

Dogs are bused to 'Bark Park'

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

Professional dog walkers are ferrying pooches into the Dyker Beach Park dog run from all corners of the borough and ruining the leash-free lot for local canines, say pup-owning residents who are getting tired of the interlopers.

Neighbors say hired dog walkers often exceed the posted three-pup-per-person limit at the bark park at the corner of Seventh Avenue and 86th Street — sometimes bringing more than a dozen at a time — which they claimed causes crowding and nasty dogfights.

Bonnie Diaz, who lives across the street from the run, said that a group of pooches being overseen by professional dog walker Beth Sampson — who admitted that she trucks in dogs from Ditmas Park — once ganged up on her pet Marley.

Today, Marley takes off when
Continued on Page 11



'MERCII, MERCI'



VETERAN'S BIG DAY: France awarded Norman Wasserman with its Legion of Honor medal last week for his service in World War II — 68 years after his courageous efforts in the Battle of the Bulge.

Photo by Stefano Giovannini

Heights war hero cheered by French

BY NATALIE O'NEILL

Better late than never.

A well-meaning group of soldier-boosters from France awarded a Brooklyn Heights World War II veteran a prestigious medal of honor — 68 years after he fought to save their country.

Norman Wasserman, 87, received a coveted French Legion of Honor award last week for fighting Nazis in one of the war's bloodiest battles, surviving sniper bullets, artillery, and land mines — not to mention a post-war career in public relations — before taking home the honor.

The medal symbolizes "France's infinite gratitude and

appreciation" for his bravery, according to the Consulat General De France.

"It feels wonderful — it's was a very touching ceremony," Wasserman said.

Wasserman helped Allied troops as a teenager during the notorious Battle of the Bulge by watching for the flash of gunfire and using hidden microphones to listen for the sound of enemy artillery.

The six-week offensive by German forces took place on a frozen chunk of ground in Luxembourg, France, and Belgium, resulting in nearly 90,000 American casualties.

War vet Ed
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\$1.2M for bike lane

BY NATALIE O'NEILL

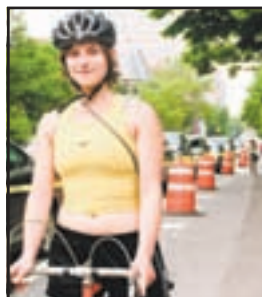
Painting the Prospect Park West bike lane isn't the only part of the controversial project that took a lot of green.

The city will spend \$880,000 finishing up the Prospect Park West bike lane by constructing raised concrete islands at

intersections — more than quadrupling the initial cost of installing the path.

The total cost of the bike lane has soared to more than \$1.2 million, including the price of constructing the path, building the new pedestrian islands, and \$140,000 in

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File photo by Stefano Giovannini

LANE DRAIN: The price of the Prospect Park West bike path keeps going up.

Coney carny's comeback

BY DANIEL BUSH

Call it Cha-Cha's revenge.

John "Cha-Cha" Ciarcia, a honky-tonk bar owner who was booted from the Boardwalk in the city's quest to bring more upscale businesses to Coney Island, is returning

to the People's Playground this summer with a new watering hole, nightclub, and amusement park.

"This is my comeback," Ciarcia said. "They threw me off the Boardwalk but they can't kick me out of Coney Island."

Ciarcia has already

opened Cha-Cha's Coney Island Seafood Bar and Pizzeria on Surf Avenue and plans to open Club Atlantis and Cha-Cha's Steeplechase-Fun Place on Stillwell Avenue between Surf Avenue and the Boardwalk next week. The Steeplechase-Fun Place

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PEDALING BACKWARDS: The city's bike-sharing program will bring Dutch-style cruisers to the streets - but don't expect to pick one up in Park Slope and Prospect Heights this year.

Bike share despair in Brownstone Brooklyn

No cycle rentals in Slope, P'Heights in 2012

BY AARON SHORT

You won't have a hard time finding the city's new rental bikes this summer — unless you live south of Atlantic Avenue.

Beginning in July, 148 bike-share stations will set up shop in DUMBO, Greenpoint, Williamsburg, Fort Greene, Brooklyn Heights, and Downtown, according to a new map released last Friday.

There will only be one station on the Cobble Hill, Park Slope, and Prospect Heights side of Atlantic Avenue until spring of 2013 — meaning you'll need your own two wheels if you want to ride home from the Park Slope Food Co-op, Prospect Park, the Brooklyn Museum, or the Red Hook waterfront.

The borough will eventually get enough docks to accommodate 3,868 rental bikes in the ambitious program, according to a Department of Transportation spokesman — but this summer's southernmost bike depot will be at the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Dean Street.

"It will be a phased-in deployment," Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan told WNYC. "I mean, we can't just airdrop 10,000 bikes in."



Community Newspaper Group / Natalie O'Neill

Cyclists are cheering the program, but the incremental rollout is a letdown for some Brownstone Brooklyn bike lovers.

"That's not good," said Park Slope resident Mitch Sonies, who owns six bikes himself. "To get around Park Slope, if you want a bike, you already have it with you."

The city announced it would build a network of rentable, sturdy Dutch-style cruisers in November 2010 and conducted a series of planning meetings throughout the borough in 2011.

The bikes are designed for short trips and commuting, not lengthy joyrides. Brooklynites who pay the \$95 annual membership fee can get access to a cerulean-colored cycle for unlimited rides up to 45 minutes, while daily or weekly riders can

receive access to unlimited 30-minute rides. But heavy charges apply to those who scoot around for hours at a time.

The city will bring its proposed bike rental locations before community boards for review in Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Downtown, Brooklyn Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, and Bedford-Stuyvesant in the coming weeks before installing the stations this summer. Board members can still weigh in on the second draft of these maps and suggest changes to station locations before they hit the streets.

Transportation officials have already made significant changes to their first draft maps, adding more stations in Greenpoint and East Williamsburg and cutting stations along Bedford Avenue, following the advice of North Brooklyn residents at a planning meeting this spring.

Community boards representing Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, Gowanus, Red Hook, Prospect Heights, and Crown Heights will host planning workshops throughout the year, before new stations are selected and installed next year.

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KIMMEL COMES HOME

Brooklyn-born late-night host to broadcast from BAM opera house

BY AARON SHORT

Live from Brooklyn, it's Jimmy Kimmel!

The Brooklyn-born late-night prince announced on Monday that he will return to his hometown in October to host "Jimmy Kimmel Live" from the Brooklyn Academy of Music in celebration of the Brooklyn Nets' first game in the borough.

We don't get it either — so we decided to pester him about it.

Aaron Short: Jimmy! Welcome to New York. Your show is coming to Brooklyn to coincide with the return of professional sports. Have you always been a Nets fan?

Jimmy Kimmel: I have not always been a Nets fan, but the fact that they're playing in Brooklyn makes me more inclined to root for them.

AS: Why haven't you moved back home yet?

JK: I have a job in California that keeps me occupied.

AS: Brooklyn has a long and prestigious comedic history. Woody Allen famously claimed he grew up under the Thunderbolt. Arthur Miller is from here. What's it like following in their footsteps?

JK: It's interesting how many funny people are from Brooklyn. Maybe it's because everyone is piled on top of each other, you have to distinguish yourself in some way. The funniest people I know are from Brooklyn.



AS: Where are you from?

JK: I grew up in Mill Basin, on E. 64th Street and Avenue T. I went to PS 236 until I was in the fourth grade and my parents picked up and moved us to Las Vegas. My uncle Frank was a cop in Brooklyn and he decided to move there and get a job as a security guard at a casino and

we followed him.

AS: When was the last time you hung out in Brooklyn and what did you do when you came here?

JK: I visit my relatives, Aunt Joanne and Uncle Tony. Typically when I'm there, it's to visit family. We make a point of doing a lot of eating when we're there.



BACK IN BROOKLYN: (Left) Comedian and late-night talk-show host Jimmy Kimmel will return to his hometown in October to celebrate the return of professional sports to Brooklyn. (Above) A younger Jimmy Kimmel sits on his family's stoop in Mill Basin.

Photos provided by Jimmy Kimmel Live

AS: Where do you go?

JK: The Mill Basin Deli. There's a f--ing great place we go to, but I can't remember the name of it.

AS: We'll get back to that. Biggest difference between Los Angeles and Brooklyn?

JK: No one talks to each other in LA, whereas in Brooklyn, if you build a fence, everyone wants to know everything about it, and then you wind up with three similar fences. Everybody knew each other's business in Brooklyn. It's a double-edged sword, but ultimately I think it's better. People watch each other's kids. In LA, you can have neighbors for 20 years and never talk with them.

AS: Who is your favorite Brooklynite living or dead?

JK: Besides my family members, I have to go with Woody Allen.

AS: And your favorite Brooklyn rapper?

JK: I always liked the Beastie Boys a lot. Jay-Z obviously. I'll go with those two.

AS: Is Brooklyn a punch line yet, the way Portland, Ore. is, or the state of Florida?

JK: No, Brooklyn is not a

punch line, because if you use it as a punch line you will get punched by someone.

AS: What do you think about the Prospect Park bike lane?

JK: This is what people are upset about? A bike lane?

AS: Will your show have anything organic or artisanal in it?

JK: It's a show, not a meal. I guess there will be human beings on it. You know there's a great place in Brooklyn called Roberta's. I love that place. They set up their lot next door, a go-kart track, which is fantastic. The food is great there. I love the overall feel of the place.

AS: Do you go DiFara's or Grimaldi's?

JK: Yeah! I've been to both of those places. One of our writers plays accordion at Grimaldi's. A lot of our staff is from Brooklyn. Probably because a lot of my family is on the show.

AS: We love Bill Simmons, but he's no longer a writer with you.

JK: Bill wouldn't last two minutes in Brooklyn.

AS: So, any advice to help the Nets compete against the Knicks or the Lakers?

JK: Spend a lot of money, and spend it wisely.

Fidler really loses to Storobin

BY DANIEL BUSH

David Storobin has retaken the lead in the race to replace prison-bound ex-pol Carl Kruger — and this time the lead should stick.

The Republican rookie took a 27-vote lead over Councilman Lew Fidler (D-Marine Park) on Monday morning, after the Board of Elections tallied the last remaining votes from the shockingly close March 20 special election.



LOSER AND WINNER: Lew Fidler and David Storobin.

The results are so close a hand recount was ordered, but most political insiders consider

that step a formality.

Storobin spokesman Liam McCabe demanded the city dispense with the hand recount, which is required by law if the winning margin is less than 110 votes.

"David Storobin is clearly the winner," McCabe said. "To drag this thing on for another few weeks is ridiculous."

But Fidler spokesman Kalman Yeger insisted the recount will take

Continued on Page 5

W'burg fired up over BYOB BBQ rule

Cooper Park visitors can bring their own grills – and neighbors aren't happy

BY AARON SHORT

Williamsburg residents fear that where there's smoke, there's going to be, well, more smoke.

Some neighbors of Cooper Park were already fired

up about charcoal fumes, trash, and crowds in the green space after the city installed a barbecue pit with eight grills — and now they're up in flames over the fact park rules will al-

low patrons to bring their own Webers.

"I think it's totally irresponsible that they are allowing an unlimited number of grills and smokers," said Carrie Perry, who

lives near the Maspeth Avenue park. "I will be smelling barbecue in my living room."

The city implements a bring-your-own-grill policy at parks that boast grill pits, such as Prospect Park and Red Hook's Coffey Park — a fact that many anti-grilling activists only realized as they protested summer searing at three community meetings last week.

"When we held our ground at zero [grills, the city] dropped the bomb that anyone can bring grills anyway — so what negotiation were we really having when the number of grills on any given day is unlimited!" said Perry. "What a joke."

Visitors can now bring as many grills as they want to Cooper Park, so long as they stay in the designated area in the northeastern corner and don't come in groups of 20 or more (larger crowds require permits



FIRE PITS: Controversial grills in the northeast corner of Cooper Park are the first part of the park's \$2.6-million renovation plan. Photo provided by Department of Parks and Recreation



DIG IT: Scores of volunteers installed eight new grills and six picnic tables in Cooper Park on May 6. Photo provided by Malcolm Sanborn-Hum

from the city).

North Brooklyn Parks honcho Stephanie Thayer and an aide to Councilwoman Diana Reyna (D-Williamsburg) told residents at a recent community meeting that the city originally planned to add 10 grills — then reduced the number to eight due to neighborhood opposition.

But the city may add two additional grills later this summer, and the Parks Department is preparing to add another eight grill sta-

tions next year as part of a \$2.6-million Cooper Park renovation if the cooking equipment proves popular.

Fans of outdoor food preparation, including residents from Cooper Park Houses who lobbied for the grills, flocked to the green space to debut the cookware last Saturday — and they promised to fight for more grills.

"I'm disappointed we got only eight," said grill fan Karen Leader. "We had an agreement for more."

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Jewish rite sets streets ablaze

Lag BaOmer celebration lights up Ocean Ave.

BY ELI ROSENBERG

Midwood was on fire last week — at least at the Lag BaOmer celebration on Ocean Avenue.

A group of religious Jews paraded down Ocean Avenue to Kings Highway to celebrate the holiday, which commemorates the life of second-century religious leader Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai — as well as an ancient plague that wiped out a handful of scholars, according to Jewish history — through bonfires and other rituals.

A performer entertained the marching masses with such medieval entertainment as sword swallowing and fire breathing, and marchers carried signs reading “I Love Every Jew,” and “Wrap the straps, get connected.”

Dozens danced down the street to celebrate the holiday, in which men and women can get haircuts after more than a month of going without them after the Passover holiday.

“People light a fire because that was the type of person Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was,” said a neighborhood source.



CELEBRATING IN THE STREETS: Orthodox Jews honored Lag BaOmer, a holiday to commemorate thousands of Jewish scholars killed in an ancient plague with (above) a fire breather and (below) dancing in the streets. Photos by Arthur De Gaeta



Lew-ser

Continued from page 3

place, and refused to concede the race until the recount is over.

“We continue to look forward to a speedy count so the person who received the most votes can take office,” Yeger said.

Storobin took a 120-vote lead on election night, but his margin of victory shrank to just three votes after several hundred absentee ballots and affidavits were counted.

Both sides contested approximately 300 ballots in court, and Fidler — the pre-

sumed frontrunner in the race — emerged with an 87-vote lead after most of the votes in Brooklyn’s answer to Florida’s 2000 Bush vs. Gore election were tallied earlier this month.

But a judge ordered the city to count 119 votes that Fidler claimed the Storobin campaign obtained illegally — giving the Soviet-born attorney and first-time candidate a lead of just over two-dozen ballots.

The result has yet to be certified by the city’s Board of Elections, which did not return calls seeking comment.

The recount has not been rescheduled, so it’s unclear

how long it would take.

Regardless, whoever wins will only have a few months in office: the state approved new political maps that divvied up Kruger’s old-stomping grounds between two Brooklyn state senators and a “Super Jewish” district that encompasses Borough Park, Midwood, and Homecrest. The district is set to be wiped off the map at the end of the year.

The race started last year after Kruger resigned hours before pleading guilty to accepting \$1 million in bribes. Two weeks ago he was sentenced to seven years in prison.

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Sardine seating at Coney concerts

BY DANIEL BUSH

Borough President Markowitz's popular summer concert series, which was booted from Asser Levy Park last year for being too loud, will once again be staged in a cramped Coney Island lot — even though concert-goers have repeatedly panned the spot for being too small for major stars like Aretha Franklin and Joan Jett.

Civic leaders confirmed that this year's Seaside Summer Concert Series will be returning to the vacant site on W. 21st Street near Surf Avenue this summer — a spot many said was a poor substitute for Asser Levy Park.

"Asser Levy was a much better venue with a much better atmosphere," said Bay Ridge resident Kelly Graham, who attended the

Joan Jett concert last July. "This space [stinks]!"

The W. 21st Street lot includes 5,000 paid seats positioned near a makeshift stage, but only has room for 2,000 free seats in the back, roughly half of what the park at Ocean Parkway and Seabreeze Avenue provides.

Asser Levy Park is about the size of a city block. The W. 21st Street lot, in comparison, is about a third of a city block.

The lack of free seating and drab surroundings irked concert-goers at the very start of last year's concert series.

Most of the complaints came from those who brought their own chairs and blankets so they could watch the show for free, grumbling that they missed

the wide-open spaces of Asser Levy.

"Asser Levy Park was a beautiful and classic location," said Steven Centonzo. "I miss the grass and picnicking with a blanket."

The issue came to a head after 1,000 angry fans were turned away from Franklin's August concert because the al fresco music venue was too small.

Yet supporters say the vacant lot is big enough to accommodate the summer-long music series.

"The spot they're working with is fine," said Community Board 13 district manager Chuck Reichenthal.

The borough president held his Seaside Summer Concert Series at Asser Levy Park every year since 1991, but caused an uproar



CROWD CONTROL: Borough President Markowitz's popular Seaside Summer Concert Series will return to a cramped parking lot on W. 21st Street. File photo by Steve Solomonson

when he announced plans to build a \$64-million, 8,000-seat bandshell there. Congregants of two synagogues abutting the park and other local critics balked at the idea, calling the planned venue a monstrosity that would destroy parkland and overwhelm their quiet street.

Synagogue officials sued to shut the Beep's concerts down on the grounds that amplified music is illegal within 500 feet of houses

of worship. Markowitz settled the lawsuit last year by agreeing to relocate the concerts to W. 21st Street.

Brighton Beach residents who sued Markowitz said they are pleased that the concerts won't be coming back to Asser Levy Park.

"It's what the law is all about," said longtime concert critic Ida Sanoff. "The new location fits in perfectly with Coney Island."

Seaside concert organizer and promoter Debbie

Garcia said the series will move forward, but wouldn't provide further details — or reveal the lineup for this year's shows.

Borough President Markowitz hasn't given up on a state-of-the-art amphitheater, spokesman Mark Zustovich said.

"The borough president remains committed — financially and otherwise — to a world-class performance venue," Zustovich said.

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Sweet revenge

Domino owner sues developer, again

BY AARON SHORT

A co-owner of the former Domino Sugar factory has filed another lawsuit to block his development partner from transferring ownership of the massive Williamsburg waterfront site to its lender.

Days after a court ruled against Isaac Katan in his first lawsuit against Community Preservation Corporation Resources, the developer argued before a Manhattan Supreme Court that he should have the right to quash any deal the group makes with its lender to buy up its \$120 million debt.

"The new suit is not redundant because it seeks a different remedy and is based on different legal principles," said Katan's attorney Y. David Scharf. "The new suit seeks to enforce Katan's right of first refusal."

A flurry of lawsuits has stalled development at the 11.2-acre Southside site — which is slated to become 2,200 units of housing — since City Council approved a plan to allow residential



FOOD FIGHT: Isaac Katan, co-owner of the closed Domino Sugar factory, is suing his development partner for a second time.

development on the industrial plot two years ago.

Community leaders charged that Domino's developer did not conduct a thorough environmental review of the site in a motion filed in December 2010. That suit is still pending and could be heard this fall.

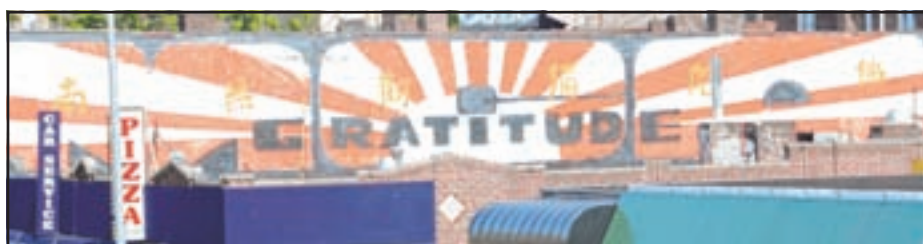
Then Katan sued Community Preservation Corporation Resources for fraud and breach of contract in March, claiming that his partner was negotiating to sell the site behind his back.

But two courts rejected Katan's motion to halt the

negotiations earlier this month in a victory for the indebted developer.

Community Preservation Corporation Resources vice president Susan Pollock said negotiations with her lender were back on and claims her company will begin building the first portion of the project by the end of 2013.

"Now that it's clear the court has given us a window to continue pursuing that agreement, we're back to moving in the direction we were moving in before these frivolous lawsuits," she said.



Artists painted a tribute to Brooklyn-born Adam Yauch, aka MCA, one of the founding members of the rap group the Beastie Boys, that's visible from the Avenue P elevated subway platform in Midwood.

Beastie tribute in graffiti

BY ELI ROSENBERG

Fans of recently deceased rapper Adam "MCA" Yauch showed their gratitude to the legendary Brooklyn-born Beastie Boy by painting a mural in his honor.

The graffiti — which is the length of a building and can be seen from the Avenue P train station at McDonald Avenue — spells out MCA's name. A beaming sunset and the word "Gratitude" is written inside the huge letters.

Mural painters, who are affiliated with the store Entree Lifestyle, saw the mural as a tribute to Adam Yauch, a founding mem-

ber of the Beastie Boys — and Edward R. Murrow High School graduate — who died on May 4 following a battle with salivary gland cancer. The beloved rapper was 47.

Yauch lent his raspy voice to the Beastie Boy's party-first, be-cool-later attitude that gave generations of suburban kids an entry-ramp into the rap world, organizers said.

"Thank you for the inspiration, for this and many, many more good reasons," said a note on the Entree Lifestyle's website. "In the heart of Midwood, Brooklyn, where it all began, we paid tribute to the energy [MCA] gave us in the best way we knew how."

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SHUL HOLY WAR

Critics: Ave. N house of worship is too big for block

BY ELI ROSENBERG

A plan to build a massive synagogue on Avenue N is drawing the ire of its neighbors, who fear that the new house of worship will overburden their bucolic, tree-lined block — and possibly put their homes in danger.

Representatives from congregation Kahal Bnei Avrohom Yaakov wants the city to ignore Midwood's zoning limitations and allow them to build a house of worship at E. 27th Street that will be three times larger than most of the homes on the avenue, which is filled with detached, single family homes.

Congregation members say the building needs to be big enough to accommodate the roughly 90 families attending services.

Yet neighbors say the new synagogue will be too large for a quiet residential street.

"I'm in full support of synagogues and churches," said Cory

Look, who lives one house away from the proposed synagogue. "But I'm really concerned about what is being proposed."

Synagogue representatives, who are currently leasing a building on E. 18th Street, also want to build on the property's front yard and do away with the more than 20 parking spaces the city requires they provide.

Community Board 14 approved the congregation's zoning changes without much incident on Monday.

Look said if the synagogue gets rid of its front yard — a required setback, according to city zoning rules — then the homes next to it will be obscured and could be targeted by burglars.

"There's a reason setback regulations in residential neighborhoods are in place," he said. "It's not just aesthetic, it's an issue with safety."

Synagogue representatives say their zoning modifications

are consistent with what has been granted to other shuls in Midwood.

"There is a lot of precedent in New York courts, which give synagogues, churches, and mosques a lot of consideration because of their importance to the community," said Richard Lobel, a lawyer working with Kahal Bnei Avrohom Yaakov.

Lobel claimed that there are several synagogues that are the same size as the one his client is proposing.

"What we're asking for is consistent with what's been asked for before," he said.

Synagogue members say they chose Avenue N and E. 27th Street because many members live nearby and will walk to shul on the Sabbath and on Jewish holidays.

But residents contend the shul's many weekly events will draw a car-driving crowd that will have nowhere to park.

Synagogue members said the



BLOCK PARTY: Residents of E. 27th Street, including (from left) Danny Gong, Cory Look, John Farrell, Kathy Murphy, Bob Murphy, Mary Murphy, Mary Ellen Murphy, and Jennifer Farrell, are concerned that the oversized synagogue proposed for Avenue N and E. 27th Street will hurt the neighborhood.

Photo by Elizabeth Graham

expansion was integral to the health of the congregation.

"The community needs a

place for families to get together," said congregation member David Sussman.

Cops seek police impersonator

BY COLIN MIXSON

Police are looking for a man who they say held up a Canarsie family at gunpoint while masquerading as a cop.

The victims told police that they were inside their Canarsie Road home at 12:30 pm when the 35 to 45-year-old suspect came to their door wearing an

NYPD jacket, a light colored baseball cap, and a gold shield dangling around his neck.

The man said he was investigating a break-in on the block.

But, when he stepped inside the home, he pulled a gun and ordered everyone onto the floor, investigators said.

Police say the thief tied up and blindfolded the victims before ushering in an accomplice and ransacking the home, taking an undetermined amount of cash and jewelry.

The victims said the police impersonator had a thin build, light complexion, and brown hair.



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Byrne playground has heads talking

BY NATALIE O'NEILL

A popular Park Slope playground reopened last week with a new name honoring a long-forgotten borough president — marking a minor victory for the barely remembered politico over the landmark-hogging forefather who snatched away his legacy.

History-loving city officials unveiled the new J.J. Byrne Playground in Washington Park — a green space on Fifth Avenue that initially bore the name of George Washington, then honored the late Beep until 2008, when the nation's first president won the title again.

As a consolation prize for Byrne — who died in office in 1930 — the park's playground got a revamp and a new name in his honor.



WHEEL DELIVERED: Scarlett, a four-year-old Park Sloper, learned about old-fashioned hula hoops at the grand reopening of J.J. Byrne Playground.

The new kids spot — near the legendary Battle of

Brooklyn site where Washington fled the borough to escape British forces — now boasts a “toddler area,” water fountains, and colonial-themed playground equipment.

Parents said the park's new features give preschool-aged kids more choices, and bigger kids a chance to learn about history (albeit of Washington's era, not Byrnes's).

“It's more than a park — it's an important historical location,” said Park Slope mom Alexandra Saghir.

Last Friday, politicians including Councilmen Brad Lander and Steve Levin (D-Park Slope) joined Borough President Markowitz to celebrate the playground's new fixtures by wearing colonial costumes — a nod to Washington with their tri-



SUITING UP: History-loving Councilmen Brad Lander (left) and Steve Levin dressed in Colonial-era garb at the debut of a playground named after a Depression-era politician. Photos by Elizabeth Graham

corn hats, not to Byrne, who before his death ordered the construction of a replica Dutch farmhouse near the playground.

The structure — completed in 1934 as a park of

rice and comfort station and now known as the Old Stone House — influenced the playground's colonial theme.

Lander, Levin, Markowitz, and Assemblywoman

Joan Millman (D-Carroll Gardens) spent more than \$3 million to pay for the play area — which pleases parents of Park Slope.

“It's a very special place,” Saghir said.

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HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE

Spartan racers get down and dirty at Aviator Sports on Floyd Bennett Field

BY COLIN MIXSON

The famous Brooklyn airstrip that launched Amelia Earhart's historic trans-Atlantic trip 80 years ago has become the training ground for the growing Spartan race phenomena — a relatively young sport where amateur athletes slosh gleefully through mud races, slog through miles of greuling obstacle courses, crawl under barbed wire, and frolic through unnerving quagmires.

They then finish the day with copious amounts of beer, music, and revelry, organizers say.

Aviator Sports and Events Center at Floyd Bennett Field will host four of the sludge-happy treks this year, said spokesman Dean Rivera, who attributed the federal park's vast hinterlands as a major reason for their popularity.

"There aren't any other big open spaces where they can do this race," said Rivera. "You can go through woods, on runways, and end up at Aviator where there are bands and barbecues."

The grimy challenges were jump-started this month by the Metro Dash, a race featuring less running and more obstacles than your standard Spartan jaunt.

The other three treks — Rugged Maniacs, Special Olympics, and Civilian Military Combine — will take place on June 30, Oct. 13, and Oct. 22, respectively.

The program for each race varies, but they all follow rigorous guidelines associated more with a military boot camp than a typical city marathon: run like hell, barrel your way through various obstacle courses, revel in mud, and end up back at home base for grub, booze, and bands — if you're still standing.

The sport is a welcome distraction in Brooklyn's concrete jungle, say fans.

"It gives people an opportunity to forget the routine of the work week, and do something out of the ordinary," said Brad Scudder, president and founder of the Rugged Maniac race. "To kind of push their limits, challenge themselves, and have an adventure."

There's another reason that shouldn't be overlooked, too.

"It's also a good time!" Scudder added.

Aviator Sports and Events Center [3159 Flatbush Ave. in Floyd Bennett Field in Mill Basin, (718) 758-7500].



GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY: Aviator Sports and Events Center in Floyd Bennett Field is hosting several mud-soaked races this year. Photo courtesy Rugged Maniac



TIGHT GRIP: Christine Solidum of Sunset Park clings to a rope during Metro Dash, a timed obstacle course, on May 12 at Aviator Sports and Events Center. Photo by Elizabeth Graham

Daredevils dash through massive obstacle course

BY COLIN MIXSON

Mud run season has officially started.

The Metro Dash — the first of four Spartan mud races scheduled to take place in and around the Aviator Sports Center this year — was held on May 12 with more than 400 athletes slogging their way through 20 grueling obstacle courses.

"It was awesome," said Susan Hurtado of Dyker Heights. "I didn't think I could get through it, but I'm really happy that I did."

Contestants tested their mettle on obstacles ranging from the traditional, to the inventive, to the sheer masochistic, including the strongman

shuffle, where athletes run — or waddle — while carrying an assortment of heavy, oddly shaped objects; the rope swing, where contestants swing to an elevated platform; and the intimidating rope wall, where competitors are tasked with scaling a sheer 12-foot stockade.

Of course, everyone had their favorite challenge.

"My favorite obstacle was the gorilla rope climb," said Hurtado. "That's where you have to wrap your hands and feet around the rope and pull yourself across. A lot of people couldn't hold on, it was pretty funny."

If a competitor is un-

able to complete, or unwilling to attempt an obstacle, then the fitness police at Metro Dash will demand a number of arduous burpee exercises — which involve squatting down, kicking out your legs, doing a pushup, and then kicking in your legs and standing up again.

"If you fall off on the gorilla rope you have to do five burpees, and you have to do 20 if you choose not to try, so you might as well try," said Hurtado.

In the end, everyone who finished the course was greeted with an ice cold brew and live music.

"It's my first race like this and I must say I'll definitely do another one," said Hurtado.

Bike lane

6 asked the city to make the bike lane tweaks match the neighborhood's street-scape, a Department of Transportation spokeswoman said.

"[The board] requested that materials such as granite curbing, which are historically consistent," she said.

Councilman Brad Lander (D-Park Slope) also allocated \$200,000 toward the islands, which will resemble the street furnishings that separate a bike lane from automotive traffic on Manhattan's Ninth Avenue.

Continued from cover
legal fees spent defending the two-way cycling route from lawsuits.

That's more than five times the cost of the country's average bike lane, transportation experts say.

The raised cement islands — intended to make it easier for pedestrians to cross Prospect Park West at nine intersections — carry such a high price tag in part because Community Board

ing comment on Tuesday, but Wasserman said the medal's timing is linked to the improved relationship between the United States and France.

And Marinello — who is also in his eighties — said it's good the French finally got around to honoring him.

"They probably want to recognize us while we're still around," he said.

Merci, merci

Continued from cover
Marinello, who served in Wasserman's battalion, said the award is important despite its tardy arrival.

"It means a lot — he was a great soldier and we were really in the thick of it," he said.

An official from Consulat General De France didn't return calls seek-

Dog walkers

Continued from cover
ever Sampson or another dog-sitter arrives with a crew, Diaz said.

"The second somebody pulls up with a lot of dogs, I leave," Diaz said, adding that the walkers tend to group around the picnic tables by the entrance, making it tough at times to escape without some kind of trouble.

James Gheida of Bensonhurst, who's been visiting the run for nearly eight years, said that the privately-hired dog-sitters often bring as many as 18 animals to the park at a time, forcing him and his dog Woody to the far corners of the fenced-in lot — or out of it entirely.

"I don't want to stick around. There's no way they can control that many dogs," said Gheida, adding that he's seen packs of the animals attack single dogs that were at the lot with their owners and reported the incidents to Community Board 10.

CB10 District Manager Josephine Beckmann said



DOGFIGHT: Dyker Beach Park Dog Run has hosted several clashes between neighborhood dog owners and professional pooch walkers — not to mention the animals themselves. Photo by Derrick Lytle

she's heard plenty of complaints like Gheida's every month.

"People are saying dog walkers bring in huge groups of dogs and that many of them are vicious," said Beckmann, adding that residents are further infuriated because 311 doesn't accept complaints about dog-on-dog violence.

A 311 representative confirmed that the city helpline only responds to reports of

dog attacks on people, but couldn't explain why.

But professional dog walkers said the charges against them are untrue.

Sampson confessed that she often brings five or six dogs to the park, but vets her animals for personality problems before bringing them inside the dog run. She also says her dogs never fight with the other canines.

Keeping the peace among

her pooches is essential to staying in business.

"If the dogs come back to their owners with marks from fighting, you aren't going to be a dog walker for long," Sampson said.

Another professional dogwalker — who refused to give her name — admitted that she brings dogs to Dyker Beach Park from as far away as Park Slope, but said she hires helpers to manage the animals.



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Cart war could head to court



File photo by Elizabeth Graham

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

The city could find itself in court if it messes with a controversial halal cart that some Bay Ridge merchants are trying to boot out of the neighborhood, lawyers for the embattled food wagon said last Friday.

Lamis Deek, an attorney for the Middle Eastern Halal Cart and cart manager Sammy Kassen, threatened to sue the city if it goes forward with a proposal to turn Fifth Avenue and 86th Street into

Vendor says he'll sue city if he's kicked off Fifth Ave.

a cart-free zone — forcing the vendor to move from a favored and profitable location.

“If we have to take it to the courts, that’s where we’ll take it,” Deek said during a press conference held at the intersection that’s become a battleground between food vendors and brick-and-mortar businesses.

Deek claimed that Fifth

Avenue merchants have repeatedly harassed Kassen because he’s Middle Eastern — and claimed that the city has done nothing to stop it.

“He has dealt with epithets and physical threats, and the bullies in this neighborhood have continued to attack him,” Deek said.

Kassen said that a man leaving the Lone Star Bar

— whose owner, Tony Gentile, has led the effort to get the cart removed from Fifth Avenue — made a pistol gesture with his hand at him and his workers on May 10, telling them that they had to move.

The food cart manager also claimed that he overheard Gentile say that the Brooklyn-born Kassen was not an American and should leave the country.

The bar owner denied all the allegations, claiming that his concerns are strictly economic.

“I love the Middle Eastern community in this neighborhood,” Gentile said, adding that many of his customers are of Arab descent. “They want to play the race card because they know they’re wrong.”

The city’s Department of Small Business Services

is considering booting all carts from Bay Ridge after Deputy Commissioner Andrew Schwartz listened to a litany of food vendor complaints from Councilman Vincent Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) — who isn’t related to Tony Gentile — as well as Community Board 10 members and leaders of both the Fifth Avenue and 86th Street business improvement districts.

The civic and business leaders attending the meeting blasted vendors and sided with the owners of brick-and-mortar restaurants, who claim food carts get off easy on rent, fees, and ignore regulations.

Roger Desmond, the owner of the Fifth Avenue eatery Hinsch’s and a member of Tony Gentile’s Save Our Streets campaign — which stopped the Middle Eastern Halal Cart from opening on Fifth Avenue for two days by putting up tables at Kassen’s usual spot — said his beef was with the city favoring food wagons over neighborhood stores and restaurants, not the dealers of street meat themselves.

“They’re making this about race to skirt the real issue,” Desmond said.

Big Bill: There oughta be a law to grade carts

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

Public Advocate Bill DeBlasio greased the wheels of his mayoral campaign by jumping on the bandwagon of brick-and-mortar businesses in their ongoing beef with food carts, claiming that street vendors are enjoying fruits they haven’t sowed.

“The fact is right now that the weight of regulation falls on our traditional businesses,” the mayoral hopeful said at a meeting of the Bay Ridge Democrats, echoing the sentiments of Councilman Vincent Gentile (D-Bay Ridge), State Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge), and other restaurants and bars along Fifth Avenue, all of whom say that food carts have an unfair advantage over store-

front enterprises under existing city health codes.

City agencies spring surprise inspections on food wagons and traditional restaurants alike, but only the latter is required to post inspection grades in their windows, disgruntled merchants claim.

Gentile proposed legislation in March to grade mobile vendors, and met earlier this month with Department of Small Business Services Deputy Commissioner Andrew Schwartz, demanding that the city turn Fifth Avenue around 86th Street into a food cart-free zone.

DeBlasio called for more regulation of the mobile kitchens to keep future problems like the cold war between Middle Eastern Halal Cart op-

erator Sammy Kassen and Lone Star bar owner Tony Gentile — no relation to the councilman — from boiling over.

“We need to be careful in regards to where we allow food vendors to be placed,” DeBlasio said.

Critics of the Middle Eastern Halal Cart have been known to execute covert plans to displace Kassen’s gyro cart.

Back on March 22, Kassen’s cart was forced to relocate after two benches were mysteriously placed at his favorite hangout spot. No one ever copped to moving the benches, which remain bolted to the sidewalk.

The city will unveil its plan for Fifth Avenue and 86th Street in the coming weeks.



File photo by Bess Adler

A HIGHER POWER: Mayoral hopeful Bill DeBlasio is standing tall against food vendors.

CLAM ON RYE

Randazzo's opens Sheepshead Bay Road sub hub

BY DANIEL BUSH

Randazzo's Sandwich Spot is finally open for business.

Legendary Emmons Avenue seafood eatery Randazzo's Clam Bar opened its long-anticipated hoagie outpost on Sheepshead Bay Road last Thursday — joining a handful of neighborhood sandwich shop icons that could give the rookie delicatessen a run for its money.

The sub shop between E. 15th Street and E. 16th Street currently offers breakfast fare, about two dozen sandwiches priced at \$6.50, and seating for four — if you don't mind sitting at the counter.

Owner Joey Randazzo said he'll add two tables — and raise the cost of sandwiches to \$8.50 — later this month.

"I'm very happy about the support from the neighborhood," Randazzo said. "So far we're doing really well."

But to succeed, the sandwich shop will have to rely on more than it's good name.

Sheepshead Bay is home to several popular sandwich hubs, including Jimmy's on Sheepshead Bay Road, Basset Deli on Avenue X, Roll N' Roaster on Emmons Avenue, and Brennan & Carr on Nosstrand Avenue — not to mention the fast food Subway store a few doors down from Randazzo's.

Randazzo said he welcomes the competition.



MMM-MM: Courier taste-tester Daniel Bush rips into a tasty chicken cutlet sub at Randazzo's Sandwich Spot. Photo by Elizabeth Graham

"If people try my sandwiches they'll never go back to Subway," he boasted.

Randazzo announced plans to open a sandwich shop on Sheepshead Bay Road after losing a bid to open a new eatery on the Coney Island Boardwalk last year.

His competitors promised to fight tooth and nail to hold onto their customers.

"As long as the quality remains the same, our customers will keep coming here," Frank D'Antonio, a manager at the 50-year-old Basset Deli, told BrooklynDaily.com shortly after Randazzo's announcement.

Randazzo's Sandwich Spot is open from 7 am to 8 pm on weekdays, and 9 am to 8 pm on weekends.

Sandwich smackdown!

BY DANIEL BUSH

The Randazzo family, proud proprietors of the iconic Randazzo's Clam Bar on Emmons Avenue, has started slinging subs on Sheepshead Bay Road — setting up a lip-smacking smackdown against a neighborhood staple, the 74-year-old Jimmy's Famous Heros.

Our crack Courier sandwich team — heroes in their own right — put the budding rivalry to the taste test last week, and let their stomachs do the talking:

Jimmy's Famous Heros

1786 Sheepshead Bay Rd. between E. 15th and E. 16th streets Emmons Avenue

•**Pros:** Jimmy's hasn't changed much since it opened during the Great Depression. The deli specializes in tried-and-true classics that have helped it stay in business — and develop a big following — for more than seven decades.

•**Cons:** What you see is what you get. There's no grill, which means sandwiches are heated up in the microwave.

•**The sandwich:** We ordered a chicken cutlet sandwich — the closest thing to the "Bella." Jimmy's sandwich came with fresh mozzarella and "the works" — tomatoes, onions, shredded lettuce, salt, pepper, and a healthy sprinkling of oregano.

The sandwich was massive but not too filling, thanks to the extra veggies. It was \$10, pretty steep for a sub, but the price tag was worth it.

The verdict: Jimmy's Famous Heros. If deli lovers are willing to venture into uncharted sandwich territory (such as the "California Special," which boasts avocado and champagne dressing), Randazzo's will be a hit for years to come. But there's a reason why Jimmy's has been around forever: their sandwiches are just too good. Don't mess with a good thing.

Randazzo's Sandwich Spot

1520 Sheepshead Bay Rd. between E. 15th and E. 16th streets

•**Pros:** The clean and cozy deli-sized storefront offers 26 sandwiches with creative ingredient and names such as "Brooklyn South," "Cyclone" and "Abondonza." Randazzo's also has greater variety and popular modern features such as a make-your-own salad bar.

The subs cost \$6.50, but will jump to \$8.50 this week.

•**Cons:** The deli has four stools and no table seating, though owner Joe Randazzo says he plans to add two tables soon. The small space gets crowded quickly.

•**The sandwich:** We ordered the "Bella," a fried chicken cutlet sandwich grilled on the spot with fresh mozzarella, portabella mushrooms, roasted peppers, and balsamic dressing. The chicken was crispy, and the mushrooms added some nice texture and flavor. But, for \$8.50, the sub could have been bigger.

Felder: 'Super Jewish District' a myth

Former councilman will run for Midwood seat as a Democrat

BY ELI ROSENBERG

Simcha Felder is running for Midwood's new state senate seat, but the former Borough Park councilman-turned deputy comptroller says there's nothing super about it.

"Calling it a majority Jewish district is correct, but a 'super Jewish' district is something for the comic books," Felder said, regarding the nickname for the new political area that will include Borough Park, Ditmas Park, Kens-

ington, and Homecrest.

Albany re-mapped Brooklyn's political landscape to include the new district — which political watchdogs call a super Jewish district because it will oversee right-leaning Orthodox Jews who tend to vote Republican.

But Felder, who is running as a Democrat but considers himself a political free agent — and hasn't decided if he will caucus with Democrats or Republicans, who currently con-

trol the state senate, if he makes it to Albany — says these insiders couldn't be more incorrect.

"It is a myth," he said. "The Orthodox community has a history of voting for candidates they feel will be most helpful in delivering resources and services to their community. The political party is irrelevant."

So far, Felder is running unopposed in the September Democratic primary, and he says he wants to keep it that way.

"I'm hoping, with god's help, that I don't have an opponent," he said. "But anybody who runs for office has to assume that they will have an opponent and I'm prepared for that."

If he wins the primary, Felder will most likely have a Republican challenger. Real estate attorney Nachman Caller said he would run for the new seat and some political watchdogs say attorney David Storobin would run for the new seat if he loses



READY TO RUN: Simcha Felder has set his sights on the new Midwood state senate seat.

his never-ending race to replace prison-bound ex-pol Carl Kruger. Storobin's March 20 special election

against Councilman Lew Fidler (D-Marine Park) is currently languishing into its third month.

If elected, Felder said he wants to secure tax credits for families who send their kids to Yeshivas and other private schools.

Felder may not be sure who he'll side with once he gets to Albany, but says he identifies with the Democratic cause.

"Running as a Democrat is a means towards winning this senate seat," he said. "But ultimately whatever party is in the majority at that point is who I will work with, because that's what I'm going to have to do to — I won't say bring home the bacon — but bring home the pastrami."

SHEEPSHEAD WATER FOUL

Residents say Bay stinks to the high heavens after a downpour

BY DANIEL BUSH

Sheepshead Bay stinks to high heavens, say nose-holding residents who want the city to fumigate the foul-smelling waterway as soon as possible.

Manhattan Beach resident Mike Baglivo and others claim that the bay smells disgusting after heavy rains, when the city's over-taxed sewer system overflows and discharges storm water and feces-filled household waste into the bay.

"Sheepshead Bay smells terrible after storms," said Baglivo, who lives a block from the water. "The city needs to clean this up."

Baglivo isn't the only resident who says the bay could use some help.

"I had guests stay over who complained about the smell," said Joyce Arberman, who lives a short distance from the water. "I never noticed, but maybe I don't have a strong enough sense of smell."

Yet others dismissed the claims, saying the water quality has actually improved over time.

"It's probably cleaner now than it's ever been," said a manager at the Stella



STINK BOMB: Mike Baglivo says Sheepshead Bay smells terrible after rain storms because the city's aging sewer system dumps untreated water into the inlet. Photo by Elizabeth Graham

Maris Fishing Station — a decades-old bait and tackle shop on Emmons Avenue near E. 27th Street — who asked not to be identified. "I don't think there's any problem."

Theresa Scavo, the chairwoman of Community Board 15, said the issue hasn't come up.

"I haven't received any complaints," Scavo said.

The swan-filled bay, which stretches from West End Avenue to Knapp Street, is a popular fishing destination. But the water is often littered with plastic bottles, wrappers, and other debris from residents who live nearby and shop at stores along Emmons Avenue, residents say.

The Department of Environmental Protection did not return calls seeking comment about residents' complaints.

The agency has spent millions in an attempt to reduce the flow of storm water and human waste into the city's waterways.

The agency also opened a \$404-million sewage treatment facility last March designed to protect nearby Jamaica Bay from waste water overflows.

They'll have nun of it!

Planned Eastern European bistro takes heat over hours

BY AARON SHORT

A landlord wants to replace a Greenpoint dive bar with a Hungarian restaurant, but neighbors and nuns from a school on the block say Newell Street is not the place for nightlife.

Peter Jakab envisions a high-end cafe dishing out Central European cuisine at the site of the raucous Continental bar, a venue whose lease expired last December.

"I want to raise up the level of the tenant, clean up the place, and make it something the neighborhood would be proud of," said Jakab, who also owns the Manhattan Avenue venue St. Vitus Bar.

But neighbors are wary about any business that serves alcohol steps from the St. Stanislaus Kostka convent and school.

"It's not a good idea to be located across the street from our homes, a convent, a Catholic School, and a church!" said Newell Street resident Agnes Freulich. "This is a children's zone!"

Two-dozen anxious Greenpoint residents accepted Jakab's offer to serve only beer and wine — not spirits — and cap capacity at 74 people at a Monday meeting at St. Stanislaus Kostka School on Driggs Avenue.

But neighbors balked at his request to keep the restaurant open seven days a week and close at midnight on weekdays, urging Jakab to stop serving diners at 9 pm and shut down by 10 pm. Jakab rejected that deal — at least for now.

"I may accept that but I have a business I'm trying to run," he said.

"There have been 90 years worth of renovations and build-outs on the site, and we need to make our expenses back," he said.

Jakab's proposed Hungarian restaurant isn't the first business to take heat from neighbors — Newell Street residents had lots of problems with the previous pub that operated in the storefront.

The state granted a liquor license to the Continental in 1994, before laws prohibited bars from opening within 200 feet of schools or houses of worship.

The watering hole attracted the neighborhood's Polish population but only opened three days per week. Neighbors and nuns blamed the bar for nearly 18 years of brawls, car break-ins, and lewd behavior on the block — claiming cops

did little to help curb the problems.

"One year there was a huge fight across the street, we called the cops and they asked, 'Do either of the men have a gun or a knife?'" said Sister Joanne Goscicki.

"The patron was smacking another man's head against the sidewalk! We realized calling the police was not going to help," she said.

Jakab promised that his new business venture would be nothing like the Continental, but some residents said the proposed Hungarian eatery could turn out being worse if it operates every day.

"You're going to prolong the suffering that these people have experienced," said Ryan Buck.

The planned eatery would not be able to serve li-



THEY'RE NOT HAPPY: Sisters Colette and Dorothea, of St. Stanislaus Kostka parish, are trying to keep a restaurant from staying open late and serving food seven days per week on Newell Street.

Photo by Aaron Short / Community Newspaper Group

quor because of its proximity to a church and a school, but beer and wine could be on the menu, pending state approval.

A State Liquor Authority spokesman said that he has not received the Newell Street application, but promised officials would closely scrutinize any application located near a church or a school.

The conflict is one of several neighborhood campaigns against restaurant noise.

Residents successfully opposed a proposed nightclub on N. First Street last month, and Community Board 1 has pressured several restaurants to remove illegal benches and outdoor tables from sidewalks in its War on Brunch.



Barclays Center Seating Chart

Yellow	\$156
Light Blue	\$106
Red	\$81
Orange	\$71
Dark Blue	\$61
Purple	\$41
Green	\$31
Grey	\$19.50
Dark Grey	\$14.50*



SEATING DOWN: Hockey fans won't be able to sit behind one of the goals during a preseason game at the Barclays Center — meaning if the Islanders do move to Brooklyn they may play in the only NHL arena without wrap-around seating.

Image courtesy of Barclayscenter.com

ARENA U-TURN

Horseshoe seating for hockey puts arena on thin ice

BY DANIEL BUSH

The Barclays Center will debut an unconventional horseshoe-shaped seating configuration for a preseason hockey game this fall — raising questions about whether the undersized arena could truly accommodate an NHL franchise.

A dozen sections behind one of the goals will be closed off when the Islanders take on the hated New Jersey Devils on Oct. 2, according to a seating chart that shows what hockey might look like in a \$1-billion arena that would be the smallest stadium in the National Hockey League and the only arena without wrap-around seating.

The Islanders are in the hunt for a new home when its lease at the Nassau Coliseum ends in 2015 — but the team could be forced to relocate sooner if an asbestos cleanup at the remote, 40-year-old venue stretches beyond the start of the hockey season this fall.

A deal with the league requires the Islanders to play on Long Island, which includes Brooklyn at its western tip. But a move to the future home of the Brooklyn Nets is anything but a sure shot, considering the 18,000-seat Barclays Center can only fit 14,500 fans during hockey games — and none be-

hind one of the goals.

Still, some sports experts say the under-construction arena on Flatbush and Atlantic avenues remains the leading option for the squad, claiming the cramped quarters and odd seating arrangement may benefit a team that only averaged 11,000 spectators per game last year.

“It eliminates some very viable seats especially in the lower half of the venue,” said Ray Katz, a managing partner of Source1 Sports and a Flatbush native who teaches sports management at Columbia University. “But it wouldn’t be the worst thing in the world for that team to have limited seating. It would still be a great thing for Brooklyn.”

The team could even turn lemons into iced lemonade by using some of the arena’s dead space to sell ads and merchandise, Katz said.

“There’s other ways to generate revenue from that side of the arena,” said Katz.

But the horseshoe-shaped seating configuration might make the stadium look empty on TV — and its effects could be felt on the ice as well.

During games, one goalie would face fans across the rink

while the other would look out onto an empty space behind the opposing net — similar to the center field backdrop in baseball — that could cut down on distractions, said sports consultant Michael Neuman.

“They’ll have to deal with any limitations the Barclays Center has,” said Neuman, the managing partner of Scout Sports and Entertainment, a consulting agency.

Nets spokesman Barry Baum confirmed the seating arrangement, but declined to provide further details.

“We have to see how all the sight lines are and then we’ll move forward,” Baum said.

Arena developer Bruce Ratner has long courted the Islanders. Hockey was originally considered for the arena but the plans were scuttled after Barclays Center architect Frank Gehry was fired in 2009 and his proposed design was scrapped in an attempt to cut costs.

In January, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said he found it hard to believe that a deal couldn’t be hammered out to keep the Islanders at Nassau Coliseum. But last month Bettman told the AP that the Barclays Center is a viable alternative.

‘Parking ring’ is real thing, doorman says

BY NATALIE O’NEILL

A doorman at a posh Prospect Park West building has cracked the code of secrecy about a parking spot-saving scheme, saying he’s forced to abandon the unwritten ethics of the street because parking in Park Slope is so competitive.

A concierge admitted his involvement in what neighbors call a “parking ring,” telling this newspaper that when he moves cars for tenants on street cleaning days, he intentionally leaves un-parkable half-spaces in front of or behind the vehicles. When it comes time to move another tenant’s car, he inches the first vehicle forward — creating a parking spot where none existed before.

“I just use my car to hold a spot for them,” explained Vick Narain, a doorman at 44 Prospect Park West. “The minute there’s a space, it will be gone within five minutes; someone’s always looking for parking around here.”

Narain said he also saves street spaces for tenants in his building by standing in the road on Tuesday mornings, when alternate-side parking rules are enforced.

The Seinfeld-style spot-snagging strategy angers already stressed-out motorists, who say the doormen’s antics — and the neighborhood’s larger parking crunch — should warrant action from city officials.

“It’s not a joke or sensational thing,” said Maura Collins, a Park Slope resident. “It’s a real problem.”

Other doormen said they sometimes park cars for tips, but claim they never spot-save.

“I’m just doing people a favor — if they want to give me a tip they can,” said George, a door-



Photo by Elizabeth Graham

SPOT OF BOTHER: A Park Slope concierge (not the one pictured above) says finding parking for tenants is so hard he saves spots for himself by intentionally wasting curb space.

man at 27 Prospect Park West. “It’s not like I’m charging \$100.”

Residents on nearby Montgomery Place have for months accused doormen of running a “parking ring,” which is not actually illegal, at least according to written law.

“It’s not criminal — but it’s certainly not very neighborly,” Detective Cheryl Crispin said in February.

A superintendent at 27 Prospect Park refuted allegations of spot-saving, claiming doormen “are just helping out four or five people” by moving double-parked cars to keep traffic flowing during street cleaning days.

But some Park Slope drivers are fighting what they consider a serious parking problem: holding block association meetings and even anonymously issuing homemade parking “citations” to drivers who leave too much wasted curb-space in front of or behind their cars.

The whole thing may seem fit for a sit-com — but not everybody is laughing.

“Sometimes you spend 30 or 45 minutes driving around looking for a spot,” said Carolyn Byrd. “It gets really contentious.”



Photo by Elizabeth Graham

ROAD HYSTERIA?: Drivers such as James Beacher say parking near Prospect Park West is a nightmare — and some blame neighborhood doormen.



IT'S WAR!: (Above) First Sgt. Jan Vermeulen gives new privates a taste of what to expect in basic training. (Top right) Future soldiers test their mettle.



Recruits get ready for basic training

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

A new crop of New York privates got a preview of Army life at Fort Hamilton base on May 12.

The six companies of recruits — one each for Manhattan, the Bronx, Staten Island, and Queens, and two from Brooklyn — and their families came to the city's only army base on Saturday for a day of competitions and exhibitions to prepare them

for basic training and beyond. Army spokeswoman Emily Gockley said the event let the future soldiers see what was in store for them in the coming weeks, and reminded them of why they signed up in the first place.

“It makes them more familiar with what it’ll be like when they get into basic training, and introduces their friends and families to what life in the Army is like

and the benefits of enlisting are,” said Gockley.

The recruits battled it out in pull-up, sit-up, push-up, and tug-of-war contests; ran in a relay race; and practiced their grenade-throwing skills with water balloons. They also got to check out the Hummer H3 land vehicle, a Black Hawk helicopter, and the Fort Hamilton barracks, as well as check out their post-military educational opportunities

and hear about their new benefits from Veterans Affairs.

Captain Nick Kolodziey, who helped organize the event, said the future soldiers would all ship out before August — now with a stronger sense of cooperation and commitment to serving their nation.

“It reminds them, ‘you’re part of something bigger than yourself now,’” the soldier said.



YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW: (Left) Gus Figueras, the son of a future soldier, checks out the controls of a military helicopter at an open house for new enlistees at Fort Hamilton while (right) raw recruit Monica Hall practices her grenade toss.

Photos by Arthur De Gaeta

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DRESSED TO THE NINES: (Above) Shangkar Prabhu and Sangeetha Kamath came ready to party as surgeons, physicians, nurses, and guests helped raise money for the Park Slope hospital (right).

Photos by Stefano Giovannini



Methodist Hospital gala rocks out

BY DANIEL BUSH

Rock legends didn't show up to the New York Methodist Hospital's annual gala — but their backup musicians did.

The Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp All-Stars — led by Aerosmith producer Mark Hudson, Monkees drummer Sandy Gennaro, Bad Company guitarist Simon Kirke, and Utopia bassist Kassim Sulton — jammed out before a crowd of several hundred

surgeons, physicians, nurses, and guests at the hospital's annual star-studded fundraising party at the Brooklyn Museum on May 12.

The borough's elite even got to rub elbows with the performers before they took the stage, but the party wasn't all fun and games.

New York Methodist Hospital CEO Mark Mundy said donations from the event help cover the costs of the Seventh

Avenue hospital's robotic surgery program, new lung cancer screening program, women's pelvic surgery program, and other health services.

"Each year I wonder if there will be any 'new' good news," Mundy said. "But our hospital community continues to [succeed]."

The hospital also recognized board members for their leadership and service.

Charles O'Neill, a member of the hospital's board of trustees, received the James Monroe Buckley Award. Emil Baccash, the president of New York Methodist Hospital's medical board, received the Lewis S. Pilcher Award — and surprised the audience by crooning Van Morrison's classic rock song "Moondance."

The event raised \$600,000 for the hospital.

Coney

Continued from cover

plechase-Fun Place which will offer a kiddie park and sideshow, he said.

The Coney Island businessman says the 15 to 20 rides — which will include the MegaWhirl, a new spinning bumper car-style ride — will offer visitors to the People's Playground a more authentic experience.

"I want to make it affordable for families that belong in Coney Island," said Ciarcia, who closed Cha-Cha's Bar last November after auctioning off its contents. "My park won't be a rich South Beach ex-

travaganza like the one the city wants to turn Coney Island into."

Entrance to the park will be free, and rides will cost \$3 to \$5, Ciarcia said.

The prices will be on par with Central Amusements's two-year-old Luna Park, which sells tickets on swipe cards and charges between \$3 and \$6 for rides. Ciarcia's park will be cheaper than the Scream Zone, which charges between \$7 and \$25 for amusements.

Like Luna Park, the new fun zone will open on Memorial Day and close on Halloween.

Cha-Cha's, a beloved watering hole known for its live music and gritty

old school Coney Island feel, was a member of the "Boardwalk Eight" — businesses that fought to stay open after Central Amusements, the company the city picked to handle its properties, petitioned to boot them from the iconic walkway.

Ruby's Bar and Paul's Daughter were allowed to return, but Cha-Cha's and four other shops were evicted last year.

Ciarcia thumbed his nose at the slap in the face by opening a restaurant on Surf Avenue. He then went to Coney Island's other major landlord, developer Joe Sitt, and inked a deal to turn one of his empty lots into the amusement park.



CHA-CHA-CHANGES: The beloved Coney Island bar Cha-Cha's got booted from the Boardwalk last year, but bar owner John Ciarcia is back — opening a new bar at this space and a new amusement park with rides and a nightclub at the People's Playground.

Photo by Steve Solomonson



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City rechristens Sheepshead, Dewey

New names for embattled high schools won't change anything, city critics charge

BY DANIEL BUSH

The city is overhauling two failing Southern Brooklyn high schools — starting with their names!

Last week The Department of Education rechristened Sheepshead Bay High School as the Academy of Career Exploration of Sheepshead Bay.

It also changed John Dewey High School's name to the Shorefront High School of Arts and Sciences at John Dewey Campus — taking the first steps towards revamping the struggling institutions since the city enrolled them into a controversial federal turnaround program last month.

Department of Education officials have yet to fire up to half of the teachers and staff at each of the two struggling high schools by July 1, which is required to get \$1.5 million in federal

funds city officials say will help get the schools back on track.

Critics of the program dismissed the new names. The schools will be gutted no matter what they're called, they said.

"It's not about the names," said Bruce Sherman, a Sheepshead Bay high guidance counselor. "What the city did is despicable."

But others were glad the new names would still resonate with both students and alumni.

"At least they left John Dewey in the name," said Stuart Handman, a member of Community Education Council 21 and vocal opponent of the turnaround program.

"Alumni at these big high schools associate with the names," Handman said.

Dewey was put on the state's list of chronically



THEY'RE GOING TO NEED A BIGGER SIGN: The city has renamed John Dewey High School into the Shorefront High School of Arts and Sciences at John Dewey Campus, the first phase towards rebuilding the struggling school as this composite photo shows. The next phase will be to fire half of the school's teachers and staff.

File photo by Paul Martinka

low-achieving schools after receiving Cs on its last three city-issued report cards.

Sheepshead Bay High,

which also made the list, dropped from a C grade in 2010 to a D last year.

Supporters claimed that

the schools showed other signs of improvement — Sheepshead Bay High's graduation rate has risen

by 17 percent since 2003, backers said

Parent Coordinator Salvatrice Shipone added that hallways were cleaner, and student brawling was down.

"We've been improving every year," Shipone said. "Is it perfect? No. But we've come a long way."

But the city has long argued that new teachers and staff will help put them on the road to recovery.

In April, the city Panel for Education Policy voted to remake the schools, despite opposition from parents who said the schools should be given another chance.

The Department of Education is overhauling 22 other city schools, but agreed to spare some that were facing closure, including William E. Grady Career and Technical High School in Brighton Beach.

Midwood plaza plan dead in the water

The plan's main neighborhood sponsor is pulling out, saying it aimed to unite, not divide

BY ELI ROSENBERG

A controversial plan to turn a small Midwood street into a pedestrian plaza is dead in the water now that a development corporation backing the proposal has pulled out of the deal, sources close to the project say.

The plan, which called for replacing cars on Elm Avenue between E. 15th Street and Avenue M with tables and chairs, crumbled under complaints from Midwood's Orthodox Jewish community.

Orthodox leaders claimed the city disrespected them by scheduling a key meeting about the plaza within days of Passover and failed to consult the Hatzolah Ambulance Corps, an Orthodox volunteer ambulance service, to see if closing the block to traffic would affect emer-

gency response times.

Members from the Midwood Development Corporation — which had agreed to clean and maintain the proposed pedestrian plaza, which the city wanted to call Dorman Square — said they did not want to go ahead with the plan if it meant dividing their neighborhood.

"There was too much op-

position from people who didn't like the idea or had concerns, and we decided it was not appropriate to go forward," said Linda Goodman, the director of the Midwood Development Corporation.

Without anyone pledging to maintain the plaza, the city has no choice but to shelve the project, a neighborhood source close to the

Department of Transportation's negotiations told Brooklyn Weekly.

"The city isn't going to be able to do this without the support of a private organization," the source said.

City officials held multiple community meetings over the last few months about the plaza in an attempt to win over upset

neighborhood residents.

The Department of Transportation argued that the plaza — which is only a short distance from the Avenue M subway station — would be a huge boon for businesses on the shopping strip and would close a dangerous car slip lane.

Elm Avenue feeds into Avenue M, an unfavorable

street design that merchants say causes many motor vehicle and pedestrian accidents.

Yet many balked at the city's proposal, claiming that closing Elm Avenue would cause traffic backups throughout the neighborhood.

Others said the plaza would attract nothing but hooligans and vagrants.

Bicycle Fetish Day celebrates Bklyn's riding obsession

BY NATALIE O'NEILL

It's a fetish fest — but the only chains you'll find are the ones attached to bicycles.

Two-wheelers and the people who love them will hit the streets on May 26 for Bicycle Fetish Day, a block party-style celebration of Brooklyn's bike obsession.

Organizer Matt Levy said the event, now in its eighth year, is a chance for cyclists to embrace the distinct subcultures within the bike boom — fixie fanatics, weekend warriors, BMXers, and vintage roadsters among them.

"We like to think of it as a cross-cultural get together," Levy said.

The Williamsburg art museum City Reliquary will hold a day of spirited contests for bikers of all stripes with prizes and serious bragging rights going to whoever brings the "Best Vintage Bike," "Best Ugly Bike" and "Best Mutant Bike" — a Frankenstein-style ride built out of several different bicy-

cles. Cyclists can also check out bike advocacy literature, a grill manned by City Reliquary, and lots of art and bike paraphernalia.

Bicycle Fetish Day [Meet at Havemeyer Street between Hope and Grand Streets in Williamsburg], May 26, noon—6pm. Free. Visit www.cityreliquary.org.

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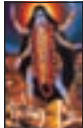
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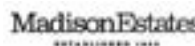
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Deep Tissue Laser Therapy does not require the use of drugs or surgery, and there are no known side effects or risks that may occur with other forms of treatment. In addition, it can often achieve results faster than other treatment modalities. During the treatment the patient will feel a deep soothing warmth. This pleasant sensation reassures the patient that the laser is stimulating cellular activity.

Lasers have made a remarkable contribution toward healthcare, allowing practitioners to treat a variety of conditions with the speed of light. As a non-invasive tool, the laser is particularly effective for the efficient treatment of soft tissue injuries, sprains and strains, and a variety of other ailments and pain.

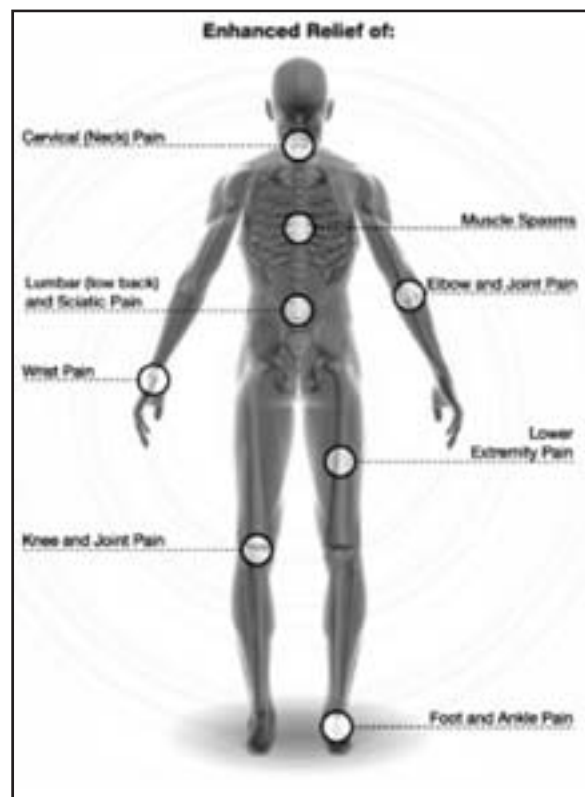
Low Level Laser enhances metabolic activity at the cellular level, without generating tissue-damaging heat.

Some of the benefits of laser treatment include:

- Fast reduction of pain
- Improvement of nerve function
- Reduction of muscle spasms.
- Speeding of tissue repair
- Development of muscle tissue and collagen
- Reduction of inflammation, swelling and scar tissue formation
- Pain reduction immediately

The Class IV laser, approved by the FDA in 2006, packs a punch while remaining non-invasive. The Class IV laser is capable of reaching depths of 6 to 9 inches, with a treatment beam of up to 3 inches.

Because the Class IV laser reaches deep into the tissues, it is ideal for treating sprains and strains, arthritis, calcified muscles and fibrotic adhesions, as well as intra-articular tissues inside of the joints. Its far-reaching capabilities also allow the Class IV to achieve results in less time than most cold lasers currently used today. With treatment times of as little as 5 to 15 minutes, the Class IV laser allows many conditions to vastly improve within a few visits. Oftentimes, patients find immediate, soothing relief that improves with each treatment.



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"I started treatments with Deep Tissue Laser after I had injured my neck in a car accident. The treatments allowed me to return to work much more quickly than anyone had expected, considering the pain I was in. During the treatments, all I felt was a warming sensation as the laser was moved across the injured area where all my pain was. After just three short treatments, my pain was almost totally gone. Thanks, Doctor!"

- Jason B.

"The Deep Tissue Laser treatments I received dramatically helped my recovery from a broken leg. Not only did it help reduce the swelling, the pain relief I experienced was nothing short of miraculous. My orthopedic doctor was amazed with the results."

- John M.

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