

## Can't foot the cost

City: Repaving Terrace sidewalk too expensive

BY COLIN MIXSON

He's trippin'!

The city abandoned a scheme Brooklyn's head transit honcho hatched to secure capital funding for repairs to a treacherous Windsor Terrace sidewalk because the \$10-million plan was simply too expensive.

"We are currently exploring other feasible options due to the cost," said a Department of Transportation spokeswoman.

The agency's Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Keith Bray suggested the pie-in-the-sky proposal after concerned residents demanded the brick sidewalk along Prospect Park West between Bartel-Pritchard Square and 18th Street be replaced with concrete, claiming the constantly dislodging masonry is both a hazard to pedestrians — especially seniors, who trip over it — and a liability for property owners, who must pay to maintain the bricks outside their businesses or homes.

Bray's plan called for repaving the pathway as part of a larger project to enhance traffic safety on

*Continued on page 8*



**BALI-WOOD:** The Balinese music-and-dance ensemble Gamelan Dharma Swara will perform on March 9 as part of the Spring Revolution festival at National Sawdust.  
Gordon R. Wenzel

# SOUNDS OF THE SPRING

A Pan-Asian music festival

BY ALEXANDRA SIMON

She's leading the Revolution.

A Pulitzer-winning composer will bring female and Asian voices to the front of the annual Spring Revolution Festival of music, starting on March 2 at National Sawdust in Williamsburg. Musician and festival co-curator Du Yun has programmed a line-up of performances from all over Asia that she hopes will make people examine their ideas about culture on that continent.

"When they approached me do this festival I had the idea of do-

ing something like a Pan-Asian festival — to investigate 'What is Asia?' and also challenge the status quo within that as well," said Du Yun, who won a Pulitzer for her 2017 opera "Angel's Bone."

Yun, born and raised in Shanghai, China before immigrating to the United States at age 20, said that she chose performers who will convey the richness of Asian cultures as more than a collection of tourist destinations and exotic locales.

"I especially want to focus  
*Continued on page 6*

## Hospital on the rise

BY ADAM LUCENTE

Coney Island Hospital is adding a whopping 10-story building to its complex later this year — four years after announcing the funding for the project.

The new building is the latest effort of the hospital to rebuild after getting hit hard by Hurricane Sandy,

and shows its attempts to strengthen its image following years of poor performance.

"Every day it's improving," said Community Board 15 chairwoman Theresa Scavo. "They have not really come back from Sandy."

*Continued on page 18*



**MUSIC PIRACY:** Dalles Willie portrays the Pirate King in "Pirates of Penzance."  
Photo by Taylor Balkom

## 'Pirates' land in Ridge

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

It is, it is a glorious thing to hear a pirate sing!

A band of scurvy scallwags will sail into St. Patrick's school in Bay Ridge this weekend for the first of six tenuous performances of "The Pirates of Penzance," from the Narrows

Community Theater. The classic comic operetta, which opens on March 2, may have lost some of its satirical punch since it premiered in 1879, but its greatly to its credit that its clever lyrics and evergreen jokes about romance will still make audiences laugh,

said the actor who plays protagonist Frederic.

"A lot of it is satire — it was very topical during the time that it was written, and it's like any sort of political farce today," said Midwood resident Chazmond Peacock. "The lyrics are very

*Continued on page 15*



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# CITY HALT!

Mayor must fix gas station 'death trap' in Sunset Park, say local parents, pols



**FLIMSY SAFEGUARDS:** Local pols called on the mayor to get the Department of Transportation to install more than just flimsy safeguards at the Speedway gas station on Fourth Avenue between 30th and 31st streets.

*Community News Group / Julianne McShane*

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**BY JULIANNE MCSHANE**

The city must do more to protect Sunset Park kids who walk by a dangerous Fourth Avenue gas station to get to school, and change has to come from the top, say local pols.

Mayor DeBlasio must force the Department of Transportation to take immediate steps to make the treacherous station between 30th and 31st streets — a block from an elementary school — safer for residents of all ages, according to a joint letter elected officials sent the mayor on Feb. 21.

State Sen. Jesse Hamilton (D-Crown Heights), Assemblyman Felix Ortiz (D-Sunset Park), Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-Sunset Park), Borough President Adams, and Councilman Carlos Menchaca (D-Sunset Park) wrote that the flimsy, temporary plastic barriers and signs that the police and transit agency installed on the unmarked pavement in response to complaints

do not do enough to protect kids' lives in the long-term, and that the city must keep locals involved in making the Speedway gas station safer.

"The children in our community have endured potentially dangerous street crossings for many years due to the gas station's location and road infrastructure," the electeds wrote. "That is why we further request that any redesign incorporate the community's perspectives on new safety measures — this would ensure that solutions moving forward are both inclusive and consistent with the community's needs."

The pols complained that several factors — including erratic drivers who swerve off the busy avenue to reach the fuel bays, parking regulations that cause blind spots, and PS 172's location only a block away — all create a hazard for pedestrians who traverse the block every day.

The transportation agency's School Safety Division must add more safety signs, permanent bollards, or sturdy barriers to protect the nabe's kids as they walk to school, the officials wrote, adding that the division should also "provide infrastructure to monitor speed and encourage driver awareness" and conduct a review of nearby school crossing guards, traffic signals, and signage. And the division should also add "no standing at anytime" zones to the Fourth Avenue and 31st Street entrances to reduce blind spots, the electeds wrote.

The pols also sent the letter to the commissioner of the transportation department, the chancellor of the education department, the police commissioner, the Community Board 11 district manager, and PS 172's principal, Jack Spatola.

A rep from the police  
*Continued on page 18*



**FOODIES:** Perelandra's co-owners Allison Buckingham, left, and Roland Auer, center, and its food service director Aly Weigle, right, are looking forward to reopening the Remsen Street health-food store's expanded kitchen in April.

Photo by Jason Speakman

# Staple Heights grocer is cooking up change

## Expanding its in-store kitchen's size, menu, and hours

BY JULIANNE CUBA

They're hungry for more!

Owners of the beloved Remsen Street health-food store Perelandra temporarily shuttered its kitchen and juice bar to make way for a massive cooking space that will serve a bevy of new freshly prepared foods when it reopens this spring.

"This is the most significant expansion we've done in nearly 20 years," said co-owner Allison Buckingham. "We're close to tripling the size of the kitchen."

The staple Brooklyn Heights grocer between Court and Clinton streets — which opened on nearby Montague Street in 1976 before moving to its current location — is recognized for its aisles filled with good-for-you fare, including organic fruits and vegetables and rice and grains by the pound, and for its entirely plant-based kitchen, where workers made to-go sandwiches and baked goods along with fresh juices and coffee before it closed in mid-January for the makeover.

And when the super-sized, Kosher-certified space opens in April, it will boast a bulked-up menu of breakfast, lunch, and dinner options as well as expanded hours that include weekends, when the old kitchen was closed, Buckingham said.

Hungry shoppers can browse a new hot bar that will feature foods including breakfast burritos, en-



**FRESH LOOK:** A rendering of the new kitchen facilities, which include a hot bar and two grab-and-go stations.

Perelandra

chiladas, and roasted vegetables, or grab specialty sandwiches made to order with several bread options, all but one of which are gluten-free, she said.

Patrons looking for a lighter bite can help themselves at two new grab-and-go stations, one of which will be stocked with items such as salads and pre-made sandwiches, while the other will include more than a dozen pastries and other baked goodies.

And the revamped juice bar will be equipped with an espresso machine in order to make cappuccinos and lattes — exciting new treats for customers who want more than the regular cups of joe it previously poured, the co-owner said.

Buckingham said she and co-owner Roland Auer originally planned to reopen the kitchen in early March, but work delays pushed its return back a month, and she's looking forward to firing

up the stove again for shoppers after contemplating the expansion for some time.

"We're thrilled, and our customers are so excited," she said. "We've been at capacity in our kitchen for years."

And the co-owner — a certified nutritionist who since 2002 has worked at Perelandra, where she often buys her own meals from — said that the store won't serve anything that a professional wouldn't put in his or her own stomach.

"I've basically eaten breakfast and lunch at this store every day for 15 years," Buckingham said. "I take a lot of pride in being able to trust where you buy your food. And people really trust that if it's on our shelves, they know it's something they could feel good about."

*Perelandra [175 Remsen St. between Clinton and Court streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 855-6068, www.perelandranatural.com].*

# Living on a prayer

## Board snubs church's development

BY JULIANNE CUBA

It needs help from above.

Civic gurus punted a controversial rezoning application for a plot of Fort Greene land where church leaders want to erect a 13-story tower of so-called affordable housing to the borough president after panning the proposal earlier this month.

"As represented by the very vocal voices tonight, I move that this body votes against this project, and sends the message that we're not in favor of it," said Community Board 2 member John Harrison at a full board meeting on Feb. 14.

Clergy from the Hanson Place Seventh-day Adventist Church want to raze the house of worship's old three-story community center at 142-150 S. Portland Ave. between Hanson and S. Elliott places to make way for a 138-foot residential high-rise with 100 units, a new street-level multi-purpose space, and a below-ground medical facility.

The proposed tower would contain 19 studios, 42 one-bedrooms, 24 two-bedrooms, and 14 three-bedrooms all doled out via the city's housing lottery according to three income-based affordability tiers. Twenty-five units would be priced at 60 percent of the area's median income, another 25 would be offered at 100 percent of that figure, and the last 50 at 130 percent.

But before the church's chosen builder can break ground, the city must upzone the area generally bounded by S. Portland Avenue and Hanson and S. Elliot places to allow for towers that rise as tall as 14 stories, five higher than the nine-story structures currently allowed on the land, which contains the development site and other lots including several row houses and a 13-story tower built before the city downzoned the area to its current height cap in 2007.

The upzoning application also proposes giving developers a free pass to build storefronts on the ground-level of new Hanson Place buildings erected within the rezoned area through what's called a "commercial overlay."

And it includes extending the Special Downtown Brook-



**LITTLE FAITH:** Community Board 2 voted against a Fort Greene church's rezoning application, which it filed in order to erect this 13-story tower of so-called affordable housing.

lyn district along Hanson Place, which now ends at S. Elliott Place, by one block to S. Portland Avenue.

Expanding the district, which establishes special height and setback regulations to promote the nabe's residential and retail growth, would limit the construction of more tall towers on the land it covers. Future buildings next to the row houses within it would be restricted to the area's current height limit of nine stories, even if the upzoning is ultimately approved, according to Community Board 2. And any of the special district's other regulations, such as mandatory sidewalk widening and parking restrictions, would not apply in the extension, information distributed by the board said.

Community Board 2's Land Use Committee voted last month to support a spot rezoning that only applies to the church's property and to reject the rest of the application, because its members feared other developers would scoop up low-rise or empty lots on the larger plot of land in order to build taller and denser buildings down the line, according to the committee's chairwoman.

But the full board rejected the committee's recommendation at its Feb. 14 session, and instead voted against the upzoning application in its entirety.

The church's proposal now sits with the beep, who held a public hearing about it on Feb. 20, and will push it along the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure process when he issues his own recommendation to the City Planning Commission in the next few weeks.

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# Bathroom breakthrough

## Work finally begins on new Boardwalk toilets

BY ADAM LUCENTE

The city couldn't hold it any longer.

Construction of new bathrooms for the Brighton Beach Boardwalk finally began on Feb. 12. The controversial comfort station, which was originally supposed to be built by the Boardwalk near Brighton 15th Street after the old one was destroyed during Hurricane Sandy, is now being built near Coney Island Avenue, following local outcry over the previous location.

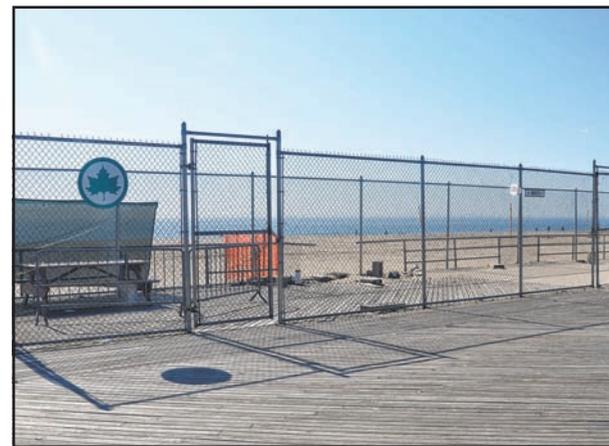
The start of construction comes as a relief for many in the community.

"It had to be done. People have been without a bathroom for the last five years since Sandy," said Community Board 13 district manager Eddie Mark. "It's long-awaited and needed for the neighborhood."

The public toilets are being built with federal funds at a cost of \$4.3 million, and are expected to be finished in time for beach season, according to the city agency in charge of the work.

"It's started. We have an estimated completion date of the spring," said a spokesman for the Department of Design and Construction.

The original plan to build the bathrooms near the upscale Oceana Condominiums — perched atop 20-foot-tall concrete stilts — ran into fierce opposition from local condo owners, who even sued the city, complaining that the high-rise toilets would lower



**FINALLY:** Construction of public bathrooms on the Brighton Beach Boardwalk near Coney Island Avenue began on Feb. 12, and when done they will finally replace those destroyed during Hurricane Sandy all the way back in 2012. Photo by Mike Beitchman

their property values by blocking their views of the water.

The 2015 relocation of the loos 350 feet down the Riegelmann Boardwalk to a site near the Shorefront Y led many locals to complain the city was pandering to the rich.

The start of work on the bathrooms marks the end of four years of squabbling, and Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz (D-Brighton Beach) — a vocal opponent of the original location — said he's happy to have it settled.

"This is an issue that people continually ask me about in the community and I'm pleased that we have a successful resolution," he said in a press release.

Not everyone believes the new site is suitable, however. Councilman

Chaim Deutsch (D-Brighton Beach) wrote a letter to the Parks Department in 2016 arguing that the bathrooms could turn into dangerous debris and damage the Shorefront Y Jewish community center nearby in the event of another superstorm.

The Oceana condo owners lodged a similar complaint in 2013, but Deutsch pointed out a fundamental difference — unlike the high-end condo complex, the Shorefront Y provided meals, clothing, heaters and other services during Superstorm Sandy, and so needs to remain secure.

"I have a significant concern that flying debris from the comfort station could have an unfortunate and direct impact on the ability of the Shorefront Y to provide these essential services," he wrote.

# Doggie daycare opens in Ridge

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

It's a pooch paradise!

A new business catering to Bay Ridge canines officially opened for business in a Feb. 23 ceremony with staffers, locals, and Councilman Justin Brannan (D-Bay Ridge) on hand to celebrate. Opening the Brooklyn Canine Club on Fifth Avenue between 82nd and 83rd streets was

a dream come true, according to the dog-loving owner.

"All my life, dogs have made me very, very happy," said Jose Candia, who lives on bucolic Staten Island and owns the doggie daycare with business partner and veterinarian Salvatore Pernice. "Everyone always said that I was pretty good with them."

The club will function

as a daycare for lonely pups whose human parents are at work or otherwise occupied during the day, and all pooches will get the chance to frolic on special, cleanable "canine turf" in the attached backyard that belongs to Pernice's practice, the Brooklyn Veterinary Group.

The club does not take *Continued on page 6*

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# Talking with the stars

## Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson returns to BAM

BY ADAM LUCENTE

It will be a stellar conversation!

The famed astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson will visit the Brooklyn Academy of Music on March 9 to discuss outer space, neuroscience, and the science of ice skating, among other topics. Recording the latest edition of his “StarTalk” podcast in front of an audience at the Academy allows him to combine science with pop culture, and to spread his knowledge to a wider audience in the borough and beyond, said Tyson.

“This is science brought to the public in a way they’re comfortable thinking about, and won’t say afterwards ‘Ow, my brain hurts,’” he said. “When science becomes one thing people do on a Friday night, then we’ve succeeded in merging it with pop culture.”

The event is part of the Academy’s annual RadioLoveFest, a live celebration of notable radio programs and podcasts. This year’s festival also includes a discussion with “This American Life” host Ira Glass, storytelling from “The Moth,”



**SCIENCE FOR THE MASSES:** Astrophysicist and snappy vest-wearer Neil deGrasse Tyson will chat about the physics of figure skating and the human brain at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on March 9.

and a chat with “American Gods” author Neil Gaiman.

During his live performance, Tyson will record material for two of his podcasts. The first is “StarTalk All-Stars,” which features talks with renowned scientists. For that, he will chat with neuroscientist Heather Berlin about the science of creativity, and whether it can be detected in brain scans. Tyson said he will learn along with the audience as he guides

that discussion.

“What helps is I’m not a neuroscientist,” he said. “In the conversation I’ll actually learn.”

His other podcast, “Playing with Science,” discusses the role of science in sports. His guest for that show will be Olympic figure skater Sasha Cohen. Ice skating involves much more science than people realize, said Tyson.

“There’s a special, unique property of frozen water that allows skating,”

said the astrophysicist, who enjoys figure skating. “You can’t skate on other frozen substances.”

A third guest will add a musical interlude to the night: rapper Baba Brinkman, who spits rhymes about scientific topics, will make a brief appearance.

Bringing the show to the Borough of Kings is especially appropriate, said Tyson, because Brooklyn has a history of mixing scientific learning with its nightlife, at events like Littlefield’s “Nerd Nite” and Astronomy on Tap.

“I call it a culture of rational thinking. There’s a lot of underground science in Brooklyn. There are science gatherings at bars, science cafes, this sort of thing,” he said.

And the cavernous Howard Gilman Opera House, where Tyson will hold his show, is just another example of that trend.

“This is the largest of such venues,” he said.

“*StarTalk at BAM: Science is Everywhere*” at BAM Howard Gilman Opera House [30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100, [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org)]. March 9 at 7:30 pm. \$35-\$65.



**CREATOR AND CURATOR:** Composer and musician Du Yun has programmed six performances of Pan-Asian music during the Spring Revolution Festival. Jill Steinberg

## FESTIVAL

*Continued from page 1*

on new works — because in my mind, new cultures cannot exist without new works — because otherwise it’s just tourist culture,” she said. “I’m hoping to really challenge people’s idea of what it means to be Asian. If you really care what we’re thinking and doing, you can come in and get an immense body of work and practices, that serves as window to what we thinking and it’s sort of like a more poignant understanding.”

The evening titled “The Shanghai You Don’t Know,” on March 10, will feature a screening of the documentary “Lotus Ferry,” about a neighborhood in Shanghai, followed by three performances of distinctively Shanghai theater, dance, and music styles. Other evenings will feature the Balinese music and dance ensemble Gamelan Dharma Swara, and Bhutanese, Japanese, and Indian musicians.

Yun will also take the stage on March 9, playing piano and singing with her band OK Miss. The four-piece, which also includes a drummer, saxophonist, and a clarinetist, will play

funk, pop, and rock and roll music, along with traditional music from China and Mongolia. Yun said the eclectic set-list will give the audience a taste of her versatility as a performer.

“I wanted to showcase not only being a performer but also the different type of music sensibilities that I can do as well,” she said. “And I’m going to be covering a Mongolian folk song, and morph that into something psychedelic.”

Every night of the festival features female curators and female artists, but Yun said that adding Asian culture complicates the discussion of women’s empowerment in a necessary way.

“I’m a woman, and I’m also Chinese. If you were to ask any woman who they really are, the answer will be chaotic, not orderly, and layered,” said Yun. “I think in society everything is so rigid and black and white, and I want my art to breathe through that. I want to have art and music to shatter that.”

“*Spring Revolution Festival*” at National Sawdust [80 N. Sixth St. at Wythe Avenue in Williamsburg, (646) 779-8455, [www.nationalsawdust.org](http://www.nationalsawdust.org)]. March 2-11 at various times.

## DOGS

*Continued from page 4*

more than 20 dogs at a time, Candia said, adding that they currently have a waiting list. And all four-legged friends have to pass a temperament test by interacting with Candia’s dog, Lilly, to join the club.

Candia opened the club because the Ridge is teeming with pups but lacking anywhere for them to gather and play.

“When I did the research, the neighborhood needed something for dogs,” he said. “I looked in Long Island City, Downtown — those places have doggie daycares, but Bay

Ridge did not have anything. And the amount of dogs I’ve seen in this neighborhood — it’s pretty amazing.”

Candia opened the shop not just to pursue his passion for playing with pups, but also to spend more time with his family, and his wife, Doreen, also contributes to managing the

canine club’s corporate side.

The business owners eventually want to create organic treats, Candia said, but for now, they’re happy to be enthusiastically received by two and four-legged Ridgites alike.

“It’s amazing, the feedback we’re getting,” he said. “We’re pretty excited.”



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# Brooklyn Spine Center offering patients living with back pain a surgery-free option

BY CAMILLE SPERRAZZA

Dr. Melinda Keller of the Brooklyn Spine Center has been treating patients with chronic back pain for 36 years.

She has heard it all from patients who come to her as a last resort, after they have tried pills and injections. Yet, despite these treatments, they are still suffering. They can't sit and do computer work for their jobs. They can't bend to pick up their grandchildren. Many can't sleep at night because the pain is excruciating. Their quality of life is so diminished, many consider surgery to be their only option.

But Dr. Keller provides them with another alternative: non-surgical decompression. She utilizes the DRX-9000 (pictured right), a state-of-the-art device that helps restore spinal discs back to optimal health. The machine gently stretches the spine so that pain subsides. As a result, pressure on the nerves is released. "It accelerates the natural healing process, and offers an effective alternative to risky spine surgery, painful injections, and prescriptive medications," says Dr. Keller.

The results are based on scientific evidence. "Post-MRI results reveal actual physical improvement to the health of the spinal disc in approximately 90% of the cases," says the doctor.

D.R.X. stands for Decompression Reduction Extraction, and the DRX -9000 is the best quality and most researched decompression device on the market, she says.



The system is manufactured by Axiom Worldwide, and is Food and Drug Administration-approved. This technology allows Dr. Keller to apply a controlled amount of traction to specific parts of the spine, gently easing the pressure off of patients' injured discs. Keeping discs healthy is important. "Discs

are responsible for drawing fluid from the body that carries nutrients and oxygen to the spine," says Dr. Keller. "The spine needs these nutrients to stay strong."

The procedure is non-invasive, and patients do not feel any pain when undergoing the treatment. The only thing they may feel is a gentle tug to the spine as the machine works to ease the symptoms

associated with herniated discs, degenerative disc disease, and sciatica.

While this is taking place, patients are lying comfortably on top of the machine's cushioned table. The treatment takes place slowly and gradually, so that patients are relaxed and stress-free.

Some patients report feeling a sense of relief right away, as the machine can offer immediate relief to the pressure on their discs. Several DRX-9000 treatments are usually needed to obtain lasting results. Dr. Keller will discuss the timeframe with each patient, outlining a treatment plan that's based on individual needs. Each session lasts about 45 minutes, providing time for the DRX-9000 to lengthen and stretch the spine, as it reduces pressure to the nerves.

Good spinal health is essential, says the doctor, as it can mean the difference between staying active and being bedridden. Some patients come into the office, and they can barely walk. If left untreated, what will their spines be like when they age? "Half of all babies born in the year 2000 or later, can expect to live to be 100 years old," says Dr. Keller. "We are already living longer, but we have to live better." Keeping our spines functioning at 100% prolongs quality of life.

More than 900 insurance companies cover chiropractic care, and the warm staff at the Brooklyn Spine Center will make a courtesy call on your behalf to see what your plan offers. The staff is compassionate, upbeat, easy-going, and available to help.

*Brooklyn Spine Center [5911 16th Ave. between 59th and 60th streets in Borough Park, (718) 234-6200, [www.BrooklynSpineCenter.com](http://www.BrooklynSpineCenter.com)]. Open Mondays - Thursdays, 9 am - 7 pm; Fridays, 9 am - 2 pm; Saturdays, 9 am - noon, by appointment.*



(Clockwise from left) Dr. Melinda Keller of the Brooklyn Spine Center helps a patient use the LPG Spine Force. Dr. Keller in her office. Cecilia and Nadia greet patients at the front desk.

Photos by Georgine Benvenuto

# HOT DOG!

## McCarren Park grills on the way

BY JULIANNE CUBA

This green space is getting licensed to grill!

The city is gifting McCarren Park with new barbecues and picnic tables ahead of the summer season so its patrons can finally have their perfectly seared burgers and a place to eat them, too.

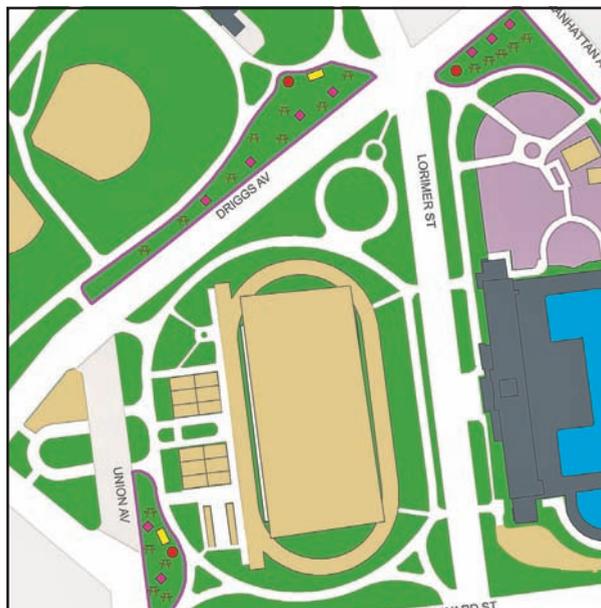
“McCarren Park is a heavily-used resource for many North Brooklynites,” said the Department of Parks and Recreation’s Brooklyn Commissioner Martin Maher. “We’re excited to bring even more amenities to the park, and we know these grills and picnic tables will be put to good use.”

The agency is coughing up more than \$50,000 to install nine “double-header” grills that hold twice as much meat, fish, or vegetables than the standard variety, along with 18 picnic tables, three charcoal-dis-

posal bins, and two additional garbage containers, all of which will be placed in three designated areas within the meadow that straddles Williamsburg and Greenpoint, according to a spokeswoman, who said park-goers have already been hauling their own grilling equipment to the lawn for a long time.

The parks department also plans to solicit bids from food vendors before picking two to operate trucks inside the green space and one to set up shop in McCarren Park’s field house near its baseball diamonds this spring, the rep said. And the agency is working to arrange a meeting with the local community board before it issues any permits, she said.

The new picnic facilities will arrive nearly six years after some park-goers begged the city to in-



**GRILL SEASON:** The city plans to install new grills and picnic tables in McCarren Park by May. Parks Department

stall barbecues in the park in 2012 — the same year that other locals grilled officials over the installation of cooking stations in nearby Cooper Park on Maspeth Avenue, which they claimed would lead to pollution and violence.

And outdoor kitchens aren’t the only changes coming to the green space

roughly bounded by Manhattan, Nassau, and Bedford avenues and Bayard, Lorimer and N. 12th streets. The parks department next month will begin a year-long, \$4-million capital project of renovating its track and field, which includes laying a new rubber oval and an artificial-turf pitch, the rep said.

## SIDEWALK

Continued from page 1

the street by adding sidewalk extensions known as bump-outs at its intersections — without which, the job wouldn’t be eligible for capital funding from the city, he said.

The transit bigwig told locals in November that officials successfully used the same strategy in other neighborhoods, but a subsequent study determined that installing a concrete sidewalk along with the bump-outs would cost upwards of \$10 million.

And the city’s Office of Management and Budget deemed the price tag cost-prohibitive, according to the transportation-department spokeswoman, who said the agency is now looking at the issue with officials from the Department of Environmental Protection.

The setback will be a blow to those locals concerned about the safety of their neighbors who travel the sidewalk, but may come as a relief to



CNC / Colin Mixson

**PRICEY PROBLEM:** Officials vetoed a plan to repave a dangerous brick sidewalk in Windsor Terrace because its \$10-million price tag is too costly.

others reluctant to give up precious street parking in order to add the bump-outs, which would gobble up spots.

The local assemblyman who organized the meeting where Bray pitched his too-pricey proposal plans to hold another session to brief residents on other potential solutions this spring, according to a staffer.

“We’re hoping to get some kind of evaluation on other things that might make it capitally eligible by springtime,” said Dan Campanelli, chief of staff to Assemblyman Robert Carroll (D-Windsor Terrace).

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# Be Proud, Big Apple Academy unite against drugs

BY CAMILLE SPERRAZZA

The Be Proud Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that works with families and the community to promote acceptance and understanding throughout the borough.

On Feb. 15 and 16, it held two assemblies on drug prevention for middle school students at the Big Apple Academy in Bensonhurst, where Mr. Vlad Gorny is principal.

Law enforcement officials were invited to participate so that they could share their expertise. Among those in attendance included Assistant District Attorney Karen Valliere, criminal lawyer Philip Gurevich, and Sergeant Anthony Caggiano of the 1 Police Plaza Community Affairs Office.

This is the fourth time the school has hosted a seminar on drug prevention, in partnership with the Be Proud Foundation.

“We have to unite against our greatest enemy — drugs,” said Mr. Gorny. “It has shattered dreams, families, and far too many lives.”

The assembly opened with a moment of silence dedicated to students and teachers who lost their lives during the latest Florida school shooting. About 400 students lowered their heads silently to respectfully show their sorrow. Gorny emphasized that we all have to work hard to make our community safe. Drug prevention is certainly one way to start.

The guest speakers shared real-life stories of ways abuse can start. Sometimes it is peer-pressure, and the desire “to be cool.” But it can also include finding and trying prescription drugs that are in the house. They pointed out that drug abuse is indiscriminate in nature, and happens in households at every income level. The speakers stressed that drug abuse is not only dangerous to one’s health, but it is also against the law. Sergeant Caggiano and Attorney Gurevich shared anecdotes that revealed the consequences involved for those who travel down that path.

Students listened attentively during the presentation and asked questions. As the topic of drug prevention is one that Be Proud’s founder and executive director, Raisa Chernina, has brought out in the open for years now, she noted that this attentiveness is something she witnesses at every assembly. She is often amazed at the questions that are posed.

Mr. Gorny said these assem-



(Clockwise from top) Attorney Philip Gurevich, Assistant District Attorney Karen Varriale, and Sergeant Anthony Caggiano spoke to students about the dangers of drugs. Sergeant Caggiano and student Johnny Yusupov thank each other for coming to the seminar. And Middle school students at Big Apple Academy in Bensonhurst bow their heads in a moment of silence to remember the students and teachers who lost their lives during the latest school shooting in Florida.

blies provide much-needed information to students.

“Shielding teenagers from this sort of conversation is not doing any good to the children, or the community in general. Parents and educators often abstain from covering this issue while the kids often seek less than competent sources to feel in the blanks.”

Chernina said, “It’s never too early to start teaching kids about the dangers of drugs. They need to get the message sooner than later.”

She believes too many kids turn to drugs because they have too much time on their hands.

“Kids must be keep busy at sports, art and science 24/7,” she

said.

It sticks in her mind that at one assembly, politician Mark Treyger (D-Coney Island) asked the audience to raise their hands if they had a neighbor, relative, or friend who had passed away from an overdose.

“Each and every person raised their hand,” said Chernina. “It

was the most terrible thing to see.”

*Be Proud Foundation [2805 E. 26th St. between Emmons Avenue and Shore Parkway in Sheepshead Bay, (718) 788-7773]. Open Mondays - Fridays, 10 am-5 pm.*

*Big Apple Academy [2937 86 St. in Bensonhurst, (718) 333-0300, www.bigappleacademy.com].*

# STEPS FORWARD

## Broadway Junction to get new staircases

BY ADAM LUCENTE

Months after straphangers begged the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to install an elevator at the Broadway Junction subway station, the Authority announced a plan — to install more stairs.

The transit agency on Feb. 21 unveiled its plan to build two new stairways at the Broadway Junction hub in Cypress Hills just outside Bushwick to accommodate an expected surge in displaced L-train commuters when officials cut that line off from Manhattan by closing its underwater Canarsie Tunnel, and some commuters are as skeptical as they are disappointed.

“I don’t know where they’re gonna put them. And what about handicap accessibility?” said Canarsie resident Michael Ien. “Come on. It’s not feasible to me.”

A Metropolitan Transportation Authority official told the Community Board 18 meeting attendees that the new stairways will be needed at Broadway Junction to handle those Canarsie straphangers transferring from the truncated L line to the Manhattan-bound J and Z trains after the L’s Brooklyn-Manhattan tunnel closes in April 2019.

“The mezzanine to the J and Z gets congested,” the official said.

The L train will still run from Rockaway Parkway in Canarsie all the way to Bedford Avenue during the 15-month closure, and Broadway Junction is one of only two places on that route where commuters will be able to switch from the L to a Manhattan-bound line.

“We anticipate 70–80 percent of diverted L cus-

tomers will use nearby subway lines, including the J and Z lines, with Broadway Junction as a major transfer point,” said an authority spokeswoman.

“The additional stairs will help customer flow from the increased demand.”

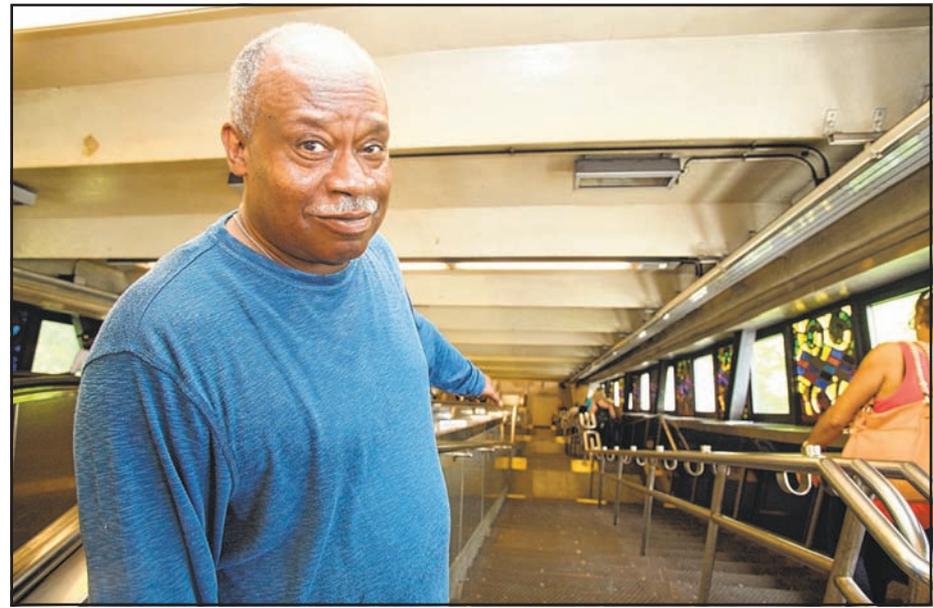
But Ien has long argued that what Broadway Junction needs more than stairs is an elevator.

“First and foremost we need an elevator,” he said. “Someone who’s elderly can’t manage the stairs or escalator.”

And he’s not alone. A fellow Canarsie resident said an elevator is more ideal for the crowded station.

“An elevator would be better. It’s very high up,” said Judy D. Newton, referring to the station’s three stories’ worth of treacherously steep stairs.

Newton nonetheless



**LONG WAY DOWN:** Canarsie resident Michael Ien said that the Broadway Junction station is in desperate need of an elevator, but the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is just promising more stairs.

File photo by Jason Speakman

said she’s happy the authority is adding stairs to reduce congestion.

“It should’ve been done a long time ago,” she said. “I think it will be safer for pedestrian traffic.”

The authority said it will make other improvements for Brooklyn’s L-train straphangers, includ-

ing a new transfer to the 3 train. Commuters will be able to walk from the Livonia Avenue stop on the L line and hop the 3 line at Junius Street free of charge.

Some riders at the CB 18 meeting worried about the effects of increased bus ridership during the shut-down. Gerard Brewster of

East Flatbush pointed out that the B6 bus that takes people to the 2 and 5 train at Flatbush Avenue is already overcrowded.

“I’ve yet to see a plan for the B6 and BM2, and what will happen to people in Flatlands who take them west to the 2 and 5 trains,” he said.

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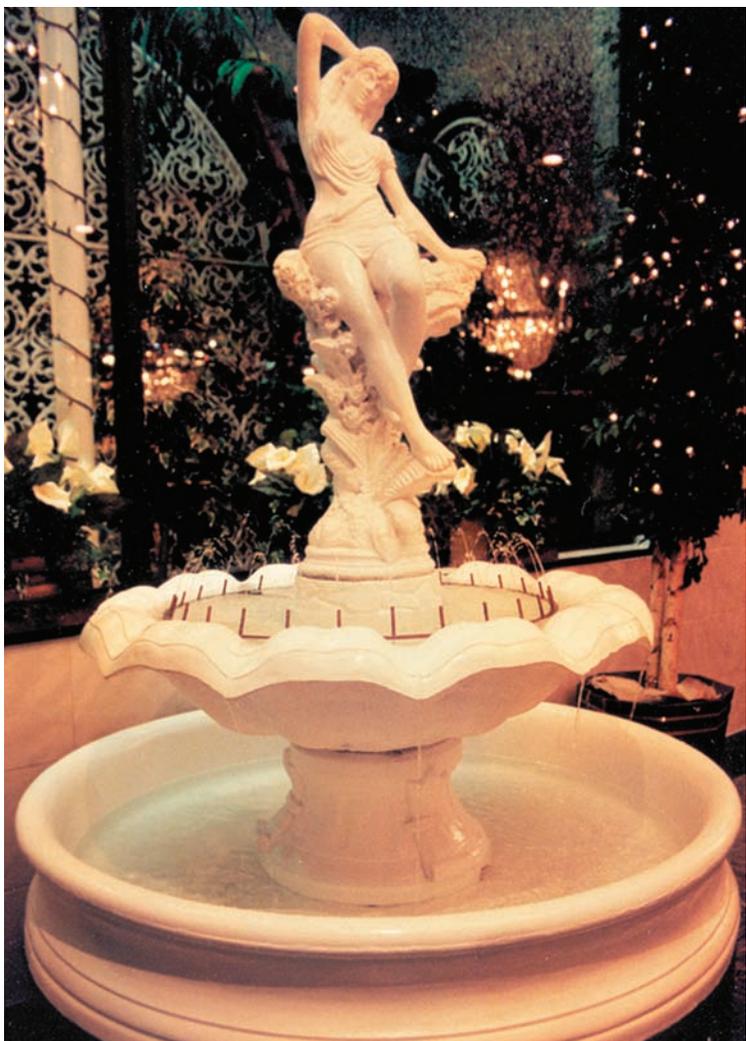
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They match the walls of marble and granite in the ballroom — which itself sports one of the largest chandeliers in all of Brooklyn — giving you just a brief inkling into what they have in store for you and your guests. Come and see the grandeur for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

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# Buoyant span floated as transit fix

Pontoon bridge would pick up closed L train's slack, model-turned-executive says

BY LINCOLN ANDERSON

This idea is full of hot air!

A new temporary pontoon bridge is the best way to shuttle the most straphangers across the East River when officials close the L train's underwater Brooklyn-Manhattan tunnel for a 15-month repair next April, according to the out-of-state real-estate executive and former underwear model who floated the concept.

San Francisco resident Parker Shinn, who once lived on the distant isle of Manhattan, claimed that plans to launch new ferries as well as beef up bus service across and create dedicated high-occupancy vehicle lanes on the Williamsburg Bridge will not be enough to transport the more than 200,000 displaced daily L-train commuters, necessitating his so-called

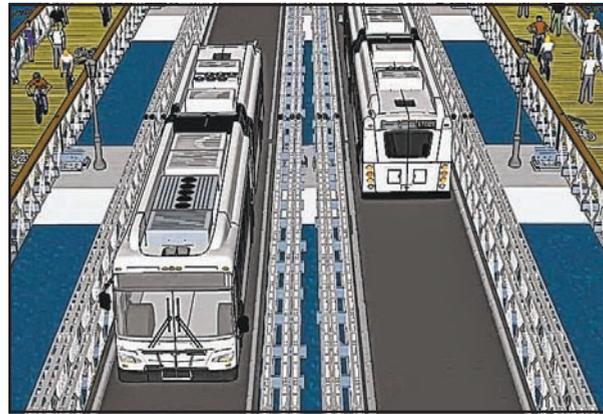
"L-Ternative" crossing.

"I question whether they're going to be able to accommodate an additional 225,000 people each day," Shinn said. "I think this bridge could take all the people that take the L."

The 31-year-old recently launched a Kickstarter campaign to raise an initial \$50,000 to get his project off the ground, and said he's already fine-tuned the concept with some professionals.

"We're exploring it," he said. "I've spoken to a couple of companies to get estimates. I've bounced it off naval engineers and architects."

Shinn proposed installing the Brooklyn end of the short-term bridge — which would be supported by 30 floating 90-foot barges anchored in the river, according to its Kickstarter



**ANOTHER WAY OVER THE RIVER:** Out-of-state real-estate executive and former model Parker Shinn proposed creating a pontoon bridge across the East River ahead of the April 2019 L-train shutdown, which he claimed would be the best way to shuttle the most straphangers between Brooklyn and the outer borough of Manhattan.

Parker Shinn

page — near the coastline around N. Eighth Street in Williamsburg. Straphangers who cross it would arrive in Manhattan near 10th Street.

The span would have four lanes, half Kings County-bound and the other half going towards the distant isle. Pedestrians and cyclists would be per-

mitted on the outer lanes, while the inner two would be reserved for buses in order to keep the bridge from flipping into the East River, Shinn said.

"You have to keep the weight centered," he said.

A portion of the crossing would be built higher to allow ferries' and other small boats' passage, and the span would feature a drawbridge to allow larger vessels through, according to Shinn, who said he has yet to share his plan with the Coast Guard, which would need to approve it, the city, or the state-run Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

"The first step was try to get this in the public eye," he said.

The Kickstarter page for Shinn's bridge notes that some European companies built a similar structure

in Africa for \$38 million 10 years ago. He said his project on the East River, however, could come with a price tag of at least \$100 million, according to a report.

But the cost for the temporary span — which will be disassembled when L-train service resumes — would be covered by a \$1 toll, he said, in addition to public financing for its initial stages.

Shinn — who said this journalist was "getting into the weeds" when he asked what other projects the real-estate executive has designed — said he first considered the possibility of a pontoon bridge eight months ago, but started concentrating on it in earnest more recently with the approaching "L-pocolypse."

"I've always loved de-  
*Continued on page 18*

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## Brooklyn doctor provides treatment of aneurysms

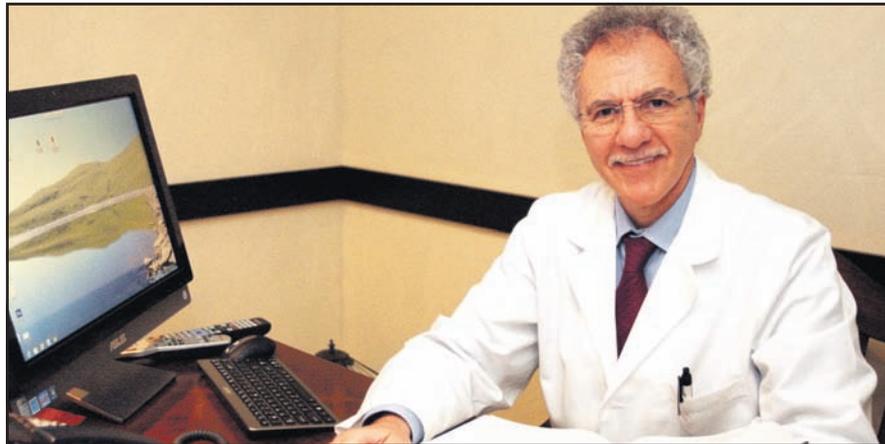
BY JACK RYAN

With the minimally invasive treatment for aneurysms now offered by the Vascular Institute in Borough Park, patients can now plan to go home the same day of an operation that once kept patients in the hospital for days.

Under the direction of Dr. Enrico Ascher, the Institute, offers the very latest state-of-the-art treatment for a wide range of vascular conditions.

No need to travel to Manhattan or Long Island when the very best care is available right here. Dr. Ascher and his team are internationally recognized for developing groundbreaking treatments for patients with vascular disease. In some cases the endovascular techniques developed by this team have eliminated the need for surgery.

There was a time not



Doctor Enrico Ascher

long ago when patients seeking treatment for an aneurysm could expect to leave the hospital with an ugly scar running from the collar bone to the groin. It doesn't have to be that way, says Dr. Ascher. The surgery that he has pioneered is done with the guidance of ultrasound on an ambulatory basis.

"This procedure is minimally invasive. The blockage can be removed with just a small incision in the groin," he said. "The beauty of it is that we have simplified this approach. Instead of spending four or five days in the ICU, patients can expect to be home for dinner."

This new procedure re-

duces costs and, more importantly, it reduces the risk of complications. In the not-distant future he expects to be able to perform the surgery, which is done with the patient under local anesthesia, in his Brooklyn facility. To date more than 1,000 patients have taken advantage of the life-saving aneurysm

surgery offered by the institute. Aneurysms occur when part of a blood vessel or cardiac chamber swell because the blood vessel is damaged or there is a weakness in the wall of the blood vessel. As the aneurysm grows there is a risk of rupture, which can lead to severe hemorrhage and other complications, including sudden death.

Dr. Ascher is currently the chief of vascular surgery at NYU Lutheran Medical Center. He is the founder of the Pan American Congress on Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, which provides a forum for surgeons from South America, Central America and North America.

The doctor has written more than 250 articles published in medical journals. Put simply, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a more respected leader in the field of vascu-

lar medicine.

In addition to the treatment of aneurysms, the Institute provides the most progressive and advanced care available for the treatment of wide range of vascular conditions including stroke prevention and clearing blocked arteries. The Institute is also involved in wound treatment, saving limbs, and removing varicose veins.

Asked why he chose Brooklyn to set up his practice, Dr. Ascher said simply, "I am very happy the very best in vascular medicine is right here in Brooklyn."

*The Vascular Institute of New York [960 50th St. between Ninth Avenue and Fort Hamilton Parkway in Borough Park, (718) 438-3800, and 2993 Ocean Parkway in Brighton Beach, (347) 533-8477, vascularnyc.com] Call or go the website to make an appointment.*

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# PIRATES

Continued from page 1

silly. If you really listen to it, even though we're singing operatically, you realize it's not serious at all."

The two-hour show follows Frederic, an extremely honorable apprentice to a band of soft-hearted pirates, who falls in love with the daughter of the infamously modern Major General Stanley. Mabel returns his affection, but Frederic must battle both her over-protective father and his loyalty to the pirate band to secure her heart forever.

The show will go on with minimal costumes and a bare stage, which puts the spotlight squarely on the songs. But Peacock said the added pressure is a privilege, since Frederic's battle cries and love songs are well suited to his voice.

"Vocally, it's a very fulfilling role for a tenor — there's a lot of great rangey tenor notes, so it's a lot of fun to sing," he said.

A nine-piece orchestra will accompany the 25-member cast, who range in age from about 13 to



**THE HIGH C'S:** Cast members of "Pirates of Penzance" rehearse for the upcoming production of the Gilbert and Sullivan opera at St. Patrick's School in Bay Ridge. Photo by Taylor Balkom

70, according to producer Marla Gotay, who lives in Dyker Heights. The big-voiced operatic style of the Gilbert and Sullivan production may surprise locals expecting a more standard musical, said Gotay.

"It's sung differently than other kinds of musical theater — it requires a different kind of talent and gives our community members to hear a different style of singing," she said.

And in addition to learning what an "operetta" sounds like, audiences will also contribute to a good cause: all ticket

sale proceeds will benefit the Betty Kash Scholarship fund for graduating eighth-grade students, named after a late musical-loving member of the Narrows Community Theater.

"*The Pirates of Penzance*" presented by the Narrows Community Theater at St. Patrick's School Auditorium (401 97th St. at Fourth Avenue in Bay Ridge, [www.narrowscommunitytheater.com](http://www.narrowscommunitytheater.com)). March 2-3 and 9-10 at 8 pm; March 4 and 11 at 2 pm. \$25 (\$20 seniors and students under 21; \$15 kids under 12).

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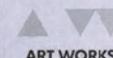
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Photos by Rosalie O'Connor; Stars and Stripes choreography by George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust



# PUSH FOR 'CHILD VICTIMS ACT'

## Locals call on to Golden support state bill protecting sex crime victims



**RALLYING FOR RIGHTS:** Child sex abuse survivor and founding member of New Yorkers Against Hidden Predators Steve Jamirez condemned state Sen. Marty Golden for opposing the Child Victims Act, especially in an era of heightened awareness around sexual abuse and harassment.

**BY JULIANNE MCSHANE**  
 Protesters rallied outside the office of Bay Ridge's state senator on Feb. 26, calling for him to support the more-than-decade-old Child Victims Act, which would extend the statute of limitations to allow for survivors of child sex abuse to come forward with their claims as adults.

One of the survivors protesting at the Fifth Avenue office of state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge) said Golden's continued opposition to a bill combatting sexual abuse is particularly egregious on the heels of the national #MeToo movement.

"As the rest of America continues to decry sexual abuse and harassment, Golden remains firmly planted on the wrong side of history, allowing hidden predators to continue inflicting pain and damage on our communities," said Steve Jimenez, a founding member of New Yorkers Against Hidden Predators, which organized the demonstration. "The inaction of him and his Republican colleagues in the Senate is a disgrace, and New Yorkers are making it known they have had enough."

Current law prevents sex-abuse survivors from

pursuing civil cases after they turn 23, and accusers in cases against public institutions have just 90 days to begin filing a lawsuit. The Child Victims Act would extend the statute of limitations to age 50 in civil cases, and to age 28 in criminal cases.

Last spring, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman called for state lawmakers to allow a floor vote on the legislation, pointing out that New York is one of only four states — along with Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi — that restricts child sex abuse survivors from pursuing legal action via statutes of limitation.

But Golden said at the time he didn't see an "impetus" to pass the bill last year.

The bill is currently stalled in the Senate Judiciary Committee and still has no floor vote scheduled — a fact protesters in Albany decried the day the legislature returned from its mid-winter break on Feb. 27, complaining that Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan wasn't allowing the bill to come to the floor.

But Cuomo included it in his 2018 executive budget proposal last month, and a recent Quinnipiac poll shows that New York state

voters overwhelmingly support it by 90-6 percent.

Another founding member of New Yorkers Against Hidden Predators said at the Monday protest that the state's current child sex abuse laws prioritize and protect abusers over accusers, and that the state Senate should bring the Child Victims Act to a vote.

"The Child Victims Act will break the hidden culture of abuse that plagues our communities, while also giving victims their day in court," said Marci Hamilton. "The state Senate should follow Gov. Cuomo's lead in embracing the importance of this bill and putting it up for a vote."

Another survivor at the protest said that Golden and any other senator who stands in the way of the bill are ignoring survivors' rights.

"Any senator who refuses to support the Child Victims Act has total disregard for a victim's right to seek justice," said Kathryn Robb. "Survivors have been silenced for decades, but we have seen an unprecedented wave of support and encouragement in the past year that gives us hope this long overdue bill will be passed once and for all."

A spokesman for Golden pointed to legislation that the state senator has previously supported, including bills to restrict the definition of statutory consent for sexual relations on college campuses, criminalize computer sex crimes, and prohibit registered sex offenders from working with kids. He added that Golden wants to punish predators and support survivors, but implied that Golden does not think the Child Victims Act is the best way to do so.

"This is an important and serious issue, and the members of the New York State Senate, including Sen. Golden, are committed to doing even more to punish dangerous sexual predators and protect the children of New York," said James McClelland.

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## HOSPITAL

*Continued from page 1*

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The construction is part of a \$923 million Federal Emergency Management Agency aid commitment that was first announced back in 2014. The funds will go to constructing a new critical services building that will house a brand new emergency department, as well as X-ray, computerized axial tomography, magnetic-resonance imaging, pharmacy, and lab services. The money also reimburses Coney Island Hospital for repairs it made after the storm, which heavily damaged its facilities. The grant will also fund a massive, 1,720-foot flood wall surrounding the hospital campus to protect it from future superstorms.

The new tower will be 10 stories and 206 feet tall, according to the Department of Buildings. The actual work on the building is slated to begin in late 2018, according to a spokesman for NYC Health + Hospitals.

Coney Island Hospital has been making a series of changes since early 2017. At that time, the hospital started a complete revamp of its emergency care protocols — reducing the wait time with a new triage system, expanding their night and weekend hours, and equipping their staff with iPads and other new technology.

Scavo said that although she welcomes the new emergency department, she'd like to see the hospital become a trauma center, so people don't need to travel to hospitals elsewhere in the borough for severe injuries sustained in major car

crashes, fires and the like. Christopher D. Greif, who advocates for the disabled in Southern Brooklyn, said he agrees on the need for a trauma center there.

“There are a lot of patients on Coney Island, Sheepshead Bay,” he said. “It would be easier to get there faster.”

The new building will be the latest tall structure to go up in the area, and not everyone is happy about it.

Martin Gangursky, from Brighton Beach, said he is a fan of the hospital, where he has been a patient before, but opposes the new building and all structures of that height going up, complaining that such towers block the sunshine in the formerly low-rise neighborhood.

“Many people come here because of the sun,” he said. “We got enough big buildings as is.”

## MAYOR

*Continued from page 2*

department said officials would review the letter. And reps from Speedway and the transportation agency met on Feb. 20 and are in the process of developing a joint-design plan, according to a Speedway spokeswoman, who did not respond to a follow-up inquiry about whether or not there would be a chance for public comment on that plan.

Spatola and local parents recently called community input after they alleged the transportation agency was keeping them in the dark on its plans for the site. A spokeswoman from the Department of Transportation promised that the agency would share more updates and details after schools' re-

opened on Feb. 26 following their midwinter recess.

Neither Spatola nor the mayor's office returned calls for comment.

Parents have slammed the city for punting the more-than-decade-old problem of the dangerous station from one agency to the next. The police department added additional plastic sidewalk barriers — with taped-on fliers reminding drivers to stay off the sidewalk — towards the end of January, but parents said the barriers are too flimsy, and that they saw cars crash into and drag them.

And Spatola insisted the city should add “school zone” signs in a two-block radius around the learning house, extend the crossing guard's hours from 3:30 to 6:30 pm to accommodate students in after-school programs, and add a sec-

ond crossing guard on 31st Street.

The parent who led the charge drawing attention to the station's problems said she is eagerly awaiting the mayor's response and glad that local pols are stepping up, but added that she hopes the problem-solvers would keep the parents who initially pushed for change up-to-date.

“I'm encouraged by all of the local elected officials who are working to solve this life-or-death crisis,” said Arsenia Reilly-Collins, who started an online petition calling for temporary solutions and a meeting with the transportation department, which has garnered more than 400 signatures. “I just wish that the parents were kept in the loop as partners. We feel shut out from the process.”

## BRIDGE

*Continued from page 12*

signing and building things, and New York City is my favorite city in the world,” said Shinn, who once modeled for companies including underwear-maker Me Undies and formalwear retailer Suit Supply. “I was think-

ing about all the people and businesses that would be affected by the shutdown. I think this bridge absolutely is going to be feasible. My hope is that it would help a lot of people.”

And Shinn isn't the only person to float unconventional alternative-transportation solutions for strap-hangers who will soon be

booted from the L train. Last year, some transit-minded locals renewed their push to create an aerial gondola connecting Brooklyn and Manhattan called the East River Skyway after the proposal received support from pols including Williamsburg's Councilman Stephen Levin and Assemblyman Joseph Lentol.

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