

City OK's Methodist expansion

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

It's a go.

The city green-lighted the New York Methodist Hospital expansion on Tuesday, opening the way for the hospital to build an eight-story, U-shaped outpatient center on Fifth Street, Eighth Avenue, and Sixth Street. The approval is a serious, probably final setback for neighbors who battled the plan for a year, saying that it will clog the residential streets with traffic, fill the air with smog, and stick out like a sore thumb among the low-slung blocks. Activists may have convinced the medical center to lower the roof line and pull parts of its upper floors back from the street, but they are deeply unhappy that the city did not hear their pleas to deny the proposal outright.

"We're obviously very disappointed, and we're going to continue to fight the size and scale of the expansion," said Jarrett Brilliant, an Eighth Avenue resident and a spokesman for the anti-expansion group Preserve Park Slope.

The Center for Community
Continued on page 9



A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP: Lloyd Kaufman, president of Troma Entertainment, with the Toxic Avenger.
Photo by Elizabeth Graham

FREAK SHOW!

Cult indie film fest makes Brooklyn its new home

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

Cannes it ain't.

The filmmakers behind the cult "Toxic Avenger" movie franchise are bringing their popular free film festival TromaDance to Brooklyn this year. And the organizers say there may be no better place for its unique brand of gory, comedic, horror, infused with political commentary.

"There's so many movies that mainstream companies are afraid of," said Lloyd Kaufman, co-founder of Troma Entertainment, which has been running the festival since 1999. "We want to remind people that there are independent artists who are visionary."

Troma films are often genre-

bending and campy — combining mild eroticism, exaggerated gore, and straight slapstick humor. The TromaDance Film Festival carries on that tradition, but with films produced by independent filmmakers. It will run from June 27-28 at the Paper Box in Williamsburg, and will include 38 short films, four features, and an after-party with live music.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the original "The Toxic Avenger," a movie about an emaciated janitor that gets transformed into a mutant do-gooder who tries to save his town from its corrupt mayor and crush crime.

"He has a chemical reaction
Continued on page 6

Dumbo Shack attack

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

A high-end fast-food restaurant is shaking up the waterfront food scene in Dumbo.

Popular patty parlor Shake Shack opened up its second Brooklyn location at the Fulton Ferry Landing on Tuesday and has a third in the works across

the street from the Barclays Center. The borough push makes perfect sense, a spokesman for the chain said.

"We're thrilled to deepen our footprint into other parts of Brooklyn," said Edwin Bragg, director of marketing and communications

Continued on page 8



HE'S A BRICK: Ben Folds will play to a sea of white-clad Brooklynites at the PopUp Dinner Brooklyn on June 28.

Ben Folds to perform P'Park

BY MELISSA KRAVITZ

The forecast predicts a whiteout at Prospect Park next weekend!

On June 28, hoards of Brooklynites are expected to dress all in white, and convene at the park to share a picnic dinner, watch a performance by Ben Folds, and raise money for the Pros-

pect Park Alliance.

The event's organizers said the color-free dress code should help strangers at the party to connect.

"Wearing all white boils down to a unifying theme of the evening," said Nicole Benjamin-Sathre, co-founder of Hand Made Events, which has been

running similar picnic parties in California since 2011. "It's very beautiful. It's simple and elegant. When you get a whole crowd of people doing it, everything flows together. You wouldn't get the same effect if people were in purple and green or anything!"

Continued on page 10

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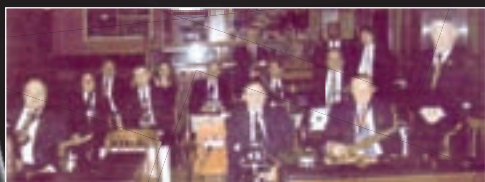
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Knockout queens

Brooklyn Heights author pens book on the history of women's boxing

BY RUTH BROWN

This book proves that hitting like a girl is no insult — it is a time-honored tradition.

A Brooklyn Heights writer and fisticuffs fan has penned a new tome that chronicles the history of women's boxing. And contrary to popular belief, it is a history that goes back more than just a few decades.

"It starts at the same period of the development of what we call modern boxing, which is the early 1700s in England, because women started to box at the same time," said author Malissa Smith, who will launch "A History of Women's Boxing" at Gleason's Gym in Dumbo on June 25.

Through the last 300 years, the prominence and popularity of women's boxing has come and gone in waves, said Smith. The 60-year-old author — who has been boxing at Gleason's since 1996 — spent a year combing through old newspapers and boxing texts while researching her book. She uncovered several other eras in history where it was not uncommon to see ladies putting up their dukes in public, especially in New York City.

In the 1870s, for example, female sparring became a popular spectacle at live variety shows in the city. Legendary local sportsman and saloon-keeper Harry Hill staged a female bout at his variety theater in the Bowery in 1876 that was such a hit he went on to sponsor shows featuring female fighters across the country, Smith said.

"It was a big media event in his day — they fought for a silver butter dish," she said. "What was amazing about these things is that some women really loved boxing and had real, honest-to-goodness boxing matches with men and women, and women and women."



A KNOCKOUT READ: Malissa Smith with her book "A History of Women's Boxing" at Gleason's Gym in Dumbo.

Photo by Stefano Giovannini

But Smith said the best anecdote she came across was from right here in Brooklyn in 1891, when experienced boxer Hattie Leslie took on a big, scrappy, untrained brawler named Gussie Freeman — or "Loony" as she was known to her colleagues at the Waterbury Rope Works in Greenpoint, where she had worked from age 12.

"Hattie Leslie was doing a thing where anyone could come up, and it was advertised before the show. And everyone at the Rope Works said, 'It's gotta be you, Loony! You do it!'" Smith said.

The fight drew a packed house to what was then the Grand Street Theater (and is now a McDonald's) in Williamsburg, and the crowd wasn't disappointed.

"They started to box, and it was evident that Gussie Freeman didn't have skills, but she had heart," said Smith. "They were just wailing at each other."

The bout was eventually stopped in the third round, in favor of Leslie, but its mythical status in the borough long outlived the sound of the final bell.

"Within a couple of weeks later, it got to be a four-round fight that Hattie Leslie won by a hair," said Smith. "Then, over the years, it became this legendary fight in the neighborhood, and it then went to four rounds, but Gussie Freeman won!"

In her fact-finding, Smith found reader letters in the Brooklyn Eagle still reminiscing about the fight 50 years after the fact.

But despite this long history of women participating in the sweet science, Smith said female boxers are still struggling for recognition, respect, and equal pay. The 19-year Brooklyn resident and Manhattan native said writing the book gave her a newfound appreciation not

Continued on page 10

Thunderbolt strikes!

Our reporter takes first ride on Coney's newest coaster

The Thunderbolt roller coaster stormed into the People's Playground over the weekend, sending riders through hair-raising twists and turns nearly 30 times an hour since its official opening on June 14. We sent our intrepid Adventure Correspondent Max Jaeger to take the first ride and bring back the lowdown on this high-flying new beast of the Boardwalk.



RIDE THE LIGHTNING: (Top) Riders on the Thunderbolt's maiden voyage scream through the first drop and into an 100-foot-tall vertical loop. (Center) Pamela Harris and kids from the Coney Island Youth Gap youth organization were the first to ride the new coaster. (Above) Locals and politicians lauded the ride — which occupies a long-empty lot — as a sign that the Coney Island Revitalization Plan is working.

Coney Island's brand-new roller coaster is named for an iconic coaster that stood nearby until it was demolished in 2000, but Luna Park's Thunderbolt — with its towering vertical loop — is really more of an homage to an even older Coney thrill ride, the Loop-the-Loop. When that coaster was torn down shortly after World War I, there was no looping ride in the People's Playground until the new Thunderbolt opened this month.

If the thought of 115-foot drops and vertical loops has you shaking in your boots, rest assured that you won't be facing them alone. Eight other adrenaline junkies are right there with you trying not to soil the coaster's brand new seats. Take off your cap and sunglasses, secure your wallet, and hold on tight, because once the staff straps you in, there's

no turning back.

A 90-degree climb straight up the first hill will get your heart pumping even before the first drop.

"It's like you're in a rocket ship," said Najee Jenkins, a member of a local youth organization who took the first plunge on the coaster.

The view climbing the 11-story tower was of a calm blue sky — until I looked sideways and realized how high we had risen above the Boardwalk. I took one last wistful look at the trains pulling into Stillwell Avenue and steeled my nerves.

At the top of the tower, you'll get a view of Coney Island few have seen since the Parachute Jump folded in the mid-60s, but don't blink because when you open your eyes, you'll be flying like greased lightning — straight to-



JOVIALITY JOVIAN: Luna Park president Antonio Zamperla basks in the glory of Coney's hottest new attraction. Photo by Paul Martinka

ward the ground.

After the 115-foot vertical drop, the ride rumbles into the first of several acrobatic inversions. The initial loop may be the most visually striking feature of the

Thunderbolt, but the contortions that come next really define the ride. A winding maze of barrel rolls give the feeling of weightless without the sinking feeling of a free-fall.

"All those loops, it makes you feel incredible," said Erik Knapp, known as Mr. Cyclone for his dedication to the iconic coaster.

Halfway through the ride, the "there-and-back" coaster reverses course with one last contortionist U-turn before taking riders on a series of bunny hills leading back to the station. The ride's second half is far tamer than the initial rush and lets riders get their stomachs back in place after an electrifying tryst with the sky.

Like a bolt out of the blue, the ride traverses 2,200 feet of track in a matter of seconds, but for all the sound and fury, it is actually a pretty smooth ride. The Thunderbolt is far less clackety than its Coney cousin the Cyclone, and despite at times hitting riders with five times the force of gravity, the whole storm is about as discomforting as a summer shower — but far more exhilarating.

— **Max Jaeger**

Photos by Stefano Giovannini

Puss to get the boot from Plumb Beach

BY MAX JAEGER

First they came for the kitties.

A group of wild cats living in a shanty town in Plumb Beach faces eviction by the National Park Service, which says the cats pose a danger to native species.

But the cats' human caretakers — who built them an elaborate wood-and-cardboard habitat in the woods and feed them daily — argue that the feral felines are doing more good than harm.

"Do you know there's a rat problem in New York City? You know where there's no rat problem? Plumb Beach," said Janelle Barabash of Midwood, who has been caring for them for months along with several other cat fanciers.

The colony consists of 33 cats living in a few dozen shelter and feeding structures organized into six cat condo clusters. It has been a haven for wild and aban-

doned cats for 11 years, according to Nancy Rogers, another caretaker.

The National Park Service, which has jurisdiction over the beach, said the maleficent mousers threaten area wildlife.

"For a national park to have any exotic species that could pose a threat to native wildlife is in direct conflict with national laws," said Doug Adamo, a biologist with the federal agency. "It is conservatively estimated that 1 billion birds are killed by domestic cats in U.S. alone."

Adamo did not have numbers specific to Brooklyn or estimates of the body count Plumb Beach's pugnacious pussycats may have racked up over the last decade, but recent studies have shown that even domestic house cats allowed to roam at night actually hunt and kill far more wildlife than previously estimated.

Local birdwatchers favor moving the cats to pro-

tect the local wildlife — especially since Plumb Beach is such a rare and specialized habitat.

"I would hope that the colony caretakers and the Park Service could work out a plan to relocate the cats that live currently at Plumb Beach to existent colonies that are not in such an environmentally sensitive area," said Rob Bate, a member of the Brooklyn Bird Club. "The littoral zone and saltwater marshes along coasts are severely diminished habitats worldwide and deserve special consideration, protection and attention."

A Parks Service spokesman said the agency discovered the shanty town last month, but cat advocates say the feds have known about the feline favela for a long time.

When the Army Corps of Engineers was rebuilding the beach after Hurricane Sandy, the Corps gave the head caretaker a key to



PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1: The National Parks Service says feral cats are a danger to critters native to Plumb Beach and plans to "dismantle" a cat shanty town where a group of Brooklyn feline fanatics care for the homeless hairballers.

Photo by Steve Solomonson

the fenced-off area. Indeed no disaster seems to have stopped the caretakers.

"When the snow was

waist-high this winter, we took a \$120 cab to come feed the cats," said Carolyn Evvino, a Bay Ridge retiree and the chief kitty caretakers who pays for the felines' food and shots. "I'm a 'crazy cat lady.'"

All 33 animals are fixed and up-to-date on their shots, said Rogers — a veterinary technician who volunteers for trap-and-release organizations.

The effort is a labor of love, but for others, it is much more.

"It's like therapy for me — I was in Vietnam," said Ridgeite Joe Destefan. "I still go to group [therapy], but this helps a lot."

But a sign recently posted near the colony at a parking lot along the Belt Parkway stated that the feds would claw back the land on June 13 by "dismantling" the kitties' shanties. The Park Service plans to capture the cats using humane traps and then demolish the wood-and-cardboard

shelters, Adamo said.

After wrangling with the caretakers, the feds extended the deadline for a week as a show of good faith — it will also help the caretakers transport their charges to nearby shelters while the cats find a permanent home, Adamo said.

But the cats' caretakers say the task isn't that easy, and a stint in a shelter will be a death sentence.

"They get five days before they put them down," said Rogers.

Most of the felines are "true ferals" — meaning they avoid people at all costs — and only a handful are adoptable, she said.

Moreover, there is no way to trap all 33 cats before the Parks Service's deadline, caretakers said.

"It took a year and a half to trap and spay or neuter the population," said Rogers. "I don't know how Doug [Adamo] thinks we'll do this in eight days."

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RATNER IS READY: Forest City Ratner head Bruce Ratner fought preservationists for years to acquire land for his vast Atlantic Yards development centered on the Barclays Center. The Municipal Arts Society recently honored him with a preservationist award.

Photo by Stefano Giovannini

Ratner gets award Bruce named top preservationist

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

The developer who destroyed, then built over, big swaths of Brooklyn snagged top honors — for his historic preservation work.

Preservationists at the Municipal Art Society issued their most prestigious award to Forest City Ratner's chairman Bruce Ratner and head MaryAnne Gilmartin last Wednesday night.

Advocates that take exception to the builder's biggest projects, Atlantic Yards and MetroTech Center, which have replaced and are slated to replace more than a dozen primarily low-slung blocks with hulking skyscrapers and the Barclays Center arena, are fuming at the decision.

"Forest City Ratner Companies has been bulldozing and demolishing huge tracts of land," said Simeon Bankoff, executive director of the Historic Districts Council, a preservationist group that spun off from the Municipal Art Society in the 1980s. "They're creating these places that are not

places at all."

The award, named for former first lady and dedicated preservationist Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, is the society's highest honor. In a statement, the group explained that the medal recognizes major players in the evolution of the city.

"MAS's highest honor is presented annually to individuals or institutions whose work or deeds have made outstanding contributions to New York City," the statement says.

Forest City developments have been a boon to the city, according to the society's chairwoman, Genie Birch.

"Bruce and MaryAnne's many accomplishments embody MAS's core principles in numerous ways," said Birch. "We are pleased to recognize them for their commitment to the future of New York."

Community groups say that, far from being an exemplar of responsible development, Forest City Ratner embodies the worst sort of politically

Continued on page 10

UNDER 'HOUSE' ARREST

Judge halts senior home evictions along Prospect Park

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

The seniors facing eviction from their tony Grand Army Plaza nursing home got a brief reprieve last Friday when a judge ordered management to keep the place open, for now.

Prospect Park Residence, which occupies a nine-story building at 1 Prospect Park West and was slated to close on Friday, will stay open until a lawsuit by angry family members challenging its closure is settled, a

judge ruled. The judge also ordered the assisted-living facility to reinstate its night nurse, allow private aids back into the facility, and provide all the services it had committed to before it started transferring elderly residents out. A lawyer for the families said they are happy with the momentary freeze, but complained that the closure process has been flawed from the get-go, when the Department of Health signed off

on the shuttering plan without putting up a fuss.

"We had serious concerns about the closure plan that was rubber-stamped by the DOH," said Aureore DeCarlo, an attorney with the Legal Aid Society's Brooklyn Office for the Aging. "It seemed like a really skeletal version of what it should look like."

In March Prospect Park Resi-

Continued on page 10

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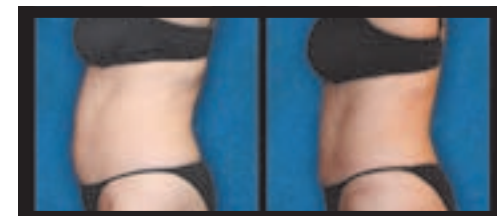


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GAY DAY! GAY DAY!

Mayor DeBlasio leads annual Brooklyn Pride Parade in Park Slope

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

It was loud, proud, and as Park Slope as it gets.

Thousands turned out to celebrate the 18th annual Brooklyn Pride festival in the neighborhood on Saturday. Former Sloper-in-chief and current Mayor DeBlasio joined first lady Chirlane McCray to lead a gaggle of pols in the parade. When the marching portion of the festivities concluded, DeBlasio gave a brief speech, telling reporters he and his wife wouldn't be caught dead at a procession that doesn't allow gay people to participate.

"You will see Chirlane at this parade, and me at this parade, but you will not see us at a parade that excludes members of the LGBT community," the city's executive said, according to reports.

DeBlasio made waves in March when he refused to walk in the Manhattan Saint Patrick's Day Parade because it excluded gay regalia.

Joining the first couple as grand marshals were Borough President Adams, Public Advocate Letitia James, and Councilman Carlos Menchaca (D-Sunset Park). The revelers marched down Fifth Avenue waving rainbow flags and, in the case of the Sirens Women's Motorcycle Club, riding hogs festooned with them.

The parade capped off a day of celebration that started with a five-kilometer run in Prospect Park and featured family-friendly entertainment from start to finish.

Simone Kolysh and Alex Floor traveled to the festival from Bensonhurst,



PRIDE APLENTY: (Clockwise from above) Alex Floor and Simone Kolysh, of Bensonhurst, with kids Alexie, Ark, and Evan. Borough President Adams with drag queen Lady Clover Honey. Bikers cruise down Fifth Avenue. Mayor DeBlasio and first lady Chirlane McCray march.

with their three children in tow. Kolysh, who teaches women's studies at Brooklyn College and marched with the school's Lesbian, Gay, and Transgender Alliance, said she was excited to bring together her family and her academic work.

"It was wonderful because my children are finally old enough to enjoy it," Kolysh said. "I wanted my kids to experience a safe space, which they did."



FREE FEST: Lloyd Kaufman, is bringing his popular free film fest TromaDance to Brooklyn.

Photo by Elizabeth Graham

Film fest

Continued from page 1

against evil," he said. "He has to stop it, even against his physical will."

The underlying theme of "The Toxic Avenger," and of all the Troma films, is a criticism of powerful forces that have an undue influence over everyday people, Kaufman said.

The motives behind TromaDance are similar.

Kaufman said the idea came about after he and "South Park" creator Trey Parker made a trip to the Sundance Film Festival in Utah to screen "Cannibal! The Musical," a film Parker had directed. They were put off by the pomp and expense of the mainstream cinema fest.

Troma started TromaDance in Utah to give indie film makers a platform to present their work. After 10 years in Park City, it moved around a bit before finally coming to New York for the first time this year.

The TromaDance Film Festival at the Paper Box [17 Meadow St. between Waterbury and Bogart streets in Williamsburg, (718) 383-3815, www.tromadance.com]. June 27 from 6-10 pm, June 28 at noon-10 pm. Free.



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Rear-view tattoo

World's biggest Kentile fan
wears Gowanus skyline on back

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

The Kentile Floors sign may soon be erased from the Gowanus skyline, but it is not coming off of this guy's back any time soon.

Soft-spoken Australian statistician David Dyte might not seem like a likely standard bearer for Brooklyn's iconography, but look under his shirt and you will find a veritable atlas of borough landmarks in tattoo form, including a shoulder-wide depiction of the rooftop sign that is being dismantled and has not yet found a new home. The inked-up borough enthusiast said he would rather take in the landmark from the Smith-Ninth Street subway station platform than over his shoulder in the mirror.

"It's really a relic of old New York," Dyte said. "It's great where it is, so why

not leave it there?"

Dyte may be a transplant to Brooklyn, but he has embraced the borough with the zeal of a convert. Originally from rural Australia, he followed his heart to Manhattan in 1999 after falling in love on a vacation and he hopped the East River in 2002. An amateur photographer, Dyte first saw the Kentile sign before moving to Brooklyn, when a friend told him about the gorgeous view from the Smith-Ninth stop. One of the snapshots he took that day ended up providing the blueprint for the Kentile Floors tattoo he now sports on his rear shoulder. The sign on his back looms large over a Smith-Ninth scene re-arranged to fit an F train curving photogenically into the station.

The skin-art tour of the borough does not stop there. A mid-back street map of Downtown, pre-MetroTech Center, stitches the Gowanus image to pictures of the Cyclone roller



INKED: David Dyte ponders the Kentile Floors sign in Gowanus, just one of many Brooklyn landmarks he has tattooed on his body.

Photo by Jason Speakman

coaster and Borough Hall. The back-spanning artwork took more than a year for tattooist Kati Vaughn to complete, spaced out over 10 painful sittings.

"I'm not good with the pain, but I like the results," Dyte said.

The owner of the real-life building the iconic Kentile Floors sign sits atop started demolishing the sign this month, but reached a tentative compromise last Thursday with neighbors eager to preserve it. Under the deal, the letters will be entrusted to the care of

the Gowanus Alliance, a pro-business group, while preservationists seek a new perch. How the letters will be preserved is unclear as the permit calls for them to be dropped down a garbage chute, according to the New York Times, and erecting it on another rooftop is a pricey proposition. However things turn out, Dyte is sure going to miss looking at that sign.

"I'm very, very sad they're taking it down," Dyte said. "It just makes the whole view. Hopefully they'll put it up somewhere visible."

Shack

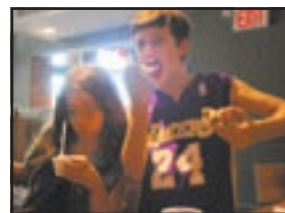
Continued from page 1

for the company. "Brooklyn continues to be a culinary and cultural hub."

The new Dumbo location sits at the intersection of Old Fulton and Water streets, directly across from the ferry dock. Aside from the usual top-shelf beef and hand-spun "concrete" custards, the new burger joint offers up a special-to-the-location Caramel Carousel concrete, named for the nearby Jane's Carousel and made of shattered sugar cone, sea salt, caramel, and banana. Also on offer is a seasonal pie from Gowanus bakery Four and Twenty Blackbirds.

One young Shake Shack devotee from Dumbo, who used to ride his bike to the Fulton Mall location with his dad, said the new spot is tops, and not just because it is closer to home.

"The burgers are really



SHACK-TIME: Naia and Alex Neuman checked out their neighborhood's new Shake Shack on opening day.

CNG / Matthew Perlman

good," said Alex Neuman after taking his first bite. "I think they're better than the ones at the other Shake Shack."

His sister had not tasted a Shack Burger before, but now says she could be sold.

"I'm not really a big burger fan," said Naia Neuman. "But it actually turned out really good."

The interior of the new spot highlights architectural details of the century-old building, including a brick archway that leads to the dining room. The in-

side is finished with wood paneling salvaged from decommissioned water towers and wood tables made from the beams of Dumbo warehouses.

The eatery is still waiting on a liquor license, but management is planning to have red and white wines on tap and Brooklyn Brewery has cooked up a special beer batch for Shake Shack's 10th anniversary that will be served at all (licensed) locations soon.

In an effort to make inroads with borough animal lovers, Shake Shack is donating a portion of its profits from the Dumbo operation to Badass Brooklyn Animal Rescue.

For one Shake Shack aficionado, all the bells and whistles are secondary to the joy of being able to get a good slab of ground beef in the neighborhood.

"We have a lot of pizza places," Alex Neuman said. "I'm just happy we have a burger place here now."

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Rebar owner faces music

Jason Steven agrees to \$1M restitution deal on same day as guilty plea

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

It's the big payback.

Rebar owner Jason Stevens pleaded guilty to felony tax fraud charges last Thursday, hours before agreeing to pay back more than \$1 million to the dozens of couples who had weddings booked at his venue when it closed abruptly in May, according to Attorney General Eric Schneiderman's office. Spurned lovebirds lauded the deal.

"I'm elated," said Christian Pascarella, a groom-to-be that has been organizing the couples to seek justice. "What he did was wrong, but if he's trying to make some restitution that's great."

The guilty plea will likely net Stevens between three years, four months, and 10 years in prison, but the restitution is what the burned lovebirds are more interested in.

The agreement means that the 73 couples who have filed complaints with the attorney

general and shown proof of having paid Stevens should get their money back, if Stevens has it. Scheiderman's office said it does not know whether Stevens can muster the money or not.

The deal needs a judge to sign off on it and additional couples will have 120 days to come forward after that, an office spokeswoman said.

Scorned lovebirds protested outside all three of Stevens' court appearances, demanding that law enforcement take action against him for supposedly taking more than \$1 million from couples booking weddings, all the while knowing he would close the gastropub.

He shuttered the venue on May 9 and vanished for a week, then surfaced to face the music for failing to pay \$200,000 in sales tax and avoiding \$1.2 million in tax bills over the course of four years.

The repayment promise

he's making now could save him from charges of fraud for the pocketed nuptial payments, Pascarella speculated.

"It seems like he's doing the right thing," he said. "Whatever his motivations are, at least he's owning up to it and being a man about it."

Only one of the couples has sued Stevens so far. Jennifer Liseo and her partner say they ponied up \$34,000 for their wedding, paying in full because Stevens offered them a discount. Stevens even gave them a tour of Rebar to help seal the deal, they said.

"He was very charming," Liseo said.

The couple's attorney Victor Dunlop served Stevens papers for the lawsuit after his plea at the tax fraud hearing.

The former proprietor rolled his eyes and let his lawyer handle the transaction, Dunlop said.

"A typical defendant," he said. "It's all business for him."

Dunlop said his case will make the argument for fraud, not breach of contract, which is how such cases are often handled.

"He knew his business was financially unstable," Dunlop said. "And he took the money anyway. That looks more like fraud than breach of contract to me."

It is important to get a judgement leveled against Stevens now because he has not yet filed for bankruptcy, which will make it harder for other couples to sue, Dunlop said.

Some present outside the courthouse said they are trying to move on. Julie Villar got hitched on May 25 in spite of losing \$22,000 in the Rebar debacle, moving the nuptials to Diety in Boerum Hill, she said.

It may have been for the best, according to her.

"We had a better wedding than we would have at Rebar," Villar said.



STREET VIEW: A rendering of New York Methodist Hospital's proposed U-shaped expansion. New York Methodist Hospital

Hospital

Continued from page 1

Health will house a surgery center, a cancer center, an urgent-care center, and a 300-car underground garage, among other facilities. The complex will take the place of 16 townhouses, some of them built in the 19th century.

A spokeswoman for the hospital welcomed the go-ahead and said the hospital incorporated community input every step of the way.

"We were most gratified by the unanimous decision of the NYC Board of Standards and Appeals

to grant the variances needed for New York Methodist Hospital's Center for Community Health," said Lyn Hill in a statement. "For nearly a year, the hospital has worked with our community to advance this project, which will enhance outpatient healthcare for Brooklyn residents, and we have incorporated numerous suggestions and revisions as a result of community input."

Advocates said they will keep up the fight, and one emphasized that it is not the new facility itself they take issue with, but its size and the hospital's approach to pushing it through.



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Seniors

Continued from page 5

dence bigs gave its elderly wards just three months to scram, saying increased taxes had struck the facility a fatal financial blow. But the suit charges the operators and the building owner did not do enough to prepare for transferring the vulnerable oldsters and that the Department of Health should not have



SAFE FOR NOW: The old folks' home occupies prime real estate at 1 Prospect Park West. File photo by Stefano Giovanni

signed off on the plan.

The old folks' home is in a prime spot across President Street from 9 Prospect Park West, where actor Chloe Sevigny bought a pad

for \$2 million in December and Sen. Charles Schumer (D-New York) lives with his wife, City University of New York vice chancellor Iris Weinshall.

Ratner

Continued from page 5

connected real estate speculator, gobbling up public money to use vibrant neighborhoods as its personal sandboxes.

"If the future is using eminent domain, hogging subsidies, and crushing a neighborhood, then New York's future isn't very bright," said Daniel Goldstein, a co-founder of the anti-Atlantic Yards group Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn. "And this award validates everything they've done."

In a 2006 presentation, then-president of the Municipal Art Society Kent Barwick condemned the mega-development that has

vacuumed up hundreds of millions of dollars in public subsidies.

And he knew his audience well.

"Those who write headlines may want to know MAS's conclusion. 'Does this project work for Brooklyn?' And I will tell you that as it currently stands we don't think it does," he said.

Today, Goldstein contends that nothing has changed in terms of Forest City's lack of respect for the existing Prospect Heights neighborhood Atlantic Yards continues to encroach on.

"It violated those principles then, and it does now," he said.

Bankoff concurred, saying that the honor makes a mockery of the street-level values Jacqueline Kennedy

was known for.

"They demolished historically and architecturally important buildings. They pushed people out with the promise of affordable housing in the future which has not been seen," said Bankoff. "This was top-down planning. Jackie was speaking from a community perspective."

The only possible reason to heap preservationist praise upon a company notorious for leveling neighborhoods is to keep the donations pouring in, Goldstein said.

"They are giving their biggest award to a major fund-raiser for the organization," he said. "It's pretty disgusting to sell out core principals for a black-tie affair."

Boxing

Continued from page 2

just for these women's skills in the ring, but for their strength outside of it.

"They do it with absolute grace, because they get s--- for what they do — both

in terms of a public that doesn't appreciate them, or promoters who don't try to fight for them to actually get money or to help create an environment that's better for boxing as a whole," said Smith. "And yet they do it anyway because they love what they do. They love the

sport, they love the camaraderie. It blows my mind."

"A History of Women's Boxing" book launch at Gleason's Gym [77 Front St. between Main and Washington streets in Dumbo, (718) 797-2872, www.ahistoryofwomensboxing.com]. June 25 at 6 pm. Free.

Folds

Continued from page 1

Tables, chairs, and entertainment will be provided at the \$35-a-head shindig, but guests must bring their own food to share with others. The food doesn't have to be all white, but many do embrace the theme, the organizers said.

"People have brought white truffles, white macaroons, white wine only,"

said Garrett Sathre, the other half of Hand Made Events.

The food doesn't need to be fancy, either — even if your duds are — but Sathre said some past attendees have gone well beyond chips and dip.

"You can't actually have flames at the event, but we have seen people trying to make creme brulee," he said.

Singer-songwriter Ben Folds will regale the monochlor-clad crowd with a solo

performance, followed by a DJ and dancing.

The organizers won't say exactly where in Prospect Park the unpigmented party will take place — the exact location will be announced a few hours before the event — but said it might be where you least expect.

The PopUp Dinner Brooklyn at Prospect Park (exact location will be revealed prior to event, www.prospectpark.org). June 28 at 5 pm. \$35.

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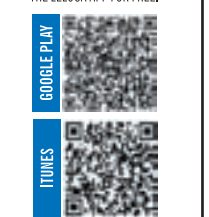
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