

NYU LICH deal ditched

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

They're pulling the plug on this emergency room.

New York University backed out of its role as a medical partner in the redevelopment scheme aimed at turning the former Long Island College Hospital campus into luxury housing with a healthcare component. The announcement came after a judge expanded the scope of a lawsuit brought by healthcare worker unions claiming the university's Langone Medical Center was failing to hire former employees of the Cobble Hill hospital, as mandated by a court settlement that gave the state the green light to close and sell the hospital. The union lawsuit originally targeted only the state, which still controls the prime real estate the hospital once occupied, but last Thursday a judge said New York University and developer Fortis Property Group also bear responsibility. A state spokesman said the university's about-face throws the whole sale into jeopardy.

"A highly complicated health-care transaction that would have

Continued on page 10

AMERICA THE BOOZE-IFUL



WITH A CHERRY ON TOP: Kilo Bravo owner Kate Buenaflor has created a cocktail for every state in America.

Photo by Stefano Giovannini

Bar creates state drinks

BY DANIELLE FURFARO

A drive to all 50 states would take a long time — especially when you factor in Hawaii. But a new Williamsburg bar is offering an alcohol-soaked road trip that will allow patrons to circumnavigate the states from the comfort of their bar stools.

Kilo Bravo, which opened this month on N. 10th Street, has created a cocktail for each state and hopes that its customers want to come along for the ride.

"The goal was to come up with creative ways to identify the bar brand without being cheesy," said owner Kate Buenaflor. "To

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Tree root of problem

BY VANESSA OGLE

The city's restrictions on fixing root-damaged sidewalks are driving homeowners up a tree.

Unruly tree roots are damaging sidewalks in Southern Brooklyn — leaving pedestrians at risk of falling, and homeowners vulnerable to lawsuits —

but homeowners say the convoluted system for getting repairs isn't solving the problem.

"The city takes the position you should just let everyone fall," said Bergen Beach homeowner Linda Schain, who was sued in 2009 after a woman was injured.

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Photo by Georgine Benvenuto

THAR SHE BLOWS: Workers respond to a 72nd Street flood.

City errors flood Ridge home

BY MAX JAEGER

It was a fire hydrant fiasco in Bay Ridge last weekend, and locals say the city is all wet.

A series of missteps by city agencies turned a routine check of a 72nd Street fire plug into a 14-hour deluge that flooded basements and ended up

cutting off water for an entire city block.

Water gushed from a stuck hydrant until the wee hours of Sept. 20 after the city failed to shut it off, leaving one Ridgite ankle-deep in muck and wondering how she'll pay for repairs.

"I don't have flood insur-

ance — you shouldn't need flood insurance in Bay Ridge," said Natalie Iwanicki, whose 72nd Street basement turned into a wading pool when the city couldn't stop the rogue hydrant. "There was at least four inches of water and now it's all full of mud. I re-

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PONY UP: Drivers crossing the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge will pay full price on the span's 50th anniversary, despite a Brooklyn Councilman's efforts to get the toll rolled back to its 1964 rate for one day.
 Photo by Elizabeth Graham

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

Verrazano historical toll roll-back nixed

BY MAX JAEGER

This throwback got thrown out.

A Brooklyn councilman asked the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to honor the 50th anniversary of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge by rolling the toll back to its 1964 price of \$1.00 per round trip Nov. 21, but the agency — which controls the city's bridges and tunnels — told the councilman that's one bridge it won't cross.

"I asked them to roll back the toll for the 50th anniversary, but they said 'Try the 500th anniversary,'" Gentile joked at a meeting of Community Board 10.

The Authority's board of directors establishes tolls for bridges and tunnels. Earlier this year, it authorized a rebate program to lessen tolls for Staten Islanders and commercial vehicles that use the bridge extensively, a precedent Gentile pointed to when arguing for the throwback rate.

An Authority spokes-

man said the approval process for rolling back the tolls, even for just one day, would take months.

"Any new MTA rebate program would require an analysis that would take months," said spokesman Kevin Ortiz.

About 173,000 vehicles have crossed the bridge so far this year, and the Authority collects an average \$936,000 daily, according to Ortiz.

The request to roll back tolls is part of the councilman's larger push for more anniversary celebrations on the Brooklyn side of the Narrows. Staten Islanders are getting the lion's share of transit-agency-sponsored events, and the councilman said he wants that to change.

"The bridge has two sides — I'm asking them to give us at least as many types of ceremonies and exhibits as Staten Island," Gentile said.

Among the events currently planned are:

• An Authority-organized ceremony at the Overlook on Staten Island

on Nov. 21, 50 years after the bridge opened to traffic. U.S. Army officials will fire cannon volleys from both sides of the bridge and the Fire Department will provide a water boat display in the harbor.

• An Authority-and-Staten-Island-museum sponsored exhibit on the bridge's construction, running through year's end. The exhibit will move to the Transit Museum in Brooklyn at an unspecified date, according to the Authority.

• Journalist Gay Talese, who chronicled the bridge's construction in his book "The Bridge," is reissuing the book and is slated to sign copies at the Transit Museum.

Gentile is not planning any events of his own, because he said it is the Authority's job. The councilman charged that events at the Transit Museum don't make sense given the Museum's location seven miles from the span in Downtown.

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Live poet's society

BY MAX JAEGER

A poetry club in Bay Ridge? Get outta here!

A cadre of creative types called the Bay Ridge Poets Society meets monthly at The Owl's Head wine bar. Often caricatured as a working-class rookery of mookery, Bay Ridge doesn't get due credit as a center of high culture, organizers said.

"There was a hunger for this," said emcee and native Ridgite Henry Stewart, who is also an editor at Opera News. "Bay Ridge doesn't have a reputation as a literary place. I think it's not a fair assessment — there are a lot of people in the neighborhood who are creating."

Stewart says he knows the saloon's salon won't transform the blue-collar neighborhood into a new Algonquin Round Table, but that's not the point.

"We aren't going to change people's perception of Bay Ridge," he said. "It's one more thing to add to the tapestry."

And it's more than just scribes who howl, yawp, and otherwise wax poetic on the last Sunday of every month.

"More and more, we are trying to figure out exactly what 'poetry' is," said John Avelluto, the Gravesend native who runs the bar and founded the society. "We get performers, musicians, people who are almost ranters."

The notion of vino-infused versification flies in the face of Bay Ridge's supposed blue-collar ethos.

"If you read a book in a bar, you're a hipster," quipped Tommy Casatelli in a 2012 video called "S-- People From Brooklyn Say."

Casatelli was himself the target of some neighborhood ire after he opened a so-called "hipster bar" — The Lock



MAN OF LETTERS: Lifelong Ridgite Henry Stewart emcees a monthly poetry gathering at The Owl's Head. Bar owner John Avelluto and Stewart devised the Bay Ridge Poet's Society to give locals a creative outlet.

Photo by Steve Solomonson

Yard — in Bay Ridge last year.

But the society's scrawlers aren't plaid-clad invaders from the north — they're locals looking to elevate their neighborhood, and their neighbors.

"Part of what we're doing is providing more attention and more opportunities for arts funding," said Avelluto, who pointed to a 2010 study from Brooklyn College that found, per capita, Bay Ridge artists receive one-tenth of the borough average in grants.

Still, in a neighborhood where there has been a backlash to bars serving craft beer, it is good to have a place where people can gather without judgement, another poet said.

"They're not expressing themselves around the people that they're normally around. You get up in front of strangers and you release everything," said Bensonhurst native Ricardo Hernandez. "This isn't just a poetry reading — it's group therapy."

Bay Ridge Poet's Society at The Owl's Head (479 74th St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues). Sept. 28 at 7 pm. Free.



STRAW MAN: (Above) An unidentified protestor likens absent candidate Domenic Recchia to the Scarecrow from "The Wizard of Oz" outside of a debate on Sept. 23. (Below) Rep. Michael Grimm took questions from the audience after his Democratic opponent snubbed the debate.

Photos by Steve Solomonson



Recchia a no-show at Ridge 'Great Debate'

BY MAX JAEGER

It was a war of words.

The Bay Ridge Community Council held its annual "Great Bay Ridge Debate" on Sept. 23, bringing together candidates for state and federal offices serving Bay Ridge. But one hopeful never made it to the stage. In a last-minute snub to his home district, Democratic challenger Domenic Recchia did not show up to debate Rep. Michael Grimm (R-Bay Ridge). The incumbent congressman blasted his opponent, saying the former councilman had not done the most basic homework before running and was not ready for the limelight.

"In the last week, my opponent has made several gaffes," Grimm said. "What they realized is that he can't be in front of the cameras."

Recchia's camp would not comment on why the candidate ducked the debate and instead attacked Grimm, who has pleaded not guilty to a 20-count indictment alleging tax, mail, and immigration fraud related to a business he owned before assuming office.

One leader of the Bay Ridge civic group said the

congressional hopeful's staff cited a scheduling conflict — though invitations went out last month.

"His handlers are telling us he is busy, but they aren't saying why," said Ted General, a member of the group's board of directors.

A recent NY1 poll shows that Recchia has come within four points of his embattled rival.

With Recchia a no-show, Grimm used his time to smear his opponent as a cog in the Democratic machine.

"If you don't think we're on the wrong track, if you think President Obama and Mayor DeBlasio have this city and this country on the right track, then my opponent is your guy, because he will be lockstep with Mayor DeBlasio and the president," Grimm said.

The contest between Assemblyman Alec Brook-Krasny (D-Coney Island) and Republican Stamatis Lilikakis also heated up Tuesday night, with the challenger attacking Brook-Krasny's record on tax hikes, and the Coney Island assemblyman exposing his opponent's political naivete.

Lilikakis, a political newcomer, attacked

Brook-Krasny's record on education, charging that the four-term incumbent voted against a 2013 bill establishing a college scholarship program. But Brook-Krasny pointed out that he never got a chance to vote on the bill, because it never cleared the assembly's higher education committee, of which Brook-Krasny is not a member. The incumbent took Lilikakis's gaffe as an opening and pounced on the business owner's own voting record.

"I know that in the last 20 years, you've only voted twice, and that was in presidential elections," Brook-Krasny said.

Lilikakis conceded the point.

"As far as my voting record, you're right, and I apologize," he said. "As far as that's concerned, I had my reasons."

The next Bay Ridge debate is Oct. 1.

Bay Ridge Council on Aging Candidates Forum at Fort Hamilton Senior Center [941 Fort Hamilton Pkwy. between 99th and 100th streets in Bay Ridge, (718) 619-5110] Oct. 1 at 9 am.

Say bon voyage to the Bay Ridge ferry

BY MAX JAEGER

The Rockaway Ferry Service's stops in Sunset Park will likely end in October.

The ferry carried Brooklynites to lower Manhattan for 13 months while the Metropolitan Transportation Authority repaired R train tunnels connecting the two boroughs, and riders said they'll miss the salt air and shorter commutes.

"There may not be 100 percent ridership, but for the people who take it, it makes 100 percent of the difference," said Bay Ridge resident Karen Hennigen, one of dozens of riders returning home from Manhattan at Sunset Park's 58th Street Pier on Sept. 22.

And it was a boon for more than just Manhattan-bound commuters, one rider said.

"Increasing my travel time to four hours a day is going to be a nightmare," said John Rochford, a Rockaway resident who takes the ferry to his job in Sunset Park.

On the ferry, Rochford's commute clocks in at a relatively trim 1 hour and 40 minutes, he said.

The city revived the defunct service to ease commutes while the Metropolitan Transportation Authority rebuilt the Hurricane Sandy-ravaged Montague Tubes, which finally reopened last week.

Initially, the boat was

a short-term solution, but the city extended the service several times since 2012 — ultimately deciding to run the ferry until the R train could once again cross the East River.

A city spokesman said the service will likely end in October, but there is hope.

"Barring an extraordinary increase in ridership that brings cost down significantly, this is not a service we'll be able to continue past October," said mayoral spokesman Wiley Norvell.

But the city will look at September ridership before making a decision, he said.

A local councilman who



GANGWAY: Dozens of riders file off the ferry at the 58th Street Pier in Sunset Park.

Photo by Elizabeth Graham

pushed for the ferry's extension said the city has the cash to keep the ferry afloat.

"Eight million dollars in the city budget is a drop in the bucket," said Councilman Vincent Gentile (D-Bay Ridge).

Ticket fiasco still rolling

Late B44 bus lane tickets continue to plague drivers

BY VANESSA OGLE

The city still hasn't hit the brakes on the B44 bus lane ticket fiasco.

After sending out multiple tickets weeks late to motorists who drove in the Select Bus Service B44 bus lane last spring, the Departments of Finance and Transportation sent out letters assuring the drivers that they

would only have to pay one of the tickets, all other violations issued between March 18 and Aug. 31 would be withdrawn, and those who had already paid multiple tickets would get a refund.

But new delayed tickets continue to arrive, late fees for supposedly withdrawn tickets keep accruing, and the refund process has left

some drivers unsatisfied.

A new ticket popped up in one driver's account — who already paid the only ticket the city said she owed — and she said she's worried this is the beginning of another blitz.

"One ticket can ruin everything," said Yelena Vasilenko, who already has a \$25 late fee for a March ticket

she didn't know she still owed. "I paid the one they mentioned in the letter."

In August — following a month of confusion since the delayed-ticket blitz started — the city issued its first official statement to the affected drivers, assuring them they only had to pay the one ticket specifically noted in their individ-



TIX BLITZ REDUX: Yelena and Yevgvemiy Vasilenko, who received 13 delayed tickets for driving in the B44 bus lane, continued to receive tickets in the mail even after the city said all but one of the violations would be dismissed.

File photo by Alexa Telano

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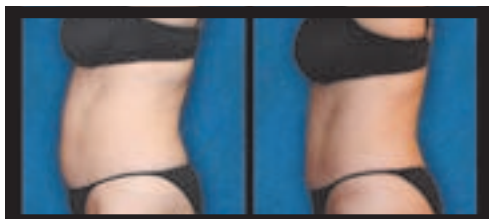
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ualized letters.

But since then, new drivers who hadn't received the amnesty letters are now being bombarded with multiple, weeks-old tickets — and facing the same disorganized response from the city. Drivers trying to fight their tickets still must take time off work to appear in traffic court, even though the city says multiple tickets would be dismissed.

One driver who just received a ticket from June 12 said the judge told her to wait 30 days to see if she receives more tickets.

"Now that I got it so late, it's like, 'Oh my god,'" said Lisa Green, who worries that she is going to be hit with more tickets. "That is the route I take every day I go to work."

The promised refunds are also grinding drivers'

gears, like one Midwood motorist who had already paid about \$1,000 worth of the tickets before he knew that most would be dismissed. The fines were refunded — but not the processing fees.

"On average, it's about \$3 per tickets," said Peter Allen. "If you pay 10 tickets, that's \$30."

The traffic cameras that automatically read plate numbers of vehicles in the select bus lane are run by a contractor called American Traffic Solutions.

The firm did not respond by press time to inquiries about why the tickets have been issued so many weeks after the violations took place.

The city did not respond to multiple requests for comment about the new flurry of delayed tickets being issued.

Rude writing on wall

BY VANESSA OGLE

Politically charged graffiti scattered around Sheepshead Bay is really leaving a mark.

Many of the messages, apparently all in the same scrawl, mostly take aim at Democrats — which is not entirely shocking in an area that voted solidly for Joe Lhota in the 2013 mayoral election.

On the overpass on Sheepshead Bay Road, near Shore Parkway — one of at least seven major sites for the graffiti — "Impeach Obama" is slanted strategically above "Traitor." "Democrats destroy America" is painted nearby in bright blue letters.

But one local said the

graffiti isn't representative of the community.

"The messages can't be any brighter than the people doing it," said Tom Scalese, the former secretary of the Sheepshead Bay-Plumb Beach Civic Association.

All graffiti is a crime, according to Councilman Chaim Deutsch (D-Sheepshead Bay) — and he said anyone who spots someone defacing property should immediately call the police. Catching the culprit in the act is the only reliable way to secure a conviction.

"If you see someone spraying graffiti, you call 911," said Deutsch. "It is not

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Lady Liberty in Sheepshead Bay

Russian immigrant shows his love for America

BY VANESSA OGLE

Their American dream finally came true.

A Sheepshead Bay family that came to America from the former Soviet Union made a statement about patriotism by erecting a miniature Statue of Liberty in the front yard of their E. 21st Street home.

For years, Lev Berenshteyn wanted a replica of the iconic statue — the ultimate symbol of immigration to the Land of the Free — and after years of searching, he found one just in time to celebrate the family's 23rd anniversary in the United States.

"It was his dream," said Lev's wife Galina Berenshteyn. "He was looking for this statue — and he finally found it."

Berenshteyn said the family moved to America in 1991 from the collapsing Soviet Union to escape the growing tensions between different nationalities in the former soviet republic of Uzbekistan.

"We moved here as a refugee," she said. "It was a very difficult time from 1989 until when we moved from there."

Five years after arriving in the United States, the family bought a home in Sheepshead. Berenshteyn worked as a computer programmer and her husband as a limousine driver — and she said the two worked long hours to buy their home and make sure their three children could live the American dream.

"We were working very hard — seven in the morning to 11 at night," she said. "We bought this house for all our children."

Now retired, Beren-



STATUESQUE STATEMENT: Lev Berenshteyn and Tayfun Yazici built a pedestal for a miniature Statue of Liberty in Berenshteyn's front yard in Sheepshead Bay. Photo by Elizabeth Graham

shteyn said her husband finally had the time to complete their patriotic project. Berenshteyn's husband built an eight-foot-tall pedestal for the statue, and earlier this month, he topped it with a seven-and-a-half-foot replica of the American icon, as first reported in the neighborhood blog Sheepshead Bites.

The little Lady Liberty — complete with a torch that glows at night — now stands watch over E. 21st.

While her husband was working on attaching the statue to the base, Berenshteyn said their son,

friends, and neighbors laughed at the idea. But since the statue's completion, Berenshteyn said the responses have changed drastically.

"He was just laughing — everybody was laughing," said Berenshteyn. "Now they like it."

Berenshteyn said her husband has always wanted to pay tribute to their new country — and she said the statue is a way for them to show off their patriotism.

"We proud of America and we're proud of our country," she said.

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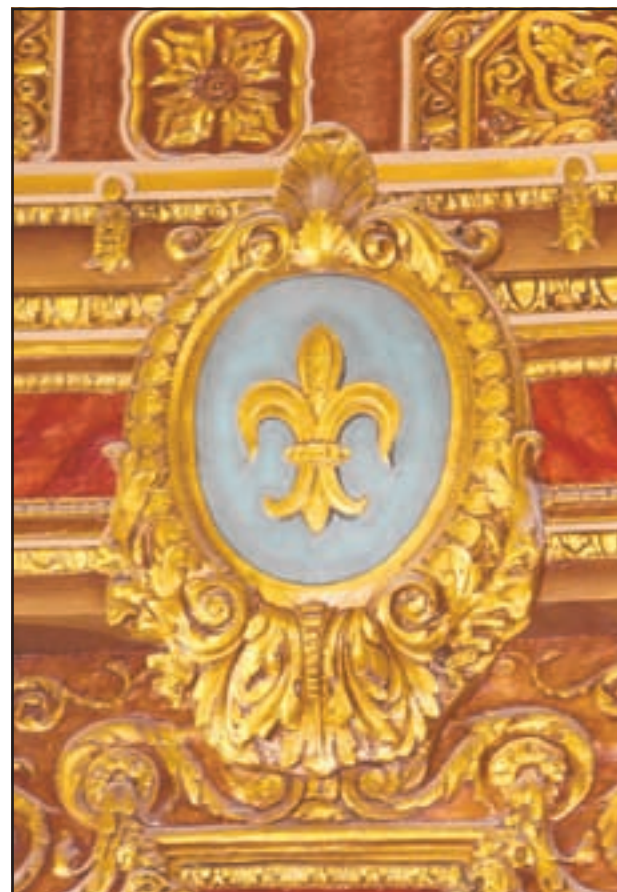
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Kings Theatre on its way to coronation

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

Watch the throne.

The Loew's Kings Theatre in Flatbush is on track to regaining its former gilded glory, and we got a sneak peek inside last week.

The Flatbush Avenue theater opened in 1929, just before the stock market crash that sparked the Great Depression, and

you can tell from the details gimmering to life inside that it was built in a time of opulence. Coming back shining is the walnut wood that lined the lobby and the seven massive chandeliers, weighing a ton each.

The renovations are supposed to restore the original details while working in some mod-

ern amenities, such as comfier seats and an expanded backstage that required adding to the back of the block-deep structure and de-mapping part of the road behind it.

Ace Theatrical Group, the company that is refurbishing the theater, has not released any information about what the grand reopening will look like,

but a spokesman told this paper in August that the theater will serve up an eclectic mix of programming appealing to Flatbush residents and people across the city.

The renovations have cost about \$94 million, about half of which came from taxpayers, and are set to wrap up in time for a January 2015 opening.

DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK: (Left) Ceiling details gleam while the floor features remain undone in this grand room of the under-renovation Kings Theatre. (Center) Engravings adorn a door frame at the picture palace. (Above) A fleur de lis shines again four decades after the theater shuttered. It is on track for a January 2015 reopening.

Photos by Steve Solomonson

DRINKS

Continued from page 1

give a bar an identity without being too gimmicky is a challenge."

Some of the drinks are actually official state cocktails, such as the Cape Codder or mint julep, but Buenaflor did not want to stick to the same formula for each.

"That would have been boring," she said. "Some of the ingredients in the drinks are from the state or some of them are named after sports teams. We did something different for each one."

For example, since Ohio



WOLF OF N. 10TH STREET: The Howlin' Wolf is Kilo Bravo's cocktail for North Dakota. The drink is made with vodka, blue curacao, creme de menthe, and Sprite. Photo by Stefano Giovannini

is known for its blue-collar workers, the Kilo Bravo cocktail is called the Blue-

Collar Sidecar. It features brandy, Cointreau, lemon, blue curacao, and sugar. The New Jersey cocktail, called the Turnpike, is an overloaded Long Island Ice Tea. For New York, Buenaflor eschewed the Manhattan in favor of the Bronx cocktail, which features gin, sweet vermouth, dry vermouth, and orange juice.

Of course, it would be dangerous to try to tackle all 50 states too quickly. As an incentive to take it easy, Kilo Bravo is giving patrons a full year to try all 50 drinks. At \$10 a state, that is \$500 in drinks. So if a customer finishes all of the drinks in one calendar year, they get a free three-hour open bar

for their friends and special drink discounts.

But the challenge is tougher than it sounds — Buenaflor acknowledges that some of the state drinks are not all that appetizing.

The patrons agree.

"If someone is proud of their state, they probably do not want to bring their friends in to try the New Jersey," said John Condon, who is slowly working his way through the states. "But this is a great place to come and try some experiments."

Kilo Bravo (180 N. 10th St. between Driggs and Bedford avenues in Williamsburg, (347) 987-4379, www.kilobravobar.com).

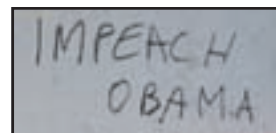
WRITING

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overkill — it is a crime in progress."

But if locals spot graffiti after the fact, Deutsch said they should report it to 311 to have it removed.

Deutsch said he received a complaint about the graffiti in the neighborhood a few weeks ago and he reported it to the city's Economic Development Corporation — semi-private city agency that works with local businesses — which started the Graffiti-Free NYC program in 1999. Deutsch also alerted the Midwood Development



GRAPHIC GRAFFITI: Politically charged messages against President Obama are upsetting some Sheepshead Bay residents.

Photo by Steven Schnibbe

Corporation, which he said he funded for graffiti removal and cleanup projects.

But Scalese said this persistent problem is getting worse — and it is really starting to paint the neighborhood in a negative light.



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Chamber rolls out a biz-help-mobile

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce is now offering house calls for small businesses.

The business booster group and the Council are rolling out a new van that will drop in on companies around the borough and offer consultations owners would otherwise have to leave their stores to get. A Crown Heights business owner said the new mobile services would help save him the inconvenience of an office visit.

"I have to decide where best to spend my time," said Fred Powell, who has owned Barbara's Flower Shop on Bergen Street for 43 years. "Going down to an office, or serving my customers."

The business-mobile can help small business



SEASONED: Fred Powell has owned Barbara's Flower Shop off of Nostrand Avenue for 43 years. He says that mobile services for small businesses from the Chamber of Commerce will be a big help.

CNG / Matthew Perlman

owners apply for credit, grapple with city regulations, and recruit new workers, among other things. Housed in a white

minivan donated by All-Car Rent-a-Car, "Chamber on the Go" is adorned with Chamber of Commerce decals and staffed by chamber employees.

Powell said he could use help with his marketing, another specialty of the enterprise whisperers.

"After 43 years, a lot of my old customers have left the neighborhood for one reason or another," he said. "I have to kind of reinvent myself."

The idea for the mobile unit came from Councilman Robert Cornegy (D-Bedford-Stuyvesant), who helped secure \$400,000 in taxpayer money from the Council for a citywide small business street team. Brooklyn will be the test service area for the program. The freshman councilman said he was amazed



ON THE GO: The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce is offering a new service to help reach small business owners who do not have the time to come to its Downtown office. Photo by Stefano Giovannini

to learn about the range of services the city had to offer small businesses, but when he went out in his district to talk to proprietors he found that they were having trouble accessing them.

"This program is about meeting the direct

needs of what the people on the ground told me," he said.

The first commercial strip treated by the business-mobile will be Nostrand Avenue, near where Powell's flower shop is located. Chamber president

Carlo Scissura said his office would target areas that do not have businesses improvement districts and are struggling.

"We're going to start by helping the businesses with the greatest needs and most limited time," he said.

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Alcoholic anonymous

Starbucks rebuffed for stealth tactic in W'burg booze bid

BY DANIELLE FURFARO

They're keeping neighbors in the dark roast.

Williamsburg's community board has rebuffed coffee giant Starbucks's application to serve beer and wine at its planned N. Seventh Street location because it left the name "Starbucks" off the paperwork, according to board member Rob Solano. The form, submitted to the board and posted on the building between Bedford Avenue and Berry Street, listed only "Coffee House Holdings LLC," prompting the board's liquor committee to table a vote on the bid and demand the java giant rewrite the application and knock on every door on the block to let neighbors know of its plans, Solano said. He added that the arrival of a chain vendor serving alcohol is a big deal that should be taken seriously.



INCOMING: The first Williamsburg Starbucks on Union Avenue, pictured here, is set to soon be joined by a second, serving booze.

"They are a huge company and I want to make sure that the neighbors understand what is happening," Solano said. "This is definitely different from if it were a mom-and-pop business."

The committee is set to revisit the application in October, provided Starbucks does that door-knocking.

"If the neighbors get notified and no one has anything to say about it, that is

fine," said Solano.

"But we have to make sure they know."

One neighbor said the arrival of another national conglomerate in the formerly bohemian neighborhood is a downer, but that if it is coming, there is no reason to stop it from serving booze.

"It is sad that there is another chain store opening around here, but what do we expect?" asked Anita Wojcik, rhetorically. "I do not think that them being a chain should mean they cannot sell alcohol."

The community board's vote is only advisory and the power to approve the liquor license ultimately lies with the state Liquor Authority.

Starbucks opened its first Williamsburg location earlier this summer at the corner of Union Avenue and Ainslie Street. The company did not respond to comment requests.

FLOOD

Continued from page 1

ally don't want to sue anyone, but I really don't know what to do."

The freak flood began around noon last Friday when firefighters opened a hydrant on 72nd Street for routine maintenance. But New York's Bravest somehow couldn't close the hose hook-up afterwards, so they called the Department of Environmental Protection — the agency that runs the city's water infrastructure — to have it halt the flow, according to a Fire Department spokeswoman.

A crew from the agency arrived at the scene and cut a hole in the street to access a cutoff valve underneath the fire plug. The workers had dug several feet into the ground before realizing that — an apparent agency oversight — no cutoff valve had ever been installed.

The city crews then left the scene, leaving the hydrant spewing wa-

ter onto the street — and into the hole the workers had dug.

The fire plug continued gushing unabated for the rest of the day and well into the night, according to neighbors, and with the street cleaved open, the water infiltrated the ground soil and began leaking into Iwanicki's basement by 10 pm, she said.

The homeowner called 911 but was told the issue should be routed through 311, she said. The non-emergency complaint line told her it would open a ticket with the Department of Environmental Protection.

When it was clear there would be no immediate response from the city, a photographer for this paper who was documenting the disaster decided to call in the heavy hitters — well after midnight.

"It was a fiasco," said camerawoman Georgine Benvenuto, who called an aide for Rep. Michael Grimm (R-Bay Ridge) in hopes of prompting action.

"I got a call at 2 am, and Georgine said there's

a flood on 72nd street and no one's doing anything, so I ran out the door and around the block," said Liam McCabe, who works for Grimm and lives on 69th Street. "I called the local precinct and brass at NYPD and the Fire Department. I explained to them the situation, and very shortly after, DEP came."

To stop the flooding, the agency had to shut off the entire block's water for several hours, according to McCabe, who blamed the belated response on poor inter-agency communication.

"The agencies weren't talking to each other," he said. "I understand how 311 works, but this was literally an emergency situation."

Now Iwanicki is scrambling to find compensation, but said she isn't getting much help from the city.

"My husband said they were supposed to come back at 9 am yesterday, but I haven't seen them," Iwanicki said on Sept. 23. "I don't even have a claim number."



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ROOTS

Continued from page 1

jured tripping in the root-ripped sidewalk in front of her house.

The city shares liability for lawsuits over sidewalk cracks outside one-to-three-family properties, but Schain said the woman filed two suits — one against the city, which was thrown out, and another against Schain, which her insurance company recently settled after four tumultuous years.

Schain has repaired the sidewalk repeatedly over the years, but she said the ruthless roots keep lifting the concrete, making her attempts at leveling the land futile.

To prevent more injuries and further damage to her sidewalk, Schain is trying to get a permit from the city to remove the tree — an expense she said she'd gladly pay. But Schain said the city denied her request because the tree is considered healthy.

"I'm willing to pay to remove — but they won't give me a permit," she said.

If a sidewalk is damaged from general decay, the Department of Transportation can require homeowners to repair their sidewalks. But if the damage is from tree roots, residents may be eli-

gible for the Parks Department's Trees and Sidewalks Program, which repairs the sidewalks — but only if the situation meets certain requirements.

The Parks Department gives root-damaged sidewalks ratings from zero to 100. But the department would not give a concrete answer about how it determines which sidewalks get repaired.

There are five categories that go into a sidewalk's rating — the location, the condition of the tree, the extent of the damage, how high it was lifted by the root, the length of the damaged section, and the proportion of the breadth of that section that is damaged.

After repeated requests for details, a spokeswoman for the Parks Department refused to elaborate on how each category is scored to determine who qualified for the repairs.

"The trees are evaluated on a scale and then addressed by priority," said Parks spokeswoman Meghan Lalor.

A Marine Park homeowner who said her sidewalk is lifted three inches off the ground by tree roots, finally received an inspection after almost a year of



RUTHLESS ROOTS: Linda Schain, who was sued in 2009 after a pedestrian tripped over her sidewalk, wants to cut down this tree because its roots raise her sidewalk, but the city won't let her. Photo by Steve Solomonson

requesting one. She said her rating missed qualifying for the program by a measly five points.

"I've already been inspected and they deemed it was not high enough to do a repair," said Wilma Lande. "They gave me an 80 rating, it is supposed to be 85 — it is a game."

She said she doesn't know what else she can do to fix the damaged sidewalk — or the rating system that is leaving her out on a limb.

"It is very frustrating to know you have this situation," said Lande.

NYU

Continued from page 1

brought world-class patient services and jobs to Brooklyn and was many months in the making unraveled. There are no winners," said State University of New York spokesman David Doyle. "The future of the facility is uncertain."

The \$240 million sale of Long Island College Hospital to Williamsburg developer Fortis Property Group was finally approved on July 1 after more than a year of protests and legal wrangling with activists and staffers over who the buyer should be and what type of medical care would remain at the site. New York University was to run the healthcare facilities, but decided to withdraw from the takeover bid

rather than deal with additional court headaches.

"It is clear to us that we will be unable to conclude the transaction, and provide the highest quality medical and nursing care that is our standard, even with the best of intentions and the commitment of the full resources of our institution," said a New York University spokeswoman.

A rep for the developer said it is searching for a new medical partner but would not comment beyond that.

One of the healthcare worker unions that is suing condemned the university for evading the prescriptions of the court settlement and, now, leaving everyone in the lurch.

"NYU has walked away from its commitment to Brooklyn patients," said Jill Furillo, executive di-

rector of the New York State Nurses Association. "NYU's unwillingness to live up to the commitments made in the proposal at this early stage in the process was a terrible omen for the future of care for the community served by LICH. How could LICH patients trust NYU to live up to any of its commitments in the long run if NYU was already failing to keep its word?"

The new medical facility was supposed to include a freestanding emergency department, observation beds, primary and preventative care offices, nine specialty departments, an ambulatory surgery center, and a human immunodeficiency virus clinic.

But that, along with the sale to Fortis and the state's continued operation of an extant emergency department, is now in question.

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