

Déjà vu

Ridge seniors face another threat of early ouster

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

They're ousting the oldsters early — again!

Catholic Charities is forcing the seniors of the beleaguered Narrows Center out of Dyker Heights' Angel Guardian building nearly three weeks before the June move-out date the seniors secured from the Sisters of Mercy, a rep from the charity told the oldsters when he visited the center just two weeks after they successfully protested an earlier plan to kick them out before the center's lease runs out.

The seniors and their supporters now plan to protest the early move for a second time at 1 pm on March 23, on 63rd Street between 12th and 13th avenues, after a snowstorm forced them to postpone their original date of March 8.

"We're not happy," said center stalwart Stella Varriale. "I believe we should stay because we were told we could stay until June."

Catholic Charities' chief executive officer, Monsignor Alfred

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ALL THE YOUNG DUDES: The exhibit "David Bowie is" at the Brooklyn Museum includes photos and artwork from throughout the artist's career, including this image from 1973.

Masayoshi Sukita

THE ARTIST IS THE ART

Museum welcomes Bowie exhibit

BY ADAM LUCENTE

The Starman has touched down in Brooklyn!

After a five-year world tour, the "David Bowie is" exhibit has made its final landing at the Brooklyn Museum. The enormous exhibition displays more than 300 artifacts from the late rock icon's five-decade career, including his instruments, costumes, writings and more. "David Bowie is" got its title because the polymorphous singer, actor, and artist David Bowie is so many things, said the curator of the London museum that initiated the project.

"It's a statement and an unfinished sentence because it can't be finished," said Victoria Broackes, of the Victoria and Albert Museum. "It's an answer in which everybody brings their own."

"David Bowie is" shows off a treasure trove from the Starman's personal archive, including original costumes, handwritten music, set designs, photos, and album artwork. Once you en-

ter the exhibit, on the Museum's fifth floor, you immediately see Bowie's name lit up in bright, white lights. Many of the signs, placards, and images throughout the exhibit are orange, a steady theme throughout Bowie's long career, said the Museum's chief designer.

"Throughout Bowie's album covers, one color stands out more than others: orange," said Matthew Yokobosky, pointing to the orange lightning bolt painted on Bowie's face for the "Aladdin Sane" album cover.

Each section covers a different era of Bowie's career, with a different attempt to complete the title: Next to a collection of this stage costumes, a sign reads "David Bowie is making himself up." Another, beside a series of photos, reads "David Bowie is floating in a most peculiar way."

Some of the coolest artifacts in the collection are a banjo that Bowie played on the BBC in 1981, the Union Jack coat he wore on

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CB15 light blight

BY ADAM LUCENTE

Manhattan Beachers told the city to stick those solar panels where the sun don't shine!

Community Board 15 threw shade on a plan by the city to place solar panels in the Manhattan Beach parking lot, arguing that the canopy would be a

blight on the tranquil, seaside neighborhood.

"Open space is a rare and precious commodity in New York City," said board member Samantha Cierra at the Feb. 27 meeting. "There is no way this structure will not be an intrusion on nature and a

Continued on page 10



AIN'T THAT A KICK IN THE HEAD: You won't see this this year.

AP / Kathleen Malone Van Dyke

Cosmos cancel season

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

Call it a foul season.

The New York Cosmos and the league it competes in, the North American Soccer League, cancelled its 2018 season after the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled on Feb. 23 to boot the league from the division it

has played in for the past five seasons, the league announced on Feb. 27.

A club spokesman told this paper last year that the Cosmos would cease to exist if it was forced to play in a lower league, but said on Feb. 28 that the team would not be permanently

shut down, and that the league would instead field a "B team" in the National Premier Soccer League, which has no official designation from the U.S. Soccer Federation, the sport's national governing body. Two other North American

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Making a 'mark

Pols send Angel Guardian worries to city

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

Local pols penned a joint letter to the city Landmarks Preservation Commission on March 1, begging the preservationists to landmark the Angel Guardian home in Dyker Heights in order to save it from demolition at the hands of its mystery buyer.

Public Advocate Letitia James, state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge), state Sen. Simcha Felder (D-Midwood), Assemblyman Peter Abbate (D-Bensonhurst), Councilman Carlos Menchaca (D-Sunset Park), and Councilman Justin Brannan (D-Bay Ridge) wrote that the property's four Beaux-Arts buildings between 63rd and 64th streets, bound by 12th and 13th avenues, are historically and architecturally significant structures that they worry the buyer will bulldoze if they're not landmarked in time.

"We fear that the change in ownership is a direct threat to losing this complex, which has been an important part of our neighborhood for over a century," the pols wrote. "Landmarking will ensure that these historically significant, beautiful structures will remain in Dyker Heights for future generations to enjoy."

City records show the Sisters of Mercy built the structures — administration, nursery, reception, and laundry buildings — in 1899. The pols wrote that the buildings are a mainstay in the rapidly changing neighborhood, and that this was all the more reason they should stay standing.

"Dyker Heights' building stock is being eroded away and has faced alterations over several generations, but the Angel Guardian complex has remained intact," the pols wrote. "This is the most remarkable collection of buildings in the neighborhood." Members of the Guard-



MARK IT: The Landmarks Preservation Commission must designate the Angel Guardian home as a historic landmark before its mystery buyer can bulldoze it, officials demanded.

File photo by Georgine Benvenuto

ians of the Guardian — a civic group calling for the nuns to choose a developer who would put affordable senior housing in the space — submitted to the landmarks commission a request to evaluate the property on Jan. 3, according to a landmarks rep. And the 28 members of Community Board 10 unanimously voted to support the Guardians' request at its Feb. 26 board meeting.

The request for evaluation does not require support from the community board or local elected officials for the commission to move forward with the process, according to a landmarks rep, who added that there's no guarantee that the buildings will even be considered for designation.

The rep said that a preliminary evaluation the commission conducted after receiving the initial request found that the main building might be a candidate for landmarking, and the subsequent support for the designation has led the panel to start the further research needed to begin the formal landmarking process.

"When LPC received a request to evaluate the Angel Guardian Home earlier this year, we assessed the site and determined that the main building may merit consideration as a potential landmark, but further study was needed," the rep said in an e-mail.

"Since then, LPC has received more letters regarding this property and the agency is commencing the additional research."

But that's still no guarantee that the building will ultimately be considered for landmarking, the rep said. If the commission did choose to start the official landmarking process, it would kick off with a public meeting, but the agency rep couldn't provide any timeline on the soonest that could start or how long the process would conceivably take.

The landmarks' agency's plodding and unpredictable process is the exact reason that locals should focus on making Mayor DeBlasio care about the property, a rep from the Historic Districts Council — a private citywide historic preservation organization — told locals at the community board's Zoning and Land Use Committee meeting on Feb. 15. In particular, she urged Councilman Justin Brannan (D-Bay Ridge) — who worked for the Department of Education under the mayor and even had Hizzoner speak at his January inauguration — to convey how much the property apparently means to him and other locals and appeal to the mayor to pressure the landmarks agency to save it.

"The best way to get this landmarked is to get
Continued on page 10

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MEMBER FDIC

Art is splendor on the grass

BY JULIANNE CUBA

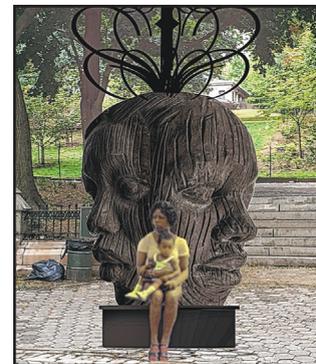
They're the new faces of Fort Greene Park!

A massive sculpture featuring three carved visages will soon greet visitors to Fort Greene's eponymous meadow, the Department of Parks and recreation announced on Wednesday.

The green-space agency handed \$10,000 to local artist Tanda Francis — who created a larger-than-life memorial for borough son and hip-hop legend Biggie Smalls in 2016 — to make her 14-and-a-half-foot piece, "Adorn Me," which combines elements of traditional African sculpture with references to Victorian- and colonial-era dress, and will serve as a new monument to black culture in the nabe when it is installed this summer, according to the artist.

"I'm using the overall form of a large African head and incorporating contrasting elements of adornment — themes of skin scarification practiced in West African cultures, and decorative elements seen in Victorian ornamentation," said Francis, who lives in Park Slope. "I seek to address the demographic of people of African descent who are often underrepresented in public art, especially in terms of the current historic artwork featured in and around Fort Greene Park."

Francis, who used to live in Clinton Hill, said she wanted to create a powerful and positive image for the African American community in Fort Greene, which transformed from a once mainly working-class, low-income neighborhood into a largely



COMING SOON: The city tapped local artist Tanda Francis to erect her sculpture, Adorn Me, in Fort Greene Park in June.

Parks Department

affluent, white-collar community.

"Being an African-American woman working, speaking my voice, is something I don't see often in the public space," she said. "The work I'm producing is a positive representation of people from African descent."

The sculpture will stand in a to-be-determined spot inside the green space from this June through next May, and its authentic representation of African culture is a remedy to the recent controversy surrounding some culturally insensitive monuments throughout the city, according to the Parks Department.

Francis is one of 10 artists who received grant money from clothing retailer Uniqlo to create artworks that will be installed in a handful of city meadows, including Bedford-Stuyvesant's Herbert Von King Park, which local artist Roberto Visani will adorn with his own original piece, according to the agency.



WHAT AN EVOLUTION!: Workers are nearly done fixing up the (below) once-gaping hole in the Bergen Street train station.

Community News Group / Julianne Cuba

MEND THE GAP

Chasm plaguing Boerum Hill subway station fixed

BY JULIANNE CUBA

It's a hole new day!

Transit workers are patching up a once-gaping chasm in a wall of Boerum Hill's Bergen Street station that nauseated commuters for weeks while putrid odors wafted from it before a miniature glacier formed inside the gap.

The tiny iceberg's natural splendor mesmerized some straphangers, but the shiny new tiles now covering the hole are a far more appealing sight for riders of the beleaguered subway system, according to the man whose nose first sniffed out the rank rupture.

"I'm glad that straphangers are finally able to have a normal, clean platform while waiting for their delayed train," said Park Sloper Marcus Baram. "I don't know why it took so long."

Baram first whiffed the foul odor emanating from the cavity in a wall along the station's Manhat-



PATCHED: Straphangers first noticed the stench-emitting chasm in early December.

Marcus Baram

tan-bound F- and G-train platform in early December, and within weeks, frigid temperatures and a furious winter storm froze ice in place within it.

Transit leaders pledged to repair the leak they said caused the chasm to form, but first had to find the source of the slit.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority workers in late January slapped a wooden plank over the crater — concealing its unknown contents and smells — and three hard hats were on site last week busily replacing the cracked and dirty tiles surrounding the gap with new gleaming ones after scrubbing the rest of the area clean.

Authority leaders believe wet stuff that oozed up from down below created the rupture, and said employees are still putting finishing touches on the good-as-new wall.

"The source of the leak is believed to be groundwater intrusion," said an agency spokeswoman. "The work is ongoing."

And if it weren't for Baram's sensitive sense of smell, straphangers might still be bedeviled by the mysterious hole.

"We get results," he said. "I'm glad it worked out."

Irish band headlines Ridge St. Patrick's Day Parade benefit

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

They rocked out for a good cause.

The Canny Brothers Band filled Bay Ridge's Leif Bar on Fifth Avenue with music and high spirits on Feb. 25 to benefit

the nabe's St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, which raises money for the annual event. The sextet's singer and guitarist said the event — which raised \$1,500 for the parade, according to

committee rep Denise Frederick — was a resounding success.

"It was a good event, great turnout," said Keith Fallon. "It was a great day, we had a lot of fun, a lot of good music."

The 12-year-old group played classic Irish tunes from the Wolfe Tones and the Pogues, according to bandmate and Ridgite Mike Canny, who started the band with his brothers Steve and Tom, and rel-

ished the chance to support the parade.

"We were thrilled to be a part of it," Canny said.

The parade is set for March 25, and will feature floats, 20 pipe and drum bands, and march-

ing bands from local high schools, including Fort Hamilton and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, according to president of the organizing committee Linda Gallagher-Lo-manto.

That's not kosher!

PS 312 sued by Orthodox employee for discrimination

BY ADAM LUCENTE

An employee at PS 312 in Bergen Beach is suing the city and her school's principal, alleging a litany of discriminatory actions targeting her Orthodox Jewish beliefs.

Ilene Klass, an occupational therapist at the school, says that since showing up late one spring day following a Jewish holiday, she has been mistreated by the school in apparent retaliation over her religious commitments.

"She was subjected to continuous bullying, harassment, religious discrimination, and retaliation from her employers or their agents due to the fact that she is an Orthodox Jew," argues her lawyer, Joseph Aron, in the lawsuit filed on Dec. 23 last year.

Klass has worked at PS 312 as an occupational therapist for around 10 years, and is still at the school, where she is the only Orthodox Jewish employee. She had an exemplary record until the con-

flict arose with principal Sungmin Yoo last year, according to the lawsuit.

Both Yoo and the city's Department of Education declined to comment for this article.

The problems for Klass began in February 2017, when she asked Yoo for the day off on April 19, which was the day after the Jewish holiday of Passover. There were no classes the previous day due to the school's spring break. Klass asked for the day off because she was returning from Florida where her ailing father lives, and Orthodox tradition forbids flying on the last day of Passover, which was April 18. Yoo declined her request, according to the lawsuit, and when Klass said the earliest she could arrive would be two hours late on April 19, Yoo allegedly responded "better to come late than not to come at all," and Klass told Yoo she would be late, the lawsuit states.

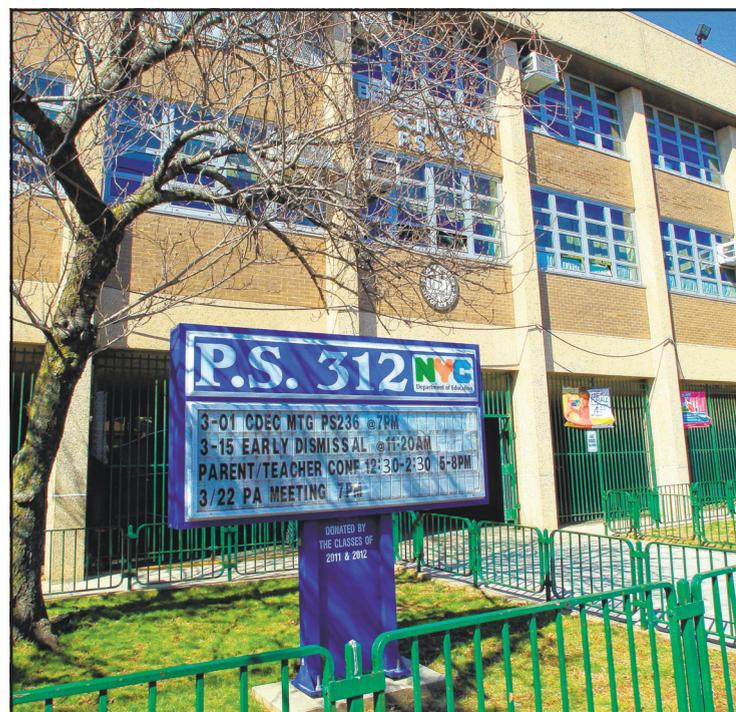
However, Yoo then wrote up Klass for "professional miscon-

duct and insubordination, due to the lateness," according to the suit. Klass argues that she was singled out for being an Orthodox Jew, since other employees were allegedly allowed the day off.

"Ms. Yoo allowed other employees to take off on April 19, 2017. Those employees were not Orthodox Jews," she alleges in the suit.

The suit contends that the lateness penalty demonstrated religious discrimination, because other employees who were late did not receive the same punishment. Yoo allegedly said that she opposed granting the day off because the city frowns upon employees not working the days before and after holidays, but Klass believes she was singled out over this, according to her lawsuit.

"This standard apparently only applies to Orthodox Jews, as others in the same school were granted the day off," she argues in court filings.



TROUBLE AT SCHOOL: An occupational therapist at PS 312 in Bergen Beach is suing the city and the school's principal over alleged discrimination towards her Orthodox Jewish beliefs. Photo by Steve Solomonsen

Klass alleges a series of other discriminatory measures then followed. Around May of 2017, Yoo changed Klass's Friday hours to 3:25 pm. Klass could not work until then in the winter due to time's proximity to sundown, when the

Jewish Sabbath begins. "This schedule was specifically made for Plaintiff in order to frustrate her Shabbos observance," the lawsuit alleges, adding that Yoo threatened her with *Continued on page 10*

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State signals support for faster BQE fix

BY JULIANNE CUBA

Now it's getting somewhere!

The streamlined design-build process is integral to the city's repairs to a crumbling portion of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, according to Gov. Cuomo, who this week signaled his support for the process that would fast-track the fix — months after local pols and residents began demanding he authorize the procedure in his budget so city transit honchos aren't forced to send the thousands of big-rigs that travel the road daily down local streets instead.

"The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway is a very big construction project. The city planning to move traffic throughout the construction period is by definition problematic," Cuomo said on Tuesday during an unrelated conference call with reporters about the next day's snowstorm. "Down-

town Brooklyn is already congested, so design-build for the BQE I think is essential. Even with design-build it's going to be a real problem in terms of traffic."

The governor has long maintained his general support for the process that state law requires his authorization for local governments to use, which would request one bid for the expressway makeover's design and construction instead of hiring unique contractors for each phase. He green-lit it for several state-run projects, including the construction of the recently built Kosciuszko Bridge and a new span that will bear the Cuomo name.

But he's repeatedly left advocates hanging when asked specifically whether he'll allow the Department of Transportation to use design-build in its reconstruction of the expressway's decaying triple cantilever. And Cuomo failed to autho-



IN FAVOR: Gov. Cuomo this week said the streamlined process of design-build is "essential" to the city-led repair of a portion of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, to the delight of state and local lawmakers who rallied for the procedure last month. CNG / Julianne Cuba

rize the procedure in both his first and revised drafts of the state budget, so his statement indicates he is moving in the right direction as his April 1 deadline to sign-off on a final budget looms, according to a Brooklyn Heights lawmaker in favor of the process.

"What's different is that this is more direct, and it's

about doing it in the context of the city and some of its priority projects," said Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon. "The governor is signaling that he will fight for this."

Before the call on which Cuomo recognized how design-build could help the expressway's repair, his staffer Alphonso David penned a Feb. 25 letter to Council Speaker Corey Johnson (D-Manhattan) that urged city officials to seek approval for the process in specific cases — including the road's rehab and other projects such as closing the jails on Rikers Island and replacing them with new facilities throughout the five boroughs, and making much-needed renovations to the city's public-housing complexes, according to the New York Daily News, which first reported on Cuomo's support.

But design-build advocates said they aren't tak-

ing a victory lap until the governor officially approves a final budget that authorizes using the procedure to fix the expressway, a permission that will cut about \$113 million from the job's current \$1.9-billion price tag, and accelerate the reconstruction of the 1.5-mile stretch of the road between Atlantic Avenue and Sands Street by at least two years, supporters say.

"Of course I'm worried," Simon said. "I'm not going to rest until it's done."

Members of both houses in Albany are now writing each chamber's own budget, which are due by the end of next week and together will be used to create the final version that must be approved by early April, according to Simon and another Brooklyn Heights state pol, who in a joint statement applauded Cuomo and pledged not to give up their fight for design-build as the budget-ap-

proval process continues.

"We thank Gov. Cuomo for his essential support for design-build for the BQE, and we look forward to working with him and with our colleagues in the Senate and the Assembly to ensure that legislation authorizing design-build for this project is enacted later this month in the final budget," said state Sen. Brian Kavanagh.

The governor's public support for the streamlined process followed a Feb. 27 meeting where Transportation Department bigwigs presented a draft of their expressway-repair plan, which locals have until March 12 to submit comment on by e-mail or snail mail.

Check out the city's proposed work for the repair at www.bqe-i278.com/en. E-mail feedback to info@bqe-i278.com, or mail it to BQE Project Team, 605 Third Ave., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10158. All comments due by March 12.



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A CIVIL ACTION

Ridge lawyer, history buff boats mini Civil War museum

BY JULIANNE MCSHANE

He's Brooklyn's attorney general!

A Bay Ridge attorney and Civil War buff commands a collection of more than 10,000 miniature military figurines poised in the midst of famous battles — and even showcases about 4,000 of them at his Fifth Avenue law firm, Connors and Sullivan, between Bay Ridge Parkway and 74th Street. Michael Connors said his interest in collecting soldiers began when he was a child, and it revived when he had his own son.

“When I was a kid, I was always interested in toy soldiers,” said the attorney. “And then for my son’s third birthday, we gave him a set, and I said, ‘I didn’t know they still made these.’ So I got on the Internet and started collecting.”

The 22-year-old collection — which he estimates to be worth \$300,000 — is distributed throughout his Ridge home and his firm’s four other offices on the distant isles of Manhattan and Staten Island and the faraway borough of Queens, said Connors, who’s also the president of an organization full of like-minded history buffs, the Civil War Roundtable of New York.

Many of the soldiers are arranged to depict specific battles, including the bloody 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg in Virginia, the 1863 Battle of Newton’s Station in Mississippi during the Union-led Grierson’s Raid, and the Battle of Chancellorsville in Virginia, which led to the



WAR GAMES: Attorney and Civil War enthusiast Michael Connors poses with his Irish Brigade display inside his Fifth Avenue law firm.

Photo by Tom Hilton

death of Confederate commander Stonewall Jackson. He even has an 800-figure set depicting Pickett’s Charge, which won the seminal 1863 Battle of Gettysburg for the Union.

The history maven also has a few rare sets, including the war’s first African-American regiment organized by the Union, the 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Plus, the born-and-bred Ridgite pays homage to his home borough with his collection depicting the 14th Regiment of Brooklyn, which consisted of mostly borough abolitionists who volunteered at the behest of President Lincoln when the four-year war kicked

off in 1861.

Connors sources the metal, plastic, and resin miniatures — which run from \$10 to \$100 per figure — from China, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam, he said, adding that he sometimes has to send unpainted figurines to be touched up by Sri Lankan experts.

His collection of miniatures of the Union’s Irish Brigade mid-charge is on display in his law firm’s Fifth Avenue storefront window for all to see, and he’s shown his collection to a local Cub Scouts troop and the Bay Ridge Historical Society. But he added that he’s willing to open his doors to any interested readers and history buffs

who want to see the miniatures up close.

“Anybody can come in and walk around and look at it,” he said.

He plans to continue collecting “until my wife starts throwing it away,” he said, and has even passed on his passion to his son, who maintains his own small collection of about 100 military miniatures.

Connors said he’s also interested in the 1836 Battle of the Alamo — along with many other moments in military history — but he has to draw the line somewhere.

“I like history, period,” he said. “But you can’t collect everything.”



IN STYLE: Many of Bowie’s famed outfits are on display at the exhibit.

Photo by Jason Speakman

BOWIE

Continued from page 1

the cover of his “Earthling” album, stage costumes from the “Ziggy Stardust” tour, and the handwritten sheet music for the guitar and violin parts to “Space Oddity.”

The Brooklyn Museum version of the show also features some objects not included at its previous stops, including lyrics and set lists.

And the exhibit is more than a visual tour of Bowie’s career — each visitor gets a pair of headphones that plays Bowie’s music hits and snippets from his interviews, with the audio changing depending on where you are in the room. For example, when you approach the slightly worn, yellowing sheet music for “Space Oddity,” you suddenly hear “Ground control to Major Tom” in your ear, followed by the rest of the song.

The passage through Bowie’s life ends in a dark room, with footage of him performing on an enormous screen. It is as captivating visually as it is sonically.

Bowie supported the dual audio and visual approach, according to Broackes.

“He wanted sound and vision to be as much a part of the story as photos and costumes,” she said.

Tickets to the exhibit start at \$20, and are scheduled to allow entry every 15 minutes throughout the day. Based on pre-sales, “David Bowie is” is already the Brooklyn Museum’s most successful exhibit, according to a spokeswoman.

“Advance sales for ‘David Bowie is’ have been the most successful to date compared to any exhibition presented at the Brooklyn Museum. A few days prior to opening, the Brooklyn Museum sold over 20,000 tickets,” said Fatima Jones Kafele.

The exhibit’s journey from London to Brooklyn echoes Bowie’s life and artistry, said those who worked on the show.

“He expressed his wish that it would open in London and close in New York,” said Brooklyn Museum director Anne Pasternak. “It followed the arc of his career.”

“David Bowie is” at Brooklyn Museum (200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights, (718) 638-5000, www.brooklynmuseum.org). On display through July 25. \$20-\$25. (VIP \$35-\$2,500).



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Citi Bike faces uphill battle

Citi Bike struggles to restock Bklyn docks in elevated naves, exec says

BY COLIN MIXSON

It's all downhill from these neighborhoods.

Citi Bike users in some hilly parts of Brooklyn are pedaling their rented two-wheelers downhill, but not back up again, according to a honcho of the program, who said riders frequently fail to re-dock bikes at stations in Prospect and Crown Heights because they're located on higher ground.

"There's higher elevation in those areas and, not surprisingly, bikes tend to go downhill," said Colin Waldoch, who manages programs for the Citibank-sponsored rental service and lives in Prospect Heights.

Although neither neighborhood boasts the borough's highest peak — that honor belongs to Greenwood Cemetery's 194-foot-tall Battle Hill — the



BRING 'EM BACK!: Citi Bike honchos are offering extra perks to the rental service's members who enroll in a program to help return bikes to certain docking stations in Prospect and Crown Heights.

stretch of Eastern Parkway that cuts through Prospect and Crown Heights, at 164 feet, towers over other lowland naves such as Downtown and Dumbo that local cyclists commute on the road to get to, according to

topographic maps.

And the incline — coupled with riders' tendency to use Citi Bikes in the morning on their way to work, but switch to other forms of public transportation for their evening commutes — makes it harder for the service to refill docking stations in the residential neighborhoods where it last year debuted plans to install roughly 400 new bicycles, Waldoch said.

"In general, we see there is more commuting in the morning than in the evening," he said.

But Citi Bike bigwigs recently announced an initiative to supplement the rental service's in-house bicycle-restocking operation in the area, in which it offers members who join its Bike Angels corps — who earn points towards membership renewals by ferrying two-

wheelers to understocked docks — extra incentives to return the rides to locations in Prospect and Crown Heights.

The special program, entitled Operation Edge Explorers, gives participants until March 16 to earn up to five times the amount of points they normally would for dropping off bikes at empty docks in the naves, Waldoch said.

"We saw this as an area that can be challenging because of those factors," he said. "It's neat to harness the power of those incentives, and the power of Bike Angels to help us in these more difficult areas."

Anyone interested in joining the Operation Edge Explorers initiative must first purchase an annual Citi Bike membership and enroll in the free Bike Angels program at bikeangels.citibikenyc.com.



Photo by Steve Solomonson

Pining for more

Cub Scouts raced small, homemade, wooden cars down a plastic track at the Pinewood Derby at the Kings Plaza Shopping Center on March 3. Racing the handmade cars at the scouting event teaches the kids the value of building something yourself, according to one of the cubmasters.

"The goal is to give them ownership. It's easy to go to the store and buy something," said Michael Moscol, the cubmaster of Pack 16 on Coney Island. "They must plan ahead and learn what types of tools to use. The goal is to do your best."

The annual Pinewood Derby is an event for Cub Scouts in grades one through five, who are given a block of wood, nails, and four wheels, and must fashion a car out of all this within a strict set of regulations.

— Adam Lucente

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Inn-ch by inch

Bossert Hotel's return further delayed

BY JULIANNE CUBA

This old inn's rooms are still being serviced.

The developers restoring the swanky Bossert Hotel yet again postponed its long-awaited reopening, pushing the luxe Brooklyn Heights lodge's debut to some time this summer while they secure a new operator after their previous candidate packed its bags.

Hotelier Fèn Hotels — which runs the Dazzler Brooklyn in America's Downtown and a handful of other U.S. properties, along with dozens of inns across Latin America — is no longer setting up shop inside the Montague Street property, according to a rep for one of its new owners, who couldn't elaborate on what firms may take its place or when another will be chosen.

"We're in the process of picking one," said Stephen Allen, the man managing the makeover under developer David Bistricher of Clipper Equity, who co-owns the property with real-estate bigwig Joseph Chetrit. "We're kind of in

the middle of negotiations so I can't really speak to that right now."

And modernizing the hotel built in 1909 — which sits near Hicks Street, within the Landmarks Preservation Commission-protected Brooklyn Heights Historic District — while preserving its historic feel is simply more time-consuming than anticipated, Allen said, necessitating a new debut date nearly five years after its owners first expected to welcome guests.

"The restoration of the hotel's architectural grandeur has proved to be a tremendous amount of work," said Allen. "All the new technology is designed to be hidden, and if it's not hidden it has to complement the elegant details. It's just taking longer to do things than management expected."

Bistricher and Chetrit in 2012 purchased the 280-room Bossert from the Jehovah's Witnesses, which once used the Italian Renaissance-style hotel to house its members, and promised to fin-

ish restoring the inn's pair of grand ballrooms, chandelier-covered lobby, and rooftop restaurant to their former glory by the next year.

But work delays postponed that reopening — along with subsequent ones slated for October 2016, which was nixed in part due to out-of-commission elevators, and September 2017, leaving locals to wonder what's taking so long.

The president of civic group the Brooklyn Heights Association told a crowd of curious residents at the organization's Wednesday meeting that the latest delay was due to a blaze inside the property, which she said developers most recently hoped to reopen last December before pushing its debut to this summer.

"Apparently there were some fires in the building that affected the timing of inspections and so things have been delayed," said Martha Bakos Dietz, relaying information she received from the head of the nabe's business-boost-



ALMOST READY TO CHECK INN: The Montague Street hotel won't open until this summer.

Photo by Caleb Caldwell

ing group, the Montague Street Business Improvement District.

But no flames tore through the hotel, according to Allen, who said tests of its alarm systems may have sparked the rumors. And a Fire Department spokesman confirmed that

none of New York's Bravest rushed to put out an inferno at the property in the last six months.

Contractors are fast at work on the finishing touches to the immaculate inn once known as Kings County's Waldorf-Astoria — where the Brook-

lyn Dodgers famously celebrated its 1955 World Series win — according to Allen, who said he hopes the latest setback is the renovation's last.

"Right now the hotel is nearly finished. I hope there won't be any further delays," he said.

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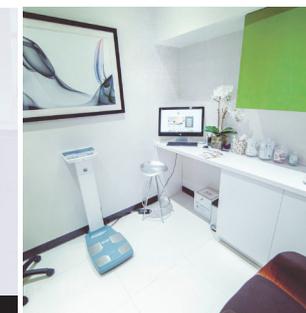
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SOLAR

Continued from page 1

contradiction to the purpose of providing green space and parks open to all people.”

The Department of Citywide Administrative Services said the city is working with the state New York Power Authority to identify parking lots across the city where solar canopies can be installed, and that the lot at Manhattan Beach is one of the options being considered, according to a department spokeswoman. Solar canopies are roof-like structures on posts that have solar panels on them.

CB15 chairwoman Theresa Scavo said she contacted the Parks Department after hearing rumors about the plans, and that the department told her the solar canopy would be a 19-foot structure that would not block the sight line.

But the panels discussed at the CB15 meeting were from a conceptual study, according to a spokeswoman for the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, who said there is currently no exact design for the structures.

“The city is in the earliest stages of planning,” said the spokeswoman. “No design has been created yet or formalized.”

Several residents addressed the



SUN BLIGHT: Community Board 15 shot down a city plan to install a “solar canopy” like this one in the Manhattan Beach parking lot, saying it would be an eyesore.

Associated Press / Al Behrman

board to voice their opposition to the solar panels. One called the proposed structure an “eyesore,” and said it would be better placed elsewhere, away from the corrosive sea air.

“We love solar, but it should be on roofs,” said Louise Albenda. “And these may need maintenance being so close to the salt water.”

Scavo added that the canopy could become a magnet for loiterers and people up to no good.

“It gives a location for shelter. It opens the door to more problems,” she said. “People looking to hangout, it gives them a roof.”

The board then voted unanimously at the meeting to write a letter to the city stating its opposition to the project.

CB15 sent the letter to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services on March 2, according to Scavo.

The Department of Citywide Administrative Services had not received the letter as of March 2, but said the community board’s views will be included in the feedback it seeks from people in the area after showing them a design, said the department spokeswoman.

KOSHER

Continued from page 4

civil and criminal penalties for not complying with the new hours.

Other allegations against the school and Yoo include stopping e-mail confirmations of requests for religious absences, putting a letter in Klass’s personnel file alleging misconduct, not allowing Klass to use personal time for religious observance as she had in the past, and scolding her for missing nine days in 2017, many of which were Jewish holidays, according to the suit.

The lawsuit specifies that Klass is suing over defamation regarding the misconduct charge, harassment at the workplace, religious discrimination, and other grievances.

Klass and Aron declined to comment beyond the contents of the lawsuit.

New York State law offers some protections to employees regarding religious holidays, including allowing them to observe holy days unless doing so would create “undue hardship,” according to the state attorney general’s website.

LANDMARK

Continued from page 2

Mr. DeBlasio to care about it,” said Kelly Carroll. “I am really hoping that our new Councilmember Justin Brannan, who has a direct ear to DeBlasio, can say, ‘This is really important, can you do us this one solid?’”

Neither the pols nor the Guardians specified what kind of landmarking status they sought for the building, but the commission rep said it would be eligible for consideration under the “individual landmark” designation, which applies to the exteriors of individual structures but could also include the property itself.

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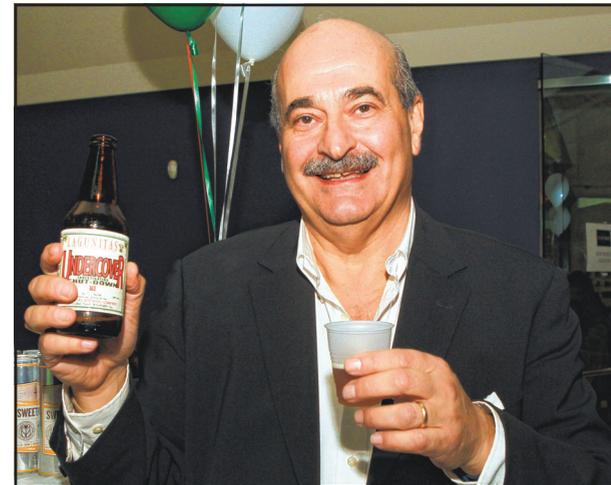
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HOME BREW: (Above) Maureen Demarinis drinks a beer from Sixpoint Brewery, located in Red Hook, at a beer tasting and buffet held at the course on March 2 to benefit the Guild for Exceptional Children, which supports families who have children with special needs. (Center) Jen Herusso and Tommy Hoefel enjoy Sam Adams at the event. (Right) Marine Park Golf Course general manager Stephen Fabrizio drinks merrily.

Photos by Steve Solomonson

Beer tasting to benefit disabled

BY ADAM LUCENTE

It's the yeast they could do!

Brooklynites turned out to taste some local brews at a fund-raiser on March 2 for the Guild for Exceptional Children, a group that supports local people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

In addition to raising money, the social event helped connect the organization's clients with others in the community, accord-

ing to the group's head.

"When people think of developmental disability, they don't think of the person, they think of the disability," said executive director Paul Cassone. "It was a chance to talk to our folks and help people see them as people."

The seventh-annual beer tasting and buffet took place at the Marine Park Golf Course. Attendees paid for entry, and then were able to sample a plethora of

beers provided by non-local and local breweries, including Sixpoint Brewery in Red Hook and Blue Point Brewing Company on Long Island. The brewers provided their beer as a way to show off their product and support the cause. All in all, the guild raised around \$15,000, and more than 100 supporters came out.

"I was thrilled," said Cassone, who was afraid the heavy snow and rain

that day would keep people from showing up. "I was very pleased with the way it turned out."

The Guild for Exceptional Children is a Bay Ridge group that supports the developmentally and intellectually disabled, and families raising disabled children, by providing vocational training, activities such as ceramics and gardening classes, therapy services, and more to their clients.

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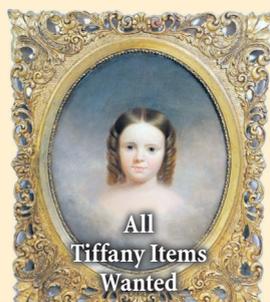
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SENIORS

Continued from page 1

LoPinto, visited the center on Feb. 16 and told the seniors they would have to move the center to the organization's Monsignor Joseph Stedman Residence in Borough Park by May 15 — nearly three weeks before the June 4 end of the center's lease.

The Sisters of Mercy had tried unsuccessfully to force the center out by early February, but backed down after the seniors rallied outside the Angel Guardian home on Feb. 2, promising the seniors that they could stay until their lease was up.

LoPinto also implied that Catholic Charities was speeding up the move to the new location on 53rd Street between Ninth Avenue and Fort Hamilton Parkway before the Sisters require it because out of legal convenience.

"We're going to try to be ahead of [the Sisters'] timeline and there are legal reasons why I must do that, because if I don't do that, there are documents that I would have to sign that I don't want to sign. They would put us under

certain legal constraints that I would prefer not to be under," he said.

A Catholic Charities rep would not elaborate on the nature of the documents and constraints the monsignor was so eager to avoid, but said LoPinto was happy that the seniors were coming forward to complain.

"He has nothing but great respect for the seniors and encourages them to continue publicly voicing their opinions and concerns," said Lucy Garrido-Mota.

The senior who organized the protests blasted LoPinto and the religious organization for distressing the seniors by walking back their promise that they could stay through June, suggesting they were probably rushing just to save a few weeks' rent.

"It's a disgrace what they're doing, these seniors are getting sick over it," said Pauline Castagna. "I think it's because they own the building where they're sending us. But June 4 is only two-and-a-half weeks more."

Councilman Justin Brannan (D-Bay Ridge) — who does not represent the district but has repeatedly publicly castigated

the nuns — also accompanied LoPinto to the center to talk to the seniors about the changing circumstances.

But the seniors said they weren't impressed with his appearance at the meeting, since the former firebrand didn't resist the early move-out date, but rather urged the seniors to accept it, retreating from his earlier pledges to fight for the seniors to stay.

"When [Brannan] came here, he took the priest's side. That turned the seniors off," Castagna said. "He's two-faced."

Brannan defended his support of the early move, citing his efforts to get the complex landmarked before it can be bulldozed, and make the senior center's transition to a new location go smoothly.

"I am doing everything I can to save the Angel Guardian Home and protect the Narrows Senior Center," he said.

"That includes signing on to a letter with the Guardians of the Guardian to see the Angel Guardian Home landmarked and to make sure the Narrows Senior Center has a viable back up plan if all else fails."

COSMOS

Continued from page 1

Soccer League teams — the Jacksonville Armada FC and Miami FC — will also have other squads play in the Premier League, which will begin its season on April 15.

"In years past, the B team has been more of a developmental squad for the main Cosmos team," said a spokesman for the team. "The players on the team have always been a mix of aspiring professionals and regular Cosmos players who were not getting enough playing time with the main club."

Last September, the U.S. Soccer Federation denied the North American Soccer League second-division status for the 2018 season, meaning that the Cosmos and the six other teams that play in that league would be forced to apply for third-division status,

which would bring with it fewer sponsors, lower salaries for the players and coaches, and a lower level of competition, according to a Cosmos spokesman.

Cosmos owner and Italian cable magnate Rocco Commisso vowed to fight the ruling, so the league — which was formed in 1967 — challenged the federation's decision in early November through the U.S. Court of Appeals. Soon after, a long list of local pols — including the borough's native son Sen. Chuck Schumer — sent letters to the governing body calling for it to keep the Cosmos alive, citing the hundreds of jobs the team brings to the Coney Island community.

The Cosmos joined the North American Soccer League in 1971 and became a team to watch four years later when the club signed Brazilian legend Pelé, who became the world's highest-paid ath-

lete at the time, according to Crain's. But 10 years later, the league crumbled, leaving the Cosmos non-existent until the league resurfaced in 2009 and the revived team rejoined it four years later.

Commisso bought the Cosmos last December after it reportedly sustained \$30 million in losses, and he promptly moved the club from its ill-fated Hofstra University home on Long Island to Coney Island's 7,000-seat MCU Park stadium.

The North American Soccer League's interim commissioner, Rishi Sehgal, said in a statement that the league will now focus on returning to the field for the 2019 season, and that it will also take certain members of the federation's board to court "for conflicts of interest and derelictions of duty which have harmed the NASL and countless other constituents in U.S. Soccer."

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