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Mail identity theft rampant

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Police are warning the greater Bay Ridge and Bensonhurst community about identity theft that took place last week involving stolen mail on Shore Road.

According to police, stolen mail can mean stolen credit cards, stolen checks and a whole host of other problems including identity theft.

Both the 62nd and 68th

precincts said they deal with about three to four identity theft cases each week.

"The problem has increased dramatically," said Sgt. Peter Moy of the 62nd Precinct, explaining that many of the credit card companies are at fault for being too lax.

"They want more customers so they send you fliers telling you that you're instantly approved," said Moy. "Then you dial an automated system and it's activated. It's too easy."

Once crooks are caught they

dump the card, go to another mailbox, grab another card and "boom they're in business again," said Moy.

No identity thefts have been reported in conjunction with the mail heist last week, but Moy said it could take months until a victim realizes their identity has been appropriated.

On Dec. 6, a man reported that mail had been stolen from an apartment building on 94th Street and Shore Road. The incident was captured on a video surveillance camera in the

building lobby and the postal police were notified.

The second heist occurred just across the street, on the same day, between 8 am and 10:50 am, police said.

The mail thieves allegedly entered the lobby and broke the lock of a panel of mailboxes containing mail for 80 apartments.

Moy said residents should exercise caution about giving out personal information over the telephone to unknown parties and noted that senior citizens were often targeted.

A common scam involves a caller claiming to be from a bank.

The caller will then try to elicit personal information

from the targeted victim, Moy explained.

Police advise that people take the following precautions:

- Be familiar with your neighbors so that they can look after your house and mailbox when you're not home.
- Run an annual credit report on yourself.
- Be wary of telemarketers or people claiming to be from a bank.
- Safeguard your credit cards.

For more information on identity theft, visit www.consumer.gov/idtheft on the Web. If you think you've been a victim of identity theft contact your local police precinct.

Cops honored for solving two crimes

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Police Officers Jamie Cafaro and Timothy Cox, were out cruising for bad guys on their routine mid-night anti-crime patrol on Nov. 7.

They soon found some. Thanks to swift police work, what started as an arrest for a stolen car led to the solving of a burglary case and earned both Cafaro and Cox the 68th Precinct Community Council's Cop of the Month award, presented to them Tuesday night at St. Philip's Episcopal Church.

At 2:20 am, the officers noticed two men in a Plymouth minivan pull up to an identical van at 63rd Street between 13th and 14th avenues. The suspects proceeded to exchange license plates on the

two cars. Noting the suspicious behavior, the officers called in the license plates and discovered that the minivan had been reported stolen in the Bronx three days prior.

Cafaro and Cox arrested the two men and as they did so noticed a Cablevision cable converter box in the backseat.

The next day, Cox called Cablevision and determined that the box had been stolen from a house on Third Street at Fourth Avenue in Park Slope.

The victims from the Park Slope burglary were called into the 68th Precinct where they identified not the suspects, but the coats they were wearing. Both suspects, were jewelry the victims' leather jackets and a piece of Tiffany jewelry they had swiped from the Park Slope apartment a

few days before.

Charges against the two men, one a 28-year-old from Borough Park and the other a 24-year-old from the Bronx, included grand larceny, burglary, possession of stolen property, and possession of burglary tools.

"This arrest is an example of great police work," said Deputy Inspector Matthew Pontillo, the commanding officer of the 68th Precinct. "They used their observation and investigation skills and were not content just to process an arrest."

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CENTER...

Continued from page 1
Center will serve the area's estimated 17,000 Chinese residents, a number that doubled in the past decade.

And while the staff is bilingual (fluent in both Mandarin and Cantonese), the center is equipped to serve the entire community.

The staff passed out blue umbrellas emblazoned with the health center's logo to the 100 or so community members, founders and elected officials who gathered in a room adjacent to the facility on 54th Street between Eighth and Ninth avenues during a heavy downpour on Dec. 4.

Despite a pending transit strike, the mayor made his way to Sunset Park to welcome the center, albeit a bit late.

"This community health center has a tremendous need to fill," Bloomberg said, noting the neighborhood's growing Chinese population and the estimated 34,000 Chinese residents in nearby Bensonhurst.

Stressing the importance of preventative care, Bloomberg said the staff would have the language skills and cultural understanding to win "the trust of the community to deal with issues of tobacco and nutrition." Later that day, the mayor announced an agreement between his administration and the City Council on his new tobacco initiative seeking to expand the city's smoking ban to almost all bars and restaurants.

The \$1.14 million health care facility was a joint effort of the Lutheran Medical Center and the Sunset Park Family Health Center Network and made possible through a grant and loan from the Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC), a nonprofit partnership of city, state, federal and private-sector funding available for projects that increase access to health care in the city's most under-served neighborhoods.

Operating at full capacity the center is expected to provide for more than 20,000 visits per year. Services will include family practice, podiatric, gynecological and dental care.

The center will also provide services for the Chinatown Health Partnership, a program started after 9-11 to provide care to workers who suffered the loss of family members, employment or business during the attacks.

Borough President Marty Markowitz, boasting that Brooklyn would soon have the largest Chinese population in America, also beamed that Brooklyn was blessed to have Lutheran Medical Center, which operates Lutheran Family Health Centers, the sponsor of the new center.

"When you have your health, you have it all," said the ever-ebullient Markowitz. Before leading a tour of the five-story facility decorated in pastels and framed Chinese drawings, a traditional Chinese lion dance was performed outside in the rain to the beating of

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Happy Holidays!

Big Mac helps cop bag thief

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A quick-thinking police officer and a misplaced fast food bag led to the swift apprehension of an armed bank robber who hit the Independence Community Bank branch on Fifth Avenue.

According to police, the bank robber tied a black scarf around his face and walked into the bank on Fifth Avenue

at 75th Street around 12:30 pm on Dec. 4. Once inside, he pulled a gun from a sling on his arm and pointed it over the half partition. Bank employees watching from the second floor immediately called the police.

The suspect fled with \$16,000 stuffed inside a McDonald's take-out bag.

"We're taking that call," Police Officer Lucy Spata told her partner, P.O. Jimmy Wong as they spun around and sped towards the bank. They were

on patrol on 86th Street at Colonial Road when the call came in.

Before they arrived at the bank, Spata noticed a man stuffing a black scarf into a McDonald's bag on the corner of Bay Ridge Parkway and Fourth Avenue. Spata found the bag suspicious since there is no McDonald's in that part of the neighborhood.

The officers cut the suspect off with their cruiser, pulled their guns, and told the sus-

pected gun-toting thief to hit the pavement.

"He was going down really slowly," Spata said. "And while he made his way to the pavement, a loaded clip fell out of his right pocket."

While frisking the suspect, Wong discovered a SigSauer 40 caliber semi-automatic handgun, that according to Spata was "loaded, cocked and ready to go."

The gun had been stolen from York, Penn., police said.

Commending Spata, a 17-year veteran of the force who has spent all but six months of her career at the 68th Precinct, Deputy Inspector Matthew Pontillo, the 68th Precinct commanding officer, said, "That's a great cop. Her instincts were right on the money."

The \$16,000 stolen from the bank was recovered and the FBI is exploring connections the suspect might have with other bank robberies in Brooklyn.

Elderly women conned at home

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Two octogenarian women fell prey to scammers who entered their homes this week.

In the most recent incident, three con-women rang the doorbell of an 83-year-old woman, on 70th Street between 13th and 14th avenues, a little bit after noon on Dec. 12.

"Don't you remember me? Are you Joseph's wife?" the three asked. The victim said "yes" and let them in, according to police.

The elderly woman sat in the kitchen chatting with one of the duplicitous houseguests while the other two filled a pillowcase with the woman's jewelry, including a 14-karat gold charm bracelet, an engagement ring, wedding bands and \$3,500 in cash. When the trio got up to leave, the victim said, "Where are you going with my pillowcase?" At that point the evil trio fled on foot down 70th Street.

On Dec. 9, at 2 p.m., a man and two women got themselves invited into the house of an 89-year-old woman by explaining that they were friends of hers when they were young. The victim invited the ladies to chat in the kitchen while the man excused himself to go to the bathroom.

He wandered around the house and apparently through the woman's purses. When the trio finally left the house, on 60th Street between 10th and 11th avenues, after about an hour of yacking and thieving, the woman noticed that her

POLICE BLOTTER

Elevator mug
An unsuspecting woman was mugged inside the elevator of her apartment building around 7:30 pm on Dec. 11.

The woman got into the elevator of her building, on Oliver Street between Marine Avenue and Opal Court, from the garage level and held the door for a man she did not know. Once the doors closed, the

wallet had been stolen.

Tranquil burglar
A cunning cracksmen found his way into an animal hospital sometime between Dec. 11 at 8:45 pm and Dec. 12 at 5:30 am. After removing the lock from the roll-down gate and the front door of the 13th Avenue clinic, between 73rd and 74th streets, the burglar made off with a small safe containing the tranquilizers Ketamine, Valium, phenobarbital, and an assortment of other narcotics, police said.

Street and 18th Avenue around 4:30 am on Dec. 14. Police described his attacker as a 20-year-old man, about 5-foot-6 and 170 pounds.

Slashed
A 25-year-old woman was standing on 67th Street, between 11th and 12th avenues, when she was approached from behind at 10:20 pm. The attacker slashed the woman's face causing a five-inch laceration above her right eye, police said.

The victim, a non-English speaker who needed a Chinese translator, said she had no prior disputes with her assailant. The slasher fled on 67th Street, heading toward 12th Avenue.

Police are looking for a 95-pound, 25-year-old woman with a ponytail in the attack.

Hefty haul
A woman returned to her home on the corner of 83rd Street and 11th Avenue at 4 pm on Dec. 12 to discover that several drawers were open in her living room. She also noticed that the kitchen window had been pried open.

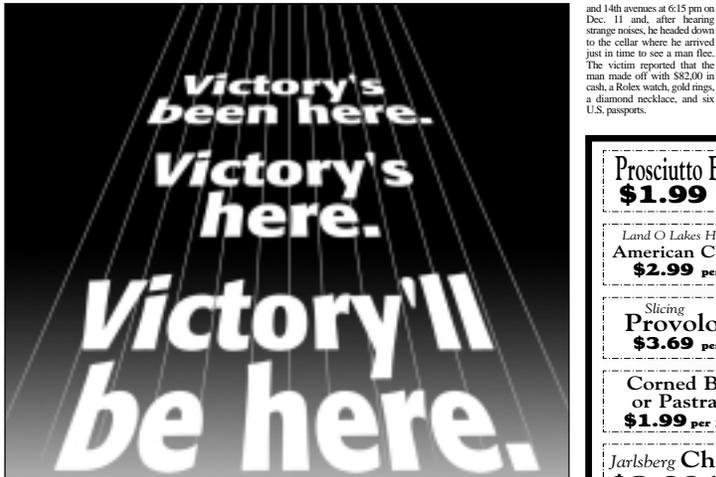
Items swiped from the basement top floor included a Nikon camera, a six-carat diamond tennis bracelet, reportedly valued at \$6,000, a Tiffany heart-shaped gold necklace, a diamond heart necklace, a Donna Karan leather coat, and a shopping bag.

Knew attackers
A 41-year-old woman was attacked Dec. 14 at 4 am on 18th Avenue between 86th Street and Beamon Avenue. Her attackers covered her head with a pillowcase and proceeded to punch her with closed fists, striking her about the head and neck. The victim said she knew who the assailants were but was unable to give names due to being semiconscious at the time of the report, police said.



Settlers

Transit workers march over the Brooklyn Bridge Monday night before City Hall protest. A strike was avoided when a settlement with the MTA was reached Tuesday.



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TERROR...

Continued from page 1
place during the Cold War where block captains direct the community in crises, and Golden organized the formation of the response team.

On Monday, Dec. 23, the CERT will be hosting an event at the Bay Ridge Manor at 7 p.m. where the community can learn how to get involved.

Based on a model developed in Los Angeles and implemented in 38 states, the goals of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) are to prepare citizens to help themselves, their families and their neighbors in the event of a disaster.

The team takes its directions from the mayor's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the police department.

"We really want to stress that we are secondary responders," said Patrick Conden, the executive director of the CERT, addressing Community Board 10 on Monday night.

"A lot of work has been done in the past few months setting up the CERT," said Conden. "Now we're taking it to the next level."

Part of that next level is outreach. Addressing CB10, Conden outlined the 25-member structure of the CERT, with an executive committee of 25, 300,000 residents, the CERT is looking to enlist at least 2,500.

"The major thrust right now is to recruit people to become part of the team," said Ray Aalbu, public affairs officer for the Fort Hamilton military base and executive committee member heading public affairs for the CERT.

Committee members include a Navy Seal, a biology professor, local civic leaders, people in the medical field, local precincts and concerned citizens.

The CERT is asking anybody with specific skills—including the ability to speak other languages, military training, knowledge of building trades, communication technology, or the ability to drive an 18-wheeler—to enter their names in the database.

Of the community's roughly trained individuals, the CERT is looking to enlist at least 2,500.

said Conden.

"The next level is establishing the team and how much it will actually cost," said Aalbu, noting that even though the team is close to becoming a reality, "We're going to need a lot of staff."

The CERT currently receives funding from the 86th Street Business Improvement District and the Bay Ridge-Bensonhurst Beautification & Preservation Alliance, both headed by Conden.

From January through June, the CERT will be hosting training sessions where community members can learn CPR and receive emergency medical and fire suppression training.

"Now we have a clear-cut mission," Conden said. "We just want to make sure we do it right."

COWCATCHER...

Continued from page 1
Narrow Avenue has been trying to persuade the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to reroute the bus for more than three years.

"Our biggest concern has always been that a child could get killed," said Guddahi.

According to a report by CB10 transportation committee chairman Larry Stelzer, the B4 has been traveling the same route since 1931. Heading back westward from Sheepshead Bay, the B4 takes Bay Ridge Parkway to Fourth Avenue, where it

makes a left down to 78th Street, then turns left and proceeds across four avenue blocks to Narrows Avenue.

"Jeff Hymun and Donna Berg have good reasons the bus should not go down 77th and 78th streets—there's no way emergency vehicles can get through and it's not safe for the children. It's an inconvenience for any street you put it on."

The CB10 traffic and transportation committee met on Dec. 10 and decided to abandon efforts to determine a viable alternative for the bus. Instead, the committee opt-

worried that the street had too steep an incline to accommodate a bus, according to both Stelzer and Guddahi.

"The MTA has been recommending the installation of 'SI Guards' or something similar on all city buses. The full board approved that measure at its Dec. 16 meeting.

The guards attach to the underside of the bus and in front of wheels and act as a deflector or cowcatcher, much like the ones fitted on old trolleys and trains.

The entire bus fleet in Washington, D.C., has been retrofitted with the guards, which cost about \$1,200 each, Stelzer said.

to send a letter to John P. Walsh, the chief of bus maintenance at the MTA, recommending the installation of "SI Guards" or something similar on all city buses. The full board approved that measure at its Dec. 16 meeting.

"The guards attach to the underside of the bus and in front of wheels and act as a deflector or cowcatcher, much like the ones fitted on old trolleys and trains.

The entire bus fleet in Washington, D.C., has been retrofitted with the guards, which cost about \$1,200 each, Stelzer said.

He said that "everybody is enthusiastic about the idea," even those who were strong proponents of rerouting the bus.

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HEALTH, MIND & BODY

Victory Memorial expands

Victory Memorial Hospital

"For 103 years, the word 'vision' has always meant planning, growing and modernizing," says J. Donald DiCunto, president of the Board of Trustees of Victory Memorial Hospital, in announcing an expansion program that includes a new neuro-surgery department, an expanded gastroenterology department as well as expanding emergency room capabilities.

"Vision" also means assessing the hospital's current facilities and medical equipment to meet the changing needs of the community in Brooklyn, Staten Island and beyond, adds DiCunto.

With more awareness for the need of colonoscopy procedure, for example, VMH has expanded its gastroenterology department to the tune of setting two new state-of-the-art, fully-outfitted procedure rooms — making a total of five rooms — where endoscopy and colonoscopy will be performed. Endoscopy at Victory is already up 40 percent, according to administrator Krishna Bhatta.

Likewise, in the "war against obesity," laparoscopic weight reduction surgeries (gastric bypass or banding) at VMH have increased an astounding 350 percent, notes Mr. Bhatta. In 2001, Victory performed 24 such procedures; in 2002, the number is about 85.

To better meet the needs of the community, both the emergency room and the operating room are being upgraded, according to DiCunto. Costs of modernizing the emergency room is expected to be \$2 million.

Noting that every 15 minutes, a man in the United States dies from prostate cancer, DiCunto said that VMH maintains a full urological center, featuring lithotripsy and prostate cancer treatment (cryotherapy and seed implantation). He sees the volume of prostate Brachytherapy procedures increasing. He proudly points to the fact that "right now, Victory Memorial Hospital is the most active seed implantation treatment center in Brooklyn. We do more procedures than any other facility."

DiCunto said that VMH is designated to provide comprehensive pre-natal and newborn services to all women in need. Women who qualify for the state-funded Pre-natal Care Assistance Program are offered complete financial relief.

The president of the board of trustees of VMH reminded area residents that there is no age requirement for PCAP eligibility and "you do not need to prove citizenship," said DiCunto.

Victory Memorial Hospital, located at 699 92nd St., in Bay Ridge, also has set in motion the organization of the new Department of Neuro-Surgery, where at least 250 cases — many of them catastrophic — will be treated at VMH this year.

Another growth area at the hospital this past year has been the Pain Relief Center — up 17 percent in the number of cases to date in 2002, as compared with 2001. "You don't have to live with your pain," reads the motto of the Pain Relief Center, which was established a few years ago.

"As our society grows older, we have to meet such demands as strokes," says DiCunto, citing the fact that VMH has installed dedicated beds for stroke patients.

To further meet community needs, VMH has kept pace with the number of services it provides, now set at 73; from ambulance service to cardiology, to vascular surgery and beyond.

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The Brooklyn Papers PARENT

Is your toddler spoiling to start a food fight?

Q: "My 2-year-old daughter places too much emphasis on food. How can I help her not be so obsessed with eating?" — a mother

A: Toddlers shouldn't be allowed to graze all day, but they do need to eat often because their tummies are small and their energy needs are high.

"It's a dilemma that a lot of parents have right now with all the reports about childhood obesity," says Ellen Satter, author of "Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense" (Ball Publishing, 2000). "Don't make a fuss about how much she eats."

In trying to restrict a child's eating, parents can actually cause the problem they fear, says Satter, an expert in child nutrition.

"Food obsession springs from food restriction," she says. "If parents try to restrict, the child thinks about food all the time, has periods of overeating and gets fatter."

When the topic is toddlers and eating, the more typical complaint is pickiness and food refusal — one mom says her 2-year-old son lives on Burger King french fries, milk and Cheerios.

Whether you think your child is at one extreme or the

Parent-to-Parent



By Betsy Flagler

other — eats everything or nothing new — your family will benefit from what Satter calls a division of responsibility about feeding.

The parent is responsible for the what, when and where of feeding. The child is responsible for deciding how much he eats — and even whether he eats. You're not throwing away control or opening the kitchen — you're planning and serving and the child takes it from there, Satter says.

Studies show that children are born with the ability to regulate their food intake according to the energy they use. Once you've chosen the menu and the times for three meals

and substantial snacks, it's important to trust your child to tune into her appetite and regulate her own eating.

"I have a 2-year-old daughter who loves to sample food, too," says Lynn Stipulowski, a former school psychologist. "She will drop everything and come running for a cracker — in part, because she likes to try new food and in part because she doesn't want to be left out of anything."

As long as the child's height and weight are in proportion and she is eating healthy food, the mother should not worry, Stipulowski says. She agrees with experts: "The mother could cause an eating problem if she keeps obsessing about the child's eating."

Toddlers need structure and limits, but parents who are too controlling set themselves up for a losing battle over food, Satter suggests.

"Offer a variety of nourishing food at regular times."

"Let your child eat as much or as little as he wants at mealtime."

"Insist that your child eat at the table. Once she leaves the table, that's it until the next scheduled food."

"Have substantial snacks at planned times during the day. Don't offer big treat food, but

something filling such as cereal and milk or cheese and crackers.

"Offer the snack even if your child forgets about it."

"Have your child eat her snack at the table."

"Don't allow panhandling for food or beverages between meals and snacks."

"Offer water for thirst. Don't give her juice or milk on demand."

"Put food away so your child doesn't graze on it."

Satter suggests parents ask for an appointment with a dietitian or other professional who understands feeding if:

- You are making no progress toward having enjoyable, relaxed mealtimes.
- You worry a lot about your child's eating or growth.
- Your child's growth has prolonged or continuous struggles about his eating.
- Your child's growth veers upward or downward abruptly.

Can you help?

"When the parent only uses a cell phone and cannot afford a regular phone or fails to pay their bill and loses service, how do the children at home call 911 if they need help? Is there a system?" — a mother

If you have tips or a question, call our toll-free hotline any time at (800) 827-1092 or e-mail us at p2paps@att.net.

SI Bank 'Kids Corner'

Staten Island Bank & Trust
Staten Island Bank & Trust announced that an educational Web site targeting children has been linked to the bank's Web site at www.sibk.com.

The history of money, a guide to banking, a glossary of terms, games, jokes and fun facts about money. There are also other links to Web sites for the arts, education and culture.

The site also gives children some ideas on how to earn money and includes a calculator so that kids can see how much money they can save over time if they establish a regular schedule for savings.

The "Guide to Banking" section explains the basics of checking and savings accounts, shows how to write a check, and explains ATMs and other services.

"Dollar the Dragon is the mascot for our educational page," explained Frank Besignano, senior vice president. "Dollar will lead kids through several pages that will explain

the history of money, a guide to banking, a glossary of terms, games, jokes and fun facts about money. There are also other links to Web sites for the arts, education and culture."

SI Bank & Trust is a wholly owned subsidiary of Staten Island Bancorp Inc. SI Bank & Trust was chartered in 1864 and currently operates 17 full-service branches and three limited-service branches on Staten Island, and

two full service branches in Brooklyn, and 15 full service branches in New Jersey. SI Bank & Trust also operates SIB Mortgage Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary of SI Bank & Trust, which conducts business under the name of Ivy Mortgage in 42 states.

On Sept. 30, 2002, Staten Island Bancorp had \$6.9 billion in total assets and \$504.3 million of total stockholders' equity.

Towns visits local school

Hannah Senesh Community Day School

Fresh from his victory at the polls, Rep. Edolphus Towns, of Brooklyn's 10th District, paid a visit to middle school students at the Hannah Senesh Community Day School.

The students were "as well prepared as any press corps," said Towns as he fielded their wide range of questions.

Among the questions the students asked during the meeting last month were:

- How did you become involved in politics?
- What accomplishment are you proudest of?
- What motivated you to become involved with "the athletes' right to know?"
- What is an education empowerment zone?

The congressman spoke about his support for education, including higher pay for teachers, and computer education for students and teachers.



Rep. Ed Towns (P) / File photo

The Hannah Senesh Community Day School is located in the heart of Brownstone Brooklyn and was founded in 1995 by a group of parents committed to inclusive, progressive day school education.

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GANGEMI...

Continued from page 1

vest the money, which amounts to about \$6 million, Gangemi instead pocketed the funds and when questioned by clients, would write bad checks, according to the indictment.

Among the counts, prosecutors charge that Gangemi cashed in a 90-year-old man's life insurance policies, sold his Miami Beach apartment and mortgage and wrote a \$65,000 check to himself from the alleged victim's account.

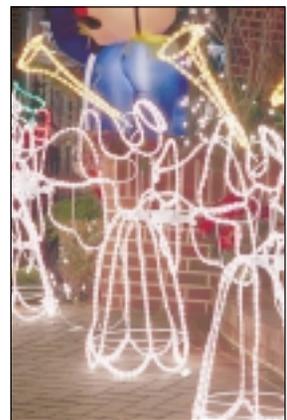
"Who's making allegations?" asked Gangemi's lawyer, Ronald Aiello, when asked about the witness tampering charges. Denying any knowledge of the allegations, Aiello, a former Supreme Court judge, said he asked for an adjournment because of "certain last-minute issues." He also said he needed time to

figure out if "Gangemi would be pleading guilty, what he would be pleading guilty to."

"The way it was written in the press was completely inaccurate," said Aiello, referring to articles in the Daily News and New York Post that suggested the adjournment was related to new information from the Luchese family bust and wiretaps.

The case has been adjourned until Dec. 23, at which time Judge Neil Firetog is expected to decide whether or not to accept the plea deal Gangemi agreed to in exchange for a four- to 12-year sentence. The district attorney's office has opposed the plea deal, offered by Firetog, saying it is too lenient.

Gangemi would face up to 20 years in prison if convicted on the fraud charges at trial.



Trumpeting angels light a driveway at 1172 84th St. in Dyker Heights. The Brooklyn Papers / Greg Mango

LIGHTS...

Continued from page 1

ago. Delighted, Joe Scanto created the Children of the World Christmas display as a tribute to his daughter, Jillan, and as something that all the children in the neighborhood and beyond could enjoy.

On the sidewalk sits a collection box for the Make a Wish Foundation, an organization that helps grant wishes to terminally ill children. The Scanto's raise almost \$5,000 each year for the cause and this year, Scanto says he'll display testimonials from all the children the money has helped.

The Scantos add new countries each year based on requests from the community. The first year, Scanto didn't have Italy and he certainly heard about it from his neighbors. He says the omission probably cost the Make a Wish Foundation a few thousand dollars.

The weekend before Christmas, the Scanto family will organize a show with Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, and the whole North Pole bunch. Jillan, 6, is finally old enough to participate and is ecstatic that she gets to dress up as an elf.

Lucy Spata, a Bensonhurst native who lives on 84th Street between 11th and 12th avenues, claims she started the tradition in Dyker Heights 20 years ago along with her husband. She now has two sons and three grandchildren.

In addition to the cluster of plastic angels tooting horns on the Spata's lawn, a giant inflatable snowman with a dangling candy cane sits perched on the roof, while animated, stuffed

animals wave from the second-floor windows.

Spata says thousands of visitors come by to gawk at the elaborate light displays. "Every year I see the same faces," she says. "They all say, 'This is my baby so-and-so. I've been bringing him here for years.'"

Every night at 7 pm, Spata's nephew Frankie Carro sits outside the house dressed like Santa Claus to greet the passersby. There is also a box where people can donate money to the St. Athanasius Church in Bensonhurst.

Explaining how her neighbors also started adorning their yard with elaborate Christmas decorations, Spata said, "If you can't beat 'em, I guess you join them."

And did they ever.

The Polizzotto family, across the street, turns their lawn into a veritable carnival for the month before Christmas. A plastic Santa Claus the size of a small house blocks the entrance to the mansion while carousels spin and eight lighted reindeer align the second-story balcony. Although impossible to miss the display, a large white sign reading, "Toy Land" highlights the house to passersby.

On the corner of 83rd Street and 12th Avenue, a lighted garzolo and assortment of reindeer decorate the lawn while "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" blares from the rooftop speakers.

A sight not to be missed, the lights of Dyker Heights, many of which go up a month before Christmas, can be seen until a few days after the holidays.

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Back on track

Borough President Marty Markowitz, author Stan Fischler ("Confessions of a Brooklyn Trolley Dodger"), Brooklyn Historical Society President Bob Diamond and Santa cut the ribbon Saturday on a trolley that Diamond hopes to run in Red Hook.

The Brooklyn Papers / Tom Cullen

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GIFTS PAGE GO 6

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

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Oven fresh

Brooklyn offers a smorgasbord of holiday cookies, cakes & breads

By Zoe Singer for The Brooklyn Papers

In the bakeries of this diverse borough, the winter holidays are celebrated with butter, sugar, eggs, nuts and candied fruits, from which are created a rich variety of festive cookies, cakes and breads.

Cookies

A well-stocked cookie jar is the best way to prepare for unexpected holiday guests.

Cookies seem inevitable at Bensons's Alba bakery, even if you came for the pizza.

And don't miss the Rococo — shatteringly crunchy wreath-shaped cookies studded with dainty toasted almonds, also topped with the obligatory rainbow sprinkles (\$7.75 per pound).



Stollen

This pastry-like bread originated in Dresden, Germany. Its flat, folded form symbolizes the blanket of the baby Jesus, studded with candied fruits that represent the gifts of the Magi.

Paper-wrapped loaves of marzipan stollen made in Brooklyn are \$12.50 at Park Slope's new foodie destination, Blue Apron Foods.



Panetone

This sweet, enriched Italian Christmas brioche is usually baked in tall cylindrical pans. Since it is supposed to be labor intensive, it is often easier to find boxed, imported loaves.

At festive Settepani bakery in Williamsburg, Chef A.J. brags that no commercial yeast is used in his glorious, tall panetone (\$12).



Holiday treats: Temptations abound in Brooklyn's many, diverse bakeries, such as: (1) Sweet Melissa's Buche de Noel; (2) Luigi De Rosa's Buccellati at Alba; (3) Settepani's Milanese, Veneziano and chocolate panetone; (4) Royal Crown's chestnut bread wrapped in fig leaves; (5) Villabate's Sicilian cassata cakes; (6) Leske's yulekage (top) with raisins, lemon and cardamom and vorte limpa (bottom); and (7) Blue Apron's stollen.

All photo The Brooklyn Papers' Greg Mango

Where to shop

It's a good idea to order these holiday specialties in advance, since many sell out quickly or are not available at the counter.

- Alba, 7001 18th Ave. at 70th Street, (718) 232-2122
Blue Apron Foods, 814 Union St. at Seventh Avenue, (718) 203-3180
Chez Isabelle, 427 Seventh Ave. at 14th Street, (718) 832-0127
Leske's, 7612 Fifth Ave. at 76th Street, (718) 680-2323

- Royal Crown, 6308 14th Ave. at 63rd Street, (718) 234-3208 or 6512 14th Ave. at 65th Street, (718) 234-1022
Panaetico, The Royal Crown bakery and cafe, 9124 Third Ave. at 92nd Street, (718) 680-2347
Settepani, 602 Lorimer St. at Skillman Avenue, (718) 349-6524
Shaloor's Sweet Tooth, 555 Third Ave. bet Halsey and Hancock streets, (718) 574-2680
Sweet Melissa's, 276 Court St. at Butler Street, (718) 855-3410
Villabate, 7117 18th Ave. at 71st Street, (718) 331-8430

well-preserved specimen Chef A.J. has held onto that long. For the indecisive, the bakery also sells a holiday sampler tin of several miniature cakes (\$15).

SEE TREATS on page GO 2

ART



Winter colors

Paintings by members of The Brooklyn Watercolor Society are now on display at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Steinhardt Conservatory (1000 Washington Ave.).

The conservatory is open Tuesday through Friday, 10 am to 4 pm, and weekends, 10 am to 4:30 pm. The Conservatory will be closed on Christmas and New Year's days.

— Lisa J. Curtis

THEATER

Nice 'Scrooge'

Marley's ghost walks tall at the Impact Theatre; Heights Players presents a shining 'Camelot'

By Paulanne Simmons for The Brooklyn Papers

'A Christmas Carol' was one of Charles Dickens' favorite creations. Not because its publication in 1843 met with phenomenal success, but because Dickens was so deeply moved by his story.

For the next 159 years, the story has continued to make people laugh and cry — not only in its written form, but also on stage and screen.

This holiday season, the Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company, newly installed at the Impact Theatre in Prospect Heights, will present its original production 'Scrooge: A Christmas Carol,' adapted and directed by J. Brandon Hill.

This is the fourth year Waterloo Bridge is mounting its production of 'Scrooge.' Past performances include three runs at the Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company's original theater on West 38th Street at Seventh Avenue in Manhattan, and a run at the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

The production certainly exhibits the smoothness that comes from experience. The main characters are all dressed in proper Victorian clothing and speak with proper English accents.

Otherwise, this is a fairly traditional rendition of the Yuletide story. Ebenezer Scrooge (Sam Antari) is mean and miserly. Bob Cratchit (Chris Bakolas) is goodness personified. Tiny Tim (Madeline E. Russick) is angelic.

Antar is particularly convincing as the old codger, down to the slightly trembling hand and the stooped shoulders. And Bakolas knows how to blend Cratchit's subservience with a touch of defiance.

Hill displays his innovative spirit, however, in his treatment of the three ghosts that visit Scrooge on Christmas Eve. Instead of portraying them as ethereal creatures of the netherworld, Hill presents a very solid-looking businessman in a minkiskit, a military officer with a foreign accent, and a surly young lady with purple hair.

Despite these newfangled ghosts, Scrooge again sees the light, is converted to goodness and mends his evil ways — thank goodness.

After all, what would Christmas be without Tiny Tim's chipper voice declaring, "God bless us, everyone!"

Lavish 'Camelot'

'Camelot,' the Frederick Loewe and Allan Jay Lerner musical based on T.H. White's 'The Once and Future King,' opened at the Majestic Theatre on Dec. 3, 1960, just weeks after John F. Kennedy was elected president.

SEE CAMELOT on page GO 2



Grieving Mrs. Cratchit (Amanda Broome) clutches Tiny Tim's crutch in a scene from the Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company's production of 'Scrooge: A Christmas Carol.'

The Brooklyn Papers' Greg Mango

Grappa Cafe advertisement for Sunday Night Jazz and Prix Fix 3 Course Meal.

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The Ginkgo Leaf cafe

CAMELOT... Continued from page G1

The show, starring Richard Burton as King Arthur, Julia Andrews as Guinevere and Robert Goulet as Lancelot du Lac, was a huge hit and a favorite of the new production.

In November 1963, shortly after JFK's assassination, Jackie Kennedy asked for an interview with journalist and family friend, Theodore H. White. During the interview, she compared her husband's 1,000 days in office with King Arthur's noble experiment, memorializing her husband with the concluding words of the show: "Don't let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was Camelot."

The myth for a long time preserved the golden reputation of the philandering and reckless JFK, but also put a special shine on Lerner and Loewe's musical, which was not much more than a fluffy attempt to repeat the success of their 1956 hit, "My Fair Lady."

Indeed, Lerner and Loewe again relied on the talent of Julie Andrews playing opposite a non-singing British actor. Other parallel elements certainly abound: the horsing-acting scene of "My Fair Lady" and the jousting of "Camelot," the love of an older man set against the love of a younger man, and the class consciousness of both the rich and the poor.

Lerner and Loewe also placed their place again in the hands of director Moss Hart, choreographer Hanya Holm, set designer Oliver Smith and musical director Franz Allers.

The pair knew what they were doing, as "Camelot" ran for 873 performances and won Tony Awards for Burton, Smith and costume designers Adrian and Troy Duggett.

Over the years, "Camelot"



Fit for a king: In the Heights Players' production of "Camelot," the costumes are designed by Albert Walsh. Queen Guinevere (Tina Throckmorton) and King Arthur (Daniel Marston) are pictured.

was turned into a 1967 movie starring Richard Harris and Vanessa Redgrave, and has received frequent professional revivals (including a much-acclaimed production at New Jersey's Paper Mill Playhouse in 1991).

This season, the Heights Players are bringing the musical to Brooklyn with a production directed by Ed Healy and starring Daniel E. Marston making his Heights Players debut as King Arthur, Tina Throckmorton (Guinevere) who debuted last spring as Fiona MacLaren in "Bridgeway," and Fabio Talencia (Lancelot), who played Tommy Albright in "Bridgeway."

The show delights with the lavish costumes of Albert Walsh and an unusually full orchestration of synthesizer, trumpet, woodwinds and percussion led by musical director Anne Rebbeck.

The show also has excellent supporting performances by Jerry Kahn as Merlin, Michael Blake as King Pellinore and, most especially, David Eason Smith, whose portrayal of the evil Mordred is like a wonderful breath of foul air amid all the cloying niceness in the play.

The most pleasant surprise is Marston, whose very humorous, agile movements and bearded good looks remind us ever so much of a very young Peter O'Toole. In fact, Marston has such a warm voice and endearing manner it's difficult to imagine why Throckmorton would ever prefer the stiff and self-righteous Talencia.

While "Camelot" will always be a little less loved than "If I Would Ever Leave You" and "What Do the Simple Folk Do?" as well as the spirited dance numbers, "Camelot" as a play only convinces when Guinevere's utterance offers an impossible choice — like Richard Burton versus Robert Goulet — which could conceivably leave her staring, like the proverbial donkey, between two bales of hay.

But even with its hi-tech orchestration of synthesizer, trumpet, woodwinds and percussion led by musical director Anne Rebbeck, "Camelot" is a welcome arrival on the Heights Players' stage this season. The production is a lovely and civil, personal agenda versus the fight against evil, the rule of civil law and civility, personal agendas versus the good of the state, and the need for sacrifice — are dilemmas we are all too familiar with.

Perhaps Jackie Kennedy's view of a presidency that was a brief shining moment is exactly what we need today to light our path.

TREATS... Continued from page G1

Buche de Noel

Funny how in America we have a television channel that features a burning yule log during the holidays, while this time of year in France most pastiseries create a rolled, filled cake decorated to look (often uncannily) like a log.

For those who prefer the cake version, Sweet Melissa's on Court Street makes their yule log from a light, tender hazelnut cake with an intensely nutty taste and texture. (Call for prices.) The cake is rolled around a chocolate mousse filling and frosted with chocolate ganache that's ridged like tree bark. Meringue mushrooms and little marzipan elf boots, fruits and holly complement the log-like look.

At Chez Isabelle's in Park Slope, choose a chocolate, mocha, raspberry or peach but to give a seasonal spin to a child's December birthday, order a *buche* that's light on booze, since the soft cake and mousse ingredients will otherwise delight all palates.

Cheesecake

Decadent and dense, cheesecake just screams holiday. In Bed-Stuy, Shaokou Watson adds his spiced sweet potatoes to the mix, to create an incredibly moist, addictive cake with a light cream cheese flavor and a salty, buttery grain cracker crust. (Shaokou's sweet potato cheesecake is \$45 for a hefty piece and \$45 for the whole cake, plus tax and delivery.)

Sicilian cassata

Sicilian Christmas dessert features a little bit of sponge cake, a rolled candy covering and a ricotta cheese filling.

At Villatte, in Bensonhurst,

the thin layer of cake is beside the point — your attention is drawn by the richly sweet marzipan wall, and once you break in, an oozy, milky, barely sweet imported ricotta filling that could make you cry with pleasure (\$18 and up). Beautiful, sticky candied fruits gild the lily.

Holiday breads

Since we can't eat cakes and cookies all day, even in December, the holidays also inspire some plainer — though just as special — baked goods.

Chestnuts are harvested in the fall and in the streets of Europe they are roasted all winter. Due to a major chestnut blight in the early 1900s, we don't see many vendors of these rich, meaty-sweet nuts. But luckily, Brooklyn's famous wood oven bakery, Royal Crown, makes a crumbly, dense, nutty-brown, round chestnut bread wrapped in a fig leaf (\$4.75 per pound).

The bread has a coffee-caramel flavor, with the rich sweetness of chestnuts in the form of chestnut flour and chestnut paste. (They claim it's 95 percent chestnut!) The bread keeps well, and is especially at home beside an oozing triple-cream cheese, a nutty Siltola, a baked apple or a rich swirl of Nutella.

At Leske's, you can buy *limpa*, a sweet, Swedish rye bread, year-round. But only during the holidays can you enjoy their *vorle loppa* (\$6), a spiced version with a candied citrus and fruit filling.

Of course, all these bakeries and more have wonderful pastries and breads. But nothing marks the season as deliciously as those sweet, spiced specialties that appear after Halloween and are gone by the first week of the New Year.

You may find that these traditional cookies, cakes and breads are self-fulfilling prophecies: if they don't taste like holidays of your past they just don't taste like the holidays of your future.

WHERE TO GO

- THURS, DEC 19**
- CANDLELIGHT TOUR:** Wyckoff House Museum hosts a tour of New York's oldest home, decorated for the holidays. \$3, free for members. 5 to 6 pm. 58 Claremont Road. Reservations necessary. (718) 629-5400.
- LIBRARY EVENT:** Brooklyn Public Library, Fort Hamilton branch, invites kids 6 and under to "Winter Arts and Crafts," 3:30 to 4 pm. Fourth Avenue at 92nd Street. (718) 748-6919. Free.
- YOUTH SHOWCASE:** Good Shepherd Services and South Brooklyn Local Development Corp. present a holiday variety show featuring dance, video, song and musical performances by students. 2:45 to 4 pm. Middle Avenue 253. Call (718) 652-0326.
- MUSICAL THEATER:** Students at FS 193 perform. 5:25 to 7 pm. Avenue S. (718) 238-0011.
- BAMCINEMATEK:** presents the series "American Dreams: Aleksandr Dovzhenko." Today: "Zemgaitis" (1927). \$9.75. Live piano accompaniment. Directed by Donald Sabin. Also, series: "My Name is Andrey." Today: "Tarkovsky" presents the film "Stalker" (1979). 8:30 pm. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 656-4111.
- BARGEUMSIC:** chamber music program of works by Dolmarty, Henze, Pärt, Beethoven. 8:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.
- WOMEN'S HEALTH:** Park Slope Food Coop discusses eating disorders, diabetes, candida, osteoporosis and depression. 7:30 pm. 782 Union St. (718) 622-5560. Free.
- BARRES BAR:** traditional Turkish music with Sukunet. No cover. 9 pm. 376 Ninth St. (718) 965-3761.
- THEATER:** Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company presents "Scrooge: A Christmas Carol," an adaptation of Charles Dickens. 8:00 pm. 512 E. 8th St. Impact Theatre. 190 Underhill Ave. (212) 522-0796.
- NEXT WAVE:** "The Hard Nut," 7:30 pm. See Sat., Dec. 21.
- ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE:** "Salome," by Oscar Wilde. 8 pm. See Sat., Dec. 21.

Last chance

- "Holiday Small Works Show II" is now on display at Object Image Gallery [91 Fifth Ave. between Prospect Place and Park Place] in Park Slope. The show, featuring paintings, drawings and prints by articles — including Eric Harris' "Woman with Ice Skates" (pictured), an 11-inch by 14-inch wax collage on paper, closes Dec. 23. The gallery is open Fridays, from 6 pm to 9 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, from noon to 5 pm, and by appointment. For more information, call (718) 623-2434.
- Lisa J. Curtis
- SAT, DEC 21**
- OUTDOORS AND TOURS**
- WINTER COLORED SOUL:** Salt Marsh Nature Center hosts an early morning hike and checks population of birds along Gertrude Lane. 8:30 am. 3302 Ave. U. (718) 421-2021. Free.
- OUTDOOR SKATING:** Prospect Park's Ice Skating rink. 54 admission, free for 10 to 15 pm and 20 to 4 pm and 7 to 10 pm. Enter park at Parkside and Ocean avenues. (718) 627-6631.
- BIRDING WALK:** Naturalists and winter enthusiasts are invited to a guided walk in Prospect Park. 1 pm. Audubon Center. Prospect Park. (718) 287-3400. Free.
- PERFORMANCES**
- DINNER THEATER:** Bread and Wine Productions presents "The Last Supper," 7 pm. See Sat., Dec. 21.
- ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE:** "Salome," by Oscar Wilde. 8 pm. See Sat., Dec. 21.
- BROOKLYN LUCEUM:** "31 Bond," 8 pm. See Sat., Dec. 21.
- THEATER:** "Scrooge," 8 pm. See Thurs. Dec. 19.
- SAT, DEC 21**
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- PERFORMANCES**
- DINNER THEATER:** Bread and Wine Productions presents "The Last Supper," dinner theater for 12 people in the playwright's kitchen. Suggested offering for dinner and show is \$25 to \$40 per person. 7 pm. 16th St. (718) 499-7758.
- NEXT WAVE:** Brooklyn Academy of Music presents Mark Morris Dance Group and the Brooklyn Philharmonic in "The Hard Nut," \$40, \$40, \$25, 2 and \$30 good. 8:30 pm. Free admission with same-night performance tickets. Brooklyn Music School, 126 St. Felix St. (718) 636-4111.
- BIRDING WALK:** Naturalists and winter enthusiasts are invited to a guided walk in Prospect Park. 1 pm. Audubon Center. Prospect Park. (718) 287-3400. Free.
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What a doll

Moscow Ballet's 'Great Russian Nutcracker' presents classic ballet in new setting

By Kevin Filipaki
for The Brooklyn Papers

It may only be a truism that, for example, French musicians play French music best, and ditto the British, Germans and Russians. But what is beyond argument is how acutely Russian artists have Tchaikovsky's music in their very bones.

Just how deeply embedded Tchaikovsky is should be borne out this Sunday afternoon, Dec. 22, when the Moscow Ballet arrives at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts for its version of the composer's most beloved ballet, "The Nutcracker," confidently titled "The Great Russian Nutcracker," and part of the Brooklyn Center's World of Dance series.

For a decade now, the Moscow Ballet has brought the grand tradition of Russian ballet to audiences in the United States, and its Brooklyn stop is part of a 10th-anniversary U.S. tour. Its all-Russian cast of 42 dancers, under the guidance of artistic director Vitali Aikhshteyn, began their dance training as early as age 8, all of the members of the company range in age from 19 to 30.

Unbelievable as it may seem to audiences today, Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" was not universally admired when it was first performed in St. Petersburg in 1892, on a double bill with his one-act opera "Iolanta." What now seems ubiquitous to people who have

grown up listening to his irresistible melodies, whether on TV shows, in commercials, the movies or the theater, began with a grudging admiration, if not outright enthusiasm.

Based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's fairy tale "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King," Tchaikovsky's ballet actually came about rather fitfully, since the composer didn't see how the story could translate into a ballet. However, after reading a Russian translation of the French version of the tale by Alexandre Dumas fils, Tchaikovsky reluctantly agreed to give it a try.

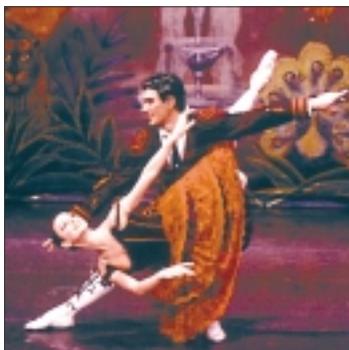
By the time the 50-year-old Tchaikovsky began work on "The Nutcracker," he had already made his reputation as a creator of rapturous, audience-pleasing ballets. His "Swan Lake" in 1877 and "Sleeping Beauty" in 1890 had seen to that.

DANCE

The Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts presents The Moscow Ballet production of "The Great Russian Nutcracker" Dec. 22 at 2 pm at the Walt Whitman Theater on the Brooklyn College Campus, one block from the junction of Flatbush and Nassau avenues. Tickets are \$35. For tickets, call (718) 951-4500 and for more information, including program, visit our Web site at www.brooklyncenter.com.

women's chorus and various "foreign" instruments (like the celesta, a piano-like instrument that provides the irresistible sounds for the climactic pas de deux, "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy"), was considered too strange and modern.

The renowned choreographer Marius Petipa staged this first production.



The first toy story: Anna Alexidze and Alisher Saburov in the Spanish dance, part of the Moscow Ballet's production of the "Great Russian Nutcracker."

It's unfortunate, in many ways, that Tchaikovsky would live another year, dying in 1893, at age 53, but perhaps most unfortunate was that he did not live to see his initially confusing ballet become a perennial. That same "confusing" score remains modern in the best sense: no matter how often it is performed, or in what guises its music pops into our ears, its lively dance numbers — including several of the best waltzes this side of the Danube — are forever etched in our collective musical memories.

And that is what "The Great Russian Nutcracker" hopes to tap into. In honor of its 10th anniversary, the ballet commissioned the Moscow Festival Orchestra, conducted by Alexander Finshayev, to record the score for them "especially dedicated to the performance of the Nutcracker ballet," explained Alkiva Talim, producer of the Moscow Ballet. ("The Great Russian Nutcracker Official Soundtrack") is specifically recorded for the tempo of the ballet, because you can't dance to the quick concert version.

Of course, it doesn't hurt to have col-

orful and lavish set designs by Valentin Fedorov, along with hundreds of costumes and life-size animal puppets to help along the enchantment, as well as a fresh re-imagining of Petipa's original choreography.

Based on reviews of the current tour, its approach is hitting a chord. "The people in the audience at the Show Me Center (on the Southeast Missouri State University campus) probably won't soon forget this 'Nutcracker,'" said a review in the Southeast Missourian newspaper. "You didn't have to be a balletomane to appreciate the extraordinary abilities of this company."

One slight, and inarguably timely, change from the original is that the ballet's young heroine, Clara (or Mascha, as she is in the Russian version), no longer enters in the Land of Sweets for the beguiling second act; rather, she enters the Land of Peace and Harmony, or *nir*.

But by any name, the Moscow Ballet's version of Tchaikovsky's timeless classic should be a "Nutcracker" to cherish.

Additional reporting by Lisa J. Curtis

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Weds, Dec 25

Christmas

BOROUGH PARK TOUR: 92nd Street Y of Manhattan hosts a tour. Urban historian Robert Furman leads a walk around the largest Hasidic community in the United States. \$22, 11 am to 1 pm. Call for meeting location. (212) 415-5500.

Thurs, Dec 26

Christmas

BARGE MUSIC: chamber music program of the complete works for cello and piano, Part 1, by Beethoven. \$35, 7:30 pm, Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

Fri, Dec 27

Christmas

TAI CHI: Salt Marsh Nature Center offers a session with volunteer Linda Braun. 9:30 am, 3302 Ave. U. (718) 421-2021. Free.

Weds, Dec 25

Christmas

TODDLER PROGRAM: Prospect Park Nestlings invites toddlers, ages 3 to 5 to enjoy activities such as storytelling, music, crafts, outdoor exploration and more. \$2, 10 am to 12 pm, Prospect Park Boathouse. (718) 287-3400. Free.

Sat, Dec 28

Christmas

PROSPECT PARK ZOO: Kids of all ages are invited to learn about animals. \$2, 50¢ to 25¢ seniors. 50 cents children age 3 to 12. (718) 399-7339.

WINTER WALKS: 1 to 2 pm, Audubon Center, Prospect Park near Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue. (718) 287-3400. Free.

BARGE MUSIC: presents a chamber music program of works by Mendelssohn, Ravel and Arensky. \$35, 7:30 pm, Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

BROOKLYN LYCEUM: "31 Bond," a story about a doomed love triangle. \$30, \$15 students and seniors. 7 pm, 227 Fourth Ave. (718) 866-gownings.

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BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: presents a New Year's Family Dance Celebration. \$4, 1:30 to 3 pm, 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

SUN Dec 29

CONCERT: Flatbush Congregational Church organ and vocal concert as part of its Sunday morning service. 10:45 am, 424 East 42nd St. (718) 262-5353. Free.

BARGE MUSIC: chamber music program of the complete works for cello and piano Part 2, by Beethoven. \$35, 4 pm, Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

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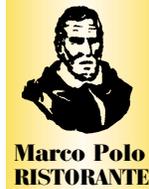
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Nostalgic for 'Coney

New books about Coney Island are great gifts for Bklyn history buffs

By John B. Manbeck
 for The Brooklyn Papers

Year's end is usually the time to recommend gift books for holiday reading. So why not books about Brooklyn?

Brooklyn is a hot topic for writers and it's getting even hotter now. Coney Island stands out as it celebrates one centennial in 2003 and another in 2034. Luna Park, a theme park that opened in 1903 and lasted for 40 years, shocked visitors with its millions of electric lights, its creative rides and attractions, and its elephants. Luna's lights blew out in 1940.

Dreamland, across Surf Avenue where the New York Aquarium now stands, opened in 1904, duplicating and doubling many of Luna's attractions but without as much charm or success. It burned to the ground in 1911.

Two excellent, thoroughly researched books have just been published about Coney Island. They present an overall history of Coney and its evolution, a sorely needed topic on bookshelves.

Charles Denison, who lived in Coney Island and has written a historic walking tour brochure of the area, now has a wonderful book on the history of the rides and attractions, many of which were intertwined with his growing up there. "Coney Island: Lost and Found," published by Ten Speed Press (2002) is available in paperback for \$29.95.

The graphics and colored postcards are novel and the text is accurate. In spite of the fact that Denison lives in San Francisco, where he works as a graphic designer, he returns here annually and has an extensive photo collection of his Coney days, which he has incorporated into the book. He told GO Brooklyn that he reduced this 300-page book from his original 700 by cutting out the dull parts. Were there any?

"Coney Island: The People's Playground" by Michael Immerso (2002, Rutgers University Press, \$29.95 in hardcover) uncovers many obscure facts about Coney's history, such as the origin of the section called "The Gut," an infamous red-light district of "Sodom by the sea." While a few errors sneaked in — the first Iron Pier was only one-story high (not two stories) — Immerso's writing is fluid and seamless, producing one of the best of the basic primers of Coney Island chronology, one that I wish I had written myself.

Both of the above books are



Thanks for the memories: Two new books about Brooklyn's "playground of the world" include Charles Denison's "Coney Island: Lost and Found" and Michael Immerso's "Coney Island: The People's Playground."

haven't seen it yet. The collection of 54 black-and-white Coney Island photographs, by Brooklyn-born photographer Gildea, spans the late 1960s through the late 1980s.

Other Coney books on the market include Kevin Baker's "Dreamland" (2000, Harper Collins, \$26 hardcover, \$6.99 paperback), a picturesque fictionalized account of macabre days in Coney Island when colorful

gangs and freaks ruled the seas, beaches and the city. Among other imprints is "Good Old Coney Island: A Sentimental Journey Into the Past" (2000, Fordham University Press, \$35 hard, \$19.95 paper), a classic on the formative days of the amusement center, by Edna McCullough, a member of the Tilly family. It has been reprinted with a new introduction and commentary.

"Coney Island Kaleidoscope" (1991, Beautiful America Press, \$19.95, paperback) is an unusual 1980s contemporary

photographic record by Lynn Butler with a text by John Manbeck. Yes, that's me. Technically, it's out of print, but a request to jmanbeck@att.com can get you one for \$5 plus postage.

The rest of Brooklyn
 Other neighborhoods of Brooklyn can be found in bookstores and online, too. Marcia Kriss, who has written guides for the Brooklyn Historical Society, has produced "Brooklyn: Then and Now" (2002, Thunder Bay Press, \$17.98 hardcover) with com-

parative photos and short historical texts with each picture. The society itself still has its own history, titled "Brooklyn! An Illustrated History" (1996, Temple University Press, \$34.95 hardcover) by Ellen Snyder-Greier.

For a history of the City University of New York, try "From the Free Academy to CUNY: Illustrating Public Education in New York City 1847-1997" (2000, Fordham University Press, \$18.74) by Anthony Cucchiara, Sandra Roff and Barbara Dunlap, which includes a general section on Brooklyn College, since Cucchiara is a professor there as well as the college's archivist.

Of course, the Brian Meris-Lee Rosenzweig picture books dominate many bookstore shelves, the latest being "Brooklyn's Flatlands: Beyond the Flat" (Brazzaville Publishing, \$34.95 hardcover), purports to chronicle Flatlanders but reaches a bit far by including Flatbush. Meris still refuses to credit the sources of many of his photographs and often shortchanges the history. Nevertheless, those who like older and unusual photographs for a reasonable price will find many in their paperback books.

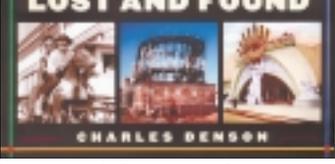
I couldn't figure "Neighborhoods of Brooklyn" (1998, Yale University Press, \$29.95) edited by yours truly with an introduction by Kenneth S. Wills. It's still selling briskly in the regional section of bookstores and has a good cross-section of Brooklyn communities. Its accuracy on schools, libraries, police and fire stations and neighborhood maps still holds up despite Astorland being relocated on the Coney Island map. Historically speaking, it's interesting to note how CUNY College moved from Flatbush to Midwood and how Bensonhurst replaced the original Dutch town of New Utrecht.

Gibbs Smith Publisher, \$27.95) with maps, descriptions of districts and bios. Morrone fills a gap in Brooklynia.

"Grave End: A True Ghost Story" by Elaine Mercado (2000, Llewellyn Publications, \$12.95) A 13-year nightmare in a haunted Brooklyn house. Really!

"Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century" by John Kasson (1999, Hill & Wang, \$13) The one that started interest in Coney Island and is still around and vital 12 years later.

"Gotham: A History of New York City to 1988" by Mike Wallace and Edwin Burrows (1999, Oxford University Press, \$24.95 paperback, \$45 hardcover) An impressive but heavy interpretation of New York — and Brooklyn — history by Brooklyn-based authors who won the Pulitzer Prize for this effort. All you wanted to know about NYC. A second volume will be out soon.



Thanks for the memories: Two new books about Brooklyn's "playground of the world" include Charles Denison's "Coney Island: Lost and Found" and Michael Immerso's "Coney Island: The People's Playground."

Brooklyn-born photographer Gildea, spans the late 1960s through the late 1980s.

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For a history of the City University of New York, try "From the Free Academy to CUNY: Illustrating Public Education in New York City 1847-1997" (2000, Fordham University Press, \$18.74) by Anthony Cucchiara, Sandra Roff and Barbara Dunlap, which includes a general section on Brooklyn College, since Cucchiara is a professor there as well as the college's archivist.

Of course, the Brian Meris-Lee Rosenzweig picture books dominate many bookstore shelves, the latest being "Brooklyn's Flatlands: Beyond the Flat" (Brazzaville Publishing, \$34.95 hardcover), purports to chronicle Flatlanders but reaches a bit far by including Flatbush. Meris still refuses to credit the sources of many of his photographs and often shortchanges the history. Nevertheless, those who like older and unusual photographs for a reasonable price will find many in their paperback books.

I couldn't figure "Neighborhoods of Brooklyn" (1998, Yale University Press, \$29.95) edited by yours truly with an introduction by Kenneth S. Wills. It's still selling briskly in the regional section of bookstores and has a good cross-section of Brooklyn communities. Its accuracy on schools, libraries, police and fire stations and neighborhood maps still holds up despite Astorland being relocated on the Coney Island map. Historically speaking, it's interesting to note how CUNY College moved from Flatbush to Midwood and how Bensonhurst replaced the original Dutch town of New Utrecht.

Gibbs Smith Publisher, \$27.95) with maps, descriptions of districts and bios. Morrone fills a gap in Brooklynia.

"Grave End: A True Ghost Story" by Elaine Mercado (2000, Llewellyn Publications, \$12.95) A 13-year nightmare in a haunted Brooklyn house. Really!

"Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century" by John Kasson (1999, Hill & Wang, \$13) The one that started interest in Coney Island and is still around and vital 12 years later.

"Gotham: A History of New York City to 1988" by Mike Wallace and Edwin Burrows (1999, Oxford University Press, \$24.95 paperback, \$45 hardcover) An impressive but heavy interpretation of New York — and Brooklyn — history by Brooklyn-based authors who won the Pulitzer Prize for this effort. All you wanted to know about NYC. A second volume will be out soon.

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Reading list

Just for the record, here is a list of previously published Brooklyn books that are fun and still available:

- FICTION:**
 "Suspension: A Novel" by Richard Crabbie (2000, Thomas Dunne Books, \$23.95) An urban crime story with a NYC detective working in the bowels of the Brooklyn waterfront. Written with a wonderful sense of history but missing a malic sense of police work.
 "Motherless Brooklyn" by Jonathan Lethem (2002, Knopf, \$13 paperback, \$23.95 hard large print; also as audiobook, \$25) A clever detective story set in Boerum Hill told by a character with Tourette's syndrome. The setting includes several identifiable Smith Street sites.
 "The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay: A Novel" by Michael Chabon (2000, Picador, \$15) The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of "Wonder Boys" sets his characters in Brooklyn at the end of the Depression. While they travel into "the city" to draw their comic books, they have the hearts of Brooklynites.
NON-FICTION:
 "Of Cabages and Kings County: Agriculture and the Formation of Modern Brooklyn" by Marc Linder and Lawrence Zacharias (1999, University of Iowa, \$34.95 hard, 21.95 paper) Farming prosperity versus industrial and residential development in Brooklyn. Nicely researched and written.
 "An Architectural Guidebook to Brooklyn" by Francis Morrone (2001,

- book, \$25) A clever detective story set in Boerum Hill told by a character with Tourette's syndrome. The setting includes several identifiable Smith Street sites.
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DINING AROUND BROOKLYN

With generous portions and superb taste, this is a must-visit for anyone who loves Saturday. Available for private parties, lunch is served Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and dinner is served daily starting at 5 p.m.

Restaurant Saul
 140 Smith St. between Dean and Bergen streets, (718) 625-9844. (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entree: \$18-\$22

Named after chef Saul Bolton, this restaurant has a menu of high-end, sophisticated dishes including foie gras, duck, roast leg of lamb and lobster, onion tart. Desserts are an indulgence, like chocolate fondue, from bento, meals, or hot chocolate wafers with varieties of caramel, vanilla, raspberry, cranberry peanut butter and chocolate and peanut butter mousses. Open seven days for lunch and dinner.

Pete's Downtown
 2 Walker St. at Cadman Place West, (718) 858-3210, http://petesdowntown.townofpeters.com (AmEx, MC, DC, Visa) Entree: \$14.95-\$24.95

Come early to ensure a table with a divine view available at both the outside cafe or inside the restaurant. The back steps of the Brooklyn Bridge and the Manhattan skyline off Fulton Landing sets the stage for a wonderful meal. Try the pork chops stuffed with prosciutto, mozzarella and basil, topped with a Marsala wine sauce, served with a vegetable and potato medley, an interesting fried potato basket, filled with creamy mashed potatoes, and a signature chicken Caesar, pan-seared chicken with seasonal greens and a whole-onion bread. There's also a seafood portfolio, fresh salmon with plum tomatoes, red onion, green peas and artichoke, olive oil. Hot only on this "hardcore seafood" menu. There's also a "hardcore burger" menu. Try the burger, market tomatoes at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge, but four generations of "hardcore" burgers are serving up great food here since 1961.

Free parking is available, as is the private party room, to reserve for your upcoming special occasion. Open for lunch and dinner.

P. J. Hanley's Tavern
 489 Court St. at Fourth Place, (718) 854-8222. (AmEx, MC, AmEx, DC, Disc) Entree: \$9-\$15

Step back in time and enjoy cocktails or a whole-onion bread. There's also a seafood portfolio, fresh salmon with plum tomatoes, red onion, green peas and artichoke, olive oil. Hot only on this "hardcore seafood" menu. There's also a "hardcore burger" menu. Try the burger, market tomatoes at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge, but four generations of "hardcore" burgers are serving up great food here since 1961.

The menu is what you'd expect from a classic Irish pub: hearty comfort food. There are terrific hamburgers and pork chops, plus daily fish, pasta and chicken specials. Enjoy Tuesday night you can order a complete prime rib dinner for \$9.99. The food is simply prepared, beautifully presented, reasonably priced.

Second Helpings
 448 4th St. at Seventh Avenue, (718) 965-1925. (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entree: \$4-\$12

Dedicated to serving the best-tasting, healthiest food possible, Second Helpings will keep you coming back for more. Using mostly organic produce, and only the freshest and the best-free-range

available, this friendly neighborhood neighborhood of many London pubs. The seven offers bar and grill food — hamburgers, club sandwiches, fish and chips, soups and salad. More substantial fare includes pan-seared salmon, pan-seared scallops, fresh and organic meats, and seasonal vegetables. In both cases, use the kids love the organic macaroni and cheese (yogurt and wheat free), their desserts are fresh, healthy ingredients. Do your tabbies a favor: come back for Second Helpings.

Red Hook: A Novel by Gabriel Cohen (2001, Thomas Dunne Books, \$23.95) An urban crime story with a NYC detective working in the bowels of the Brooklyn waterfront. Written with a wonderful sense of history but missing a malic sense of police work.

"Motherless Brooklyn" by Jonathan Lethem (2002, Knopf, \$13 paperback, \$23.95 hard large print; also as audiobook, \$25) A clever detective story set in Boerum Hill told by a character with Tourette's syndrome. The setting includes several identifiable Smith Street sites.

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set windows. Tavern on Dean is truly representative of many London pubs. The seven offers bar and grill food — hamburgers, club sandwiches, fish and chips, soups and salad. More substantial fare includes pan-seared salmon, pan-seared scallops, fresh and organic meats, and seasonal vegetables. In both cases, use the kids love the organic macaroni and cheese (yogurt and wheat free), their desserts are fresh, healthy ingredients. Do your tabbies a favor: come back for Second Helpings.

Settepani
 602 Lorimer St. at Consoles Street, (718) 849-6204. (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entree: \$18-\$22

At festive Settepani bakery this restaurant has a menu of high-end, sophisticated dishes including foie gras, duck, roast leg of lamb and lobster, onion tart. Desserts are an indulgence, like chocolate fondue, from bento, meals, or hot chocolate wafers with varieties of caramel, vanilla, raspberry, cranberry peanut butter and chocolate and peanut butter mousses. Open seven days for lunch and dinner.

64 Water Street
 64 Water St. at Main Street, (718) 625-9382. (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entree: \$9-\$21

Chef Neal Thompson's eclectic continental menu at 64 Water Street in DUMBO has something for everyone, from vegetable with orange lochin sauce to macadamia crusted Pacific cod which includes a fresh tomato and herb sauce. Other favorites are the house special sushi, which includes a kamikaze roll with soy tuna and scallops, a wasabi roll with tuna, salmon, avocado and cucumber, a dragon roll with crab, cucumber and avocado, and a spicy tuna roll.

Sushi Time
 78 Court St. at Henry Street, (718) 625-9893. Entree: \$8-\$18

This fine Brooklyn Heights sushi bar and Japanese restaurant provides an extensive menu of the healthy and delicious, from miso tuna with scallion to wasabi tobiko. The most popular dishes include the Chicago Roll, the California Roll, the Urahi, which is broiled and with Japanese pickled radish, and the Spicy Tuna Roll. Other favorites are the house special sushi, which includes a kamikaze roll with soy tuna and scallops, a wasabi roll with tuna, salmon, avocado and cucumber, a dragon roll with crab, cucumber and avocado, and a spicy tuna roll.

Trattoria Mulino
 133 Fifth Ave. at St. Johns Place, (718) 398-9001. (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entree: \$10-\$18

This new Park Slope Italian restaurant, which includes a kamikaze roll with soy tuna and scallops, a wasabi roll with tuna, salmon, avocado and cucumber, a dragon roll with crab, cucumber and avocado, and a spicy tuna roll.

Tavern on Dean
 750 Dean St. at Underhill Avenue, (718) 638-2326. (AmEx, DC, MC, Visa) Entree: \$12.95-\$18.95

With its dark wooden exterior and deep-

Tak is named for the ubiquitous three-wheeled vehicle in Thailand. It's a tuk-tuk — which makes the "tuk tuk" sound.

Tak Tak plans to feature jazz performances on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday afternoon. It's a night-long show at the bar — featuring fun to watch dancers and live music to make dishes.

Tuscano's
 291 Third Ave. at Carroll Street, (718) 624-0101. Entree: \$5.50-\$12.95

Tuscano's pizzeria and restaurant, 291 Third Ave. at Carroll Street, is a place where you can enjoy a slice of pizza and a drink. The menu includes a variety of pizzas, salads, and sandwiches. The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner, and has a bar area.

2 Fifteen Cucina Napoletana
 215 Columbia St. at Union Street, (718) 698-9960. (AmEx, DC, MC, Visa) Entree: \$5.50-\$16.95

The big green and powder blue motif of 2 Fifteen Cucina starts with the walls, which are decorated in the same colors. The menu includes a variety of pizzas, salads, and sandwiches. The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner, and has a bar area.

200 Fifth Restaurant/Bar
 200 Fifth Ave. at Union Street, (718) 698-9960. (AmEx, DC, MC, Visa) Entree: \$5.50-\$16.95

Open since 1986, 200 Fifth Restaurant/Bar has recently expanded in size and it's still a favorite. It now offers a 42-foot bar, more than 25 two-top tables and an internet jukebox. On Sundays, they offer the NES (New England Soccer) showing all the football games live on TV. The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner, and has a bar area.

Tak Tak
 204 Smith St. at Balch Street, (718) 222-0101. Entree: \$5.50-\$12.95

Smith Street restaurant Tak Tak, opened by Anwarud "Nuu" Moradpour, offers a variety of Thai food. The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner, and has a bar area.

Tavern on Dean
 750 Dean St. at Underhill Avenue, (718) 638-2326. (AmEx, DC, MC, Visa) Entree: \$12.95-\$18.95

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Lighting ideas from around the borough

The Brooklyn Papers
With darkness falling at 4:30 pm this time of year, thoughts naturally turn to lighting. It's a good time to assess each room's brightness and to evaluate changing needs.

Are you weighing track lighting? Floor or table lamps? Hanging fixtures or chandeliers? **Lamp Warehouse** is a marvelous store to shop in: six huge showrooms of every kind of fixture you can imagine, in a setting studded with lovely antique furniture and luxurious carpets. Not only does it feel homey, but the displays allow a shopper to get a feeling of how a particular lamp or hanging fixture would look in a home setting.

Each showroom features a different type of lighting: one full of crystal chandeliers, one with hundreds of table and floor lamps (including an impressive display of stained glass Tiffany lamps), one with modern fixtures, and a room full of an unusual collection of museum quality lamps and hanging fixtures. Large displays of ceilings fans, bath-

ADVERTISER FOCUS

room lighting, recessed lighting, fluorescents, track lighting, sconces, outdoor lighting, lampshades and specialty bulbs are found towards the rear of the store.

Owner Bill Ain warns not to overlook the function of a particular light in favor of its beauty. "People often put up a fixture that looks great but doesn't deliver the light they need," he says. "They may get used to insufficient light at the room never quite feels comfortable without an apparent reason why."

He also suggests that customers should consider the function of the room and whether they want ambient light or task lighting.

The Ain family has been operating Lamp Warehouse for more than 30 years, and can help you with virtually any technical or decorating question.

Lamp Warehouse is located at the corner of Fort Hamilton Parkway and 39th Street on the Kensington side of Borough Park (39th Street between 10th and 12th avenues).

To visit, take the W or M trains to the Fort Hamilton Parkway station, or take the Prospect Expressway to Fort Hamilton Parkway (then pass the border of Green-Wood Cemetery, and turn right on 39th Street).

Lamp Warehouse is closed on Wednesdays, and open Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, 9 am-5:30 pm; Thursdays, 9 am-8 pm and Saturdays and Sundays 10 am-5 pm. The store will be closed Dec. 25 thru Jan. 6. All major credit cards accepted. For more information, call (718) 436-2207.

Creative Lighting opened its doors in Cobble Hill in 1987, attracted to the area by its large residential market, and the lack of any other lighting store in the surrounding neighborhoods. Sixteen years later, it has developed another distinct customer base: electricians and contractors, to whom it sells on a wholesale basis.

The residential customer benefits from this in two ways: access to a wide selection of fixtures and brands, as well as to the on-staff lighting engineer and designer. This feature can be especially helpful to those building or renovating a home, and the information can be co-ordinated with your architect's plans.

Creative Lighting's showroom space is small, but represents a smattering of many types of lighting: crystal and modern chandeliers, track lighting, recessed downlights, children's lamps.

What's not on display can be seen and ordered through the many manufacturer's sample books. You'll find Lightolier, Progress, Halo and Kichler brands to choose from, among others.

Creative Lighting is located at 223 Court St., at the corner of Warren Street, and is open Sundays, 10 am-3 pm; Mondays-Wednesdays, 8:30 am-5:30 pm; Thursdays, 8:30 am-7 pm; and Fri 8:30 am-1:30 pm. They are closed on Saturdays. All major credit cards accepted. For more information, call (718) 935-0393.

If you're looking for a small decorative gift lamp, **Fabric Alternative** has some nice ones on display, ranging from \$44 to \$60. They come in fun and interesting shapes and colors, some with beaded and fabric shades, some Tiffany-style night lights, and some featuring an angel on a cloud or a crescent moon.

Fabric Alternative is located at 78 Seventh Ave., in Park Slope. For more information, call (718) 857-5482.

Don't have your Christmas lights yet? Head over to **American Tree**, on Third Avenue between President and Union streets in Park Slope. They've got strings of lights to cover your tree, your windows, and even your stoop railings with pure white or multicolors. Happy season of lights!

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