected came back to us tonight."

Lopez added, "That was the most beautiful tone, the most beautiful vibrato."

So that night Han was given one last chance to prove himself worthy of "Idol-dom." Host Ryan Seacrest asked him to "sing for his life."

And sing he did. But sadly, this would be Han's last time in the spotlight. He was eliminated after receiving the fewest votes among the finalists.

Waving and smiling, Han said his emotional goodbyes before leaving the stage. He said it did not really matter that he had not won — he got the chance to sing in front of millions of people.

Back on March 7, he crooned "All in Love Is Fair" by Stevie Wonder, causing Lopez to swoon and say, "I loved you from the first time you sang for me and I still love you now."

Han told his fans he left the show on a high note, adding, “First thing I’m gonna do when I get home is eat lots and lots of Korean food.”

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Heejun Han, of Flushing, performs on the show "American Idol" in Los Angeles.

AP Photo/FOX, Michael Becker
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POLICE

Blotter

Cops seek two men in four Astoria burglaries

ASTORIA — Police said two young men burglarized four commercial spots in Astoria at the end of last month, taking money, equipment and, in one case, a motor scooter.

The two men, described as either white or Hispanic and somewhere between 16 and 22 years old, first hit the Unisex Fanny’s Place hair salon, at 22-05 35th St., sometime between 6:30 p.m. March 27 and 9 a.m. March 28, breaking the front door’s lock and taking money, police said.

Around the same time period, the two of them also broke into Okean’s Greek Seafood, at 35-02 Ditmars Blvd., by breaking the rear door’s lock sometime between 11:50 p.m. March 27 and 2 p.m. March 28, police said. They took money and computer equipment from the restaurant, police said.

The next day, the two men then broke the side door lock of Bar 30 Lounge, at 32-02 30th Ave., at around 3:45 a.m. March 30, police said. The men broke the front door’s lock and took the register, checks, cash and a motor scooter, police said.

Those with information should contact the NYPD’s Crime Stoppers by calling 1-800-577-TIPS, visiting nypdcrimestoppers.com or texting 274637 and then entering TIP577.

Car hits and kills man in Blissville accident: Cops

BLISSVILLE — A man in his 30s was killed April 4 after being hit by a car while riding his bicycle at Borden and Greenpoint avenues, police said.

The NYPD received a call at 5:22 a.m. about a pedestrian who had been struck by a gray 2007 Toyota Camry livery cab, which was driven by a 25-year-old man. When the EMS responded they brought the cyclist to Elmhurst Hospital Center, where he was pronounced DOA, police said.

The NYPD did not see any evidence of criminality. The victim had not been identified, police said.

Police seek suspects in boro jeweler robbery

FOREST HILLS — Police were looking for three black men in their 20s suspected of robbing a jewelry store in Forest Hills March 31.

The NYPD said at around 12:41 p.m., the three men went into Kinara Jewelers, at 72-03 Austin St. While inside the first man, described as about 5-foot-8, held the door while pretending to have a weapon, while another man, about 5-foot-10, stood by, police said.

The third suspect, who was also about 5-foot-8, came into the store, broke the showcase with a hammer and took about 12 watches, police said. Nobody was hurt, but the three men got away in a blue Chrysler 300, police said.

Those with information should contact the NYPD’s Crime Stoppers by calling 1-800-577-TIPS, visiting nypdcrimestoppers.com or texting 274637 and then entering TIP577.

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Buy local.
Queens gets highest health rank in city

BY PHILIP NEWMAN

Queens is New York City’s healthiest county, according to an annual survey of the nation’s more than 5,000 counties.

The County Health Rankings for 2012 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin listed Queens as No. 16 among New York state’s 62 counties.

Manhattan came in at No. 19, Staten Island No. 22, Brooklyn No. 54 and the Bronx No. 62.

Putnam County, just to the north of Westchester County, was rated the healthiest county in the state. Nassau County was No. 6 and Suffolk County was No. 15.

“Queens comes out well in quite a few categories,” said Julie Willens Van Dijk, a University of Wisconsin researcher for the project.

The survey reported that Queens had a citywide low of 4,882 premature deaths in 2010-11, which are those deaths involving people 75 or younger and which are preventable or controllable.

Brooklyn had 6,515 premature deaths, Manhattan 5,005, Staten Island 5,524 and the Bronx 7,987.

Queens had 22 percent of children living in poverty, compared with the Bronx at 42 percent, Brooklyn at 33 percent, Manhattan at 23 percent and Staten Island at 17 percent.

In Queens 22 percent of the adult population is obese, in the Bronx 28 percent, in Manhattan 15 percent, in Brooklyn 25 percent and in Staten Island 28 percent.

As for adult smokers, Queens came in at 14 percent, the Bronx at 19 percent, Brooklyn at 16 percent, Manhattan at 15 percent and Staten Island at 20 percent.

A new feature of the survey this year was fast food outlets. Willens Van Dijk said surveyors so far have taken no stand on fast food environments as they measure the percentage of these restaurants in a county.

“It is informational for residents,” she said. “Something for them to consider in their environments.”

Fast food outlets account for 51 percent of Queens’ restaurants, 48 percent of Staten Island’s and Manhattan’s, 52 percent of Brooklyn’s and 62 percent of Brooklyn’s.

“The rankings are an annual checkup that highlight the healthiest and least healthy counties in every state, as well as those factors that influence health outside the doctor’s office,” said Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, chief executive Continued on Page 33

Queens has the smallest number of adult smokers in the city at 14% of the population, according to a new report.

AP Photo/Gerry Broome

Lancman outlines platform

Assemblyman emphasizes small biz, Israel in race for Congress

BY JOE ANUTA

State Assemblyman Rory Lancman (D-Fresh Meadows) recently sat down with TimesLedger Newspapers to discuss his campaign for Congress and outline some of the issues he would tackle in Washington, D.C., if he should win a four-way primary in June and then defeat a Republican challenger in September.

Lancman said his main goal for the campaign revolves around the economy and “leveling the playing field” for small business owners in the borough. For example, he wants to require banks to release more credit as well as lower the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 28 percent and eliminate loopholes, a plan that has been proposed by President Barack Obama.

Lancman is a lawyer and is in his eighth year as a state assemblyman. He is the current chairman of the Subcommittee on Workplace Safety and is also on the Majority Steering, Judiciary, Codes, Labor, Banks, Housing and Cities committees.

Lancman predicted equalizing the tax rate would help mom-and-pop shops in Queens stay competitive with national chains that operate similar type businesses. In addition, Lancman touched on capital gains taxes, which he would like to eliminate and have profits subject to traditional income taxes.

The taxes, which range from 0 percent to 35 percent depending on the income bracket, are applied to profits from stocks and bonds as well as property such as houses. They apply to all investors, including retirees in Queens who have invested money in financial markets as well as their homes over many years.

“I think it is misleading to make a distinction that income earned through sweat and work is less of a value and less important than income earned through investment,” he said.

Lancman faces Assemblywoman Grace Meng (D-Flushing), City Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley (D-Middle Village) and Jeff Gottlieb in a four-way primary. Councilman Dan Halloran (R-Whitestone) is running on the Republican ticket and is currently waiting in the wings until after the June 28 primary.

Israel has come up consistently in the Lancman campaign, since there is a large Jewish population centered in the west of the district around Forest Hills and Rego Park. The district runs from parts of Elmhurst and Ridgewood in the east through Forest Hills and Flushing and onto Bayside and other portions of northeast Queens.

Lancman received the endorsement of former Mayor Ed Koch and cited his travel to the country, op-eds in newspapers there and his vocal opinions on the conflict as reasons why his position is responsible, as opposed to Republicans who have also championed Israel’s cause but have engaged in what Lancman called “knee-jerk” reactions of military chest-thumping that might not be helpful to the region.

When asked about his staunch support of Israel and how it affects relationships with the borough’s Muslim population, Lancman said relationships with certain populations have not been as robust as others.

Lancman pointed out that his wife is Iranian and he gets along well with certain populations, including the Bangladeshi Muslims, but in 2006 when Israel invaded southern Lebanon, the assemblyman’s relationship with the Al-Khoei Mosque in Jamaica became strained.

Lancman had a rally in support of Israel. Al-Khoei had a rally in support of Hezbollah, which the U.S. Department of State recognizes as a terrorist organization.

“The with them, I don’t have that much of a relationship,” he said.

Along with the endorsement of the Working Families Party, which historically has been a robust organizer on election days, Lancman has snagged endorsements from unions, including 32BJ. The assemblyman said that the endorsements do not with the understanding that the unions will receive favorable legislation in return. Lancman said he has always been pro-labor and that if he was seeking endorsements for financial gain, he would have sought the backing of developers or banks.

The assemblyman prided himself on his scrappy legislative history and touted bills he wrote on a state level that have affected federal issues, like regulating Wall Street and proposing state regulation of companies that do large amounts of money to super political action committees designed to influence elections.

“One of the my mantras is that there is not any issue that I can’t have an impact on,” he said.

Specifically, Lancman wants to tackle the issue of garbage-toting trains that lumber through western Queens, which are federally regulated, and would like to see a national DREAM Act, which would give illegal immigrants who were brought to America in their youth a path to citizenship.
TREES BITE THE DUST

Without notice or warning, the city cut down 32 College Point trees. The arborcide occurred along 28th Avenue between Ulmer Street and College Point Boulevard. The street is on the north border of the College Point Police Academy development, a $1 billion facility under construction.

The city Parks Department said some of the trees were unhealthy, but it wouldn’t say what the nature of the illness was or how many of the trees were sick. Nor could it explain why it allowed the contractor to cut down all 32 trees if only some of the trees were sick.

It’s just the beginning. Before it’s done, the NYPD plans to cut down 82 trees to facilitate the construction of the 3-million-square-foot training facility. Parks has to sign off on any tree removal, but in this case the agency appears to be a rubber stamp. The contractors are running this show and once again the people of College Point have been ignored.

The NYPD hired an arborist who allegedly inspected each of the trees before they were massacred. The city should make the findings of the arborist public.

It is hard to imagine how the city could have handled this worse.

Mock Debate a Learning Tool

Part of every college student’s experience should include learning how to see things from somebody else’s perspective.

The Queensborough Community College students who participated recently in the school’s mock GOP debate may not have agreed with the thinking of the politicians they portrayed, but they learned how to stand in that person’s shoes.


To do this, they had to familiarize themselves with the issues in the Republican debates and the positions taken by the candidates.

This exercise would prove useful in all high schools and colleges.

St. Mary’s more a matter of big business

I would like to address your March 22-28 Bayside Times editorial “Skala Rides Again.”

I have lived in the immediate neighborhood of St. Mary’s Hospital for the better part of 60 years. I remember when the original building was erected. It was run by Episcopal nuns, who lovingly tended to the chronically ill children in their care.

It was a welcome addition to our little neighborhood where I spent my childhood, and later my married life as I raised my own children. We would eagerly await for our annual visit from the children of St. Mary’s, who were taken around the neighborhood on Halloween.

Wheelchairs, crutches and many other medical accoutrements accompanied these children, but their happy faces as they eagerly awaited their treats will always stay with me. My mother-in-law was honorary godmother to many of the young St. Mary’s residents.

The issue concerning the expansion of St. Mary’s is not about “sick children” or the opposition to having a facility that can take adequate care of them.

What this is about is a huge corporation running roughshod over a residential neighborhood that cannot comfortably accommodate the expansion. It is my understanding that St. Mary’s was offered space in another part of Queens that is more adaptable to its needs.

Parking, pollution and an increasing flow of traffic have taken a serious toll, not to mention many of the caretakers of the children loitering on the outskirts of the St. Mary’s property taking cigarette breaks. Great examples to sick children.

This might be a good time for the sake of Bayside to take a closer look at St. Mary’s and not get caught up in the emotional banter about sick children but big business.

Susan Broderick
Bayside
City must show respect for the dead at Old Towne

An open letter to city Comptroller John Liu: As the co-chairman of the Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground Conservancy, I am writing to you to ask for your assistance with a crucial issue facing the 19th-century cemetery.

As you are aware, the conservancy for this cemetery has been advocating for years that the four headstones destroyed by New York City in the 1930s be replaced. We would also like to see recognition in the form of a permanent monument erected to honor all of the others interred at this site, which altogether brings the number buried at the cemetery to about 1,000 souls, all well-documented.

Borough President Helen Marshall gave $100,000 to replace the four headstones and honor the other deceased. After various meetings with her, representatives from the city Parks Department, Community Board 7 and the city Design Commission, we have not made any progress toward achieving these goals and Parks dismisses any ideas we may have.

In fact, the conservancy believes the lack of progress may have been deliberate.

When the city consolidated in 1898, the administrative code directed the city comptroller and the five borough presidents to maintain and protect the burial and town grounds owned by the city. That code remains in effect to this day. In the early 1900s, the burial grounds came under the aegis of the city Parks Department.

As we look at city history, the prevailing attitude has been that people of color did not count, even when it came to preserving and respecting their burial grounds. Resting places for African Americans in Manhattan, for example, continuously shifted northward over the passage of time.

My people were pushed from what is now Sarah Roosevelt Park to Washington Square to Bryant Park to Central Park Seneca Village. As the land was developed, graves were frequently uncovered and desecrated, paved over or built over.

The Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground is also a victim of this unfortunate attitude on the part of the city. While much has been achieved with your help, the work is not finished. We therefore ask you to intercede to expedite the placement of the four headstones and memorial monument that the conservancy seeks for the burial ground.

The dead must be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve and the site must be identifiable as the cemetery that it is.

After the tornado damage was repaired and new signs were placed, the wording on one of the signs has been written with incorrect history. This also has not been discussed, as Parks has taken the stance of no headstones, no meeting. The last presentation from the conservancy to Parks was totally rejected, with no further action.

We implore you to help us honor those who are buried at this site.

Mandingo Osceola Tshaka Co-chairman Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground Conservancy

Work to make America better

As 2012 continues and the presidential election campaign begins to really ratchet up, is our nation’s economy really beginning to improve? Unemployment remains high, foreclosures on homes are continuing and mortgage and credit card rates continue to climb, as do prices on everything from food to gas. Whoever wins the presidential election this November will have his work cut out for him, and the American people want to see tangible and long-lasting, positive results — not more political gerrymandering, as has been the case for the last four years.

Also, our politicians in Congress need to get their act together and do the jobs they were elected to do — and to do them honestly and to the best of their ability, which means they need to actually work.

John Amato
Fresh Meadows

Pols shouldn’t jump at chance to run

It is interesting how politicians vying to be elected to an office and promising to protect and serve us are jumping quite fast to leave office.

Since U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-Bayside) announced he will not seek another term, politicians came out of the woodwork to run for his seat. There should be a pledge that once someone wins an election, they pledge not to leave that seat when a better one pops up.

Those professional politicians who announced they wanted to run for Ackerman’s office slapped those who voted for them in the face and should never get another vote again. It is obvious they have used their current offices as stepping stones to higher offices and do not give a damn for the districts or the people they were elected to represent. Shame on them.

Joyce Shepard
Bayside

No seniority hurts Queens in D.C.

With all the hoopla concerning the decision of U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-Bayside) to not run for another term, people often forget that the power in Washington, D.C., is based on seniority.

The longer you are there, the more you can deliver for your district. Queens and Long Island have lost 30 years of muscle to be replaced by zero seniority and a representative at the bottom of the barrel of 435.

Kenneth Lloyd Brown
Forest Hills

Allow Avella to speak on ICCC

I am in agreement with state Sen. Tony Avella (D-Bayside) and other community leaders calling for a thorough investigation of the deliberate attempt to muzzle him from sounding off over a disputed land deal — concerning the Indian Community and Cultural Center — over what we all suspect might be foul play.

His proposed new district is most inappropriate.

Dick Lopez
Former Member
Community Board 13
Queens Village

LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be typed or neatly handwritten, and those longer than 300 words may be edited for brevity and clarity. All letters must include the writer’s name and phone number for verification. Names may be withheld from publication if requested, but anonymously sent letters will not be printed. Letters must be received by Thursday noon to appear in the next week’s paper. All letters become the property of Queens Publishing Corporation and may be republished in any format.

Contact the newsroom:
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Political season heats up with U.S. Senate, House races

Dee Richard
Dishing with Dee

The political races are beginning to gel. The campaigns are starting to form their strategies that they hope will result in a winner for their respective candidates. What would normally be a mild campaign season is turning out to be a rather riveting winner-take-all contest.

On April 4, George Maragos, who is running for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Kirsten Gillibrand, held a fund-raiser at a lovely restaurant named Limani on Northern Boulevard in Roslyn, L.I. It was hosted by AHEPA, the largest Greek-American group in the world. It was a successful fund-raiser, with many important, powerful Greek community members coming out to support one of their own.

Every time I hear George, he sounds better and there is a lot to be said for practice makes perfect. George, as you know, is the Nassau County comptroller, and to his credit he has managed to balance Nassau’s budget every year, reduce borrowing by 75 percent, shrink the size of Nassau’s government and all of this with no tax increases. Those are big pluses for a candidate, considering the financial crisis we find ourselves in. Good luck, George.

Last Thursday evening, the Queens Village Republican Clubs speakers were Wendy Long, who is also running for Gillibrand’s seat. That was the first time I have heard her speak. She was scheduled to speak at both the February and March meetings of the Queens Conservative Club. She had to cancel both, so naturally I was anxious to hear her.

She makes an attractive appearance and promoted all the correct conservative points of view. The Conservative Party has endorsed her and given her its line. Either Wendy was tired after a long day or we were both tired, but it seemed to me her speech, though intelligent and well-informed, was rather flat. No fire in the belly, but to be fair you cannot judge a person’s worth on the strength of one speech alone. I am scheduled to hear her speak again next week, which may give a more accurate point of view. Good luck, Wendy.

Up until now, I haven’t had the opportunity to see the third person Bob Turner, who is also vying for Gillibrand’s seat, and hear his reasons for running and why he believes he is the best candidate for the Senate. As soon as I have the opportunity to hear him, I will fill you in on the details of his campaign. Good luck, Bob.

The other speaker at the QVRC was City Councilman Dan Halloran. When Dan heard that U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman was not going to run for re-election, Halloran decided to throw his hat in the ring for Ackerman’s congressional seat. Halloran will not have a Republican or Conservative primary, but he will have to face whoever wins the Democratic primary. The Democratic candidates are Elizabeth Crowley, Rory Lancman and Grace Meng.

Since Ackerman’s decision was totally unexpected and on short notice, it didn’t give any of the candidates trying to replace him much time to get a “rock star” campaign together. The real fun will begin after the primary, when it will be Halloran vs. the Democratic primary winner.

If you are into local Queens politics and “all politics is local,” you will have an interesting summer and fall to look forward to.

We hope our readers had either a happy Easter or happy Passover, whichever is apropos. Wasn’t Sunday a beautiful day for a holiday? Both holidays produced a slow news week, which is why our column is shorter than usual this week.

And I hate to rain on everyone’s parade, but just a gentle reminder that the income tax filing date is now due. I hope you have all your ducks in a row.

Till next week, Dee.

 Titanic failed to claim any Queens residents in 1912

The Greater Astoria Historical Society

The newspapers were filled with progress and development. It was a confident age, but midway through the month a jarring note burst upon the world. It has remained seared in our collective memory to this day.

The R.M.S. Titanic sank in the early hours of April 15, 1912.

As radio-telegram was in its infancy, for days only a confusing stream of news trickled in from rescue vessels.

“All women on Titanic saved,” said a relayed message from the Carpathia. “Some of the dead are on the US California,” including, it was rumored, John Jacob Astor IV.

“Neither Isidor Strauss nor his wife was on the Carpathia,” read another dispatch.

Another report claims, “Baltic has about 250 Titanic passengers.”

Hospitals in New York stood ready to receive the passengers. Shocked crowds milled around the piers and shipping offices.

When the Titanic hit the iceberg, engineers said the impact was terrific — a collision something like 37 Empire State express trains going at 70 mph — and hitting a wall.

On April 25, 10 days after the event, ships reported numerous bodies in an area extending for miles east and west of the wreck site. Mail ships were advised to give the area a wide berth.

A ship, sent out to recover the dead, issued a daily series of grim reports: “To date the total number of bodies picked up was 205.” “We have brought all the embalming fluid to be had in Halifax — enough for seventy.” “We have been drifting in a dense fog.” “Within a week, we should clean up the relics of the disaster.” “In our opinion, the majority of the bodies will never come to the surface.”

The indelible image of a recovery vessel, bound by dense fog and picking up hundreds of victims, was copied in the movie “Titanic.”

Medical opinion held that when the victims went down with the ship, death was practically instantaneous. Ultimately, some debris drifted as far as Bermuda.

Although no one from Queens died in the disaster, local waters, as if in spite, claimed its due.

The Hell Gate received a fatality when a barge captain’s wife fell from her husband’s boat. The vessel, moored to the pier on Franklin Street in Astoria Village, had swung out with the tide and was several feet from the dock.

The captain got a plank, bridged the gap and his wife started across. He tried to keep her head above water. A half-hour passed before a policeman heard her cries for help.

By then, the woman had lost consciousness and was pronounced dead at St. John’s Hospital. Mrs. O’Neil was 53.

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The NYPD had not made any arrests as of Tuesday afternoon press time.

Ryan pleaded guilty to manslaughter in 1995 and was sentenced to 11 to 22 years in prison, the Queens district attorney’s office said.

Davis said Ryan spent 12 years in jail. When Ryan was released two years ago, he went to live with Davis at her Ravenswood apartment on 36th Avenue since both of his parents had died. Davis, the sister of Ryan’s father, had looked after Ryan when he was a child.

“They never go away,” she said of Ryan coming back to live with her.

Davis said despite his crime he was a lovable person who had respect in Ravenswood Houses.

“I don’t want nobody judging him,” Davis said. “What he did, he did. He [God] forgave what he did.”

A memorial of lit candles and an empty bottle of vodka was set up outside Davis and Ryan’s building. Davis said she was hoping a crime victims’ group could help her pay for Ryan’s burial.

The liquor store where Ryan was shot is located at the intersection of the Queensview Co-Op and the Ravenswood Houses projects. Some area residents said they heard the shots.

“At first I thought they were firecrackers because they weren’t really loud,” said resident April Hatcher.

She said she had been getting dressed in her home and ready to leave when she heard four or five shots.

Hatcher said she found the incident sad and shocking.

“I’m not surprised to see the cops are here, because they’re always here, but as far as violence, yes,” she said.

Chris Fotiou, who lives in the co-ops, said he had not been sure the loud noises were shots when he was inside his apartment, but realized what happened when he saw the blue police tape and cop cars in front of the liquor store.

“You have your housing projects, you have your crime element,” he said of the incident.

Last year 32-year-old Guimmia Villia was shot inside a pharmacy near the 34th Avenue and 24th Street intersection, two doors down from Saturday night’s shooting. The suspected shooter, Alex Figueroa, later shot and killed himself.

Reach reporter Rebecca Henely by e-mail at rhenely@cnglocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4564.
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other battle that needs to be fought, both against prostitution but also because of the possibility of the johns who frequent the businesses being hurt.

“It’s a situation where I guess they’re being run out of town from Roosevelt Avenue [in Jackson Heights] and they’re finding small, inexpensive space throughout all the area,” he said.

Van Bramer said he did not believe the problem was systemic in any way, but he was concerned that the businesses detracted from the otherwise “wonderful residential neighborhood.”

“We have a zero-tolerance policy for illegal businesses and crime in our neighborhood,” he said.

Reach reporter Rebecca Henely by e-mail at rhenely@cnglocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4564.

RFK Harlem Lift Span Work

Motorists are advised that the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge’s Harlem River lift span will be closed to all traffic in both directions between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. Friday for necessary maintenance work that will take place above the roadway.

Drivers should use the Willis Avenue Bridge as an alternate during this closure.
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<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
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The Ridgewood Glendale Middle Village Maspeth Little League kicked off their season with their annual parade.

(Clockwise from top l.) Dozens of participants fill the street in Glendale; Lucas Clausen, 5, gets a ride on his father Ken’s leg; Samuel Rivera salutes firefighters during the parade; Nicky DiStefano tries to tie his shoe as he walks; a young player from the Cubs team flips through the air; Junior ROTC members from Franklin K. Lane High School march on Myrtle Avenue; Thomas John San Andres holds hands with his little sister Gabrielle; and members of the Braves team march arm-in-arm.

Photos by Christina Santucci
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We Treat You Like Family
Garden City jockey races way to Kentucky Derby

BY REBECCA HENELY

Thousands of horse racing enthusiasts from the city and beyond converged on Aqueduct Racetrack Saturday to watch Gemologist and his jockey, Garden City, L.I., native Javier Castellano, take top honors at the Wood Memorial.

As winner, Gemologist will compete in the Kentucky Derby as will runner-up Alpha, ridden by Elkton, Md.'s Ramon Dominguez.

“It’s a beautiful race to see,” said 80-year-old Bronx resident Albert Smith, who came to the South Ozone Park track for the prestigious race.

The Wood Memorial Stakes is a race for 3-year-old thoroughbreds and one of five that lead up to the Triple Crown races: the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes. The race is named after Eugene Wood, a politician and one of the founders of the Jamaica Race Course, which existed from 1903-59 at the current site of Rochdale Village.

Many who came to the race track for the blue skies and hopefully a lucky ticket were there for the Wood Memorial, and some predicted which horse would be the winner accurately. Odds on Gemologist to win were 6-5 and those who put a $2 bet on him to win won $4.40, the New York Racing Association said.

“Horse racing is so exciting,” Hall said. “You meet good people. Majority of the time you meet good people.”

Dave Leslie, of Fort Greene, Brooklyn, thought it would be Alpha and My Adonis, but also gave Gemologist a good chance.

During the race, the cheers and whoops started as the horses lined up, stayed at a low ebb as the contenders ran around the track and became a roar as Gemologist surged ahead and passed the finish line.

“We found out that the horse is as good as he’s advertised,” said Peter Kisafuludi, 58, who came from Manhattan for the race.

Dominguez rode Alpha to second while Leslie and Hall’s other possibility, My Adonis, ended up placing seventh. Teeth of the Dog and his jockey, Joe Bravo, of Eatontown, N.J., placed third.

Gemologist’s owner won $600,000 for his win, while Alpha’s owner earned $200,000, NYRA said.

Yet while the Wood Memorial brought out horse racing enthusiasts, others were just there to enjoy the day.

“It’s fun,” said 16-year-old Monica Robbins, “but I wish I was winning.”

This was the first time the Wood Memorial had been held since the Resorts World Casino opened, and some visitors said they were happy with the addition.

“I think it’s going to be good for them,” said 62-year-old Woodhaven resident John Spinelli.

Leslie was similarly enthusiastic about Aqueduct’s new neighbor.

“The casino is great,” he said.

Gemologist, ridden by Javier Castellano, crosses the finish line first during the Wood Memorial. Photo by Christina Santucci

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Five Towns College

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Yet while the Wood Memorial brought out horse racing enthusiasts, others were just there to enjoy the day.

“It’s fun,” said 16-year-old Monica Robbins, “but I wish I was winning.”

This was the first time the Wood Memorial had been held since the Resorts World Casino opened, and some visitors said they were happy with the addition.

“I think it’s going to be good for them,” said 62-year-old Woodhaven resident John Spinelli.

Leslie was similarly enthusiastic about Aqueduct’s new neighbor.

“The casino is great,” he said.

Gemologist, ridden by Javier Castellano, crosses the finish line first during the Wood Memorial. Photo by Christina Santucci

Open House - Saturday, April 14 at 1 pm

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10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Time with Recruiters
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
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Corona, 718-651-1100
Train: 7 to 103rd St./Corona Plaza. Walk 5 blocks to Northern Blvd.
Bus: Q23, Q66, Q72

For more information, please call 718-990-0871. Registration is not required. Admission is free. www.queenslibrary.org

Queens Library is grateful to American Eagle Outfitters Foundation for sponsoring the College Fair, and to contributors to the Queens Library Foundation.

Queens Library is an independent, not-for-profit corporation and is not affiliated with any other library system.
New York Mets Opening Day

The New York Mets kicked off their season with a game against the Atlanta Braves last Thursday. (Clockwise from top l.) Mets and Braves players take the field during Opening Day; Glen Oaks resident Jackie Kozodoy looks festive in her blue and orange; Billy Garry of Rockville Center is dressed as Bernie Madoff; Annie Neglia shows off her belly painted with a baseball in hopes that her baby would become a Mets fan; Amazins’ third baseman David Wright (r.) hi-fives teammates; Coffe the dog sports sunglasses and a pipe; and Wig Man Louis Vazquez sports a different hair piece for different moods during the game.

Photos by Christina Santucci
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TimesLedger Newspapers and Community Newspaper Group invite your school to participate in our feature highlighting young people who are excellent students as well as role models for their younger peers.

Nomination requirements are:

A) That the student excel in academics in addition to participation in extra-curricular school activities.

B) A nominating letter from your school’s guidance counselor and instructors describing the student’s abilities and why they would be worthy of this recognition.

C) Please make sure that the student’s bio and a recent photo are included with the nomination.

D) Categories are:
1) Middle School  2) High School  3) College

Please send nominations and information to:
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2012 NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW

GRAND SCHEMES see inside

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And More Included With Every Vehicle Purchased.
ALF a century ago, concepts looked way ahead, usually to the year 2000, when we’d all have robot servants and go on vacations to the moon. These days, concepts tend to look ahead just a couple of years. They still showcase future technology, or some are asking the question – should we build this car? If the crowds at New York give the thumbs-up to these concepts, then something very similar could be on the road in the very near future.

HONDA CROSSTOUR
Honda says the Crosstour concept reveals the exterior styling direction of the updated 2013 Crosstour. This crossover has had a pretty cool reception since its launch in 2009 with a rather odd coupe-like body. We guess this concept could be exploring ways to improve cargo and rear headroom. It’s currently available in two- or four-wheel drive, and ranges from $27,655 for the four-cylinder to $30,340 for the V6. No image of the concept was available before the show.

MW I8 CONCEPT SPYDER
Following the reveal of BMW’s 2+2-i8 Coupe concept last year, New York sees a mouth-watering open-top roadster. Apart from making us weep because we can’t have one, the job of the Spyder is to showcase lightweight construction and eDrive hybrid-electric technology. Its passenger cell is made of lightweight, strong carbon-fiber-reinforced plastic (CFRP), while the Drive modules are made primarily from aluminum components.

The 131-hp electric motor on the front axle works in tandem with a turbocharged three-cylinder petrol engine sending 223 hp through the rear wheels. The Spyder can sprint from 0 to 62 mph (100 km/h) in 5.0 sec on the way to an electronically governed top speed of 155 mph. In European tests, it has recorded a jaw-dropping 94 mpg.

THE WAY WE WERE
Whatever happened to the world we were promised?

That sounds great, but we will probably never get automated highways because of the insurance implications —

Roadside beacons might spot traffic jams and inform sat-nav systems or alert cars to vacant parking spaces. Connected cars could warn each other about hazards. And while we can’t let the car take us there, we can program a route into our sat-nav.

We’re told, “The Century Cruiser has a sleek aerodynamic body finished in bright metallic blue, a double-bubble roof and all-silver interior with television, stereo, game table and refrigerator.” We certainly got aerodynamic bodies created with the help of computers and wind tunnels. We’ve got better than a stereo radiogram or TV, and we can download music on the move. Many SUVs and minivans now offer individual screens to keep passengers happy with DVDs or limited TV options. Some glove boxes are cooled and SUVs have power ports for a cool box in the rear.

As for the gaming table, Chrysler and Dodge minivans offered a fold-up table that you could swivel the rear seat to face, but the Swivel-N-Go option was withdrawn in 2011.

— Liz Turner

THE NEWEST CONCEPTS FOCUS ON STYLE AND PRACTICALITY

Some Futuristic Features
No One Predicted:
- Lasers for headlamps (introduced by BMW last year)
- Eight-speed gearboxes
- Regenerative braking to improve fuel economy
- Pre-tensioning seatbelts
- Bluetooth and apps
MILEAGE MATTERS

Clean diesel, with its fuel economy and hauling power, finally makes inroads into the US

By LIZ TURNER

DIESEL used to be that stuff that smoked and left black ooze along the back of trucks and buses. Now, an increasing number of upscale vehicles have the option of a powerful, clean diesel engine.

Porsche will reveal its new diesel Cayenne at the New York Auto Show, while the 2013 Mercedes GLK, seeing its world debut at the show, will add the GLK250 BlueTEC 4MATIC early next year.

Mazda and Nissan are both planning to bring diesels to the US, and American manufacturers are getting in on the act. Chrysler has announced that it will introduce a Jeep Grand Cherokee diesel in 2013 or 2014, and possibly other Jeep diesels later. GM says a diesel version of the Cadillac ATS will be available in the near future, a diesel version of the Chevrolet Cruzoe goes on sale in the US in 2013.

But will Americans ever love diesel? 2011 sales of new diesel automobiles in the US increased by 27.4 percent over 2010, compared to the overall market’s increase of 10.2%, according to HybridCars.com and the market research firm Baum and Associates. By 2015, Baum and Associates expects diesel car sales to grow to 6.0 to 6.5 percent of the entire US market, compared with just over 3.0 percent today.

Allen Schaeffer, executive director of the Diesel Technology Forum, says, “This 27% increase in annual sales is a strong sign that American drivers are understanding the benefits of new clean diesel technology in terms of better fuel efficiency and reduced emissions.”

Drivers who have tried the new turbo diesels have enjoyed the dollar savings their high fuel economy brings, but there are other benefits. Diesel engines may sound a little gruff compared to the mellow tones of a gas V8, but they punch out their power at low revs so you don’t have to plant your right foot to get decent acceleration. They also deliver wads of torque, or pulling power, so they can haul a bulky SUV frame with ease. That low-range torque is also great if you go off-road or tow a trailer.

The complex new diesel technology includes particulate traps that can reduce particulate emissions by 80 to 90 percent and selective catalytic reduction. SCR injects a urea liquid agent through a catalyst into the exhaust stream, setting off a chemical reaction that converts nitrogen oxides into nitrogen, water and tiny amounts of carbon dioxide. The liquid is known as diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) in the US, but it’s called AdBlue in Europe, so while hybrids and electrics have grabbed green as their color, blue has become the manufacturers’ buzzword for clean diesel.

NEW YORK’S NEW CAB DESIGN GOES PUBLIC

New Yorkers will be able to check out the new official NYC yellow cab at the auto show. Nissan’s NV200 was announced as the winner of the “Taxi of Tomorrow” contest in 2011, and it will be the exclusive vehicle for the city’s iconic fleet for 10 years from late 2013. It will cost around $29,000.

The Japanese carmaker beat Ford and Turkish manufacturer Karsan in the contest to design the best vehicle to carry 600,000 passengers around the Big Apple every day. City authorities based their final decision on the opinions of 25,000 people who were asked to help select the new vehicle.

The NV200’s minivan style offers plenty of room for legs and luggage while sliding doors and an entry step make life easier for hurried passengers and should reduce the number of accidents caused by doors flying open.

A major factor in the win was the NV200’s excellent fuel economy. Nissan is also to provide several of its Leaf electric vehicles to taxi firms for testing in the city, and if these prove successful, the city may adopt electric NV200s. Mayor Michael Bloomberg says, “That would be a big step toward cleaning out air, improving public health and shrinking our carbon footprint.”

— Liz Turner

THE new Porsche Cayenne Diesel joins the 2013 range at the New York Show and announces its fuel with bold diesel badges on its fenders.

Its powerful, yet fuel-efficient, 3.0-liter V6 turbodiesel engine delivers 240 hp and 406 lb-ft of torque from as low as 1750 rpm. The result is a strong 0-60 mph acceleration in just 7.2 seconds and a top track speed of 135 mph.

Based on preliminary estimates, the Cayenne Diesel should achieve a rating of 20 mpg city/28 mpg highway/23 mpg combined, so it can travel 740 miles on one tank.

The Cayenne Diesel is built to meet EPA Bin 5 emission standards, and includes selective catalytic reduction (SCR) technology.

Power reaches the wheels via an eight-speed Tiptronic S transmission without the Auto Start Stop function available on other Cayenne variants. As with the Cayenne S Hybrid, the Diesel includes Porsche Traction Management (PTM), which features permanent all-wheel drive.

Drivers will be prevented from filling up with gas and damaging the engine by a mechanical safeguard in the fuel tank filler neck. This ensures that the locking mechanism can only be operated by the larger-diameter diesel fuel pump nozzle and that refueling will begin only at that point.

— Liz Turner

WHY SO BLUE?

2013 MERCEDES GLK-CLASS

from $36,500 (est)

Mere’s redesigned entry-level SUV has a slim, muscular look and more bling, including a chunky chrome grille. Burl walnut trim stretches across the width of the dash, the multifunction steering wheel is lovingly wrapped in leather, and highlights of silver brighten the cabin.

We’re promised outstanding driving dynamics, excellent safety and superlative ride comfort on the road. The 4MATIC gives confidence in slippery conditions, and it’s capable of some proper off-road adventures.

When it arrives this summer, both rear-drive and 4MATIC all-wheel drive models will be powered by a 3.5-liter direct-injection V6 gas engine generating 302 hp.

Then early next year the GLK250 BlueTEC diesel joins the range (available only with 4MATIC permanent four-wheel drive). Mercedes says this four-cylinder diesel is the most powerful ever in an SUV; the direct-injected 2.1-liter engine delivers 190 hp and 369 lb-ft of torque.
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By LIZ TURNER

SOME real beauties are lifting their lids in New York. There’s a big contrast in their size and price, but they are all guaranteed to become icons.

WORLD DEBUT
MERCEDES-BENZ SL65 AMG V12 ROADSTER
$200,000+ (est)

Janis Joplin sang “Oh Lord, won’t you buy me a Mercedes-Benz?” A Mercedes-Benz AMG Roadster might not scan, but we’d be even more grateful. The storming flagship 2013 SL65 AMG Roadster makes its grand entrance at the New York Auto Show before going on sale in November. This is the fastest, most-powerful Mercedes Roadster. Its AMG 6.0-liter V12 bi-turbo engine generates a peak output of 621 hp and a maximum torque of 738 lb-ft delivered to the road through a seven-speed auto box. The use of an all-aluminum body reduces weight massively, so the SL65 AMG is 254 lbs. lighter than before. Mercedes says this means the two-seater is capable of rocketing to 60 mph in a claimed 3.9 seconds and on to an electronically limited top speed of 186 mph.

The distinctive front end is dominated by the new twin-blade grille (equipped with two blade-shaped fins) and the lower horizontal bar in the front skirt in high-gloss chrome. The SL65 AMG joins the SL550 roadster and the SL63 AMG roadster. The SL550 will cost $106,375 when it arrives in dealerships in May; the SL63 AMG arrives in July at $143,800. The 2011 SL65 AMG was priced at $198,750. You can see how it drives on YouTube.

NORTH AMERICAN DEBUT
2013 BENTLEY GTC V8 CONVERTIBLE
$200,000 (est)

The gorgeous Bentley Continental arrives as a fresh-air model with a welcome new soundtrack – the rumble of a V8. This 500-hp 4.0-litre twin-turbo unit is essentially the same engine as that used in the latest Audi S8, mated to a new, close-ratio, eight-speed transmission with ultra-fast shifts. Variable displacement cuts four cylinders when the car is in cruise mode or on light throttle, helping to deliver a 40 percent improvement in fuel efficiency over the big W12, and both the hardtop and convertible can drive 500 miles on one tank of fuel.

With a reduction of weight in the nose, the all-wheel drive GTC convertible promises confident, sporty performance. It boasts 0-60 mph time of 4.7 seconds and a top speed of 187 mph.

The V8 models are distinguished by a black gloss matrix grille with a chrome frame and center bar, as well as a red enamel Bentley ‘B’ badge. At the rear, they get unique chromed figure-eight exhaust tailpipes, a dark lower valance and a red enamel ‘B’ bootlid badge. The wheels are 20-inch alloys as standard or an optional 21-inch six-spoke design.

US DEBUT
MINI ROADSTER
$25,050 to $27,350

Mini USA is celebrating 10 years in the States, and, like office workers who have to buy doughnuts to celebrate their own birthdays, its given us a present. The Mini Roadster is a two-seater version of the convertible – a romantic version of the usual four-seater drop-top, perhaps, or a great excuse not to give lifts. It’s a lot cuter than the odd-looking two-seater Coupe that went on sale last fall.

The Roadster drives like a Mini should (see right) and is a blast on twisty roads.
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Contest tickets under Muni-Meter reform: Gennaro

BY PHIL CORSO

The rush to the Muni-Meter is over.

A new law giving drivers the chance to fight unfair parking tickets should boost local businesses, City Councilman James Gennaro (D-Fresh Meadows) said Monday.

“This is a commonsense law. If you park your car at a metered spot and you walk to the Muni-Meter to pay for it, you’re playing by the rules,” Gennaro said. “And if there’s a parking agent close by or you’re elderly and walk slowly or there’s someone in front of you at the Muni-Meter terminal, you shouldn’t be penalized as if you were trying to cheat the system.”

The law, which Gennaro sponsored, requires that tickets be terminated when a resident shows a valid receipt to the ticketing officer no later than five minutes after it is issued. Gennaro said the measure would save drivers the trouble of having to slog through the appealing process.

“This absolutely had to happen,” Gennaro said.

Business owners and area leaders joined the councilman Monday at a news conference outside his Fresh Meadows office, at 185-10 Union Tnpk.

Queens Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jack Friedman said it was a long time coming for Queens shoppers and merchants.

“This law is great news for small business owners in Queens and throughout the city,” Friedman said. “When drivers are unfairly ticketed for parking on the street, small businesses suffer, too. The shoppers effectively blame the merchant — they don’t come back.”

The Council passed the bill in January, but Mayor Michael Bloomberg vetoed it in February. The Council overrode the veto by a 47-2 vote last month, allowing the law to take effect Sept. 24. Gennaro said it would take about $270,000 and 180 days for the city to reprogram its hand-held digital parking scanners to cancel violations on the spot.

“It’s going to make a difference,” said Wendy Marsh, of Marsh Optical and former president of the Union Turnpike Merchants Association. “It’s enough that they get tickets all the time here anyway. When people get tickets, they don’t want to shop here.”

Gennaro said the law would provide consumers with the piece of mind they deserve while shopping in Queens.

“It’s a very commonsense way to go about this,” Gennaro said. “No one has to worry now.”

The councilman added that another bill making its way through the Council complemented his law. The new bill, which has received support from both Bloomberg and Council Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan), would let drivers use their purchased parking time anywhere in the city until it expires.

Under the bill, scheduled for a Council hearing April 23, drivers would be allowed to transfer parking time throughout city Muni-Meters as long as their meter rates are consistent.

City Councilman James Gennaro (second from l.) celebrates a new law he sponsored, which will boost local businesses by allowing the immediate cancellation of unfair parking tickets.

Photo by Phil Corso

Queens health rank

Continued from Page 9

Angela Russell, a researcher for the University of Wisconsin, said those working on the project had found certain characteristics in different sections of the nation:

• Excessive drinking rates are highest in the Northern states.
• Rates of teen births, sexually transmitted infections and children living in poverty are highest across Southern states.
• Unemployment rates are lowest in the Northeastern, Midwest and Central Plains states.
• Motor vehicle crash deaths are lowest in the Northeastern and Upper Midwest states.

officer of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “The good news is that businesses, health care providers, government, consumers and community leaders are already joining forces in communities across the nation to change some of the gaps that the rankings highlight.”

“Now in its third year, the rankings are increasingly being used by community leaders to help them identify challenges and take action in a variety of ways to improve residents’ health,” she said.

For more information and to RSVP, visit liu.edu/brooklyn/openhouse
Christ the King Regional High School Alumni Named to 2012 U.S. Olympic Team

Middle Village, NY – The 2012 U.S. Olympics Women’s Basketball Team Media Guide is asking if “there is something in the water?” at Christ the King Regional High School. With the naming of Tina Charles to the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team, Christ the King High School now lists three Olympians on its alumni roster. Chamique Holdsclaw (2000) was the first Olympian from Christ the King, followed by Sue Bird (2004, 2008, 2012).

While at Christ the King, Sue Bird (Class of ’98) was the MVP of the 1998 New York state tournament, and also led her squad to a 27-0 record and the USA Today national crown. Byrd was named to the 1998 Parade Magazine All-America first team and the USA Today All-USA second team. Olympian Sue Bird will be playing Guard and wearing #6.

While at Christ the King, Tina Charles (Class of 2006) compiled 1,750 points, 1,224 rebounds, 440 assists and 432 blocked shots in three varsity seasons and led her team to a pair of USA Today No. 1 final national rankings and state titles in 2005 and 2006 to go with a two-year 57-0 record. Charles was named the 2006 National High School Player of the Year by USA Today, McDonald’s, Parade Magazine, Gatorade and SI.com. Olympian Tina Charles will be playing Center and wearing #14.

See full stats at http://www.usabasketball.com/misc/12_woly_guide_ALL.pdf

Pictured above from Left to Right:
Principal Peter J. Mannarino, Stephanie Bodre, Christina Juran, Kathryn Engesser, Nateshwar Nauth, Annmarie Valentin, Krislyn Schweiger, Angelica Masullo, Rebecca Goldman and Katherine Subasic

About Christ the King Regional High School

Christ the King Regional High School is a private, co-educational Catholic High School with a 4-year college preparatory curriculum. Located in Middle Village, Queens, Christ the King Regional High School draws students from all areas. The school is accredited by The Board of Regents of the State of New York and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Christ the King’s current enrollment is approximately 1000 students. The faculty numbers 45.

More information is available http://www.ctkny.org. Find Christ the King on Facebook at facebook.com/CTKNY.
As Queens commemorates the 100th anniversary of the sinking of RMS Titanic and the events surrounding her fateful journey, it’s customary to recount those fascinating, decades-old tales and anecdotes that are part of this never-ending story.

In 1898 (14 years before Titanic), M. Robertson wrote a prophetic fictitious novel called “Futility,” about a huge ship hitting an iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean on a cold April night. The fictitious ship, the Titan, was similar in design to the Titanic, and their circumstances were remarkably alike — both stories ended tragically, with the loss of many souls.

In stark contrast to the cowardly actions of the captain who made recent headlines after fleeing his cruise ship, Costa Concordia, after it capsized in Tuscany, RMS Titanic’s captain, Edward John Smith, did indeed go down with his ship, along with 1,500 passengers, who drowned or froze to death in icy waters on April 15, 1912.

The centennial of Titanic’s sinking was honored during a standing-room only event April 2, hosted by the Greater Astoria Historical Society in Long Island City. Titanic enthusiast, author and photographer Gary Vollo, from Astoria, shared his theories with dozens of attendees, while showing actual footage of the ship and its passengers.

Bob Singleton, the society’s executive director, addressed curious audience members, including a Titanic fan from Fresh Meadows, who said she took two buses and a train to get there.

Comparing the Titanic disaster to events on 9/11, he said, “In both cases, the unthinkable happened: Technology ran amok; a huge structure failed; people of many nations, gone; both events, subjects of investigations and controversy. Both disasters seemed to mark the sudden end of something: a sense of complacency, of confidence, innocence and vulnerability.”

Guest speakers Vollo and “Titanic Joe” Colletti, who once owned Titanic House — Colletti’s private home in Long Island City he dedicated space as a Titanic museum — shared intriguing first-hand accounts of survivors they had met atpast Titanic Historical Conventions.

Vollo recalled his meeting with Philip Aks, a survivor of the Titanic disaster who was only 10 months old at the time of its sinking in 1912, at a Boston conference in 1988.

The RMS Titanic departs from Southampton, England.

Photo courtesy Greater Astoria Historical Society/Colletti Collection

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Vollo recalled his meeting with Philip Aks, 10 months old at the time of the Titanic’s sinking. Continued on Page 38.
BY SUZANNE PARKER

When Taci’s sign went up last summer on Metropolitan Avenue in Forest Hills heralding the arrival of a Turkish restaurant, we were positively salivating. We knew of the highly regarded Brooklyn establishment similarly named Taci’s Beyti and hoped for a clone. What we got about two weeks ago was, if not a clone, a spin-off.

Annette Dulger was a longtime fan of Taci’s Brooklyn spot. Although professionally she was a jeweler, she learned Turkish cooking at her mother’s knee. She used her powers of persuasion to convince Taci Bec, owner of the Brooklyn original to partner with her on this Forest Hills venture.

The menu here offers classic Turkish fare—surely one of the most delectable cuisines of the Mediterranean. Pastirma—the Turkish dried cured beef antecedent of pastrami—is a leitmotif that runs throughout every movement of the menu. In addition to hot and cold appetizers, salads, and entrees, there is an extensive list of pide, the Anatolian answer to pizza. Everything is house made here.

It’s tempting to make a meal of the appetizers, especially if you’re a vegetarian. There is a nice complement of savory dips and spreads, perfect for gathering onto the house baked pide bread which more closely resembles focaccia than pita. There are also some more unusual cold items like a single jumbo artichoke served with potatoes, peas and carrots. When our companion confessed to disliking stuffed grape leaves, our server insisted we try (gratis) Ms. Dulger’s rendition. The slightly sweet pignoli-studded filling created an on-the-spot convert.

Shepherd’s salad is a classic of diced tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and red onion topped with feta cheese, olives and parsley. We preferred it to the Esme salad which is another chopped salad, but in this case minus the cheese, but with the addition of killer heat in the form of hot peppers. Unless you are looking for an incendiary blast for your taste buds, stick with the shepherd.

The hot appetizers have plenty to offer as well. Try the hummus with pastirma, which is a red-hot ceramic crock of hummus studded with pastirma and slathered with butter. It’s great heaped on the focaccia-like bread in the basket on the table.

Although it’s positioned in the “From the oven” category, Findik Lahmacun makes a superb hot appetizer. It’s a platter of five crisp, thin crusted mini-pide topped with cumin-infused blend of ground lamb, tomatoes and onion. It makes it even more delicious when you pile on some of the sumac sprinkled shaved red onion on the platter.

Taci’s is also something of a Turkish pizzeria. Is “pideria” a word? They offer ultra-thin crusted boat-shaped pies with an assortment of topping options. Various combinations include Turkish sausage (sucuklu), ground lamb, pastirma, and kasseri, a mozzarella-like cheese.

Continued on Page 38
The outrageous fortune company, my theater company, for 17 years and 50 plays at Queens Theatre in the Park (it’s still in the park but now it’s just Queens Theatre), has been out of action for almost two years, searching for a new venue. Easier said than done. The economics and prices may be down, lots of places are for sale or rent, but I’m looking mainly in northeast Queens for a building that can be turned into a theater, where parking is sufficient and public transportation reasonably convenient.

Phoenix would join with Outrageous, perhaps along with one or two other groups, in a collaboration that would produce theater of all kinds year-round — contemporary plays, classics, musicals, children’s theater, original works and staged readings. There would be nothing like this in all of Queens, once it could morph from fantasy into reality. Money, dedication and hard work are required, but first we have to find a home.

Last year in Long Island City, at the Secret Theatre, three companies banded together to solve the space and expense problem. Gideon Productions, Boomerang Theatre Company and Flux Theatre Ensemble agreed on rental arrangements and the common use of sets, props, costumes and tech. It seems like a good idea — how it works out remains to be seen.

If you were as fortunate as I, you got to see the recently concluded tango show at the Thalia Spanish National Theatre in Sunnyside. They ran it for eight weekends, and nearly every performance was sold out. This Saturday morning Thalia starts a children’s workshop in bilingual theatrical movement and dance, running for 12 sessions, and on April 28-29, they offer a couple of spring concerts. Give this unique professional group a call at (718) 729-3880 for more information.

For those of you who can’t get enough of “Annie,” The Gingerbread Players at Saint Luke’s Church in Forest Hills opens its production on April 21. This group has been around since 1971. With a cast of 45 children and adults, and a suggested donation of only $12, it seems like a good bet that the sun will come out tomorrow. Try them at (718) 268-7772 for details and the weather report.

The latest sojourn of my first wife and I took us to Manhattan, a stay at the Paramount Hotel in midtown, the musical “Once” and the Pulitzer Prize-winning play “Clybourne Park.” Both shows were recently done Off Broadway, and “Once” was also a movie.

Both should be on your must-see list, since it’s all too rare these days to find quality Broadway productions that appeal to adults. Not like in 1927 — 85 years ago — when a record 268 attractions made it to the Great White Way, and most of them made money!

By this time most of you will know that April marks the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the “unsinkable” Titanic. The 1997 winner of the Academy Award for Best Picture is back in theaters, in 3-D no less, and Céline Dion will be emoting again with “My Heart Will Go On.” My cardiologist predicts that mine will go on too, but we both agree that when Old Rose drops that diamond overboard, we knew that a lot of the story was pure fiction.

Contact Ron Hellman at rnh24@columbia.edu.
Titanic
Continued from Page 35
of the sinking. He was taken from his mother’s arms and separated from her. Frantically looking for her son after the rescue ship brought survivors to New York harbor, his mother spotted him in the arms of a woman who claimed she was her baby. But the captain helped identify a birthmark on “Filly’s” chest, re-uniting mother and son.

Vollo’s “Titanic 101 crash course” drew emotional reactions from folks inquiring about the disaster. One woman asked if the shipping company was ever sued (apparently, it wasn’t). A young boy wanted to know: “How come the Titanic went so fast? And did it really split apart?” To which Vollo replied: “The warnings went unheeded, and it did break in half from the pressure on the stern.”

“My feeling is if the captain had gone straight into the iceberg, instead of trying to steer away, the ship may have not sunk, as only the front would have been destroyed. But the ship hit the iceberg from the side; the berg kept banging into it, causing five compartments to flood,” Vollo explained. Titanic sank two hours and 40 minutes later.

Although Smith was warned of icebergs seven times that day, he maintained his speed of 22 knots. Some said he made good time; others still say he was trying to break a record.

At 62, the bearded captain was a striking fellow. Sporting his seaman’s cap and dressed in summer whites, he posed for photos taken in the early 1900s, unaware that his long, distinguished career would end in tragedy. He planned on retiring after Titanic’s maiden voyage.

Two years before commanding the ship, Smith made this famous statement: “I can’t conceive of any kind of situation happening that could cause a ship to founder (sink).”

There are rumors that when the ship collided with the infamous berg at 11:40 p.m., the quietly flamboyant captain may have been quite tipsy. One account said he seemed indecisive when he arrived on the bridge and gave his second officer the order to man the 16 lifeboats — women and children first.

Survivor stories

The strange series of events that led to the epic disaster were like a perfect storm. Surprisingly, it was an unusually warm winter and the ocean was as smooth as a lake, with no ice caps breaking.

The mammoth luxury liner had 2,228 passengers on board. Sailing from Southampton, England for four days, she made two stops — in France and Queenstown, Ireland — but never made it to New York’s Pier 59, her final stop. They brought survivors to Pier 54, at 13th Street and 11th Avenue (where the façade still stands), on the RMS Carpathia, which was 58 miles away when it picked up Titanic’s two distress signals.

“When I was younger, I saw the film ‘A Night to Remember.’ It ignited my interest in Titanic,” said Vollo. “What happened was like a script. It was phenomenal.”

First class passenger Benjamin Guggenheim was traveling with his mistress, who escaped on a lifeboat. As the water rushed into his cabin, the dapper millionaire was dressed in his evening best. They said he went down like a gentleman.

Macy’s founder Isidor Straus and wife, Ida, wouldn’t be separated and perished together.

Yet another story was told of a desperate fellow who dressed as a woman to escape the sinking ship.

Eva Hart, 7, was traveling second class with her parents, from Southampton, England. The family was headed to Canada through New York to open a drugstore there. Her mother had a premonition that something bad would happen. Sadly, Eva’s father drowned.

“I knew I was going to meet the survivors one day,” said “Titanic Joe” Colletti, who met seven people, and finally got to interview Hart in 1988. She was 87 then, and remained his friend for eight years, until her death.

“Eva told me it haun-
ed her, the rest of her life — she had nightmares. But she also remembered how beautiful the ship was — the fresh paint, the wood; that there were fresh flowers everywhere. It used to be called ‘the ship of flowers,’” he added.

Colletti became an avid collector of Titanic memorabilia after he saw “Raise the Titanic” in 1980. “There was a picture of the propeller being built in Belfast. That hit me. I can’t explain it to you, but it seemed to plant something in me.”

He also knew Millvina Dean, Titanic’s youngest passenger, and the last one to survive, at 97. At 9 weeks old, she was lowered to safety in a mail sack.

After Dean died in 2009, no more survivors were left to tell their stories.

As Titanic’s great bow sank into the depths of the dark sea, the band continued to play.

After the event, there was a book signing with author Lindsay Gibbs, who wrote “Titanic: The Tennis Story,” about two American tennis players who met on the RMS Carpathia, and went on to play each other in the quarterfinals of the US Open in Newport, R.I. in 1914.

“It’s such an amazing story that I wanted to bring it to life,” she said.

The film, “A Night to Remember,” will screen at the Greater Astoria Historical Society, 35-20 Broadway, 4th floor, Long Island City, on Saturday, April 14, at 1 p.m.

Dining Out
Continued from Page 36
Turkish cheese. They make a tasty change from the usual Italian pie.

The downfall of many an ethnic restaurant is the quality of its meat, but that is definitely NOT the case here. All the meats in the mixed grill — shish kebab, baby lamb chop, donner kebab and adana kebab — were tender and succulent without a trace of gristle or fat and are sure to please. We particularly favored the adana kebab for its outstanding use of traditional Turkish spicing, but you really can’t go wrong.

The signature dessert, baked to order, is kunefe, shredded dough layered with sweet kunefe cheese served with honey syrup and pistachio topping. It has its own unique flavor that is sort of like eating a pastry and a grilled cheese sandwich at the same time.

The Bottom Line
Taci’s really spins the dial on our yum-o-meter. They offer some of the best Turkish fare to be had in the metropolitan area. It’s a great spot for casual or family dining, and for take-out. The service is warm, friendly and efficient. The tables are too close together for a heavy date, but the moderate prices and deliciousness make it perfect for anything else.

Suzanne Parker is the TimesLedger’s restaurant critic and author of “Eating Like Queens: A Guide to Ethnic Dining in America’s Melting Pot, Queens, N.Y.” She can be reached by e-mail at ansfoodie@aol.com.
Continued from Page 37

jam session right here in Queens. No need to travel into Manhattan, share the stage with our Jazz Jam house band at monthly jams curated by internationally acclaimed trumpeter and Queens College Professor, Michael Mossman. All levels are welcome; just drop by and sign in! (btw, we got the baby grand, drum kit and the house band.)

When: May 2 and June 6, 7 pm
Where: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard, Flushing
Contact: (718) 463-7700

Website: www.flushingtontownhall.org

EVENTS

“Wherever I Wind Up”
When: April 21, 6 pm
Where: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union TPK., Fresh Meadows
Contact: (718) 380-7077

Astoria Comedy All Stars
– Ben Rosenfeld hosts five different comics each week. Comics range from underground NYC acts to nationally touring headliners. The show is absolutely free, no cover charge and no drink minimum.
When: Tuesdays, 8 pm
Where: On the Rox Lounge, 43-03 Broadway, Astoria
Contact: Ben Rosenfeld ben@bigbencomedy.com
Website: www.bigbencomedy.com/blog/archives/astoria_comedy_all_stars/

First Sundays for Families
– The Queens Museum of Art and MetLife Foundation invite families of all ages to an exciting array of interactive dance, art and music workshops.
When: First Sunday of each month, 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm
Where: Queens Museum of Art, New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Contact: (718) 592-9700

GALLERIES & EXHIBITS

5th Arts and Crafts Festival – Exhibits showcase community artists.
When: April 13, 2 pm
Where: St. Albans Library, 191-05 Linden Blvd., St. Albans
Contact: (718) 528-8196

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Ensuring the job is done right

Housing Rehabilitation Assistance program thrills another home improvement client

Neil Andrews and his wife, Althea Saunders-Andrews, bought their home two years ago knowing full well that it was a fixer upper. And fixing it up is just what they’ve been doing – nearly every inch of it.

It’s a work in progress. All over the house, floors are covered by heavy paper or plastic as remodeling goes on. Outside, there is no facade on the first-floor front wall, and there’s just dirt where the stoop should be. The contractor disappeared before the job was done.

But there’s one room that’s completely done, and one project outside that is too. Those are the projects that were handled through the Housing Rehabilitation Assistance program – so not only are they done, they’re done right.

HRA is the organization that’s helping homeowners all over the city and on Long Island do the home renovations of their dreams – using the best, most reliable contractors. Not only does HRA find the right company to do a project, it also works with banks to get the loans for major renovations, finds extra financial assistance for clients who qualify, explains the tax breaks that come with energy-efficient work, and makes sure the job will always be done right.

Neil and Althea are quite happy with the work that HRA-approved contractors did at their home in Levittown, LI, completely remodeling a second-floor bathroom and adding a concrete pad and walkway all around the outside of the house.

“Y ou can accomplish your dreams through Housing Rehabilitation Assistance, and I really appreciate that,” Althea said.

That’s how far above and beyond the call HRA will go for its clients. And the organization puts just as much care into its oversight of remodeling projects, giving homeowners the peace of mind that comes with knowing the job will always be done right.

For Neil and Althea, the HRA-approved contractors took everything out of the entire bathroom and gave them a modern, sparkling one with matching porcelain tile on the floor and walls, a granite sinktop, a curved vanity that maximizes usable space in the small room, real wood cabinetry, a solid wood door – and hot-tub jets in the bath tub for maximum comfort.

“They gutted everything and put in real quality stuff,” Althea said. Pointing out the built-in shelves in the shower walls, she added, “I like the little details.”

One feature of her new bathroom that Althea Saunders really appreciates is the solid wood door.
LEASA SILVERA
APRIL 2012
STUDENT OF DISTINCTION
HUMANITIES & ARTS
HIGH SCHOOL
CAMBRIA HEIGHTS, NY

Leasa Silvera is a junior in the Humanities and the Arts H.S., Campus Magnet Complex, Cambria Heights. A dedicated young lady, Leasa is a very active participant of Humanities and the Arts High School. Due to her activities as President of the Student Council and as Captain of the Campus Magnet Girls Soccer Team, Humanities and the Arts Principal Rosemarie O’Mard states she is, “A young lady whose persistence defines her character.”

Two years ago Leasa’s sister Tynielle Silvera was tragically killed by a hit and run driver one evening as she was returning home from work. Her older sister was a student in the Law, Government & Community Service H.S. in the Campus Magnet Complex and was Captain of the Soccer Team. A year after the tragic event Leasa arranged for a memorial in the Campus Magnet Library as a tribute to her sister and as a way of remembering. Students and teachers from the four schools in the Campus Magnet Complex attended the moving ceremony.

Ms. O’Mard commented that, “Throughout Leasa’s struggles after the loss of her sister in a tragic traffic accident, she has persevered. She continues to give of her time and talent to her school, her community and her friends.”

As President of the Student Council Leasa coordinates school activities, conducts planning meetings and works with many different students and school officials. She volunteers in the school library and volunteers for several teachers marking exams, cleaning classrooms, decorating the bulletin boards and hanging up posters. Even with all these activities she manages an 88.9 average and is on the Principal’s Honor Role.

When Abbe Raven, President and CEO of the A & E Television Network, came back as Principal For A Day, Leasa Silvera was one of the student leaders who met with her. They discussed activities in the school and how Ms. Raven could help students succeed the way she had. Ms. Raven had been a student at the predecessor school which was then called Andrew Jackson H.S. and worker her way up the newly developing Cable Television field.

Leasa is involved in the Big Sister program in the four Campus Magnet High Schools. The older students act as mentors to younger students under the guidance of Counselor and Social Worker Ms. Joann Grimm.

Currently, Leasa is attending a College Now class through Queensborough Community College titled Introduction to Acting. She also plans to take summer courses at QCC that would allow her to volunteer in a hospital.

Leasa Silvera would like to become a Forensic Scientist. Among the colleges she is considering are John Jay and Genesee. Her philosophy is, “Life is short, enjoy it the fullest.” She thanks her mother Denise Wilson and older sister Tynielle Silvera for all their help over the years.

- by Bob Harris
Maspeth cardiologist brings friendly back

Dr. Gregory Gustafson, of New York Hospital Queens, opens private practice at 72-41 Grand Ave.

BY STEVE MOSCO

The days of house call doctors with little black bags are long gone, but a good bedside manner remains a primary concern to at least one Maspeth cardiologist.

Dr. Gregory Gustafson, a board-certified cardiologist, at 72-41 Grand Ave., returned to providing private medical care to residents after a year working exclusively for New York Hospital Queens. His previous experience serving the Maspeth community made returning an easy decision.

“I grew up in a small village and Maspeth reminded me of that environment,” said Gustafson, 63, who is from a small northwestern New Jersey town. “Everyone knew each other. It had a strong, tight-knit community feel.”

The doctor’s first go-round in a Maspeth private practice began with a mere two to three days per week away from the catheterization laboratory at NYHQ.

“I never intended for that office to get all that busy. I mainly started going there to get away from the radiation at the cath lab,” he said. “But we ended up with a strong following of very loyal patients. I think the attention they received was unusual for them. We gave people the time they needed. There was an understanding that problems aren’t solved in 10 minutes and we needed to go in-depth with patients.”

Gustafson said support system of great colleagues is what makes a practice successful. When patients first come into a doctor’s office, Gustafson knows it can be a nerve-wracking experience.

“A patient’s previous experience with physicians can be very cold and challenging and intimidating. It’s important when they come in that they meet someone that’s warm, accommodating and puts them at ease,” he said. “Relieving the anxiety of the initial confrontation is crucial. I believe in the user-friendliness of a doctor.”

Remembering his early days in medical school, Gustafson said he always enjoyed the extra time he spent with people and recalled being castigated by doctors for the amount of time he devoted to patients on a personal basis.

“They tried to make it the exact opposite in medical school,” he said. “They want you to be imposing — to move quickly from patient to patient.”

That is how a profit-driven doctor operates, according to Gustafson, but when dealing with common cardiac problems — irregular heartbeat, chest discomfort, heart valve problems, just to name a few — there are steps a doctor can take pre-treatment that deal directly with the bad habits that cause such ailments.

These steps begin with getting to know the patient. Doctors need to know if the patient is overweight, if they smoke, if they have high blood pressure, diabetes, alcohol problems or genetic heart issues. These factors, when mixed with the stresses and anxiety of everyday life, can render a person’s heart health vulnerable to a number of diseases.

“In New York, the bad economy and high cost of living is a big part of what physicians have to deal with. The effects of family, financial and emotional stress can bring on disease,” he said. “The aspect of my practice of taking time with folks and working through emotional and personal issues is what binds me to the community.”

With Gustafson, the Maspeth community has access to the expertise, treatments and technology of the Heart Hospital of Queens at NYHQ. The difference is patients receive those standards with the added benefit of a doctor whose main drive above all else is one of the basic tenants of medicine.

“You just have to do what is right,” he said. “And if you are not prepared to do that, why practice medicine?”

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**Business Calendar**

**Youth Tech Initiative Program** — Increase your employability. Free advanced training in Microsoft Word for anyone ages 16-24. Participants will have the opportunity to take the Microsoft Office Specialist exam at the end of training to become Microsoft Certified.

*When*: Tuesdays, through May 22, 6 pm–8 pm

*Where*: The Daughters of Isis Foundation Office, 148-14 Liberty Ave., Jamaica

*Contact*: (718) 292-5176; toliver24@verizon.net

*Website*: luecorp.tripod.com

**BNI T.N.T. (The Networking Titans) Weekly Meeting** — BNI is a business and professional networking organization that allows only one person per professional classification or specialty to join a chapter. BNI provides positive, supportive and structured environment to further business through word of mouth marketing.

*Contact*: Martin Koos to arrange a visit.

*Website*: www.powerfullyou.com

**Power Networking Group** — Led by Harvey G. Beringer

*When*: Every Wednesday, 7 am

*Where*: Jackson Hole Diner, 35-01 Bell Blvd., Bayside

*Contact*: Harvey G. Beringer at HGBCPA@aol.com or (718) 423-0427

**Annual Spring Brunch — SAGE honors John Nagel, its director.**

*When*: April 15, 11 am

*Where*: El Coyote Restaurant, 80-18 Northern Blvd., Jackson Heights

*Contact*: (718) 474-3826

**FUND-RAISERS**

**Queens County Conservative Party Annual Spring Cocktail Party** — This year’s keynote speaker will be Wendy Long, Conservative Party candidate and leading Republican Party nominee for U.S. Senate. Our honoree will be Congressman Bob Turner in recognition of his service.

*When*: April 12, 7:30 pm

*Where*: Roma View, 160-05 Crossbay Blvd., Howard Beach

*Contact*: (718) 474-3826

**Annual Spring Brunch** — Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard, Flushing

*Contact*: (718) 463-7700

**Website**: www.flushingtownhall.org

**Dinner-Dance** — Honoring Pat Dolan, Mike Miller and others. RSVP.

*When*: April 19, 6:30 pm

*Where*: Riccardo’s, 21-01 24th Ave., Astoria

*Contact*: (718) 721-7777

*Website*: www.riccardos.com

**A Walk to Benefit People with Developmental Disabilities** — 5 Mile Walk to Kissena Park and Back to Progress, Queens Center for Progress.

*When*: April 21, 8:30 pm

*Where*: Queens Center for Progress, 81-15 164th St., Jamaica

*Contact*: (718) 229-4000
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The Citibank building (c.) was once Long Island City's only skyscraper, but it has been joined by others in recent years.

LIC boom

Continued from Page 5

ing these streets from Switzerland, Australia.”

Yet when hotels eager to benefit from the short subway ride to Manhattan began putting up large multi-story structures between one- and two-family homes in Dutch Kills, the community voted to pass a rezoning in 2008 limiting the height at which commercial properties can build. Even now residents have clashed with individual hoteliers over building practices.

TRANSPORTATION

Walking the streets of Long Island City can have a schizophrenic feel. Steel and glass skyscrapers sit side by side with warehouses and taxi depots. Residents in apartments next to the Long Island Rail Road at 2nd Street and Borden Avenue have complained about the noise of the trains idling nearby.

Parking is also a well-known nightmare in the community. Those who do not take the subways or buses can expect to circle blocks multiple times if they arrive at the wrong time of day. Tishman Speyer, the developers of Gotham Center, were at one point supposed to replace 1,100 parking spots in the neighborhood, but went back to CB 2 and approved a request to reduce the number to 500.

“I don’t think this administration wants us to own a car,” Walsh said.

With eight subway lines and several bus routes, the neighborhood is flush with public transportation, but a constant worry among Long Island City’s elected officials is whether the infrastructure will be able to keep up with the exploding population.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority had shut down the No. 7 train in Long Island City on weekends from January to April to modernize the signal system, in large part because high demand for the train makes the delays catastrophic.

Yet despite all these issues, optimism remains.

“This is still a new community, so it will take some time to grow, mature and evolve as a neighborhood,” Januszewski said, “but it has already come a long way in a very short time.”

JetBlue

Continued from Page 5

space, the elected officials joined the higher-ups at JetBlue’s new headquarters, at 27-01 Queens Plaza N., which is historically known as the Brewster Building, in honor of the Brewster car and aviation company that was once housed there.

JetBlue had been headquartered in Forest Hills and the new location will consolidate both JetBlue’s offices there and those in Connecticut.

“We are a New York-based company,” said JetBlue Chief Executive Officer Dave Barger, about why the airline moved within the city. “This is our home.”

Bloomberg said the new office will bring 1,000 jobs from Forest Hills and Connecticut to Long Island City.

U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said he helped JetBlue get off the ground and into New York’s airways. The senator had campaigned in 1998 on the issue of bringing cheap flights from the city to upstate New York. JetBlue would-be founder David Neeleman approached the senator after he was elected, requesting slots at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Schumer said he would get them for him, but stipulated that the airline needed to offer flights to the upstate New York cities of Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester and Albany. While the airline determined that Albany was too close to New York City to be a feasible route, JetBlue kept the rest of the promise.

“This is a great day for New York, and I’m proud to be a part of it,” Schumer said.

U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-Astoria) said JetBlue will ensure that Long Island City will grow as a business district.

“The truth is that Long Island City has arrived in a very, very profound way,” City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer (D-Sunnyside) said.

Divorce Caribbean Style

For a growing number of New Yorkers, tired of the delays and expense of conventional local divorces, fast, inexpensive Caribbean and offshore US divorces have been the answer.

A leader in the fast divorce business has been Divorcefast.com of Massachusetts, a company that has been providing speedy, low-cost foreign divorces for 50 years. The company provides divorces that can be completed in as little as one day in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the US offshore island of Guam.

According to Alan Alford, proprietor of Divorce.com, some of the divorces offered require travel to the court, while some can be done without any travel or court appearance. Some require both parties to sign the court petition for divorce, while others can be achieved with only one party signing. All of the divorces happen very quickly and with a minimum amount of paperwork.

The divorces are valid and recognized everywhere, and Alford reports that he processes several thousand of them every year, particularly for New Yorkers. The total cost for fast divorces starts at $895, with other options raising the price to as high as $1,500. All of the divorces, Alford says, are completed within a few days and the clients are then free to remarry or otherwise continue with their lives as single persons.

Anyone interested in more details about the Divorcefast offerings should access the company website: www.divorcefast.com The forms and instructions are printed out from there and submitted to the company. For those lacking Internet access Alford and his staff are prepared to discuss foreign divorces on the phone, or by mail.

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Dozo shocks PSAL city champion GW

BY ZACH BRAZILLER

Three weeks ago, Cardozo began its baseball season in Washington Heights to see how it measured up against powerhouse George Washington, the defending PSAL Class A city champion. After finding themselves in a huge 11-run hole, the Judges rallied against the Trojans backups. They left feeling good after the narrow defeat, taking a moral victory back with them to Queens.

The on-the-rise program was back at GW Saturday, only this time it didn’t need to find positives out of a setback.

Cardozo rallied from an early three-run deficit. Newcomer Connor Doyle worked three impressive innings of relief for the save and the Patriots surprised the Trojans southpaw Adrian Castano for three runs in the second, the powerful Trojans’ lineup went quiet.

Calvin Luk stabilized the game for the Judges with two solid frames and Doyle, the hard-throwing junior righthander, slammed the door, fanning Yasmany Gomez with the tying and go-ahead runs aboard to close out the impressive victory.

“We know we have the team, we have the chemistry, we don’t think anybody’s stopping us,” Doyle said. “We’re focused on the championship and beating George Washington is a big step.”

Continued on Page 48

Red Storm recruits Bedoya

Francis Lewis soccer star keeps talent in boro with St. John’s

BY ZACH BRAZILLER

Humble as he is talented, Danny Bedoya was reluctant to accept that a single signature put him in a class by himself.

The Francis Lewis center midfielder became the first high Division I soccer player in Coach Roger Sarmuksnis’ hugely successful tenure April 2 when he faxed his National Letter of Intent to St. John’s University.

An East Elmhurst native, Bedoya was playing down the accomplishment, saying the program, his teammates and Sarmuksnis made it possible, that his scholarship to St. John’s was no more significant than any of the other scholarship players that wore Patriot black.

“We all try to play our best and make it into a good school with a good offer,” said Bedoya, who is ranked 84th in his class nationally and fourth in the state by topdrawersoccer.com. “That’s all I did.”

It made sense for the selfless star — for three years Bedoya took as much joy out of scoring as he did setting up others.

He recalled showing Sarmuksnis the papers before he sent them over to his future school and the coach’s reaction stuck with him.

“It’s the best papers I’ve ever seen,” the coach told him.

Bedoya added, “It seems like he was proud of me.”

Not seems — he was and is. Bedoya fell short of leading Lewis to an elusive city title, guiding the Patriots to back-to-back finals berths, but he did everything else. He waited his turn and took advantage of his opportunities, emerging as arguably the top talent in the city this fall. His senior year Bedoya scored 16 goals and added 14 assists, helping to extend the Patriots’ unbeaten streak in Queens to a hard-to-fathom 57 matches (50-0-7).

“It couldn’t happen to a better kid,” Sarmuksnis said. “He really earned it. He practiced hard, did well with his grades. I was happier for him than I think any other player to come out of Francis Lewis.”

The Colombian-born Bedoya heard from Clemson, Notre Dame, Syracuse and Bucknell, but he wanted to stay local, to be near his brother Santiago, who plays for Queens College, and parents Olga and Freddie. St. John’s, Iona and Adelphi were the options.

“I couldn’t see myself anywhere else,” he said.

The Red Storm, a perennial national powerhouse, began following him as a junior and remained in contact, often attending his games with Red Bull Academy. When the offer came through last week, he couldn’t wipe a smile off his face. He signed March 30 and sent the paper over April 2.

“It feels good, now knowing I’m going to such a big program,” Bedoya said. “I’m really excited. Being able to play at Belson Stadium, having my friends from Francis Lewis come watch, that will be great. I can picture it in my head. It makes me happy to think about.”

Bedoya said the coaching staff, led by legendary headman Dave Masur, has told him there will be an opportunity to get on the pitch as a freshman. They like his playmaking

Continued on Page 48
Bayside softball wins for cancer-fighting coach

BY MARC RAIMONDI

Bayside’s postgame celebrations this year might as well be sponsored by AT&T.

Just minutes after beating rival Francis Lewis 6-1 in PSAL Queens A-I softball April 3, the players were on the phone, dialing up Coach Steve Piorkowski.

“Everyone on the team says it: ‘Let’s do it for P’,” pitcher Heidi Gomez said, using Piorkowski’s nickname. “Make it for P.”

Piorkowski has been away from the team and from school since late January while battling a form of cancer that attacked the bone marrow of his C6 vertebra. The disease left him with a broken neck and wheelchair bound. It is not life-threatening, though, and Piorkowski hopes to be back by the playoffs if his treatment goes well.

In the meantime, his beloved team is playing for him. Bayside (5-1) dropped its league opener against Cardozo, but has now won five straight games. This one, against division favorite Francis Lewis (5-1), a semifinalist last year, was by far the biggest victory.

“To be the best, you have to beat the best,” Bayside interim Coach Maggie Kassimis said. “Everybody is looking up to them this year and hopefully our actions today just made a statement that we’re still here.”

Kassimis was a student of Piorkowski’s and assistant Coach Soribel Paulino played for him, graduating last year. Last month, the Bayside girls’ basketball team went on a magical run for Piorkowski, who had to leave the sideline just before the playoffs.

The Commodores got three more runs in the seventh on a Perno two-run single and a Moy run-scoring hit.

We just wanted to keep hitting, hitting no matter what,” Bernstein said. “We didn’t let our lead get to our head.”

Samantha Stelloh drove in Bianca Concepcion in the first inning to get Lewis within 2-1, but the Patriots didn’t score again. Lewis Coach Brian Brown said Bayside clearly brought more intensity than his team and he thinks it has to do with Piorkowski.

“I think they play hard, they play for him,” Brown said. “They love him. He has a way with them. I’m sure they’re gonna play hard all season. The guy is a great coach.”

After the game and the celebration, Kassimis brought the players to right field in foul territory and they all sat down. Things took a serious tone when she brought up Piorkowski. His treatment, Kassimis told them, has been going well and the tumor is gone. The coaches are confident he will be back soon.

“Oh of course, they miss P,” Kassimis said. “We all wish he was here. But he’s coming back. We have something to look forward to. If anyone can do it, it’s definitely him.”

Until then, Piorkowski will be Bayside’s rallying cry.

“Every day at practice,” Gomez said. “Always. Everything is for P.”

Inappropriate language sidelines Dozo softball coach

BY MARC RAIMONDI

The longtime Cardozo softball coach has been removed pending an investigation into his “inappropriate language,” and players, parents and fellow teachers are not happy, the New York Post has learned.

Larry Alberts, who has been at the helm of the program for 26 years, was escorted from the field by school safety during practice March 22, sources said, after a parent filed a complaint regarding the coach’s behavior toward a player.

The charges are now being looked into by the city Department of Education’s Special Commissioner of Investigation. Former baseball Coach Pete Douglas has taken over the softball team in the interim.

“He was removed pending an investigation into allegations of inappropriate language,” DOE spokeswoman Marge Feinberg said of Alberts.

The morning after Alberts was dismissed, multiple parents went to Cardozo to meet with principal Gerry Martori in support of the coach, sources said. Martori was not in, but they did meet with athletic director Joe Cavallo, who told them when a complaint like that is filed the coach must be removed pending an investigation. Sources said the complaint was made directly to the superintendent’s office.

“The allegations are ridiculous,” said one parent under condition of anonymity.

Alberts did not return multiple voice messages April 2. Cavallo and Douglas also did not return messages from the Post.

Alberts guided Cardozo to back-to-back PSAL Class A semifinals in 2009 and 2010, the former being his first-ever trip to the final four. Cardozo beat Bayside 6-5 in the coach’s first and only game this season. With a young core returning, the Judges had high hopes for a deep run in the playoffs this season.

“They have a lot of confidence from last year,” Alberts said in the preseason. “They are confident, but definitely not cocky. They know they have a lot of work to do.”

The support of Alberts is also significant in Cardozo’s athletic department. Judges’ boys’ basketball Coach Ron Naclerio says he’s known Alberts for 30 years and has a hard time believing the allegations are true.

“He’s a great guy,” Naclerio said. “He’s great for those kids. He does a lot for those kids and they all love him.”

Added boys and girls’ volleyball Coach Danny Scarola, “I could never believe he would do something like this.”

Naclerio, the legendary hoop coach, sympathizes with Alberts, who fears he might not get his job back this year — if ever.

“When something like this happens, they put the handcuffs on you and you have to find the key,” Naclerio said.
Adams prodigy gets 15 Ks against LIC

BY ZACH BRAZILLER

Anderson DeLeon is only a sophomore, but the righthander baseball teammates call “Pedro” because he resembles Pedro Martinez with his slight build and winding motion, can do what most seniors can’t: relax easily excitable John Adams Coach Glenn Beyer.

When DeLeon is on the mound, Beyer is relatively calm and able to sit in the dugout rather than pace back and forth like he usually does.

“He’s better than Prozac,” said the longtime coach of his 15-year-old, a 5-foot-6, 135-pound young flamethrower. “He’s a tonic.”

Nobody on Adams had any reason to be anxious last Thursday as the diminutive underclassmen put forth his second gem of the young season. In the Spartans’ 3-1 victory over Long Island City, he struck out 15, allowed just two singles and walked three in a commanding complete-game performance.

He had four 1-2-3 innings and grew stronger as the contest wore on, throwing his hardest pitches in the seventh inning and striking out the side for Adams (3-0, Queens A West). He mixed in a lively low-to-mid 80s fastball with a deceptive change-up that kept LIC (2-2) off balance.

“He’s got the total package,” Beyer said. “He handles the situation and you can’t teach that. He’s got the total package.”

Beyer was impressed by DeLeon last year as he was racking up a 4-0 record and 0.75 ERA on the junior varsity, but opted not to call him up. Adams had enough arms — it fell to Telecommunications in the second round of the playoffs because it managed just one run — and Beyer thinks the experience helped DeLeon gain confidence.

He tested his young stud out of the gate, giving him the ball in the league opener against Newtown because he wanted senior Braylin Nunez to start the first home contest. DeLeon was up to the task, fanning 12 in 6 1/3 innings of three-hit, shutout ball.

“It made me feel special,” he said through an interpreter. “I’m used to pitching against older players. I’m confident in myself.”

The sophomore said he didn’t feel as good last Thursday. He struggled with his footing and landing spot on the mound. Yet, as Beyer said, it never showed. He never lost his composure, never changed his expression, never altered his routine — qualities that stood out to Long Island City Coach Tom Lehman.

“He seems like he doesn’t care — he just pitches,” the LIC coach said. “He gets the ball and throws it.”

Without taking anything away from DeLeon, Lehman said his team is struggling mightily offensively. In two losses to Adams this week, the Bulldogs pushed across just three runs and managed only six hits, all singles. It’s particularly frustrating because LIC yielded just seven runs in the setbacks.

“Offensively, everybody’s pressing right now,” he said.

Bryant coach hits 1,000th

Softball coach marks 1,000th game with rout of Richmond Hill

BY MARC RAIMONDI

Wally Hausdorf was a basketball coach who had stints at Stony Brook, Old Westbury and Queens College. At the time, softball was just something to do to fill time and make extra money before he became a Division I head coach.

In his first game in the dugout, Bryant was blasted by Cardozo 23-0 and Hausdorf wondered, “What am I doing here?”

“I had no idea how to approach this,” he said.

That was 31 years ago. Two seasons after Hausdorf started with the Owls, they were in the PSAL city semifinals. Since then, the Glen Oaks native has had a legendary run at the Astoria school. He’s the winningest coach in New York State softball history (772) and last Thursday he coached his 1,000th career game, a 19-1 romp over Richmond Hill.

“How you can manage to have a thousand games is beyond me, but he did it,” shortstop and senior captain Gabrielle Faustino said.

About a dozen former players took in the game April 4. “It’s days like that, the 59-year-old Hausdorf says, that keep him not only continuing back year after year, but also enjoying every second.

“This is what keeps me young,” he said. “To do this every afternoon and be with these kids — I get paid to do this. Isn’t that ridiculous? People would love to do this for nothing.”

Added assistant Coach Alicia Sanchez, “I wouldn’t have doubt in mind that he could do another thousand. He said he’d sit there in a wheelchair if he had to. He loves these kids, he loves this program, he loves this building.”

Sanchez played for Hausdorf and graduated in 1997. She’s been coaching with him since 2003 and says she wouldn’t be the person she is if not for her mentor.

“He’s like my dad,” Sanchez said. “I love him. He turned me into an all-city first baseman, something I never thought I could do.”

Faustino said the Bryant dugout is a revolving door of alumni — not just for games like April 4’s, where Hausdorf is reaching a milestone. She called the Owls a big family and plans on coming back when she graduates and helping out with the girls, too.

“His more like a second father,” Faustino said. “I can talk to him about anything and he’s there for us. He means a lot to us. We really love him a lot. That shows why he has coached 1,000 games and he’s still there.”

Hausdorf has no plans on retiring any time soon, but Bryant is slated to close after school finishes in June. Once that happens, there would be a personnel shake-up and no guarantee that he keeps his coaching job. He also works in the building as student affairs coordinator.

“I would like to stay here for awhile longer,” Hausdorf said. “I feel like I do the job and I enjoy it. I’m not just milking it. I’d do it for nothing.”

Hausdorf is an institution at Bryant and has been for more than three decades. He’s turned countless girls into scholarship-level softball players and also molded them into young women. Winning a city championship hasn’t been in the cards — and may never be — for the old coach, not with multiple travel players populating most teams across the city.

But he said long ago he realized that it didn’t matter.

“It’s more the kids enjoying it, getting better and having great experiences,” Hausdorf said. “It’s for days like today. That’s what I’m here for.”
Doyle, who came to Cardozo from Townsend Harris via a safety transfer, got the Judges going with a leadoff triple in the fourth. He scored on Nicanor Luna's fielder's choice and Castano, the impressive junior, was hit by a pitch and came around on catcher Nelson Rodriguez's throwing error. And Luna crossed with the tying run on Torres' walk.

Keith Rogers singled and scored on another Rodriguez throwing error in the fifth and Diego Gonzalez extended the lead with an opposite field homer in the sixth.

“Our chemistry is amazing,” Castano said. “We play for the name on the front of our jerseys, not on the back. This is the best team I’ve played on since I got to Cardozo.”

GW managed just three base-runners from the third through the sixth innings before finally coming alive in the seventh. Randy Rodriguez swatted a leadoff homer off Doyle, Rodriguez walked and Brian Mejia singled to center with one out. Reaching deep, Doyle fanned Alexis Torres on three straight fastballs and beat Gomez with a 1-2 heater up in the zone.

“After the home run, I turned it up a notch,” Doyle said. “I was determined to win this game for us.”

The contest had an early June feel rather than early April. The teams traded words on a few occasions. Each home run was wildly celebrated. On the final strikeout, Doyle pumped his fist and was mobbed by teammates.

Mandl understood Cardozo’s excitement. His team, after all, is the defending champion many have fingered as this year’s favorite. Then again, it was just one win.

“I’d like to see them do it again,” the coach said. Cardozo may get that opportunity. If both teams advance to the tournament final as expected, another matchup would be set Thursday at GW at 3 p.m.

Skills, pinpoint accuracy on set pieces and ability on the ball.

“He’s a game-changer,” Sarmuknis said.

During the year, the coach called Bedoya one of the top players he’s ever coached, right up there with Sebastian Guenzatti, Chris Herrera and John Koutsoundis. He’s now in his own category, even if he is reluctant to admit it.
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Conquering the fear, returning to the classroom

Once you have determined that completing your degree is the best way to achieve your life goals, you’ve probably done your research. You’ve figured out how to make the time, how to pay for school, and what degree to pursue. One thing, however, may still be holding you back — fear.

It can be scary walking into a classroom full of strangers. What if things are completely different from when you last set foot on a campus? What if everyone in the class is in their teens and you can’t relate?

“Being nervous about returning to college is not necessarily a bad thing,” said Dr. Mary Hawkins, president of Bellevue University. “Your apprehension shows your desire to do well. More than 2.5 million people over the age of 30 currently attend college in the U.S. Don’t let fear take away the chance to accomplish the new goals you’ve set for yourself.”

Research the learning environment

“Familiarizing yourself with the situation will help alleviate some of the tension,” Dr. Hawkins suggests. A good place to start is the National Center for Education Statistics atnces.ed.gov. The site’s College Navigator tool allows you to search for leads on colleges and view enrollment statistics, including age breakdown, on each. This will give you a good picture of whether the school you are considering attracts more adult learners or more traditional students.

Speak with current students and alumni

Next, call the schools at the top of your list and ask for referrals to students who have taken or are currently enrolled in the program you might enter.

“This is the best way to get a firsthand account of the experience you will have,” Dr. Hawkins says. “Students and alumni have nothing to gain or lose by being honest about their experiences. Make sure to speak to more than one individual to get a more balanced view of the student experience.”

If you feel more comfortable with an indirect route, you can pose your questions to any alumni groups the school may have on social networks such as Facebook or LinkedIn.

Give yourself a deadline

Simply putting your plan in writing or talking about it out loud can give you the momentum and accountability to get moving. Give yourself as much time as you need, but set a firm deadline. Determine a specific date by which you plan to begin your coursework. Tell family and friends who, you feel, will be supportive.

“Remember, most of your classmates will be as nervous as you are,” Hawkins says. “Much like going to the gym after years away or going to the doctor for your yearly checkup, the anticipation is often worse than the actual experience.”

Don’t let fear hold you back; once you overcome it, you are on your way to a more promising future. — NAPS

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