

At the table with city's money man

BY NATHAN TEMPEY

Space. The rain forest. The deep blue sea. Just when you thought we were out of final frontiers, comptroller Scott Stringer has a fresh one: Brooklyn.

The newly elected city-money-minder and former Manhattan borough president, pictured, stopped by The Brooklyn Courier's Downtown office last week to hold forth about his plans and propositions. Chief among them was turning the borough into a hub for high-tech businesses.



"There's a lot of density to Manhattan, a lot of build-out," he said. "So the new frontier is going to be in communities in Brooklyn, which have so much vast potential."

In order to woo silicon-centric companies, Brooklyn needs more bike lanes, more dedicated-lane bus routes, fast public internet service, and "to create more of the office space that younger people want to work in," Stringer opined.

"In my generation it was all about getting the corner office, the big corner office with the
Continued on page 6



Critical sit

Scott Wayne Indiana has created a "Dungeons & Dragons"-themed yoga class for both fitness fanatics and fans of the time-honored fantasy game. It will have its second outing at LaunchPad on Franklin Street in Crown Heights on March 22.

Photo Stefano Giovannini

FIT FOR KINGS

An exclusive look at the Kings Theatre restoration

BY MAX JAEGER

This blockbuster renovation project is running ahead of schedule.

One year after breaking ground on a massive restoration of the Kings Theatre in Flatbush, restorers with Ace Theatrical Group say the picture palace that had sat abandoned since 1978 is actually less messed-up than they first thought, and that it could open in November, a month earlier than anticipated.

"We thought it was going to be harder," said Ace president David Anderson. "It's been a derelict building for 35 years — just sitting on Flatbush Avenue, gradually crumbling."

The Courier took an exclusive

tour of the construction project, which is meant to make the iconic theater look like it did when doors first opened in 1929.

When it reboots, the theater will host live music, theater, and dance acts, as well as several concession stands and a basement lounge. But first, Ace has to bring the venue back from the dead.

Ace inked a deal with the city in 2012 to restore the theater and operate it for 55 years, with more than half the \$94-million project's funding coming from taxpayers.

Water damaged much of the interior's decorative plaster, so workers made molds of remaining embellishments to make recreating them easier, Anderson said.

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Cops nab grifters

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

Talk about low-level corruption!

Three alleged grifters, who police say claimed to be members of Bay Ridge's Community Board 10, were collared by cops last week for allegedly collecting donations for the panel — and witnesses suggest they may

have been pulling a borough-wide hustle.

Police picked up two men and a woman last Friday whom they allege bilked the owners of a new eatery at the corner of 71st Street and Third Avenue out of \$20 on Feb. 27 by claiming to be fund-raising on behalf of

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NO KIDDING: Jasmin Almonte protested charter co-locations last year.

Mayor approves 'co-locations'

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

Charters have won the day in Southern Brooklyn.

The DeBlasio administration decided to allow a pair of controversial new charter schools to move into the buildings of two Southern Brooklyn junior high schools — while simultaneously scrapping a plan

to "co-locate" a new public school inside the building of a beleaguered Gravesend high school.

After a citywide review of so-called "co-location" plans approved in the waning days of the Bloomberg administration, the Department of Education announced on Feb. 27 that

Joseph Cavallaro middle school in Bath Beach and Seth Low Intermediate in Gravesend will have to open their doors to grammar schools run by Coney Island Prep and Success Academy, respectively. At the same time, the city decided that John Dewey High School on

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Manhattan Beach booster remembered

Outspoken advocate Ed Eisenberg dies at age 79

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

Manhattan Beach lost one of its staunchest and most tenacious advocates this week. Long-time resident and community activist Ed Eisenberg passed away on March 1 at the age of 79.

Neighbors and friends will best remember Eisenberg for his outspoken defense of the neighborhood, its parks, and public safety. He was an active member of the Manhattan Beach Neighborhood Association, the 61st Precinct Community Council, and Community Board 15 until his death. And he never stopped looking out for the community he loved to call home.

In recent years he raised his voice about park funding, a dangerous pier, and even the NYPD's blotter blackout in the pages of this paper. His opinions may



SERVING TO THE END: Community activist and Korean War veteran Ed Eisenberg never missed the Memorial Day Parade. Photo by Steve Solomonson

have occasionally differed from those of his neighbors, but no one questioned where his heart was.

"Ed Eisenberg de-

voted his life to making his community a better place, and he did it in his own uniquely passionate, relentless way," said Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Sheepshead Bay) in a statement. "He knew the details of every community meeting and neighborhood event, almost before they were scheduled."

Councilman Chaim Deutsch (D-Sheepshead Bay) also recalled Eisenberg's passion for his neighborhood.

"I've known Ed for a long time, and have always admired the passion he held for his favorite part of Brooklyn," Deutsch said in a statement. "Manhattan Beach will never be the same."

Eisenberg is survived by his wife Eileen, his two sons, and three grandchildren.

Cyclones hire new skipper

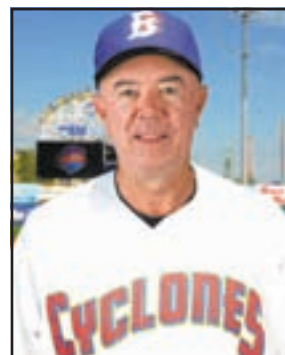
BY WILL BREDDERMAN

A new coach for Brooklyn's Boys of Summer is stepping up to the plate!

The Cyclones drafted Tom Gamboa to manage the team for the 2014 season — replacing three-season professor Rich Donnelly, who abandoned Brooklyn to coach a Triple-A team in Washington State.

The 66-year-old Gamboa is a veteran manager, having served as skipper for a Class-A affiliate of the Anaheim Angels for part of the 2011 season, and led the Triple-A Albuquerque Isotopes and the Double-A Arkansas Travelers to division titles in 2000 and 2005 respectively.

But Gamboa is best known as the victim of a bizarre incident in 2002, while serving as first base coach for the Kansas City Royals, in which a father-



READY FOR HIS CLOSE-UP: The Brooklyn Cyclones tapped Tom Gamboa, who appeared in the movie "Moneyball," to manage the team for the 2014 season. Brooklyn Cyclones

son duo ran onto the field and attacked him during a game against the Chicago White Sox, giving Gamboa permanent hearing loss ever since.

Gamboa has also moonlighted as a movie star,

having played "Scout Martinez" in the Oscar-nominated 2011 baseball flick "Moneyball."

The Clones hired another Tom as the new pitching coach — Tom Signore, a longtime pitching coach for minor league affiliates of the Toronto Blue Jays. The Mini-Mets have also brought back Benny Ditefano as hitting coach. Ditefano oversaw the Pride of Coney Island's batting practice during the 2010 season, when the team clinched a playoff berth but came up short in the championship series against the Tri-City Valley Cats.

The team's top brass praised the new hires.

"We look forward to welcoming the new coaching staff to Brooklyn for the 2014 season," said Cyclones vice president Steve Cohen.



IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER: Soon, you too could be enjoying a roasted swan like this one.

Swans on the menu

Swan never caught on in the kitchen .but under the state Department of Environmental Conservation's swan-eradication plan, the culled birds may find their way into New York's food pantries. So here are two recipes even non-aviavores can't refuse:

Swan terrine

Ingredients:

2 fresh bay leaves
 ½ teaspoon whole black pepper
 12–14 oz. bacon
 3.5 lbs. swan (hung for four days for best flavor)
 1 lb. minced veal
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
 ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
 2 tablespoons dry breadcrumbs

1 egg
 1/3 cup dry sherry

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line a loaf pan with parchment paper. Scatter bay leaves and peppercorns over it.
 2. Carefully line pan with bacon. Finely dice any remaining bacon and place in a mixing bowl.
 3. De-bone swan meat. Cut breast meat into strips and set aside. Place all other meat into a food processor and pulse until swan is finely chopped but not a paste.
 4. Add swan meat to mixing bowl, then add minced veal, salt, pepper, nutmeg, breadcrumbs, egg, and sherry. Mix well.
 5. Spread a layer in the pan, keeping firm pressure while spreading. Cover the layer with swan breast strips. Repeat, layering mince-meat and breast meat.

Finish with a layer of mincemeat and fold bacon over the top. Cover with wax paper and aluminum foil and seal the foil around edges of pan.
 6. Place pan in baking dish filled with boiling water until level reaches halfway up the side of the pan. Bake for 75 minutes, remove, and let rest for 30 minutes. Place weights on top to compress and refrigerate overnight.

Swan flan

Ingredients:

1 cup white sugar
 1 swan egg
 14 ounces sweetened condensed milk (1 can)
 12 fluid ounces evaporated milk (1 can)
 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
 2. Using a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, melt sugar until liquefied and golden in color. Carefully pour hot syrup into a 9-inch round, glass baking dish. Coat the bottom and sides, then set aside.
 3. Beat the egg in a bowl, then beat in vanilla, evaporated milk, and condensed milk until smooth. Pour egg mixture into baking dish and cover with aluminum foil.
 4. Bake for 60 minutes. Let cool completely.
 5. To serve, invert onto serving plate.

Swans out of frying pan and into the line of fire

Bird-lovers fear iconic waterfowl will be hunted down

BY MAX JAEGER

Either way, their goose is cooked.

Albany is backing off its proposal to shoot or gas the state's entire mute swan population and feed the birds to poor people. Instead, the state is now planning to round them up and move them to private nature preserves. But pro-swan conservationists argue that keeping the birds in captivity could land the birds in game hunters' sights.

"Keeping them in captivity is a euphemism for giving them to private citizens for hunting," said Sheila Bolin of the Regal Swan Foundation.

The Department of Environmental Conservation announced last Friday that it would revise the controversial plan to emphasize "non-lethal means to achieve the management plan's intended goals" of eliminating the state's 2,200 free-ranging mute swans.

The draft proposal released last December mentioned some non-lethal strategies — including turning them over to private individuals with facilities appropriate for keeping the birds — but preservationists cry foul, saying that no sanctuaries could accommodate large numbers of swans, because they require large bodies of water so the highly territorial birds can spread out.

"There's not a sanctuary that can house them," said Bolin.

Other experts agreed — and suggested the sanctuary idea is just a decoy.

"To me there's no such thing as a swan sanctuary, and there never could be," said Virginia Frati, who runs a wildlife rescue on Long Island and sits on the New York State Wildlife Rehabilitation Center's board of directors. "I think that's a carrot that they dangle."

Public institutions are not likely to take in refugee swans either.



SWAN SONG: State plans to remove all swans — an invasive species that has become a staple in neighborhoods such as Sheepshead Bay — have residents worried for the birds' lives, and could make some swans head for the hills.

Illustration by John Napoli

"We have a large population of mute swans that we're trying to figure out what to do with," said Dave Arwin, chief of resources at the Gateway National Recreation Area. "I don't believe any natural area in New York City would look forward to increasing its population of mute swans."

Without wildlife sanctuaries willing to give the birds refuge, some conservationists worry that mass incarceration would be little different from mass extermination, with swans being rounded up and delivered to private hunting preserves.

David Karopkin of Goosewatch NYC — a group spawned by the infamous 2010 Prospect Park goose massacre — said that any plan to give swans to individuals would probably deliver them into hunters' hands.

Either way, it would be a golden egg for the state, according to Karopkin.

The Department of En-

vironmental Conservation could benefit from selling hunting permits to private citizens taking aim at the birds on private land, he said, but state wildlife services could rake in even more cash under a full extermination plan, because they would get contracts with local municipalities to cull the swans.

Under the original proposal, hunters would not be allowed to shoot mute swans — but the plan points out that the department "has the authority to establish seasons and bag limits for this species."

Mute swans are the largest bird in the state, and the department's control plan noted that trumpeter swans have become a popular game bird in other states.

The department received 30,000 petition signatures and 16,000 letters that mostly opposed slaying the birds, according to a press release.

Bowing to the heavy criti-

cism, the department plans to hatch a kinder, gentler plan in the coming months, which will be subjected to another round of public scrutiny.

"DEC is listening to these comments and concerns and will revise the draft plan and provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the revised plan this spring," the department said.

The department maintains that mute swans, which roost by the hundreds in Sheepshead Bay, are an invasive species that displaces native birds, destroy aquatic plants, and can be aggressive toward humans.

But Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Sheepshead Bay), who led the charge in Albany against the extermination plan, has appealed for a more tolerant attitude.

"Sheepshead Bay wouldn't be the same without the mute swans," Cymbrowitz said. "Yes, they may hiss sometimes, but this is New York, so they're entitled."

Coming soon: Pie at the library

Gowanus bakery and cafe is setting up shop in the Central Library

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

Book lovers flocking to the Central Library will soon be able to purchase some treats to keep their literary flights of fancy aloft when a Gowanus pie shop opens an outpost in the lobby.

The bakery and cafe Four and Twenty Black-

birds will start serving up pies and grub on March 14, which math nerds celebrate as Pi Day in honor of the endless number which begins "3.14." A co-owner of the sweet shop said that, cheeky though the choice of deadline may be, it also adds much-needed urgency to getting the shop in order.

"That date was intentional, and it puts us under the gun to finish setting up," said partial pro-pie-eter Emily Elsen.

Elsen and her sister Melissa opened the Gowanus location, on Third Avenue and Eighth Street, in 2010 and made a name for themselves with surprising cre-

ations such as salted caramel apple, chili chocolate, and grapefruit custard pies, all using ingredients from nearby locales.

The library followed their lead by selecting a vendor locally, a Brooklyn Public Library spokesman said. "They're homegrown and locally based," David Woloch said. "It's great to have them aboard."

The new location will be in the main lobby of the prose palace on Grand Army Plaza between Eastern Parkway and Flatbush Avenue, but bookworms will have to check out their titles before chowing down.

In addition to pies, the eatery will carry sandwiches, soups, salads, and coffee.

The Elsens inked a three-year lease with the Brooklyn Public Library, and will pay the library a percentage of what they



PIE SOCIETY: Stephanie Monohan shows off a tray of Four and Twenty Blackbird's signature wares at the bakery's Gowanus location. Photo by Stefano Giovannini

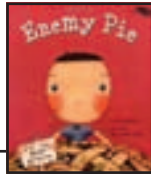
Some books to eat by

The Brooklyn Public Library will begin selling pie, and we're adding value to this story by detailing our favorite pie-centric books:



Look, we're not going to lie to you. When not involving math, the majority of pie-themed books are for kids. So don't be afraid to give your wee-one a slice of apple a la mode while you check out (literally) "Moon Pie" by Simon Mason, the story of a little girl who has to take on many responsibilities of a new kid in town through after her dad falls off a ladder. Then there's

"Enemy Pie" by Derek Munson, in which a boy tries to gain the trust



a secret recipe. Of course, no pie list would be complete without Beatrix Potter's classic "The Pie and the Patty-Pan."



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City slays Homecrest 'monstrosity' home

BY MAX JAEGER

They're bringing down the house — finally!

The city issued an order on Feb. 28 to demolish a dangerous structure under construction at 1882 E. 12th Street that area residents have been fighting for more than eight years — and neighbors are ecstatic.

"It feels fantastic," said Bella Center. "We're delighted."

"I think this is great news," said Ed Jaworski, who heads the Madison-Marine-Homecrest Civic Association. "It should have never gone this far."

Residents feared the building — which opponents describe as a "grotesque" and "hideous" "monstrosity" — put neighbors at risk. Contractors cantilevered the bizarre structure over a crumbling bungalow. A cantilever is a beam anchored into a wall to hold up a structure over a span without supports on the other side.

At 43 feet tall, the structure towers over neighboring homes. A portion even hangs over a neighbor's driveway, and residents feared the "monstrosity" would topple onto their homes.

The Feb. 28 decision came after the Department of Buildings held a meeting with the architect, Shlomo Wygoda, and neighbors on Feb. 24 to determine the contentious building's future.

The department found that contractors built the supporting wall on a foundation initially intended to support a porch — not a two-story home, said Walter Maffei, a Brooklyn architect who advised neighbors fighting the building.

Center actually dug up part of her house to expose the slab for inspection.

"We really had to 'get to the bottom of this,'" she said.

Locals have been asking



TEAR DOWN THIS HOUSE: After an eight-year battle, the city has finally sided with neighbors and ordered the owner of this bizarre building to tear it down. File photo by Arthur De Gaeta

the city to halt construction since it issued permits to the builder eight years ago, and many had given up hope.

"I cannot believe that it has been eight years," said Community Board 15 chairwoman Theresa Scavo. "After the first two or three years, you start to think the city is not going to step up and do anything."

Scavo said the building plan conformed to zoning requirements when construction began nearly a decade ago, but a 2006 rezoning would have halted work had builders not gotten special permission from the city in the form of a vesting right. Scavo said the community board unanimously opposed the vesting, but the city okayed it anyway. Neighbors then sued to stop construction on the grounds the building was unsafe and the permit application contained several major errors.

As a result of the suit, the Board of Standards and Appeals, which oversees the buildings department, took another look at the building permit, but deemed it valid.

Maffei said the permit was ill-gotten in the first place, because Wygoda applied for an alteration

permit though he was building a new structure.

"It's a gaming of the system which produced this awful monstrosity," Maffei said. "The application was pure fantasy and total disregard for any policies and procedures required by the DOB."

In June of last year, a state supreme court judge ordered the board to review the permit again, but it ruled the permit valid a second time, despite admitting it issued the wrong permit due to an administrative error.

Residents pressed on.

"We were so convinced of the rightness of our case, and we couldn't step down from that," Center said.

Under pressure from residents and Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Sheepshead Bay), the department issued a stop-work order in mid-February and scheduled the Feb. 24 meeting to consider revoking the permits.

"We are so thrilled with what amazing work Assemblyman Cymbrowitz does for his constituents," Center said.

A department of buildings spokeswoman said the builder has denied access to the site and has not provided a structural peer review as required by a city audit.

Property owner Joseph Durzieh has 60 days to submit new plans or tear down the home, according to a press release from Cymbrowitz's office.

"The city did the right thing," Scavo said. "If you look over the wood construction fence you can see that the building is collapsing right there."

Wygoda declined to comment, and Durzieh did not return calls to his E. 14th Street medical practice.

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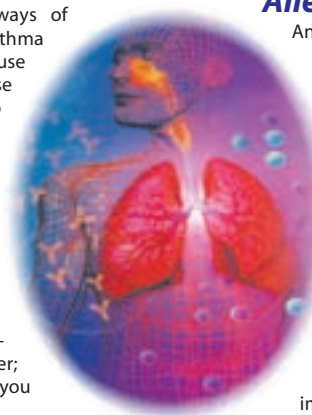
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Scam

Continued from page 1

Community Board 10.

Authorities reported that the threesome went into recently opened Turkish restaurant Pashazade at around 3 pm that day and told the owner that they were collecting money on behalf of CB10 for the family of a local boy killed in a hit-and-run incident. The owner gave a Jackson to what she believed was a good cause.

The accused con artists then allegedly went across Third Avenue and tried to solicit from another restaurant owner, who found the troika's tale suspicious — and said he discovered that the scam may span much of Brooklyn.

“This sounded fishy to me from the beginning, because I knew the community board wouldn't do something like that,” said Anthony Loupos, owner of Glow Thai. “They were so full of s--- from the moment they walked in, it was hilarious.”

Loupos said that when he asked to see some kind of



GLOWING WORK: Glow Thai owner Anthony Loupos helped bust a ring of serial scammers last week. Photo by Steve Solomonson

identification proving that they were affiliated with the board, the three just showed him a bag full of cash and checks — and a Gmail account called “Friends of the Community Board.” As they scrolled through the account's sent mail, Loupos said he noticed “Thank you” messages sent to restaurants in dozens of different neighborhoods, purporting to be from several different community boards. The restaurateur said he knew for sure then that he was in the company of crooks — and pretty bad ones at that.

“They weren't the sharpest criminals,” Loupos said. “It was laughable. To show me the e-mail address as proof of who they were was just ridiculous.”

Loupos said the three high-tailed it when he made it clear he was not going to donate. He said he phoned CB10 to be sure they were not sending around solicitors, and then called the police. Then he phoned Pashazade, and learned that not only had the owner given the trio money, but that one of the alleged chiselers had told her that they could expedite her

liquor license for a mere \$650 — and left a phone number.

Loupos said that the Pashazade proprietor — who declined to comment for this story — made arrangements to meet again with one of the accused fraudsters at her restaurant Friday night. The suspected swindler showed up for a 7 pm appointment with the eatery owner — and several plainclothes cops.

The Pashazade owner and the alleged scammer met at the restaurant and talked about getting the Turkish joint a booze permit, while police officers in street garb sat at neighboring tables and stood nearby outside. The other two in custody allegedly made the mistake of accompanying their accomplice back to Bay Ridge, and according to Loupos were pacing the street close at hand. This enabled the cops to nab them all at once when they attempted to leave.

Police said that the triumvirate in custody are currently only charged in the \$20 fraud at the Turkish joint, with one count of petty larceny and criminal impersonation each.

Stringer

Continued from page 1

view,” he said. “Today, younger people are working around tables with laptops and computers. They're inventing things among five people.”

Also on Stringer's agenda is deciding what it is worth to taxpayers to litigate the cases freshman District Attorney Ken Thompson has opened up for review, citing possible misconduct by his predecessor Charles Hynes, should the prisoners be exonerated and sue the city.

Stringer claimed victory for overseeing the \$6.4-million settlement in the lawsuit brought by David Ranta, who was sprung from prison in 2013 after serving 23 years for a murder he did not commit.

The financial top dog demurred when asked how much the agreement had saved the city, but said he assigned an in-house legal team to the task and that the result was a good deal for all involved.

“We negotiated a fair settlement but we were able to act right away,” he said. “We didn't go through years and years of litigation.”

The Ranta case is one of many allegedly questionable cases handled by Hynes' office that Thompson has assigned a team of legal eagles to pore over and Stringer says that, if additional exonerees turn up, his office will work to put a dollar amount on their suffering, too.

When pressed on whose side he takes in the standoff between Mayor DeBlasio and Gov. Cuomo on how to pay for universal prekindergarten — DeBlasio wants to raise taxes on New Yorkers making more than \$500,000 while Cuomo says the program can be paid for with existing state funds — Stringer said that DeBlasio's proposal makes sense money-wise.

“Cuomo's plan hasn't crystallized so I don't think it's much of a plan,” he said. “The DeBlasio plan is real, consistent, and I praise him for giving us a way to pay for it.”

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Garden of thorns!

Booted Boardwalk gardeners to sue city

BY WILL BREDDERMAN

These gardeners are sowing the seeds of discontent.

The New York Community Gardens Coalition is suing the city on behalf of Coney Island's Boardwalk Garden, which was bulldozed last December to make way for ex-Borough President Marty Markowitz's \$53-million amphitheater project.

The Coalition's legal team claims that the planned Seaside Park and Community Arts Center violates municipal requirements for sewer capacity — and so the city should therefore not have booted the People's Playground planters from their 17-year-old garden.

"The city did not follow its own regulations," said attorney Joel Kupferman of the New York Environmental Law and Justice Project, which is spearheading the suit. "You're going to have thousands of people coming to a concert, and the sewers in Coney West cannot take that."

Kupferman further alleged that iStar Financial, the company that will construct and operate the new hall as a permanent home for Markowitz's summer concert series, did not do the proper studies when they designed the underground reservoirs that the company claims will



LAYING DOWN THE LAW: Lawyer Joel Kupferman is suing the city on behalf of the Boardwalk Community Garden to stop the construction of Marty Markowitz's Coney Island amphitheater.

Photo by Elizabeth Graham

combat flooding at the waterfront venue.

Attorneys for iStar say that the blueprints are perfectly in line with regulations.

"I'm not sure what they think their grounds are, but I know that everything that needed to be done was done for this project," said Howard Weiss.

The Coney gardeners began tilling the soil at the W. 22nd Street spot in 1997. The city kicked the growers out in 2004 in order to convert the parcel into a parking lot for MCU Park, but the garden was never paved, and seed-sowers returned without much notice.

Hurricane Sandy

soaked the spot and buried it in sand, but the gardeners dug their way out and replanted last spring — about the same time Markowitz announced his plan to place his long-dreamt-of amphitheater inside the landmarked Childs Building next door — and to convert the garden into seating.

Community Board 13 voted down Markowitz's proposal last September, but the plan breezed through the City Planning Commission and then the Council.

The gardeners hoped to hold out and somehow keep their longtime location, but late last year iStar deployed an array

Continued on page 8

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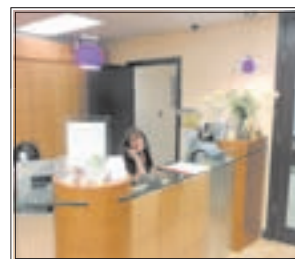
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Theater

Continued from page 1

Mildew destroyed much of the theater's drapes and carpeting, but restorers found unharmed swatches in the basement and will use them as a pattern for copies, he said.

The theater's ornate wood carvings were in better condition than Ace anticipated, too.

"There was an incredible amount of life and luster left in the wood," Anderson said.

The theater group is looking into restoring the massive pipe organ that once accompanied silent movies, he said.

Moviegoers last entered the cinema in late 1977, but some of the details restorers are uncovering would only be familiar to the theater's earliest patrons.

"We're peeling back layer after layer of paint and exposing things that you could have never known were there," Anderson said.

Workers discovered portraits carved into the stage's proscenium arch that no one knew existed because they were covered in thick, black paint, he said.

Restorers aim to bring the theater back to its 1930s look, but there will be some modern-day improvements.

For one, there will be stadium seating — a departure from the original arrangement that required contractors to raise the floor.

Ace is also installing new heating, cooling, and fire-suppression systems, and bringing the back of the house up to date.

"There used to be this rabbit's den of dressing rooms behind the stage," Anderson said. "That will be replaced by a state-of-the-art facility."

The football field-sized theater will be 1.5 times larger after the restoration, and the backstage area



THEATER OF DREAMS: (Top) The elaborate decorations inside the Kings Theatre are starting to sparkle after one year of restoration work. The ornate ceilings (above) and fine architectural details of the once-grand movie palace (left) are returning to a semblance of their former glory. Photos by Steve Solomonson

will take up most of that additional space. Ace also bought an adjacent commercial property, which it will turn into a box office, Anderson said.

There will be food and drinks — including alcohol — but management has not yet selected a vendor, said Matt Wolf, the theater's newly minted executive director. There is no

kitchen, but the theater may bring in caterers for special events or private parties, he said.

And do not let the sea of white faces on the architectural rendering outside fool you. Anderson said Ace will make sure the theater programming is affordable and appropriate for the predominately Caribbean and African-

American neighborhood around the theater, where the median income is about \$40,000.

"There is incredible variety in the population within a quarter mile of the theater — not to mention the whole of Brooklyn," he said. "Ticket prices will be affordable for the local community for virtually all shows."

Charters

Continued from page 1

Avenue X will not have to share space with a traditional district school.

All three building-sharing plans, along with dozens of others across the city, were passed in the last months of 2013, in the face of widespread public opposition. Soon after taking office, the new mayor promised to carefully review all of the proposals pushed through during Bloomberg's final months, and the Department of Education said it took the best interests of students and parents into account when making its decision.

"As enrollment deadlines approach, we considered the thousands of families that could be affected," said new schools chancellor Carmen Farina. "We were deliberate in our decisions and, under the circumstances we inherited, believe this is the best approach."

School leaders applauded the decision to stop a new school from moving in with Dewey — long targeted for closure — but lamented the loss of vital space at the pair of middle schools.

Officials at Cavallaro and Seth Low argued that the existing schools are already near-capacity and

need the room both to accommodate new junior high kids, and for special needs children who require a separate space during state exams.

They also questioned the wisdom of having Kindergarten through fifth grade students sharing a building with middle schoolers.

"Our community is growing, we need this space," said Heather Fiorica, president of Community Education Council District 21, the official oversight organization for Dewey, Seth Low, and Cavallaro. "They're going to need junior high school seats. They're giving my junior high school seats to elementary school students."

But the charter schools are not smiling either, noting that Farina blocked three new charter schools in other parts of the city — a decision that charter-school proponents argued will hurt children.

"This isn't a case where you can split the difference and declare victory," said Success Academy spokeswoman Kerri Lyon. "When even one child is denied a high quality public education, we are not fulfilling our civic and moral promise to put them on the road to success."

Coney Island Prep did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Garden

Continued from page 7

of earthmovers early one morning to forcibly uproot the garden. The amphitheater plan calls for construction to begin this year, and for the venue to open in 2015.

The Coalition expressed hope that Markowitz's successor, Eric Adams, would work

with them to let the gardeners return to their vegetable patch.

"We're asking our new elected official to right the wrong that has been done," said Aresh Tavadi, legislative coordinator for the Coalition.

Adams's office declined to say if the new beep would aid the gardeners, but said he would be glad to meet with them.



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