

Kentile sign sits in exile

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

It likely won't become part of the skyline again, but the Kentile Floors sign could be coming out of storage.

The beloved rooftop sign came down from its perch in Gowanus in July, but the letters could find a new home at the long-shuttered Under the Tracks playground, below the elevated F and G tracks between Second and Third avenues. The location is just one possibility, and a lot of hurdles have to be cleared before the letters go anywhere, but the disused park is a solid candidate, the sign's caretaker said.

"We are trying to pinpoint spaces that make sense for them, and we think it would be great to bring them back to the community and put them there," said Paul Basile, president of the Gowanus Alliance, a business association.

He explained the appeal of the playground this way:

"They still would be physically connected to the F and G lines, and if you want to see

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GRIMM GOES

Tax-cheating congressman to step down

BY MAX JAEGER

Congressman and tax cheat Michael Grimm will resign from office on Jan. 5.

The announcement came less than a week after the Bay Ridge legislator pleaded guilty on Dec. 23 to one count of tax evasion and confessed to a list of other crimes laid out in a 20-count indictment related to a restaurant he owned before taking office.

"After much thought and prayer, I have made the very difficult decision to step down from Congress effective January 5, 2015," Grimm said in a state-

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Ferocious flames

A speeding car burst into a blaze after its driver ran a red light and was hit by another vehicle in Sheepshead Bay on Dec. 29. Police say the driver of the 2008 Infiniti was traveling towards Midwood when he sped through a red light. The second driver made a left turn onto Quentin Road and slammed into the Infiniti. A police spokesman said the impact caused the Infiniti to spiral into a utility pole and catch fire.

Photo by Steve Solomonson



'Mall brawl' sequel

BY VANESSA OGLE

Marine Park has a new holiday tradition — teenagers fighting at Kings Plaza Shopping Center on the day after Christmas.

On Dec. 26, dozens of teenagers got into a ferocious fight at the local mall exactly one year after the marathon "mall brawl" of

2013, which temporarily closed the mall last winter and resulted in a short-lived chaperone policy for teenagers.

A grainy cellphone video captures a fight starting between two teen girls but which erupts into a melee involving dozens of youth.

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Photo by Steve Solomonson

ROAD TO RECOVERY: Some Webers Court residents say they are still waiting to move forward with Build It Back.

Building back in S'Head Bay

BY VANESSA OGLE

It may be a new year, but many in Sheepshead Bay say they are still facing the same old problems with Build It Back.

The city-run recovery program released statistics for the neighborhood in December to show what

has been achieved, but residents say the data shows that rebuilding efforts are still delayed more than two years after Hurricane Sandy.

Residents who live in the neighborhood's courts say their rebuilding process has been especially slow

since the program said it is often easier — though not required — if all residents on a court choose the same "resiliency path" for their homes.

Build It Back offers three "pathways" to storm-proof damaged homes: el-

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COZY UP: Alyssa Nastasia of Queens and Michael Verdirame of Bay Ridge warm themselves by the fireplace at Union Hall.
Photo by Jason Speakman

ALL FIRED UP

Brooklyn's best bar fireplaces

BY NOAH HUROWITZ

Baby it's finally cold outside.

It is beginning to look — and feel — a lot like winter. Fortunately, many Brooklyn watering holes boast large, cozy fireplaces where you can warm up without racking up a huge heating bill. Our resident fireplace expert advises on four of the best bar-based hearths in the borough, and how to get toasty while you're there.

Union Hall

The fireplace at this Park Slope bar takes the cake. Big and toasty, it sits in a central chimney that allows groups to sit on both sides. And in a neighborhood full of comfort lovers, increased access scores big points. It is surrounded by deep and cozy leather couches and bookshelves that, while largely ornamental, lend it the feeling of a well-used study in a snowed-in hunting lodge somewhere cold and remote.

Warm up with: Keep it classic with a hot toddy, or for a more inventive warm drink, try the hot hard cider. Fortified with a shot of cinnamon whiskey and spiced with cloves, it will put the color in your cheeks

and brace you for the colder temperatures outside.

Union Hall [702 Union St. between Fifth and Sixth streets in Park Slope, (718) 638-4400, www.union-hallnyc.com].

Clover Club

You may not be able to get as close as you can at some other bar fireplaces, but the 'place at this Carroll Gardens cocktail haunt adds the perfect winterish atmosphere to your enjoyment of its top-notch drinks.

Warm up with: Whatever is on the seasonal winter cocktail menu.

Clover Club [210 Smith St. between Baltic and Butler streets in Carroll Gardens, (718) 855-7939, www.cloverclubnyc.com].

Black Rabbit

If you find yourself in Brooklyn's more northerly regions on a wintry night, burrow into the cozy confines of the Black Rabbit. As the name suggests, its interior looks like a rough-hewn tavern, and when the sun sets at 5 pm and the wind whips off the East River, a perch by the wood-burning stove in this establishment is the hottest seat in the 'hood.

Warm up with: As great as the fireplace here is, the real draw of Black Rabbit is its booths. If you are lucky enough to snag one, hide deep in one of the wooden snugs with a couple of pals and you will never have to leave, because you can summon wait staff with a service light.

Black Rabbit [91 Greenpoint Ave. between Franklin Street and Manhattan Avenue in Greenpoint, (718) 349-1595 www.blackrabbit-barnyc.com].

Two Door Tavern

This joint loses points for its modern-looking blonde wood and its mostly open floor plan, but a fireplace is a fireplace, and this one will do you mighty well should you find yourself in a snowstorm in the heart of Williamsburg.

Warm up with: If you are trying to fill your stomach as well as the yawning chasm in your soul that only a fireplace can thaw, we advise you try the red velvet pancakes.

Two Door Tavern [116 N. Fifth St. between Berry Street and Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg, (718) 599-0222, www.twodoortavern.com].

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WHAT A YEAR! 2014 IN REVIEW

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COURIER STAFF

As 2014 draws to a close, it's hard to believe how much has happened in the county of Kings since the year began. Albany put a hit out on Sheepshead Bay swans. A Marine Park woman finally received a long-delayed letter — postmarked in 1969. Coney Island got a new roller coaster, we went pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a mistletoe drone attacked our photographer, and Coney Island started a brand-new New Year's Eve tradition. Take a look back at the top news of 2014 with our Year in Review.

January

Per-swan-a non grata: Swans are not symbols of purity, beauty, and transformation, but rather a blot fit to be shot, claimed Albany swan haters, who came up with a plan to kill off the mute variety of the birds by 2025. The state's "Mute Swan Management Plan" calls for an all-out war against New York's largest fowl for allegedly behaving aggressively towards people, destroying aquatic vegetation, frightening away other birds, and posing a danger to flying planes. Animal activists retaliated with a petition on Change.org that has drawn thousands of signatures so far.

Methodist expansion: New York Methodist Hospital's ambitious plan for a U-shaped outpatient center needs some nips and tucks before it can proceed with its operations, stated Community Board 6, dispensing a prescription of demands it says will make the new facility blend in with the landscape while sticking to height-zoning laws.

Nyet!: You can take a person out of the former Soviet Union, but you can't take the Soviet Union out of some people. Members of Russian punk band Pussy Riot went to prison for singing anti-state lyrics in a Moscow cathedral, but a Russian-American priest warned them to stay away from his Bensonhurst church when they attend next month's Amnesty International concert in Prospect Heights. Archpriest Serge Lukianov of the Orthodox New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia Church called the punk protestors "satanic," and said their message against the church and its role in government was nothing to rave about.

February

Karate kids: The terrible twos are the perfect age for tempestuous tots to hone their self-defense and discipline skills, claimed self-defense experts at the Williamsburg Mixed Martial Arts school. They prepped the just-out-of-Pampers set on roundhouse kicks, jabs, and foot sweeps, while harnessing their focus and concentration skills, with classes aimed

at fun and functionality — with emphasis on respect, responsibility, and friendship. For now, the kids remain blissfully ignorant of the brutal, grown-up world of pro fighting — and champs, such as Georges "Rush" Saint-Pierre and Johny "Bigg Rigg" Hendricks, and their parents claimed they intend to keep it that way.

March

RIP, Ed: Manhattan Beach lost one of its staunchest and most tenacious advocates, when long-time resident and community activist Ed Eisenberg passed away on March 1 at the age of 79. Neighbors and friends remembered Eisenberg for his outspoken defense of the neighborhood, its parks, and public safety, and said he never stopped looking out for the community he loved to call home. Eisenberg was an active member of the Manhattan Beach Neighborhood Association, the 61st Precinct Community Council, and Community Board 15 until his death.

April

RIP, Lou: Courier Life columnist Lou Powsner, a World War II veteran and urban gladiator who famously battled politicians, special interests, and bureaucrats, died in his sleep at his Bensonhurst home on April 6 at the age of 93. Powsner's popular column, "Speak Out," was a Brooklyn Graphic staple since the 1950s, attracting a broad fan base with his candid and spunky take on community issues. The former haberdasher, whose storefront on Mermaid Avenue in Coney Island survived the stormy decades of the '60s through the '80s, fought for brighter street lights to help halt nighttime crime, and locked horns with the city over parking meters, which he said gave shopping malls an unfair advantage over his beloved mom-and-pop stores. Powsner, a staff sergeant with the 64th Bomb Squad Army Air Force known as "Kelly's Kobras," was laid to rest at the Veterans Cemetery of Forest Green Park in Morganville, N.J.

End of term: Bishop Ford High School was a community fixture in Windsor Terrace for the past 52 years, but the co-ed Catholic academy will graduate its final senior class in June due to dwindling enrollment. Ford was known for its athletics program, while Drake, R.E.M. and other artists filmed their music videos there, but a 75 percent decrease in rolls — from 1,347 students in 2006 to 499 this year — triggered its closure, said school officials.

Late delivery: Neither snow nor rain nor four decades of roving could derail this snail mail from completing its appointed round. Marine Park resident Susan Heifetz almost keeled over when she received a letter from her dead mom — postmarked 1969! Heifetz, who received the correspondence from a man living in her childhood Homecrest apartment, "freaked out" when she learned that the envelope was sealed with a lipstick kiss — a trademark of her late mother. The miraculous missive was a birthday card her parents dropped in the mail the day before her 19th birthday, 45 years ago.

May

Fatal fashion: The body of missing Bushwick fashion designer James "Jay" Ott was found floating in the East River near Pier 4 off Second Avenue and 58th Street in Sunset Park, ending a two month search. Ott, who designed for Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen's label The Row, was seen for the last time on a security camera heading for the Williamsburg Bridge. Friends and family claimed he suffered from depression and anxiety, and authorities ruled out foul play. An initial autopsy report was inconclusive.

Whatta Dumbo: Jason Stevens, owner of Rebar on Front Street in Dumbo, suddenly shuttered his popular establishment and took off, stiffing employees and several couples planning their wedding receptions at the popular gastropub. He surrendered to the Brooklyn DA's office after angry altar-bounds hit the



Illustration by John Napoli

BIG ANNOUNCEMENTS: (Above) In January, Albany planned to shoot or gas the state's entire mute swan population, calling the elegant birds an invasive species that must be destroyed. (Right) A rendering of New York Methodist Hospital's proposed U-shaped expansion, announced in January.



New York Methodist Hospital

roof and big-hearted Rebar staffers worked a wedding for free. Stevens was slapped with grand larceny and several fraud counts linked to nearly \$1 million in unpaid taxes. He was released after posting \$30,000 bail, but faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted.

June

Aaaaaaaaargh!: The Thunderbolt rumbled into the People's Playground like a magnificent brute, delighting thrill-seekers who shrieked their lungs out as Sodom-by-the-Sea's first new roller coaster since the Cyclone whipped them about like rag dolls through a pitiless tangle of drops, twists, turns, and loops at speeds of 65 miles for two heart-pounding minutes. The new Thunderbolt — a rebooted version of its iconic namesake, which croaked in 2000 — is faster, steeper, and more twisted than the Cyclone, which opened in 1927.

Rocket-on: The Astroland Rocket Ship — one of the first and only surviving early

amusement park space simulators — zoomed back into Coney Island's atmosphere after six years in orbit at the Staten Island Homeport, delighting Wonder Wheel Park owners who plan to restore the craft in preparation for the funzone's annual history day on Aug. 9. The rocket, originally called the Star Flyer, debuted in 1962 at Astroland Park as one of the first of the imaginary space voyage simulators constructed during the Space Race. It showed simulator films of rocket rides while the chassis rocked its viewers to "outer space" for three minutes.

Joe's woes: Former District Attorney Charles "Joe" Hynes experienced a role-reversal as a scathing city report accused him of allegedly looting the public piggybank and violating election laws in his failed re-election bid last year. The borough's ex-top lawmaker may have paid a political hack more than \$1.1 million in public funds between 2003 and 2013, including al-

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Ohio a no-go for Dem party

We explain why Columbus stinks as a DNC host city

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

Update: *The thin-skinned Columbus Dispatch has picked up our article on its politics blog, calling the piece “sophomoric” and full of “cheap shots.” The digital rag proceeds to list the thoroughly researched disses underpinning our argument, but does nothing to refute them, offering only that Columbus has gotten the nod from “politico types.” Weak sauce, Columbus.*

What do you get when you cross the decline of American industry with the rise of strip malls and factory farms? That's right, Ohio.

Democratic Party honchos are still deciding which city should host its quadrennial presidential-candidate-anointing party, and the field has narrowed to three competitors: Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and Columbus, Ohio. Our crack team of oddsmakers who are in no way partisan drew up a convincing list of reasons why the City of Brotherly Love should be utterly shoved out of contention back in April. Which leaves Columbus,

also known as Cowntown.

What's in a name?

The first problem with Columbus is name recognition. Practically every state has a city by that name. We even have a public space outside of Borough Hall called Columbus Park, but the moniker is so generic that people often lump it in with neighboring Cadman Plaza. The name Brooklyn is ubiquitous, too, but wayfarers who encounter the sleepy village of Brooklyn, Iowa probably think it is paying homage to its big brother by the East River (it was actually named for the brooks and land in the area

— go figure). And when we say we love Brooklyn, nobody thinks we mean Brooklyn, Ohio, population 11,169.

Size matters

No competitor can hold a candle to Brooklyn's size, and Columbus is no exception. Borough President Adams noted back in April that Philadelphia has about 1 million fewer people than Brooklyn, which means a million fewer hearts and minds to win, and a million fewer sets of pockets to fill, or empty, depending on the depth of said pockets. Columbus has such size issues that its local paper de-

voted a whole article to its breaking the 800,000 population mark, a feat a local demographer attributed not to rapid-fire in-migration, but to regular old human reproduction. And the enterprising boosters over at the Columbus Dispatch couldn't even find someone who was excited by this supposed milestone! Even the resident cows are bored!

Food

Brooklyn's culinary landscape is famously diverse. Our fair borough popularized the hot dog in the early 20th century, and these days, it is lousy with



WELCOME TO COLUMBUS: What a dump.

Associated Press / Kiichiro Sato

coal-fired pizza, gastropubs, and organic, single-source coffee. We even have a \$10 latte that our arts editor swears is worth every penny. Columbus, Ohio gave the world Wendy's.

Too close for comfort

The Republican Party has already picked Cleveland for its 2016 conven-

tion. The Dems would be better off saving that battleground state stuff for the campaign. With Obama fatigue setting in throughout much of the U.S., this might be their last big party for a while, and where better to dance like it's your last night on Earth than at Flatbush and Atlantic avenues, crossroads of the world?

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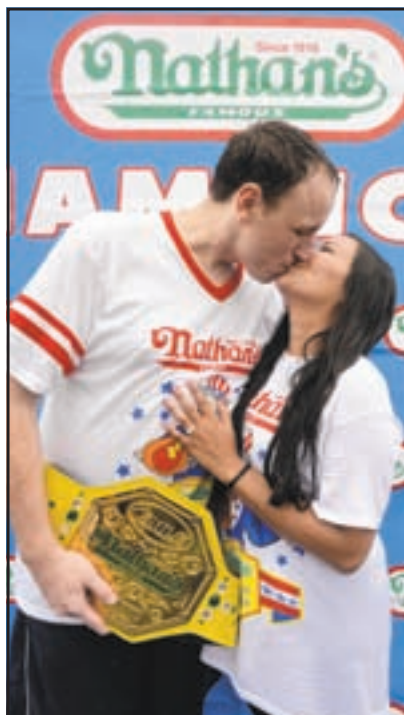
most \$220,000 in cash seized from criminals, to boost his campaign, while improperly seeking political advice from a sitting judge, authorities claimed. Hynes was the borough's top lawyer for 23 years before current District Attorney Ken Thompson unseated him in the November elections.

July

Lover-wurst: Hot-dog king Joey "Jaws" Chestnut showed he was a red-hot in the romance department, proposing to his sweetheart Neslie Ricasa at Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest on July 4. Fueled by her acceptance, Jaws scarfed his way to an eighth-straight win, gobbling 61 wieners and buns in 10 minutes. His bride-to-be — a fellow contestant — managed 10 dogs and trailed the women's division won by Miki Sudo, who wolfed 34 dogs and buns to defending champ Sonya "The Black Widow" Thomas's 27 and three quarters.

Broke-lynn Bridge: Granite bricks rained down on pedestrians seeking shelter from a torrential downpour near a Brooklyn Bridge support wall that didn't seem to be a part of the viaduct's extensive, ongoing renovations. Three children and two adults were treated for minor injuries. The iconic bridge — one of the oldest suspension spans in the country — also made headlines later in the month when two white flags mysteriously replaced its Stars and Stripes atop the bridge towers.

Toddler tragedy: A family picnic in Prospect Park turned to horror when a toddler was found dead in the lake after disappearing with a cousin. Police scuba divers found the body of



RIDE THE LIGHTNING: (Left) Joey Chestnut and new fiancée Neslie Ricasa celebrate the beginning of their next great adventure in July. (Top right) A banner implores for people to respect life following the murder of two police officers in Bedford-Stuyvesant in December. (Above right) A white flag flies over the Brooklyn Bridge following a nighttime switcheroo in July.

File photos by Paul Martinka



Ruhshona Kurbonova, 2, in a wooded area of Prospect Park Lake, ending an extensive search. The children strayed from a family gathering and headed toward the water, where a family strolling in the park found the little girl's 3-year-old cousin, said cops.

August

Bam on BAM: The world-famous Brooklyn Academy of Music found itself in the spotlight when President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama gave it the coveted National Medal of Arts during a pomp-filled ceremony at the White House. The 153-year-old Brooklyn arts institution has been a stage for the likes of opera star Enrico Caruso, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and ballet great Rudolf Nureyev. Now it is also the bearer of the highest government award given to artists and arts patrons for outstanding con-

tributions to the promotion of national arts.

Treasure island: Thousands of dollars may still be buried at Coney Island beach, after a pair of wealthy do-gooders from San Francisco hid \$2,500 in 38 Pez dispensers and scattered them across the sand between the New York Aquarium and Luna Park as part of a scavenger hunt. But the cash-filled candy cases were gone the next day, likely due to city tractors raking and leveling the sand each night, said a spokeswoman for the Parks Department. One lucky treasure hunter dug up some cash on the beach, while our adventure correspondent emerged only with a rusty fishhook and some straight-up trash after his own exhaustive search.

September

Pole pose: Downward dog on a pole, anyone? Yoga reached new highs when a

Brooklyn Heights studio combined the ancient art with a support best known for X-rated stretches. Yoga Pole Studio on Schermerhorn and Court Streets in Brooklyn Heights focuses on teaching "inversions," or headstands, as well as handstands and forearm-stands, with students using a pole to steady themselves.

NIMBY: Gowanus residents blasted the state for secretly centralizing the borough's parole offices into one command post in their backyard, claiming the influx of ex-jailbirds will bring crime to the area. Department of Corrections and Community Supervision representatives said the state wouldn't scrap the three-story building, currently under construction where Second Avenue deadlocks into the Gowanus Canal, but added the parolees were committed to staying on the right side of the

law, although armed officers would be around just in case.

October

In the pink: The Courier kicked off Breast Cancer Awareness Month with a pink-paged issue devoted to Brooklyn's pivotal role in early detection, research, and treatment. Did you know that Maimonides Breast Cancer Center is the borough's first and only facility dedicated to the study, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer? Or that chief oncologist Dr. Patrick Borgen helped to discover the genes that cause breast cancer, his research leading to surgical techniques that are now the gold-standard for treatment? Our rose-hued edition had the lowdown.

Cop gone wild: A Clinton Hill teen suffered brain damage after a cop sucker-punched him out cold for smoking a cigarette he mistook for a joint, his family claimed. Incomplete video footage showed Marcel Hamer, 17, lying in a gutter near Gates and Waverly avenues imploring, "Mister, it was just a cigarette, sir," as the police officer who arrested him for disorderly conduct jeers, "Do you wanna get f---- up?" The alleged blow is obscured in the video, but a friend is heard yelling, "You knocked him out," after the Finest appears to strike Hamer in the face with his left hand. The youth complained of blurred vision, a headache, and being unable to properly move his left arm, hospital records showed.

November

Ferguson to Bklyn: Demonstrators, including moms with young children, stormed the Manhattan Bridge to condemn a grand jury's decision not to indict Officer Darren Wilson for fatally shooting unarmed black teen Michael Brown in Ferguson,

Missouri. Around 1,000 rallyers crossed into Brooklyn chanting "Hands up! Don't shoot!" and made their way to the Barclays Center and surrounding areas, accompanied by cops who had their batons drawn, but did not quell the demonstration.

Fare increase: Planned toll hikes tarnished the Verazano-Narrows Bridge's golden anniversary celebration, as ticked-off pols spurned the shindig and Metropolitan Transportation Authority bosses took credit for the iconic span's 50-year reign, days after announcing plans for sweeping increases to plug their multi-billion-dollar budget gap. The transit board will vote in the New Year on the proposals, which include an extra 42 cents for cars using E-ZPass, a possible additional buck for cash commuters, and higher tolls for large trucks.

December

Drone strike: When a TGIFridays "mobile mistletoe" drone hit Courier photographer Georgine Benvenuto in the face, it became an international sensation, and the most popular story in history for Brooklyn-Daily.com. The incident occurred at the Sheepshead Bay TGIFridays in the flying kiss-copters' New York City debut.

Police assassinated: A gunman murdered NYPD officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu as they sat in their patrol car in Bedford-Stuyvesant in what Police Commissioner Bratton called an "assassination." The culprit later turned the gun on himself.

Countdown in Coney: Borough President Adams kicked off a fresh New Year's Eve tradition by hosting a countdown event in Coney Island centered on the neighborhood's iconic Parachute Jump.



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MALL

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After the first fist flies, several groups of teens began brawling on the floor while a few of their peers film the fight. Within seconds, the outnumbered security guards sprinted from group to group, attempting to break up the battles that left a pair of glasses and articles of clothes strewn on the floor.

A spokesman for Kings Plaza said the mall tries to maintain order at all times, and added that the mall's security team moved swiftly to defuse the situation.

"Please note that we strive to provide an enjoyable and safe shopping environment for our guests and employees at all times at Kings Plaza," said Steve DeClara, the property manager of the shopping center. "There was an incident regarding teenagers that was effectively dealt with by our security and local police."

This incident is just the latest example of mall madness.

Last February, another



MAULED AT THE MALL: Video shows security guards at Kings Plaza Shopping Center trying to break up a brawl that flared among local teens at the Marine Park mall on Dec. 26 – exactly one year after the infamous 2013 post-Christmas "mall brawl" shocked the neighborhood.

large-scale disturbance forced some stores to close their security gates in the middle of the day. Just two months ago, at least four security guards were caught on tape tussling with a high school freshman at the plaza. The high school student was later arrested for assault and a slew of other charges for allegedly starting the scene.

DeClara said the mall has strict rules and all vis-

itors must comply while they are inside the facility.

"It is important to note that Kings Plaza is private property and we have clear Code of Conduct that is effect at all times, for all people, visiting the center," he said.

The 63rd precinct did not respond to multiple requests for comment about whether any of the teenagers involved in the incident were arrested.

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REMEMBERED

Fallen officers to be honored with memorial wall

BY MATTHEW PERLMAN

The Downtown station house that lost two officers to a de-rated gunman in Bedford-Stuyvesant on Dec. 20 will get a memorial wall inside commemorating their lives, care of its community council.

“We want to do something permanent for these guys,” said Leslie Lewis, 25-year president of the 84th Precinct Community Council. “We are going to honor these guys forever.”

Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu were shot dead by Ismaaiyl Brinsley as they sat in their squad car at Myrtle and Tompkins avenues that Saturday afternoon, cops said. Brinsley then ran into the Myrtle-Willoughby G station with officers in pursuit and shot himself in the head on the platform, according to the authorities.

In the days since, flowers

and candles have piled up out in front of the Gold Street station house and officers and civilians have poured in to pay their respect. Inside, donations of coffee, donuts, and hot food are accumulating alongside flower arrangements.

The precinct's commanding officer Capt. Sergio Centa tweeted his thanks last Sunday.

“The Men and Women of the 84 Precinct thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers during this extremely difficult time,” he wrote.

Lewis said the murdered officers' colleagues miss them terribly.

“It's tragic. They really were good guys,” Lewis said. “They are well thought of by the guys in the precinct. Everyone has nice things to say about them. And what more can you want in life than for people to speak well

of you?”

Mayor DeBlasio held a moment of silence at City Hall and one at a memorial near the murder scene last Tuesday and some of Manhattan's most iconic buildings dimmed their lights in remembrance that evening.

Police Commissioner Bill Bratton issued a statement praising the sacrifices of the two officers, and flags throughout the city continued to be flown at half-staff through Christmas, per Bratton.

The 84th Precinct last lost an officer in 2011, when a domestic abuser pushed Officer Alain Schabarger to his death over the railing of a Boerum Hill stoop.

A viewing for Liu will be held at Aievoli Funeral Home in Bensonhurst on Jan. 3 from 1 to 9 pm. The funeral will be Jan. 4 at 10 am.



NOT FORGOTTEN: The 84th Precinct station house is getting an outpouring of support following the murders of two of its officers in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Photo by Stefano Giovannini

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GRIMM

Continued from page 1

ment.

The move is a dramatic about-face for the former Marine and Federal Bureau of Investigation agent, who defiantly vowed to remain in office on the day of his felony plea.

Grimm, who also represents bucolic Staten Island, faced possible expulsion from Congress, and a post-plea meeting with House Speaker John Boehner convinced him that his felony charge and potential jail time would hamstring him in Washington, according to a New York Daily News report. A congressional rule would have stripped him of his ability to vote on the House floor.

"I do not believe that I can continue to be 100 percent effective in the next Congress, and therefore, out of respect for the office and the people I so proudly represent, it is time for me to start the next chapter of my life," Grimm said in the statement.

Grimm had been a rising star in the Republican Party, elected in 2010 with no political experience amid a nationwide wave of Republican gains. He was reelected in November despite the looming indictment, trouncing gaffe-prone former Brooklyn councilman Domenic Recchia. He ultimately pleaded guilty to filing a fraudulent 2009 tax return for Health-



GOING, GOING, GONE: Rep. Michael Grimm reversed course on Dec. 29 and decided to resign from Congress in the wake of his guilty plea on charges of tax evasion.

File photo by Dan MacLeod

licious, the Manhattan health-food restaurant he owned. His plea deal also acknowledged that investigators had evidence to prove that he dodged a tax bill of between \$50,000 and \$200,000 and perjured himself during a 2013 civil deposition, according to prosecutor Loretta Lynch.

"In addition to pleading guilty to causing the filing of a false tax return for his restaurant, Grimm has signed a statement admitting to the conduct underlying every charge filed against him," Lynch said in a Dec. 23 statement.

Lynch is President Obama's pick to replace Attorney General Eric Holder.

Grimm's sentencing is set for June 8, 2015. He faces as many as three years in

prison and a maximum fine of \$100,000.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo could call a special election to fill Grimm's vacant seat. The governor's office did not respond to a request for comment.

Staten Island's top prosecutor expressed interest in Grimm's seat on Tuesday morning.

"I am deeply flattered by the enthusiastic expressions of support I have received over the last 12 hours, and I am very seriously considering the race," said Richmond County District Attorney Dan Donovan. "I will make an announcement after the due deliberation such an important decision deserves."

Donovan would be a contentious choice because he recently failed to secure an indictment against Officer Daniel Panteleo for killing Gowanus native Eric Garner by choking him and holding him face-down when Garner objected to being stopped. Donovan faced criticism for not pursuing a reckless endangerment charge in Garner's death, and the grand jury's non-indictment on more serious charges of manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide sparked weeks of protests citywide. Though Donovan has not announced his candidacy, he has already secured the endorsement of the Captain's Endowment Association police union, BuzzFeed News reported.

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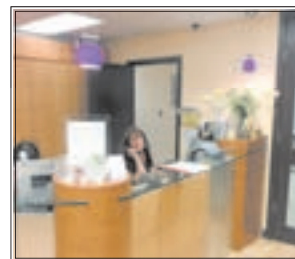
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OHIO

Continued from page 4

The smell test

Sure, Brooklyn is home to two federal Superfund sites, deeply polluted waterways that, in the case of the Gowanus Canal, flood with sewage when it rains, and Newtown Creek, neighbor a massive sewage treatment plant. But the convention isn't near either of those places. The entire region around Columbus, on the other hand, recently got blanketed with a noxious smell that a local

described "like sewage or landfill gas," "kind of sewage, rotten eggs." The culprit was a ventilation snafu at a paper plant 50 miles away, and who's to say a repeat won't strike on the decisive morning of the con-fetti drop? Nothing sours that big-donation impulse like rotten-egg smell.

Trust issues

Okay, so Barclays Center sprang a leak a couple of weeks ago. We admit it. That was a problem. But what's the old saying? You can't install a green roof without causing a few game

delays? In any case, the soccer stadium in Columbus had even bigger problems earlier this year when the scoreboard at Crew Stadium, home to the Columbus Crew, caught fire back in April. We acknowledge that Columbus is pitching its hockey arena as the center of the convention festivities, not the defective stadium, but with local maintenance crews like that, a political club can never be too careful.

In summation

Brooklyn rules. Columbus drools.

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KENTILE

Continued from page 1

them, get off the train, visit us in Gowanus, and see our parks and stores.”

The playground has been closed since 2009, according to a transit spokesman, before work began on the Culver Viaduct, according to Community Board 6's district manager. It had to be fenced off because the crumbling track support structure was sending chunks of concrete falling onto the play equipment, the district manager said. The lot is currently being used for the ongoing restoration work on the viaduct and Basile's group has not yet reached out, the transit spokesman said.

The sign, a longtime fixture of the Brooklyn skyline, visible from the elevated tracks and from the Gowanus Expressway, was dismantled at the direction of Ely Cohen, owner of the building it sat atop, despite howls of protest from preservationists, neighbors, and local pols. The outcry prompted Cohen to preserve the letters as workers took them down, then hand them over to the Alliance.

The iconic typography has been hidden in a warehouse ever since, as the group has plotted its come-



SPECIAL K: Paul Basile, right, and a Gowanus Alliance member pose in front of the Kentile Floors sign “K” at the group's holiday party.
Photo by Jason Speakman

back. Work can't officially begin until Cohen files paperwork to list them as a charitable donation, Basile said, but that should come soon.

The Gowanus Alliance will convene three committees to work on the sign's restoration, including one to work on fundraising, one to actually restore the letters, and one to nail down a final resting place, he said. The restoration will be a Gowanus affair, Basile added.

“Everything must be done in Gowanus, by a Gowanus professional or a resident of the neighborhood,” he said.

The letters are in rough shape, and will require some metal work to be brought back to life, but

Basile said he is not interested in making the sign look good as new.

“The scars and dings and physical wear all tell a story,” he said. “We think that's valuable in itself.”

One letter, the K, made an appearance at the Gowanus Alliance holiday party on Dec. 19, to the delight of attendees, Basile said. The 90-degree tilt of the top and bottom serifs on the right side of the letter caused alarm in our art department and comments section, but Basile assured us that the letters are made up of movable segments and will be rebuilt in their original shape when they have a permanent resting place.

The sign commemorates a long-closed asbestos-tile plant.

BUILD

Continued from page 1

evaluating only the vital systems such as wiring and heating above flood levels, raising the entire house up on stilts, or rebuilding the home entirely at the higher elevation.

Typically homeowners who suffered only minimum damage from Sandy go with the first option, and houses with substantial damage are recommended to be razed and rebuilt.

One local said the delayed process has led her neighbors to stop even expecting for their homes to be elevated or rebuilt.

“A lot of my neighbors are giving up and they're living the way they are,” said Jennifer Fridstrom, who added that many of her neighbors have deserted their properties. “We have

abandoned houses that have been boarded up since the hurricane.”

Fridstrom — who selected the rebuilding pathway in August — said she hasn't been contacted by the program and she said that's a common experience in her neighborhood.

“We're the ones that need to be elevated the most, and I feel that we're the ones who are being giving the runaround the most,” she said. “I was told I'd be called back in a month.”

A representative for Build It Back said the organization is trying to build up the neighborhood cohesively.

“We do need to look at some of this stuff at a neighborhood perspective,” said Amy Peterson, the director of the Mayor's Office of Housing Recovery. “When we started looking at this —

even Sheepshead Bay, especially — the courts is something we'd knew would be a focus of this.”

But she said the organization has helped a majority of the area.

“Over half the people in Sheepshead Bay have had offers for rebuild, elevate, et cetera,” said Peterson.

City data show that there has been progress in Sheepshead Bay:

- 406 applications have been filed.

- 226 residents have attended the option review meeting.

- 69 residents have had design consultations.

- 61 residents have received reimbursement checks, which equals a total neighborhood sum of about \$1.3 million dollars.

- 29 constructions began.

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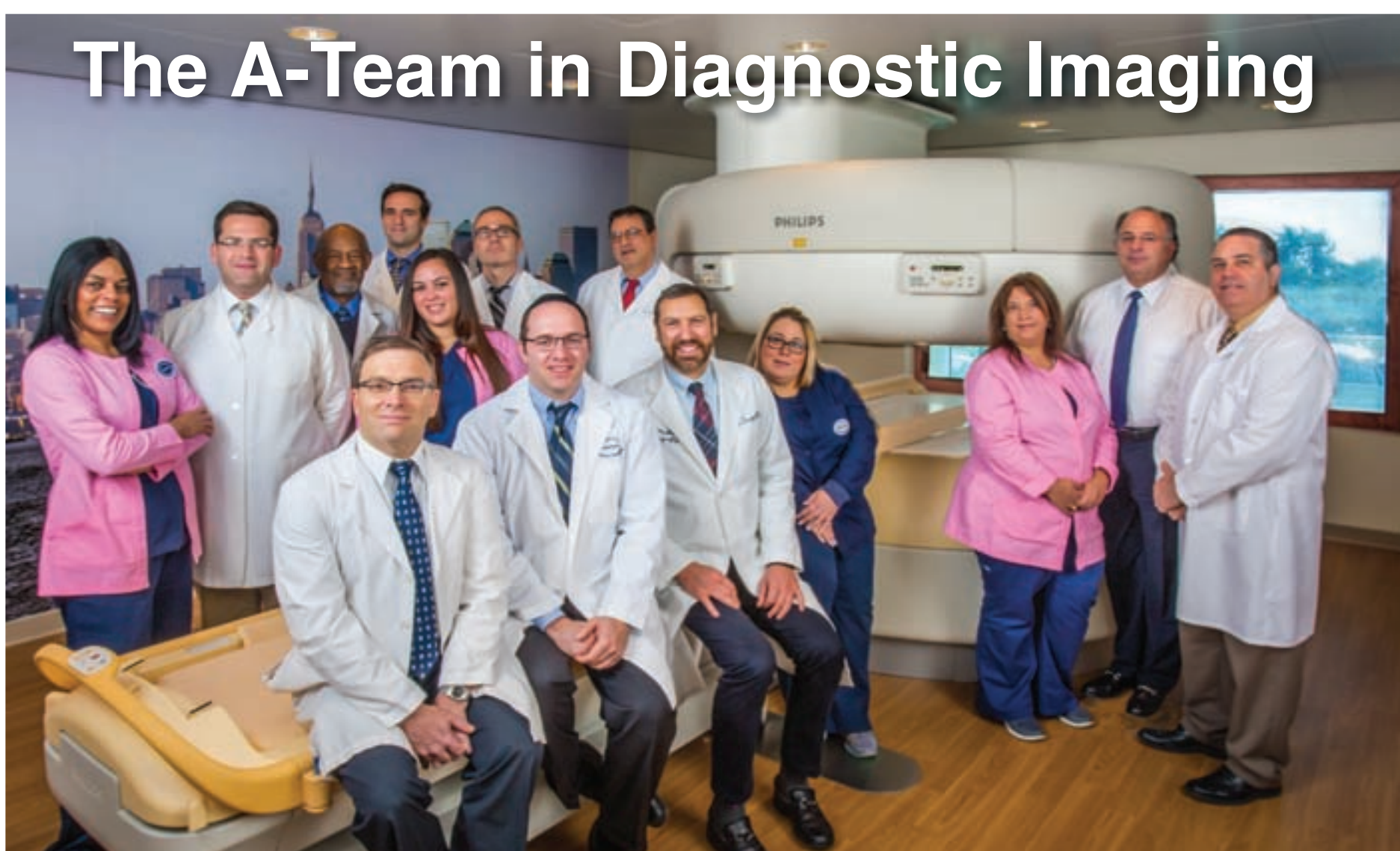
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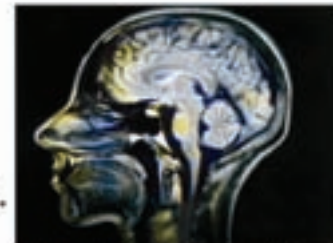


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