

Bortnick's traffic control

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

The intersection of 86th Street and Fourth Avenue is about to become the site of another collision — between the Department of Transportation and Community Board 10 member Allen Bortnick.

The outspoken member of the board's Traffic and Transportation Committee has released an alternative plan to the agency's own designs for the intersection, which are the centerpiece of the city's controversial vision for overhauling Fourth Avenue.

Bortnick blasted the department's plans — and the people who drew them up — as certain to wreak havoc on the roadway.

"They don't know what they're doing. These people are complete idiots," fumed the fossil-fueled firebrand. "They are going to create traffic back-up like you are not going to believe."

The city's proposal entails a concrete refuge island on the Verrazano Bridge side of the junction and a sidewalk pedestrian fence stretching from 86th Street halfway to 87th Street on

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TRAMPLE-INE: Kids had a blast hopping on trampolines at the Nickelodeon Worldwide Day of Play in Prospect Park (above), but park lovers say the event trashed their turf (right).

Photos by Stefano Giovannini

NICK AT BLIGHT

Park advocates: Cable station's kids day ruined green space

BY NATALIE MUSUMECI

A Nickelodeon extravaganza in Prospect Park last weekend further wrecked a massive meadow in the heart of Brooklyn's backyard, claim park regulars who say that the beloved field has endured too much abuse from big-ticket events.

The cable channel's free, ticketed Worldwide Day of Play event drew 35,000 excited kids and their families to the park's Nethermead field last Saturday, but the rumpus left the lawn covered with litter and scarred by bare swatches of dirt, according to park preservationists.

"They did a number on the Nethermead yet again," said Pros-

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Lamb-chopped!

BY COLIN MIXSON

Is this Mill Island, or the Daytona 500?

A \$400,000 Lamborghini was torn in half after it collided with another car and then slammed into a wall on E. 66th Street, and homeowners on the block say it's time the city does something about rampant speed-

ing in the neighborhood.

"I don't want my kids going outside and walking down E. 66th. I'm afraid they might not come back," said Michael Yuryev, whose two surveillance cameras recorded footage of the spectacular accident, which he subsequently posted on

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NO GO: Rev. Eddie Brumfield spoke out and voted against the plan.

Photo by Steve Solomonson

Panel spanks Marty's Childs play

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

Borough President Markowitz's controversial plan to convert Coney Island's historic Childs Building into a concert venue was trashed by residents during a public hearing for the second time in a week on Monday night.

Community Board 13 smacked down the Beep's

latest vision for an new amphitheater after a raucous public hearing on Sept. 23.

The neighborhood panel voted 14-7 against the proposal, which would knock a hole in the wall of the landmarked former restaurant on W. 21st Street and set a stage inside — then put a 5,100-capacity seating bowl

in the adjoining lot. Seven board members abstained.

Nearly a dozen Coney Island residents came to speak out against the envisioned arena, which would provide a permanent home for the Beep's summer concert series — and, according to critics, bring noise, traffic

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Drug rehab center suffers withdrawal – of approval

State backtracks and blocks new clinic

BY COLIN MIXSON

The state is having second thoughts about First Steps.

The Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services has withdrawn its initial approval for First Steps to Recovery, a drug rehabilitation center, to relocate to a Sheepshead Bay apartment building, months after the agency gave the clinic the go ahead to renovate the office space in preparation to move in.

Assemblyman Steve Cymbrowitz (D-Sheepshead Bay) is claiming total victory in his campaign to block the rehab clinic.

"The controversial drug treatment center proposed for ... Sheepshead Bay is now history," Cymbrowitz said in a press release.

Psychologist Igor Beregnoi, the owner of First Steps, had gotten "contingent approval" from the state agency when he began preparing to move his drug-counseling practice from its current location on Brighton 12th Street to the E. 21st Street apartment building between Jerome and Voorhies avenues — despite a Community Board 15 hearing where locals spoke out against the proposal last year.

Community residents complained that the building was home to families and children who would be exposed to Beregnoi's presumably seedy clientele.

"You can see children's toys out on the terraces of the building," said Cymbrowitz. "The siting is horrendous and doesn't make any sense."

As Beregnoi was busy renovating the former doctor's office on the building's ground floor, Cymbrowitz was moving against the business with the help of CB15 chairwoman Theresa Scavo. In July, the lawmaker called a meeting with state officials that resulted in a stop-work order to halt Be-



REHAB REJECTION: (Above) Stewart Gross - who lives at this E. 21st Street apartment that a drug abuse treatment center wants to move into - is relieved the state regulator blocked the move at the behest of Assemblyman Steve Cymbrowitz (right).

Photo by Steve Solomonson

Beregnoi's renovations.

Scavo described the meeting as unpleasant for the representatives from the state agency.

"We sat down with OASAS and the city health department and tried to figure out who dropped the ball and how these people got okayed," she said.

Following the state revoking their "contingent approval," Beregnoi still had hopes that his growing drug counseling business, which he claims has a clientele consisting mostly of older, Russian-speaking, Southern Brooklyn alcoholics, would eventually receive approval from the state agency, which has the final say in permitting rehabilitation practices.



Now that agency has ruled against the psychologist, however, Beregnoi's efforts to expand to the E. 21st Street location seem to have been for naught.

The residents of that building, on the other hand, are happy that their nightmare visions of a drug-fueled crime wave will not become a reality.

"If it does go through, you'll see a big change," resident Stewart Gross said, prior to the state's recent decision. "You'll see crime, a lot of crime, and homeless people. You can't have this in New York next to residential buildings."

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Man found dead in P'Park

BY NATALIE MUSUMECI

A 50-year-old man was found dead in Prospect Park on Sunday night, police said.

Cops found the body of the man, whose name has not been released, lying in a wooded area directly behind the park's Litchfield Villa, just off of Prospect Park West between Fourth and Fifth streets, at 10:25 pm, authorities said.

Investigators responding to a 911 call found the man unconscious in back of the historic mansion and he was pronounced dead at the scene, officials said.

No arrests have yet been made and an investigation into the death is ongoing, cops said.



GRISLY FIND: On Monday morning police and a forensics team were analyzing the scene where a 50-year-old man was found dead on Sunday.

Photo by Elizabeth Graham

On Monday morning, police and a forensics team were analyzing the scene where the man's body was discovered. The Medical Examiner's Office will try to determine the cause of death.



BLOOD ON THE STREET: A sport utility vehicle and a motorcycle collided on Third Avenue between 69th Street and Ovington Avenue on Sept. 21.

Photo by Mark Mellone

Biker and driver crash on 3rd Ave.

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

The streets are running red in Bay Ridge.

A motorcycle slammed into the side of a sport utility vehicle on Third Avenue on Sept. 21 — marking the third crash to bloody the area's pavement in two weeks.

Police said the driver of the larger vehicle attempted an illegal U-turn at 4:08 pm between Ovington Avenue and 69th Street. The biker collided with the passenger door, and — according to eyewitnesses — briefly wound up underneath the gas-guzzler while it was still in motion.

"He drove a few feet before they got him to stop," said Arlene Rutuelo, owner of nearby Nordic Delicacies.

Rutuelo described a horrific scene, as the biker lay on the street with his helmet smashed and neck broken.

"It was horrible, and that should never happen along these thoroughfares," said Rutuelo.

Other local business

owners echoed Rutuelo's account.

"The guy was laid out, there was blood everywhere," said Sam Dabas, owner of the Family Store next door. "It looked horrible."

An ambulance rushed the motorcyclist to Lutheran Medical Center in serious condition, while police issued the driver of the sport utility vehicle with three summonses.

A hit-and-run driver struck 14-year-old Jackson McLeer at 86th Street and Fourth Avenue on Sept. 11. The teen suffered a broken hip and a lacerated liver. A pick-up truck and a minivan collided at 75th Street and 13th Avenue in nearby Dyker Heights on Sept. 17 — sending the truck crashing into a nearby bus stop, where it struck and killed a 71-year-old man.

Rutuelo and Dabas both recalled another motorcycle accident occurring just a block away less than a month ago, though neither could not say what the cause was.

Child struck down by van in Midwood

BY COLIN MIXSON

A man driving a speeding van mowed down a 12-year-old boy crossing Bedford Avenue on Tuesday night, sending the boy to the hospital in critical condition.

Police were called to the scene near Avenue M at 7:20 pm, where they found the young victim clinging to life.

The driver stayed at the scene and even spoke to witnesses, who described him as visibly shaken from the accident.

"He told me he was the driver," said Sherman Kahn, who lives a block away on E. 26th Street. "He was shook up."

Kahn also described long skid marks leading up to the accident, which he estimated were between 40 and 50 feet long.

The driver received two summonses following the accident — for speeding and driving with an expired license.

The collision investigation squad was called to the scene to conduct a full investigation. The specialized highway patrol unit typically investigates accidents in which a person has been killed or appears likely to die.

Council candidate Chaim Deutsch said he spoke with the father of the victim the next morning, however, and was told that the boy's condition has improved since Tuesday night.



MOWED DOWN: Police investigate the scene at Bedford Avenue in Midwood where a 12-year-old boy was struck by a motorist.

Photo by Steve Solomonson

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COLOR IN HER CHEEKS: Two-year-old Holly Didner got her face painted by Danielle Porter during the opening celebration of PS 118 on Sept. 21.
Photo by Stefano Giovannini

Slopers inaugurate school after strife

PS 118 parents bounce back from rezoning

BY NATALIE MUSUMECI

A new Park Slope elementary school opened this month, just in time to take in kids cut out of two prestigious neighborhood schools by a controversial redistricting.

Parents said the opening of PS 118 on Eighth Street at Fourth Avenue is a breath of fresh air after they failed to stop last year's rezoning of District 15, which dashed their hopes of filling coveted seats in PS 321 and PS 107 with their children. Now, with classes under way and the new school officially christened at a ribbon-cutting ceremony last Saturday, PS 118 backers say that the education there is so good, they do not feel like they are missing out on anything.

"We're very enthusiastic," said Park Slope dad Matt Didner, whose 4-year-old daughter Natalie started pre-kindergarten at the school in the former St. Thomas Aquinas building two weeks ago. "Because of the small nature of the school, the children are going to be given more individual attention."



NEW SCHOOL: Park Slope's PS 118 was created last year during the controversial rezoning plan that shrunk areas that fed into two of the neighborhood's most beloved schools.

Photo by Stefano Giovannini

Didner was one of many parents who had their hearts set on one of the two prized schools but, once neighborhood education officials approved the redistricting last November, turned their efforts towards supporting the new school. PS 118 already has 86 kids enrolled in kindergarten and pre-kindergarten, according to the school's principal.

"It feels like the school

has been around for a while," principal Elizabeth Garraway said. "The teachers are really teaching, the kids are learning, and people are collaborating."

Garraway worked as an assistant principal at the sought-after PS 321 for the past eight years. At her new job, she said she had a tough time getting parents to accept the reality of redistricting.

"It was a rocky start," she said. "Parents were apprehensive — they wanted PS 321."

PS 118 incorporates Spanish into every subject and will add two classes each year, ultimately housing 300-plus students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, according to Garraway.

Parents and school officials named the institution the Maurice Sendak Community School in honor of the late, Bensonhurst-born children's author and illustrator Maurice Sendak, who is best known for the book "Where the Wild Things Are."

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Save the Schnitzel!

Weekend benefit to fund beer hall repairs

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

Forget Oktoberfest — celebrate Schnitztemberfest this weekend by raising a stein to save Bay Ridge's own German beer hall!

The city says that Fifth Avenue's Schnitzel Haus needs \$70,000 in renovations to meet building codes, and the owners are asking the neighborhood for a little *freundlichkeit* to help them bear the costs.

"It's turning into a financial nightmare for us," said Fred Urban, who bought the building between 73rd and 74th streets seven years ago.

Urban said he and his wife, Amber, were inexperienced at the time and did not hire an inspector to check if the building was up to code. He said that neither the bank nor the title company warned them that the previous owner's conversion of a second-floor office into a dining room, an extension built in the back, and the relocation of the kitchen into the basement were all done without the necessary permits.

"Nobody ever said, 'hey, there's a problem here,'" Urban said.

When the Urbans decided to make some repairs upstairs last year, a city inspector slapped the building with a slew of citations, and forced the couple to close the second-floor dining room. To save their beloved beers and brats, the Urbans decided to hold a fund-raising *feier* — and asked some longtime musical friends for some help.



PLAYING FOR SCHNITZEL: From left, John Lepore, Paul Cassone, Alfred Urban, Richard Urban, Phil Fahey, Matt D'Emic, Ariel, 8, and Heidi, 6, are fighting to save Bay Ridge's Schnitzel Haus with a fund-raiser on Sunday.

Photo by Elizabeth Graham

Regular performers at the eatery said they were more than happy to help out the Urbans, who provided a unique place for them to play.

"The Schnitzel Haus is a little different, and it's really special to me," said John Lepore, half of the singer-songwriter duo Whippoorwill.

Lepore said the Urbans created a space where he and his friend Paul Cassone could sing and strum original acoustic tunes, something hard to find in Bay Ridge — almost as hard to find as au-

thentic German cuisine.

"They've made Paul and I feel really, really comfortable there, and anything we can do to help them out, we're there," said Lepore. "Besides, the food is fantastic."

Ridge bands Lords of the Fjords and Potentially Unstable will also perform.

"Save the Schnitzel" at the Schnitzel Haus (7319 Fifth Ave. between 73rd and 74th streets in Bay Ridge) On Sept. 29 at 1 pm. \$20. For tickets, go to <http://savetheschnitzel.eventbrite.com>.

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Red Hook treasure

Pirate ball raises funds to float old barge



BY NATALIE MUSUMECI

“Arrrr!” is for Red Hook.

Or at least there was no shortage of swords, eye patches, and peg-legs at the Pirate Ball, a pirate-themed gala aboard a barge off shore from the nautical neighborhood last Thursday night.

“The ball was a blast. It was a great full moon, high tide, and a perfect evening,” said Park Sloper Herve Riou, the chairman of the Barge Centennial Committee, which help organized the pirate extravaganza.

The blowout took place aboard the Lehigh Valley Railroad Barge No. 79, a vessel that is home to the Waterfront Museum and one of the only remaining vessels of its kind, kicking off a yearlong celebration of the vessel’s 100th birthday. The barge that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places once ferried cargo between freight trains and deep-water boats on the Hudson River has been docked at the end of Conover Street since 1994.



AHOY: Carlo Vogel and Gary Baum (top) came out for last Thursday night’s fun-filled Pirate Ball aboard the historic barge (above) docked at the end of Conover Street. Photos by Stefano Giovannini

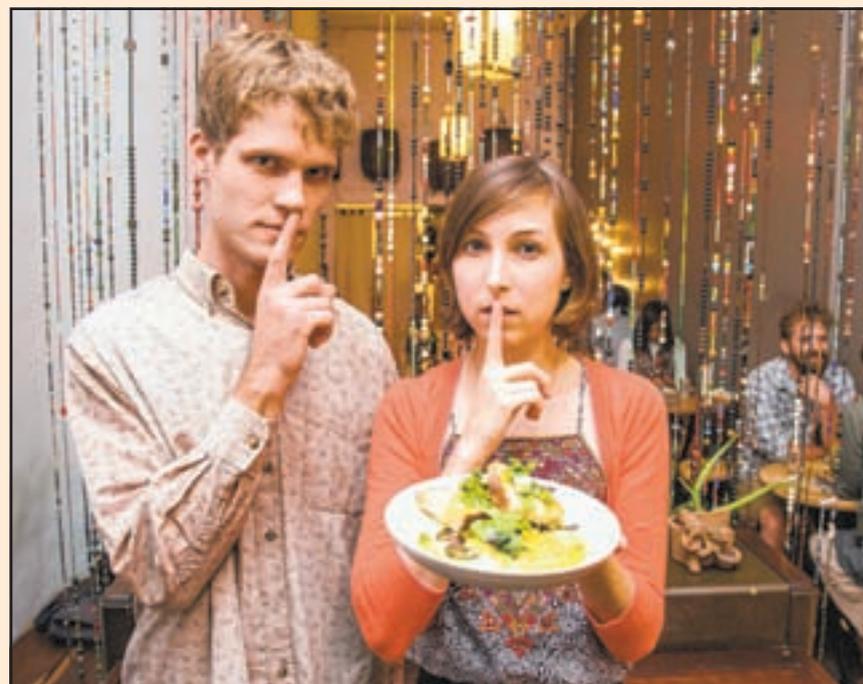
“She is the last survivor of the old railway system,” said Riou.

The party featured musical performances, hors d’oeuvres like chilled oysters, and lots of champagne, raising more than \$20,000 to maintain the old boat.

“The barge needs maintenance and dry dock repairs over the next five years and it is one big project and very costly,” said Riou, adding that helping to preserve the barge will ultimately help keep alive the dream of Captain Da-

vid Sharps, who founded the barge’s Waterfront Museum in 1986 and saved the old boat from destruction.

Among the honorees at the bash was Red Hook developer Greg O’Connell of the O’Connell Organization. In 1994, O’Connell and his company created the berth for the barge and since then has continued to donate equipment and materials to help keep the boat afloat. Also honored were Alison and George Tocci, who have both been active with the barge.



Shut up and eat!

BY DANIELLE FURFARO

Picky foodies do not have to worry about patrons talking with their mouths full at this restaurant.

The Greenpoint restaurant Eat is hosting silent meals to put patrons in touch with their innermost grub insights, the restaurant’s management says.

“This is an opportunity for people to experience food as they might not otherwise,” the organic-centric eatery’s quiet feast curator Nicholas Nauman said. “If we limit our engagement with speech, we can find our consciousness doing other things.”

Hungry diners at the first silent dinner on Sunday quieted for Nauman’s welcome speech and kept their lips zipped for the duration of the four-course meal, which featured gourmet dishes like pecan ricotta with vegan cheese over brown rice and Tokyo cabbage. As advertised, the lack of table chatter made it easier to commune with their \$40 dinner, some attendees of the mute meal said.

“The language of eating was gone



SHHH: Eat employees Nicholas Nauman and Eva Schmidt (top) serve up meals to diners who promise to remain silent (above).

Photos by Stefano Giovannini

and it was much more about the sensuality,” said Frank Lyon of Cobble Hill.

Nauman plans to host the silent meals every few weeks and he expects them to get increasingly popular without any chatty diners breaking the spell.

“I don’t expect there to be many saboteurs,” he said.

Eat [124 Meserole Ave. between Leonard and Eckford streets in Greenpoint, (718) 389-8083, www.eatgreenpoint.com].



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Bortnick

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the side nearest Third Avenue. It also calls for stripping away a driving lane in each direction between 86th Street and Ovington Avenue to put the brakes on speedsters.

Bortnick — who once put out a plan for stifling the stink from the Owls Head Sewage Treatment Plant with tubs of chlorophyll — calls instead for the construction of a seven-foot-high pedestal dead center in the intersection. Atop the pedestal, the Bortnick Plan would mount a booth outfitted with windows looking out in all directions and a switch panel for operating the traffic and walking signals.

The box would also come equipped with a microphone and speaker system, so the cop can yell at pedestrians endangering themselves by jaywalking.



TOWER OF POWER: The Bortnick Plan would place an observation tower at the center of the intersection of Fourth Avenue and 86th Street, staffed by a police officer with a megaphone to scold jaywalkers. Photo illustration / Sylvan Migdal Drawing / Allen Bortnick

“He can say, ‘hey, you, in the black overcoat, you’re jaywalking, get back,’ or tell people, ‘wait for the light, don’t cross against the light,’” said Bortnick, arguing that reprimands would stop illegal street-crossers in their tracks. “If somebody’s doing some-

thing wrong, and you point them out, everyone’s going to be looking at them and they’ll cut it out.”

The city said that it was not considering any measures remotely resembling Bortnick’s plan, and it intends to push ahead with its current ideas.

CB10 is due to make a decision on the city plans at its October general meeting. Bortnick argued that obstructing the free flow of automobiles through Bay Ridge would be an existential threat to the fair metropolis we call home.

“If there’s no traffic,” said Bortnick, “there’s no New York City.”

Childs

Continued from page 1

congestion, and low-income jobs to the area.

“Don’t push this through, and jam it down our throats,” Coney resident Mathylde Frontus begged the board.

Others objected to sinking \$50 million into a new entertainment venue while the neighborhood is still hurting from Hurricane Sandy, and many schools, streets, community centers, and public housing buildings remain in disrepair.

“That’s \$50 million you’re using that we could use to rebuild five, six, seven schools,” said Nicole Vazquez.

“We’re putting millions of dollars into the area, but we are not putting any money into the infrastructure. And it will sink us someday,” said CB13 member Ronald Stewart.

Several others spoke out for the Boardwalk Garden, a community growing space next door to the Childs Building, which would be plowed under to create the seating area. The urban agrarians argued that the small oasis cultivates unity among the neighborhood’s black, Latino, and Eastern European residents — and should not

be carelessly uprooted.

“The garden brings a lot of people together, all different cultures,” said gardener Yury Opendik.

No one spoke in favor of the plan.

This isn’t the first time that Marty’s dream of a permanent home for his seaside concerts has hit a sour note with residents. Markowitz tried — and failed — to construct an amphitheater inside Brighton Beach’s Asser Levy Park in 2009. Public protest and a lawsuit blocked the structure, which was widely mocked for resembling a potato chip.

A representative for Markowitz’s office declined to comment on the vote — though he did ask CB13 secretary Barbara Santonas for a list of the board members and their votes. Markowitz is responsible for appointing half the members of all the borough’s community boards.

An attorney for iStar Financial, the current owners of the Childs Building, defended the plan for iStar to sell the structure to the city and transform it into an amphitheater for \$50 million in taxpayer money. The lawyer said that the company, which has a lease to operate the new facility at a profit for

10 years, had already taken into account the potential for problems with noise and traffic — and found that there will be no problems at all.

“I expect that it’s going to be ultimately approved, and I expect that this project will be a benefit not just to people who come to the concerts, but to the whole community,” said iStar counsel Howard Weiss.

The City Planning Commission — the next body to review the project — is free to ignore the CB13 vote, which is only advisory.

CB13’s vote went against its own Zoning and Land Use Committee. The committee voted 10-1 to approve the proposal — as long as there was a study on the amphitheater’s impact on parking, and an investigation into the possibility of a shuttle bus to the new facility. The committee also asked for iStar to hire Coney residents to help build and run the concert space and restaurant, at a prevailing wage.

Markowitz pitched the Childs Building — which operated as a restaurant from 1923 until 1949 — as the perfect spot to shelter his ocean-side shows as part of his 2013 State of the Borough address in April.

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Nick

Continued from page 1

pect Lefferts-Gardens resident Noel Hefele, adding that the field is back to looking as it did after the two-day Great GoogaMooga music fest left parts of the park fenced off for nearly the entire summer.

Park lovers said that the hordes of Nickelodeon fans playing sports, jumping rope, and rocking out to pop bands, along with the equipment brought in to support it all, tore up the turf majorly and that the repeat destruction represents a brush-off of everyday park users by the people in charge.

"It is so disheartening after events like these to see the blatant disregard for our backyard," said Randi Lass of Windsor Terrace, who regularly volunteers to clean up the green space. "I thought after GoogaMooga perhaps they learned a lesson about the scale of events in Prospect Park."

Park officials said that they are still in the process of assessing whether the Day of Play damaged the

Nethermead and pointed out that events like the Nickelodeon shindig help fund the everyday operation of the park.

"We have a mission to bring different types of events to the park for the public and we have a responsibility to restore, maintain and preserve the park," said Eric Landau, spokesman for the Prospect Park Alliance, which manages the park. "And these events do bring in revenue, so it is sort of two-fold."

Big events such as the Great GoogaMooga and the movie party Tropfest generate funds to help pay for park maintenance and free programming, according to officials. The Alliance made \$75,000 on a rental fee from GoogaMooga, \$41,500 from Tropfest, and \$150,000 on a rental fee from Nickelodeon.

But, cash influx or no, some park patrons say that events that require barricades and ticket-takers simply do not belong in the green space.

"The Prospect Park Alliance's idea about proper uses for the park are loath-

some," said Windsor Terrace resident Jolanta Benal.

The Nethermead was completely fenced off for five days while Nickelodeon set up for the blowout, and for another two while the kids network broke down the sets. Plenty of park-goers are upset about the state of the park before, during, and after the play day, but some take it a step further, saying that the cable network-sponsored bash was a symbol of corporate excess that had no place in Frederick Law Olmsted's public playground.

"We are witnessing a for-profit private land grab in the heart of Brooklyn," said Hefele, adding that he worries even more massive events will continue to take over the field.

Landau said that if the Alliance determines that repairs need to be made to the turf, Nickelodeon is required by contract to dole out whatever money it costs to fix it, just as GoogaMooga organizers paid to reseed grass and repair the extensive damage that their event caused.

Crash

Continued from page 1

YouTube. "E. 66th Street is a tragedy waiting to happen, and enough is enough."

In the video, the Lamborghini can be seen travelling at high speed down E. 66th Street, when the Mazda attempts a left turn and clips the rear end of the sports car, causing the back end to sheer off—sending it spinning down the Mill Island roadway in two halves.

And Yuryev says it isn't the first time the intersection at Gaylord Drive North has been the scene of an accident.

"People are always speeding down E. 66th Street," said Yuryev. "There are no traffic lights, no stop signs, and it's a problem that's been ongoing many years."

Paramedics arrived at about 5:15 pm, and found the busted Mazda not far from one of two pieces of the outrageously expensive Italian sports car.



LAMBURGER: Michael Yuryev's surveillance cameras caught the dramatic accident on E. 66th Street that tore a \$400,000 Lamborghini Aventador in half. The driver was unharmed.

Provided by Michael Yuryev

One of the drivers was taken to Brooklyn Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, according to a Fire Department spokesman, though he would not say whether it was the driver of the Lamborghini or the Mazda.

Since Saturday's collision, the E. 66th Street resident has been reaching out to Community Board 15, as well as Assemblyman Alan Maisel (D-Canarsie), and

Councilman Lew Fidler (D-Canarsie-Flatlands), calling for a traffic study, which he hopes will result in additional stop signs or stop lights being installed on the street.

Until something changes, Yuryev says he's reluctant to allow his children to walk down E. 66th Street for fear they might be hit by a reckless speedster.

"It's a quality-of-life matter," he said.

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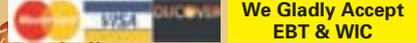
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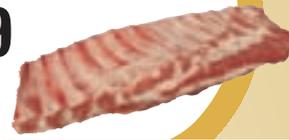
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