

THE MAIN PROBLEM

BY COLIN MIXSON

Talk about wet work!

Park Slopers can expect three years of racket, road closures, and parking woes as workers dig up neighborhood streets to renovate aging city pipes below them.

The Department of Design and Construction's water main-replacement project, called BED798, kicked off on Jan. 31, and will continue through the summer of 2021 as plumbing beneath roadways including St. Johns Place as well as parts of Baltic Street and Flatbush and Sixth avenues is revamped.

Workers will cut trenches through the asphalt between 7 am and 6 pm on Mondays through Fridays in order to lay new pipes ranging from eight to 72 inches in diameter, and local car owners should keep an eye out for fliers announcing temporary road closures and parking restrictions, according to agency spokesman Ian Michaels, who said all affected streets will remain accessible to pedestrians throughout the job.

Residential and commercial buildings on blocks where work is taking place will lose water service during certain periods, but the design-and-construction de-

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HAUL OF PREZS



DYNAMIC DUO: Kate Villa and Alexandria Iona, the creators of the "Every President Ever" show at Littlefield on Feb. 21, will play Teddy Roosevelt and James Madison, respectively.

Mark Bracamonte

Comedy show welcomes 45 chief execs

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

Hail to the chiefs!

President George Washington will don his powdered wig and cross the Gowanus to join 44 other Presidents of the United States onstage for a comedy show next week. The duo behind "Every President Ever: Together Again," at Littlefield on Feb. 21, hope the show will help Brooklynites to understand the men behind the monuments.

"I hope it takes these people out of the history books a little bit," said co-creator Kate Villa, who will also play Teddy Roosevelt. "That was definitely our goal, seeing these people as humans for the first time instead of just portraits. They look very stoic, inhuman, difficult to relate to when you see them as portraits, and I think bringing them into the modern day is a fun way to engage with history."

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Show of 'Hands'

BY JULIANNE CUBA

This show is 'maid in Brooklyn!

A pair of Brooklyn comedians have put a peppy musical spin on the dystopian television series "The Handmaid's Tale," and moved its story to the hip Borough of Kings. The

Hulu series, based on Margaret Atwood's novel about a world where the few fertile women are forced to become sexual servants, often features emotionally devastating rape scenes, but "Handmaid's Tale: The Musical," playing at the Bell

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RUN, PARK, RUN: New York Road Runners hosts free community run events every Sunday at 9 am in Marine Park.

M'Park & Canarsie run

BY ADAM LUCENTE

This run is a walk in the park!

The running enthusiasts at New York Road Runners hold free community runs in Marine Park and Canarsie Park every weekend, bringing people in the nabe closer together as

they lap the parks.

"They run, walk, volunteer, and truly become a family," said Michael Rodgers, the vice president of youth and community runner engagement at the organization.

New York Road Runners started in 1958 to pro-

mote running as a way to increase health and happiness. The group also raises money for charitable causes, such as the recovery effort following Hurricane Sandy, according to the organization's website.

The group began hold-
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Make up before it breaks up!

Locals to Gov, Mayor: Stop feud, fix BQE



DEMANDING NOT ASKING: Councilman Mark Treyger says the state must pass legislation to speed up repairs to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. Photo by Zoe Freilich

BY JULIANNE CUBA

They need to work it out so the real work can begin!

Gov. Cuomo must look beyond his public political spats with Mayor DeBlasio and allow the city to use a process that will accelerate its repairs to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway's decaying triple cantilever in Brooklyn Heights, local pols and activists demanded during a rally at the foot of Montague Street on Feb. 9.

State lawmakers and local leaders again called on Cuomo to green-light "design-build" — a process that would request one bid for the project's design and construction instead of hiring unique firms for each phase — weeks after they first demanded he revise his recently unveiled budget to include authorization for it.

"The only obstacle I can see is this rancor between Albany and the city, and that's just completely unacceptable," said Peter Bray, the head of civic group the Brooklyn Heights Association, which is bussing local advocates up to the state Capitol on March 6. "Our neighborhoods deserve better, and our communities should not be collateral damage to this political fighting."

Cuomo approved design-build for multiple state-run projects, including the recently built Kosciuszko Bridge and a new span touting his family's name, so his refusal to allow it in the city-led expressway fix must come down to his schoolyard fight with Hizzoner — which has also included

bouts over deer and the subway system — especially because authorizing the process won't cost the state a dime, the newly elected Council speaker said.

"If it's good enough for the new Kosciuszko Bridge and the new Mario Cuomo Bridge, why is it not good enough for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway?" asked Councilman Corey Johnson (D-Manhattan). "It doesn't make any sense. We should put politics aside."

Although he said he supports expanding design-build, Cuomo released his first draft of the budget without it on Jan. 16. He had until Feb. 15 to make amendments — including authorization for the process — before both houses in Albany prepare their own fiscal plans that, together with the governor's, will be used to create a final budget that must be approved by April 1.

Design-build proponents argue it will cut about \$113 million from the job's current \$1.9-million price tag, and speed up the reconstruction of the 1.5-mile stretch of expressway between Atlantic Avenue and Sands Street by at least two years.

Local transit honchos now expect work to begin in 2024 and wrap in 2028, but if Cuomo allows design-build, they say repairs could start as early as 2021 and conclude before 2026 — the year the city will be forced to send the more than 16,000 big-rigs that travel the triple cantilever daily down local streets instead so the three-

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SAY CHEESE: Charlie Sahadi handed his store's keys to his daughter Christine Sahadi Whelan in 2016, and she recently announced the shop will open an outpost in Sunset Park. File photo by Stefano Giovannini

Sahadi's heads south

Beloved bulk grocer to open super-sized store in S'Park

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

It's the Sahadi's experience — on steroids!

Beloved Brooklyn Heights grocer Sahadi's will open its long-awaited, super-sized second location in Sunset Park's Industry City later this year — a more-than-a-football-field-sized store with an open kitchen, bar, and event space.

Going bigger in the borough is the natural next move for the 70-year-old shop, according to its co-owner.

"Brooklyn is a dynamic place," said Bay Ridgite Christine Sahadi Whelan. "The Industry City store will allow us to share the beloved Sahadi food and hospitality culture

in a new, modern setting."

The new 35th Street outpost of the bulk-goods emporium — famous for its bins full of Middle-Eastern delicacies, including nuts, dried figs, spices, and roasted coffee — will also offer weekend brunch, a prepared-foods section with a dining-in area, and a *saj* — a griddle for making flatbread that the owners first saw on a trip to Beirut — according to New York Magazine, which also noted that the owners want to serve "lesser-known dishes" including chicken merguez with green tahini and couscous timbale with duck confit.

Whelan's grandfather,

Wade Sahadi, founded the store in 1948 as a reincarnation of the Manhattan market his great uncle, a Lebanese immigrant, launched in 1895. Whelan's father, Charlie, and uncle, Bob, later took over the shop, and oversaw the original location's expansion in 1985.

The pair expanded to a third storefront about 25 years later, and the duo handed the day-to-day operations over to Whelan and her brother Ron in 2016.

The store has become a neighborhood institution during its decades in business, and even took home a coveted James Beard award for awesomeness last January.

DA: Ditmas Park's cyber creep charged

BY COLIN MIXSON

A Ditmas Park man lured underage teenage girls into having sex with him using Facebook and false promises of cash, before blackmailing at least one victim with footage of their illicit affair, according to the district attorney.

"This defendant is allegedly a sexual predator who targeted vulnerable young girls in a cruel scheme," said Eric Gonzalez, who charged the man before a Supreme Court Judge on Feb. 7.

The 26-year-old defendant approached multiple girls as young as 14-year-old on social media using the name "Coolen Jay," offering money if they agreed to have sex with his friend "Teddy" — another alias for himself, Gonzalez said.

One 15-year-old girl slept with the suspect on multiple occasions between April and September last year, before refusing to see him again after she realized his promises of cash were bogus, the top prosecutor said.

But after she stopped having sex with him, the defendant sent a video he recorded of the victim in the act to her friends, and shared it on an online porn site, according to Gonzalez, who said the girl found out about the video from her school principal before she contacted authorities.

A police investigation revealed



DANGEROUS WEB: District Attorney Eric Gonzalez on Feb. 7 indicted this 26-year-old Ditmas Park resident for using Facebook and the false promise of cash to lure underage girls into having sex with him.

District Attorney's office

that the man used his lurid scheme to lure two other girls, ages 14 and 15, into having sex with him, neither of whom he paid, the district attorney said.

Prosecutors charged the suspect on multiple counts of rape, sexual misconduct, and child-endangerment charges, Gonzalez said.

Sick driver prosecuted for causing 'preventable death'

BY COLIN MIXSON

The district attorney charged a sickly motorist with reckless manslaughter for hitting and killing a man in East Flatbush last year, claiming the driver with multiple sclerosis knew better than to get behind the wheel in his condition.

"This was a preventable death that could have been avoided if the defendant had listened to his own doctor's advice, instead he got behind the wheel and now an innocent father is dead," said Eric Gonzalez.

The 41-year-old defendant was in the driver's seat of his 2004 Nissan Pathfinder on Avenue A near Remsen Avenue around 5:20 pm on Jan. 9, 2017, when his neurological condition caused his leg to seize up on the gas pedal,

sending his car hurtling down the street at a speed of at least 60 miles per hour, where it struck six vehicles before plowing into victim Marlon Palacios near Linden Boulevard about two blocks away.

A subsequent investigation revealed that the motorist's physician told him not to drive following his multiple-sclerosis diagnosis, Gonzalez said.

The top prosecutor charged the defendant with second-degree manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide, and reckless driving before a Supreme Court judge on Feb. 8, and the man faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted, Gonzalez said.

The ill man's indictment came after two other high-profile fatal collisions, in which

drivers with suspended or expired licenses hit and killed pedestrians but were not charged with manslaughter.

Last month, Philip Monfoletto killed 13-year-old bike rider Kevin Flores in Bedford-Stuyvesant while behind the wheel of an oil truck with a suspended license.

Monfoletto stayed at the scene, where police arrested him for driving with a suspended license, and the next day Gonzalez charged him with aggravated unlicensed operation of a vehicle, a criminal misdemeanor. But the driver, whose license was suspended 9 times before he hit Flores, could not be charged with a felony, which can only be issued to a motorist with 10 suspensions at the time of his or her arrest.

And last July, 63-year-old Jose Nunez ran down cyclist Neftaly Ramirez in Greenpoint while driving a private carting company's garbage truck that he was not licensed to operate.

But Gonzalez decided in January that there was not enough evidence to bring charges against Nunez — who drove off after plowing into Ramirez — and cops slapped him with a summons for operating the truck without the correct license after their investigation determined the driver didn't know he hit the 27-year-old.

And neither man was subject to manslaughter charges because driving without a license isn't considered reckless under the law, according to a spokesman for Gonzalez, who said the sickly man

was indicted because prosecutors believe his condition directly caused Palacios's death.

"It's not the same as driving with an expired classification," said Oren Yaniv. "In order to prove manslaughter in the second degree, you have to prove the conduct directly led to the death. The fact that [Nunez's] license classification expired did not cause the crash."

But unlike driving without a license, it is not illegal to drive with multiple sclerosis, Yaniv said. The penalties are simply far more severe when drivers with the condition kill someone, he said.

An attorney for the defendant with multiple sclerosis did not return a request for comment by press time.

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MAKING ITS ROUNDS: The driver of an Action Carting packer truck made his way through Williamsburg on Feb. 9 with his helper, who typically rides on the back of the vehicle, sitting inside the cabin.

Community News Group / Julianne Cuba

PANDEMONIUM AT THE WHEEL

Trash company's overworking and law-skirting results in deadly collisions, employees claim

BY JULIANNE CUBA

They're commanded to work as many hours as allowed by law — and pick up some overtime.

Calls come from bosses while they're behind the wheel asking them where they're at — and to speed up.

When they hit a red light — they're coached on how to run it.

That is the culture of malfeasance truckers at Action Carting, the garbage firm whose unlicensed truck driver hit and killed 27-year-old Netfaly Ramirez last July, have to deal with every day, claimed those who work there and union officials.

This newspaper spoke to two employees of a union representing Action Carting staffers — one of whom once drove for the company — and a current Action driver, and all of them claimed management at the New Jersey-based private-carting firm demands speed over safety from its truck operators.

"Drivers are kind of always put under the gun to get their stops done however they can in a timely

fashion," said Ray Borrero, who works for the Teamsters Local 813. "During the course of the night, you get calls asking where you're at or what's taking so long, and that adds to the pressure."

Action Carting's drivers — including 63-year-old Jose Nunez, who ran over 27-year-old Neftaly Ramirez while driving a truck without the proper license — usually start their work weeks on Sunday nights, sometimes driving for as many as 14 hours straight, the legal limit under federal law, as they collect garbage from across the city, leaving them little time to recuperate, according to Borrero.

The majority of Action truckers work six days a week, with around five percent clocking a five-day work week, and all can receive overtime pay for driving more than 40 or 60 hours, depending on their contracts, the Local 813 rep said.

The drivers can either pilot a "packer" — the truck Nunez drove when he hit Ramirez — that requires the aid of a co-worker,

called a helper, and makes more local stops picking up standard trash bags, or a "roll-off," which collects larger containers such as dumpsters and is operated by a single employee.

Driving either truck is a hard job, but those behind the wheels of Action's packers are notoriously overworked, according to the current employee, who said he used to drive one but switched to a roll-off to give his body a break.

Action demands its packer drivers work nearly twice as much as those at some other private sanitation companies, according to the worker who requested anonymity out of fear he would lose his job if his bosses knew he talked to a newspaper.

A typical night in his previous position as a packer driver for the Texas-based firm Waste Management lasted between six and eight hours — occasionally stretching as long as 10–12 — with anywhere from 150 to 300 "stops," which can vary from quick pickups at a single mom-and-pop to longer ordeals at commer-

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cial complexes with multiple clients. But for Action packers, a light night requires 200 to 300 stops, and a heavy one can mean anywhere from 500 to 1,000, the Action employee said.

“Physically I can’t work all those hours, it’s just way too much,” the anonymous driver said.

Another former Action Carting packer operator who also once drove for Waste Management agreed that the New Jersey company overworked him, saying he would routinely skip meals in order to complete his shift.

“I used to have 14 hours, and what I had to do was not stop for lunch — there was no other way I could get my route done. And when you couldn’t get your route done, the supervisor would chastise you,” said Allan Henry, who now works as an organizer for Local Union No. 813.

And company higher-ups have told drivers to ignore traffic laws if it’ll save

time, Henry said — behavior that locals routinely document.

“I’ve been told by workers who’ve been pulled into an office and shown a tape of them running lights, they tell them, ‘Try to stop and look both ways before you run the light, just don’t run through it,’” he said.

But instead of lightening truckers’ workloads by hiring more and shrinking their routes, Action honchos routinely ask drivers to make more stops in their given collection areas, the current employee said.

“They should have a lot more drivers on the road. That eliminates the long hours, and the accidents,” the anonymous worker said. “But Action is doing the total opposite — if there are three routes that are right next to each other, they will eliminate the one in the middle, break it in half, and add each half to the [two] others.”

And company bosses don’t seem motivated to change protocol for the good of their workers, according to Henry.



STOPPED FOR A SNOOZE: A passerby on the distant isle of Manhattan spotted two workers sleeping in the cabin of this Action Carting truck on Feb. 8.

Jehiah Czebotar

“They really don’t give a damn about the standard that they diminished,” the former Action employee said.

A rep for another union that represents Action employees—including Nunez, before he retired shortly after hitting and killing Ramirez, according to his coworkers — called the accusations that company honchos terminally overwork their drivers ridiculous. He added, however, that his group is fighting

to institute a shorter, five-day work week in the next round of contract negotiations.

“As far as complaints or concerns about excessive hours or the company not allowing for proper breaks, I find that to be a ludicrous accusation,” said Mike Hellstrom of Laborers Local 108.

Before any motorist can even hit the road inside a massive garbage truck, he or she must obtain a commercial driver’s license,

which requires medical clearance and passing specialized written and road tests.

Nunez did not have one, and Action Carting rep Ken Frydman declined to comment on whether his bosses knew that, how often the company checks the validity of its employees’ licenses, and if Nunez ever got behind the wheel of another truck after fatally striking Ramirez, citing an expected civil suit the deceased’s fam-

ily plans to file against the carting company. Frydman confirmed that Nunez retired last year, but would not specify when.

Each source this newspaper spoke to was shocked to hear that Nunez was on the road without a valid commercial license, however, because all of them said Action honchos regularly check drivers’ credentials, although they couldn’t say how often.

“That’s a big no-no,” said the current driver. “They do have someone that monitors our licenses to make sure they are valid.”

And Borrero questioned how that could have even happened in the first place.

“He should never have been behind the wheel of that truck,” he said. “How did that fall through the cracks? They really dropped the ball on that one.”

When police found out Nunez was on the road without the proper license — a fact authorities never released, which this news-

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Marvel heroes fight forces of evil at Barclays Center

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

He's just a god from Brooklyn.

The Norse god Thor will do battle with his villainous brother Loki at Barclays Center next week, alongside a longbox-worth of Marvel superheroes and their foes, including Spider-Man, the Green Goblin, Brooklyn kid Captain America, the Guardians of the Galaxy, and Doctor Strange. The live-action show "Marvel Universe Live: Age of Heroes," running for nine performances starting on Feb. 25, is so filled with stunts, action, and special effects that it leaves the Marvel films behind, said the Bedford-Stuyvesant actor who portrays the God of Thunder.

"There's a lot of combat, a lot of cool special effects. It's a stunt show — if anything, it's more like an action movie, but live in front of you," said



THE GOOD FIGHT: Brooklyn actor Gjermund Gjesme, left, plays the Norse god Thor, who joins Captain America, the Black Widow, and a host of other heroes in the stunt show "Marvel Universe Live." *Feld Entertainment*

Gjermund Gjesme, who grew up in Norway, just like the mythical character he plays. He moved to the borough of Kings in 2014, after two years in the Norwegian military — a

job he said helped prepare him for his onstage fights.

"It definitely helps with my mental toughness, being able to be fierce and ready to deal with how hard it is to rehearse a

production like this," he said. "But I thought in my mind, if I'm getting a role in this production, it'll be Thor."

To portray the stormy deity, Gjesme must don an elaborate, colorful costume that enhances his already impressive physique — but which makes the action a little more difficult, he said.

"I have a muscle suit, helmet, and cape — it makes it extra challenging to perform the stunts, but it makes it look even cooler if you can do it," said Gjesme.

During the show, Thor and his buddies team up to wrestle control of a mystical McGuffin back from Loki, the God of Mischief, who plans to use its power to rule the world. The super-battles include a large ensemble of battle fighters, who wear about 100 outfits between them, according

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BLESSED BE THE FRUIT: Comedians Melissa Stokoski and Marcia Belsky created and perform in musical parody version of the bleak television series "The Handmaid's Tale," at the Bell House on March 8. *Mindy Tucker*

HANDMAIDS

Continued from page 1

House on March 8, drops them in favor of laughs and dance numbers, said one of its creators.

"We lighten up a lot of those things. Part of the reason we wanted to do this is watching the show is so hard, through humor and satire it makes it less of a taxing experience for women to watch," said Marcia Belsky, who lives in Bushwick and co-wrote the parody with Greenpoint comedian Melissa Stokoski. "We wanted to make it a little less rapey for our purposes."

The bleak nature of the show makes it especially funny that it would be adapted into a musical, just like recent Broadway shows "Groundhog Day: the Musical" and "Spongebob Squarepants: the Musical," said the writers.

"We were watching 'The Handmaid's Tale' together and joking about how everything becomes a musical, and how it would be funny if 'Handmaid's Tale' did because it's so dark," said Belsky.

Belsky and Stokoski re-

imagined the story's main character, a handmaiden named Offred, as a 20-something millennial who loses her job as a barista, and they traded the restrictions imposed by its theocratic army, such as women being forbidden to read or move about freely, for more light-hearted modern-day travesties, said Belsky.

"Offred starts out as sort of typical musical theater heroine, naive and starry-eyed, excited to move to New York," she said. "We sort of rewrite, for our own parody purpose, what a coup of this nature would look like: our social media taken away, my Sephora points went to zero — what would it look like for us?"

And what better place to set a dystopian society than hipster Brooklyn, she asked herself.

"We basically looked at shows like 'Girls' — pretty much every millennial female story takes place in Brooklyn, so why not 'The Handmaid's Tale'?" said Belsky.

The musical also mashes up the characters from the series with real world figures and parodies of other television shows.

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PRESIDENTS

Continued from page 1

During the show, 45 comedians will each portray one of the chief executives, wearing a costume of their own making and performing a one-minute sketch that showcases that president's personality. The performers drew their president out of a hat, said the show's creators, to avoid competition over who would play Abraham Lincoln, and so that someone will play 13th president Millard Fillmore.

Villa and co-creator Al-

exandria Iona, who will play James Madison, came up with the idea last fall, after reading "The Complete Book of U.S. Presidents," a nearly 1,000-page tome that explores the lives and personality of the presidents. From the book, they learned that President Obama loves "Harry Potter, doing the dishes, and chocolate — but hates ice cream," said Iona, and that Jimmy Carter is a speed-reader who can read more than 2,000 words a minute.

President Trump will also make an appearance at the show, but the Tweeter-in-chief will get no more

time than a member of the powdered-wig brigade, said the creators. However, there is something special planned for the 60-second Trump impersonation — it will double as a fund-raiser for the American Civil Liberties Union, though the exact details will remain a surprise until the show.

Diving into the history books to research the show gave its creators a welcome escape from the daily stress of political headlines, said Iona, and it helped to give them a non-partisan view of history.

"Going back and reading about things we didn't

know about presidents from yesteryear has been fun and educational, because we're not dealing with it from day-to-day," she said. "It's non-political, and more personality based: stuff they liked to do, who they hung out with, weird stuff they said. It's more light and surprising, and it's been a fun journey discovering some very silly things about these guys."

"Every President Ever" at Littlefield (635 Sackett St. between Third and Fourth avenues in Gowanus, www.littlefieldnyc.com). Feb. 21 at 9 pm. \$8.



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Don't give up pizza!

Gerritsen Beach pizzeria offers special menu of seafood dishes during Lent

BY ADAM LUCENTE

A Gerritsen Beach pizzeria has come up with a fishy way to help customers observe Lent.

Victoria Pizzeria is kicking off Lent by introducing a menu of seafood pizzas and dishes for the entire 40 days of Lent — complying with certain Christian denominations' prohibitions on eating meat during the period. The joint's manager says the menu will allow people to satisfy their cravings for meat pizzas while observing the strictures of Lent.

"As someone that follows Lent, I think it's great," said Joe Gencarelli. "You're not tempted by everything else and stay in your beliefs."

Lent is a 40-day period that begins on Ash Wednesday, which is on Feb. 14 this year, and ends shortly before Easter Sunday. Catholics typically do not eat meat on any Friday during this period, and some give up meat all together for the duration of Lent. Fish is allowed in its place, however. Lent aims to replicate Jesus' sacrifice when he spent 40 days and nights in the desert.

Victoria Pizzeria's Lent menu includes an array of fish dishes, including shrimp pizzas and shrimp parmesan, according to the "Special Lent Menu." The pizzeria also puts non-fish meatless dishes on the Lent menu, such as a rice ball with cheese. Owner Salva-



PIZZA PRIDE: Salvatore Genova of Victoria Pizzeria in Gerritsen Beach is serving up a half calamari, half eggplant pizza that meets to no-meat requirement for those who observe Lent.

Photo by Jon Farina

tore Genova said that some of the seafood items, such as the shrimp fra diavolo, a seafood linguini dish, stay on the menu year-round. Others, like the shrimp pizza and the rice ball, are only available during Lent.

The pizzeria has been around since 1962, but Genova became the owner two years ago. Last year was the first time Victoria Pizzeria offered the Lent menu, and Genova said it was a hit.

"It did very well," he said. "We sold a lot of shrimp pizza."

Gencarelli said they have to add extra staff due to the menu's popularity.

"It's gonna be busy," he said. "Not a lot of places offer a menu just for Lent."

The pizzeria started the menu because Genova and Gencarelli are both practicing Catholics, but also

because of the large Catholic presence in Gerritsen Beach and nearby Marine Park and Sheepshead Bay, according to Gencarelli.

"Our customers are mixed religiously," he said. "But there's a big Catholic presence around here."

Non-Catholic customers can still order pepperoni pizzas and other meat dishes during Lent at Victoria Pizzeria, however. The staff simply keeps the meat supplies away from the Lent-compliant supplies, Gencarelli said.

"We have everything for people who don't do Lent," he said. "We keep the Lent sauces separate from the meat sauces."

Victoria Pizzeria. [2716 Gerritsen Ave., between Everett and Florence avenues, (718) 891-9496, <http://victoriapizzanyc.com/>].

MARVEL

Continued from cover

to costume designer Mark Koss. The superheroes' super-sized bodies made dressing them a special challenge, said Koss.

"One of the really difficult and wonderful parts of this show was how to create costumes that really could be active and move, are really durable and cool for audience members to watch,"

he said. "They aren't humans and therefore don't have human proportions."

Rocket Raccoon and Groot, from the Guardians of the Galaxy, are the shortest and tallest characters in the show, respectively, and the producers put the characters on stage next to each other to emphasize their size differences, Koss said.

"We tried to find the shortest actor we could to play Rocket and then dealt with the proportions," said

Koss, who added that Groot towers eight feet high thanks to two-foot stilts built into his outfit. "Rocket is always next to Groot to make Rocket feel shorter and Groot feel taller."

"Marvel Universe Live!" at Barclays Center (620 Atlantic Ave. at Flatbush Avenue in Prospect Heights, www.barclayscenter.com). Feb. 22-24 at 7 pm, Feb. 23-24 at 11 am and 3 pm, Feb. 25 at noon and 4 pm. \$19-\$120.



Chamber's century mark

BY JULIANNE CUBA

It was the party of the century!

Hundreds of Brooklynites packed a Downtown hotel on Saturday to celebrate the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce's 100th year of boosting local businesses. But the organization's centennial gala was just the beginning of its next ten decades' worth of work to ensure resilient, sustainable, and equitable commercial growth in the Kings County, its president said.

"The centennial goes way beyond one night of celebrating," said An-

drew Hoan. "We've come a long way in the past 100 years, but we have a lot more work to do for the next 100."

The group's work supporting businesses across the borough fosters life-long relationships among its members, as well as bonds between them and other city officials, according to one attendee who joined the festivities at the New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge.

"It was great to see old friends again, especially the legislators," said Dominic Mascara, who works at the

Visiting Nurse Service of New York. "I've used the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce as a great tool over the years. I was able to develop relationships with so many influential people from different sectors and industries, and made great friends."

The swanky bash in America's Downtown featured entertainers who dazzled its nearly 1,000 guests with talents including knife swallowing and snake charming. And several local leaders came out to toast the or-

Continued on page 12

MADE IN BROOKLYN: (Left) Courier Life Publisher Cliff Luster, Brooklyn Democratic Party Boss Frank Seddio, Borough President Adams, and Community News Group's Vice President of Advertising Ralph D'Onofrio enjoy the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce's Centennial Gala at the Brooklyn Marriott on Saturday. (Center) Former Borough President Marty Markowitz and his wife Jamie celebrate at the gala. (Above) Entertainer Fred Kahl wows the crowd with sword-swallowing tricks. Photos by Stefano Giovannini

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They raised money to spare!

Girl Scouts rake in cash for hurricane victims at bowling fund-raiser

BY COLIN MIXSON

These girls are on a roll!

Four local Girl Scouts used their spare time to fill the lanes of Sunset Park bowling alley for a Feb. 10 fund-raiser to help kids in storm-ravaged Puerto Rico.

“They wanted to do something for kids affected by the hurricanes,” said Troop 2672 leader Jeannie Jackson. “There were different ways we spoke about raising money, and they were set on doing the bowling.”

The pint-sized philanthropists — Elena Marquez, Samantha Roberts, Dahlia Sussman, and Zola Coppia, all 10-years-old — rallied 16 friends to participate in their day of doing good at Melody Lanes on 37th Street between Fourth and Fifth avenues.

Each kid, including the four organizers, brought in \$60 or more in donations, resulting in a total of \$2,000 in contributions toward rebuilding and relief efforts on the island territory slammed by Hurricanes Irma and Maria last year, according to Jackson.

And local businesses including Maz-zola Bakery in Carroll Gardens as well as Boerum Hill’s Exit 9 Gift Emporium and Mia’s Brooklyn Bakery donated prizes awarded to the best bowlers and Marquez — who brought in more than \$700, the most money of the bunch, the troop leader said.



BOWL OF LOVE: Girls Scouts Elena Marquez, Samantha Roberts, and Malia Rodriguez used the power of bowling to raise \$2,000 for Puerto Rican hurricane victims during a bowl-a-thon fund-raiser on Feb. 10. Photo by Caroline Ourso

The youngsters’ threw the fund-raiser as part of an effort to earn the highest honor scouts their age can receive: the Bronze Award, which is bestowed to teams of girls that make a difference in the lives of those in need, according to Jackson, who said the local foursome will also meet displaced Puerto Rican tykes currently living in the

city as they work to nab the honor.

Funds from the bowling event will be donated to a special storm-relief fund operated by do-good group Save the Children, which has volunteers on the ground in Puerto Rico to address the needs of kids and families there, according to the organization’s web-site.

BQE

Continued from page 2

tiered structure doesn’t collapse beneath them.

Roads including Third and Fourth avenues, and Tillary, Court, Jay, and Columbia streets could all get a massive spike in truck traffic if the vehicles are banished from the expressway, according to the Department of Transportation.

And in addition to saving time, using design-build would conserve funds that could be reinvested into the city’s failing subway system and cash-strapped public-housing complexes, according to another councilman, who attended the rally alongside Borough President Adams, Comptroller Scott Stringer, Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, and Brooklyn Heights pols including state Sen. Brian Kavanagh and Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon.

“This is insanity, \$100 million could be used to address a subway crisis and a heating crisis in New York City Housing Authority buildings,” said Councilman Mark Treyger (D–Coney Island). “I find it outrageous and insulting that they would hijack more than \$100 million in public money that could go towards addressing transportation, public-housing, quality-of-life, and public-safety issues because of a high-stakes political game.”

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They match the walls of marble and granite in the ballroom — which itself sports one of the largest chandeliers in all of Brooklyn — giving you just a brief inkling into what they have in store for you and your guests. Come and see the grandeur for yourself.

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longevity and of their success.

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TRUCKS

Continued from page 5

paper confirmed after speaking to the Ramirez family's lawyer — they slapped him with a summons four months after the fatal crash. The violation Nunez received typically results in a \$150–500 fine, according to a New York State courts spokesman.

Still, hitting and killing the cyclist while driving without the correct license was not enough for District Attorney Eric Gonzalez to press criminal charges, and the top prosecutor absolved Nunez on Jan. 9.

Authorities said the driver didn't know he hit Ramirez and that they lacked the evidence needed to charge Nunez, in part because they claimed there is no surveillance footage of his packer truck plowing into the cyclist — only clips showing the moments before and after.

But the district attorney's prosecutors told the Ramirez family's attorney, Michael Kremins, that video clips show Nunez's

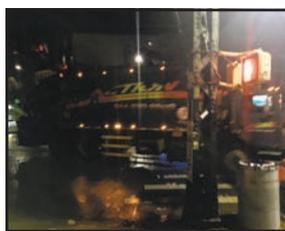
helper riding on the back of the truck moments before the crash, and inside the cabin immediately following it — which the lawyer said doesn't add up. An eyewitness claimed to see Nunez's helper in the vehicle at the time of the collision, according to police.

This newspaper filed a Freedom of Information Law request on Jan. 17 for evidence from the fatal crash, including video, now that the case is closed, but the city denied it, claiming the release of such information would “constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.”

And Local 813 rep Borrero, former Action driver Henry, and the anonymous employee still working for the company said that all of its trucks should be equipped with two cameras.

“Action has cameras equipped in their trucks that face inside in the cab and face out into the street,” Borrero said.

Henry, who left Action in 2014, said he remembers the first cameras being installed around 2013, and the driver currently em-



IN ACTION: A helper rode on the back of an Action Carting packer truck that rumbled along Broadway in Bushwick on Feb. 7. CNG / Anthony Rotunno

ployed by the company said its trucks are equipped with the technology.

“They started putting cameras in, maybe, 2013, so it's hard to believe [Nunez's] truck didn't have a camera,” Henry said. “Anything is a possibility, but in my perspective, when I worked there, once they started using them, the cameras worked every day.”

But the district attorney's rep Oren Yaniv claimed the truck Nunez drove when he hit Ramirez had no cameras.

Frydman declined to comment on whether all of its trucks are equipped with cameras and how many vehicles are in its

fleet — but last December, months after Nunez hit and killed Ramirez, another company rep claimed it would finish installing the technology in all of its trucks by the end of 2017, garbage blog Waste360 reported.

The Greenpoint cyclist isn't the only victim of Action's drivers — at least fourteen people filed civil suits against the company since 2012, after collisions with its trucks left them either severely or mildly injured, court records show. Five of those lawsuits were settled out of court, according to the records, which don't specify each settlement's details.

And Action's truckers have hit and killed five people, including Ramirez, in the last decade, according to multiple reports. In 2008, an employee plowed into British tourists Andrew Hardie and Jacklyn Timmons in Manhattan, and another Action trucker ran over 24-year-old cyclist Timothy “TJ” Campbell in Williamsburg later that year. And in 2011, a driver backed over Mark Chanko in Manhattan.

Borrero said the last time he remembers cops cuffing an Action driver for a fatal collision was in response to the 2008 double fatality, when the employee hit and killed the two pedestrians after suffering a seizure while behind the wheel.

Authorities charged the driver with manslaughter and negligent homicide because they said he chose not to take his medication before operating his vehicle and, according to both Borrero and a New York Times report, did not disclose his health condition when applying for a commercial license.

“He falsified the medical exam, and he did go to jail,” Borrero said.

But deadly collisions are also devastating to those drivers who don't intend to harm anyone when they get behind the wheel, he said.

“My worst nightmare is having to deal with my members in sanitation getting involved in some kind of fatality,” Borrero said. “We don't go out there looking to purposely hit people.”

CHAMBER

Continued from page 9

ganization on its 100th year, including Councilmen Robert Cornegy (D–Bedford Stuyvesant) and Mathieu Eugene (D–Flatbush), Brooklyn Democratic Party boss Frank Seddio, Borough President Adams, and the beep's predecessors Marty Markowitz and Howard Golden.

But the packed house came as no surprise to guests who've witnessed just how many people and companies the Chamber has helped in its century of service, according to the publisher of Courier Life Publications.

“When you think about the impact the Brooklyn Chamber has had on business in the borough, it makes complete sense that everybody would turn out for this,” said Clifford Luster, who was joined by Community News Group's vice president of advertising Ralph D'Onofrio.

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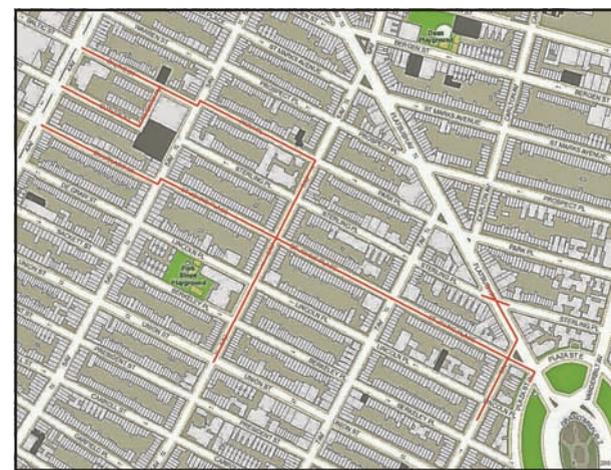
WATER

Continued from page 1

partment will alert locals in advance, and any interruptions will be restored by the end of the work day during which they occur, Michaels said.

The pipe-replacement project also includes the installation of combined sewers, catch basins, and manholes, in addition to reconstructing a triangular pedestrian plaza bounded by Eighth Avenue, Flatbush Avenue, and St. Johns Place.

Similar work is underway on plumbing beneath Leonard Street in Williamsburg, and last week the design-and-construction department announced it would use an installation process called "slip lining" — in which new, smaller pipes are threaded through larger, older ones — to shave one



WET WORK: The city will be replacing water pipes beneath St. Johns Place, Flatbush and Sixth avenues, and Baltic Street over the course of three years, resulting in loss of parking, closed streets, and loud noise.

Department of Design and Construction

year off the job, which will now finish in 2019 instead of 2020.

But that technique won't work in Park Slope, Michaels said, because the pipes being replaced there are too bendy, making it difficult to insert new tubes

inside them.

Any residents who want to contact the city about the water-main-replacement project in Park Slope can contact its community liaison Niel Patel at (347) 889-5271 or bed798cc@gmail.com.

RUNS

Continued from page 1

ing so-called "open runs" in Marine Park in 2015 and in Canarsie Park in 2016, and also holds similar runs in the other boroughs. The other open runs in Brooklyn are in Highland Park on the border with Queens and in Brooklyn Bridge Park. Between 15 and 45 people usually show up to the Canarsie run, while the Marine Park one can host 40 to 80 runners each week, according to Rodgers.

"Marine Park is definitely one of our most popular locations," he said.

Local volunteers staff

each of the runs. They time the runners, watch their bags, and direct them on the course, according to New York Road Runners' website.

Carol Mendez of Marine Park says she takes part in the open runs because of the supportive atmosphere.

"It's very encouraging," she said. "Even if you don't want to run, are not feeling well, and instead walk, they still cheer you on. You feel like you still accomplished something."

New York Road Runners chose the Marine Park and Canarsie locations due to local demand and a desire to improve parks in growing communities, but the

group aims to provide runs for people in all boroughs, Rodgers said.

"NYRR is committed to creating touch points across all five boroughs to encourage all New Yorkers to get out and get moving," he said. "Regardless of which neighborhood they live or work in."

New York Road Runners Open Run (openrun.nyrr.org/). Saturdays at 9 am in Canarsie Park at the Canarsie Park office, on Seaview Avenue near E. 88th Street; Sundays at 9 am in Marine Park, behind the Carmine Carro Community Center on Fillmore Avenue between Madison Place and Marine Parkway.

HANDMAIDS

Continued from page 1

Autocratic figure Aunt Lydia, for instance, who trains the handmaids to become submissive servants, is reinvented as Aunt Betsy Devos, named for Trump's Secretary of Education. Another character is named Rory Gilmore, after the lead character from "The Gilmore Girls," said Belsky.

"It's really hard to disassociate her from that character that we loved in middle school," she said.

Both Belsky and Stokowski see the show as an opportunity to comment on serious topics through a comedic lens, such as the men's rights movement. In the show, the coup is led by "Commander Fred, a sexually repressed elite East Coast man," who convinces his fellow men's rights ac-

tivists that feminists are conspiring to make them hate their own penises. Fred strikes by means of a song titled "I Love My Dick," said Belsky.

"We try to not make anything too on the nose," she said.

"Handmaid's Tale: The Musical" at the Bell House (149 Seventh St. between Second and Third avenues in Gowanus, www.thebellhousesny.com). March 8 at 8 pm. \$15 (\$10 in advance).

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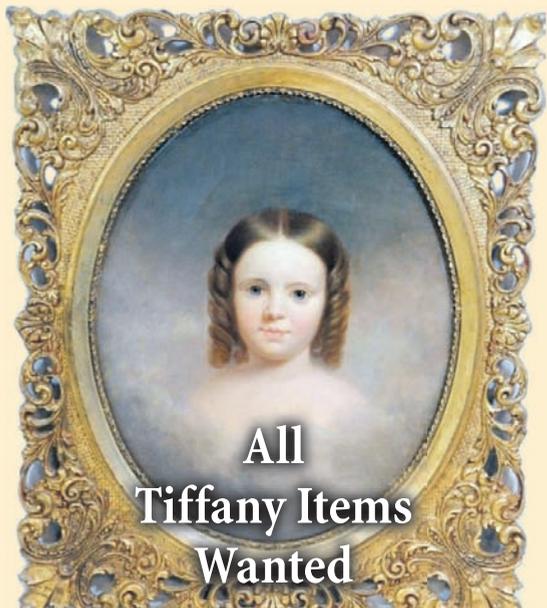
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