

The Brooklyn Paper

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God blessed America!
USO dancers added some color to the St. Patrick's Day parade in Bay Ridge on Sunday, Oh, and the mayor was also there.

HEARY GEHRY LEERY, THEN TURNS CHEERY

Architect was 'misconstrued' about Yards

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

Starchitect Frank Gehry quickly recanted — sort of — a statement he made earlier in the week that the Atlantic Yards project is dead. The latest brouhaha over the stalled development project began on Monday, when The Architect's Newspaper, a trade publication, asked the 60-year-old master builder to look ahead to the end of his career and reflect on whether he had any "unrealized commissions" that he "wish had been built."

Gehry's answer: "The Corcoran Gallery in D.C., the Atlantic Yards project in Brooklyn — I don't think it's going to happen."

The always-outspoken Gehry quickly reconsidered his pessimism.

In a statement issued by his Los Angeles-based firm, the architect said his earlier comment had been made in a "free-flowing interview," and was now being "misconstrued as a prediction of the future of the Atlantic Yards development."

"All of us at Gehry Architects New York are immensely proud of our work with our client Forest City Ratner on the Atlantic Yards Project and remain hopeful that it will come to fruition in the very

near future," the statement concluded.

Atlantic Yards opponents reminded that some people define a gaffe as when a newsmaker slips up and actually tells the truth.

"World Famous Architect Sounds Like He's No Longer Working on Bruce Ratner's Project," stated a press release from Develop Don't Destroy, the main Yards opposition group.

"While Bruce Ratner's project is a big question mark, it seems clear that Frank Gehry — who was

a major selling point for the project, its investors and its naming-rights sponsor Barclays — is no longer working on the project," group spokesman Daniel Goldstein said in the statement. "Mr. Gehry would not have made this comment if he were still involved with Atlantic Yards and Forest City Ratner as his client."

Urrue, said Ratner. "Frank Gehry is a friend, a great

architect and someone I have huge respect for," the Forest City Ratner CEO told The Brooklyn Paper in a statement. "It is understandable how he and others have concerns about this project happening in the worst economic environment since the Great Depression. But that said, [we] are ready to proceed even at a time when other projects and industries have faltered. Atlantic Yards will have faltered. Atlantic Yards will have faltered."

See **GEHRY** on page 12

Flora in the hole!

Billyburg 'bombers' set to spill their seeds



By Bon Mueggig
The Brooklyn Paper

Gardening in North Brooklyn is about to become a form of rebellion. A group of "rogue botanists" are hoping to transform the barren streets of Williamsburg and Greenpoint into lush landscapes by hurling projectiles — laced with cornflower seeds — onto vacant properties this Saturday.

The green guerrillas hope to beautify their neighborhoods by distributing hundreds of eco-friendly orbs made from red clay, seeds and organic compost, chucking the much-missiles over walls, pushing them through chain-link fences, and putting them just about anywhere that could use some greenery.

"Guerrilla gardeners seek

See **SEEDS** on page 2

Arrest in Weber slay

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

Police have arrested a teenage suspect for the vicious murder of WABC newscaster George Weber, whose body contained more than four dozen stab wounds when it was discovered in his Henry Street apartment on Sunday afternoon.

The Queens 16-year-old, who

apparently met Weber through an online personal ad, was arrested on Tuesday. The New York Post identified him as John Katchis and said that he had confessed to the murder, which police believe happened last Friday night.

Officially, cops would not say more.

"We believe that [Katchis] met

Weber over the Internet through Craigslist, and that they agreed to meet and that while he was inside Weber's apartment, he stabbed him approximately 50 times," said NYPD spokesman Paul J. Browne.

The spokesman added that the suspect "subsequently made state-

See **MURDER** on page 12

Museum ups ante

Entry fee to \$10

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

Art lovers proved to be largely untouchable by the Brooklyn Museum's surprise hike in the institution's "suggested donation" on Saturday from \$8 to \$10.

"They have to raise the price in this economy unless the city pays or they fire people," said Toni Weaver, a Manhattanite who forked over the double-digit admission fee on Friday.

"Another visitor did even more than that."

"I feel \$10 is a bargain — I paid more than the suggested price," said Nikki Darling, a former Williamsburger who is getting her MBA at Lehig.

Such talk will no doubt please the higher-ups at the Museum, which said the two dollar increase was necessary because of the deep recession.

"We truly regret that the challenges created by the economic downturn have made it necessary to modestly increase the admissions fee at the Brooklyn Museum," Director Arnold Lehman said in a statement.

Despite the fair hike, if you will, Lehman said that his museum "still represent[s] extraordinary enriching value for all visitors, particularly in this difficult and distressing time."

See **MUSEUM** on page 13



FORK YOU! Anthony Ruiz, a clerk at Sid's Hardware in Downtown, taps into the public's populist anger.

RE-LAND! Brooklyn wants to stick it to The Man

BORO HITS WALL ST

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklynites are so irate about Washington, war and Wall Street inside Weber's apartment, he stabbed him approximately 50 times," said NYPD spokesman Paul J. Browne.

But it's not those AIG bonuses that are enraging the electorate on the eve of next Saturday's "March on Wall Street" — it's the bloated Pentagon budget that feeds the Wall Street beast!

"We have wacked out priorities in our military budget that usurps funds that are needed at home," said an irate Matthew Weinstein, an organizer of the march. "The war filled the coffers

of giant corporations. They are like pigs feeding at a trough."

And the feeding frenzy hasn't settled down since President Obama moved into the White House. His proposed defense budget may be 1.4 percent more than last year.

"Wall Street symbolized the financial center of the country," said Charlotte Phillips, chairperson of Brooklyn for Peace.

The Brooklyn groups are assembling on White Street, between Broadway and Lafayette Street, at 11 am on April 4. For info about the march, visit www.BrooklynPeace.org.

— with Evan Gardner

FARE HIKE IS UNFARE

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn seethed with rage on Wednesday after the Metropolitan Transportation Authority voted to significantly raise fares and tolls, while drastically hacking away at mass transit service across the borough and city.

Months of political bickering and dickering with Albany culminated in a vote by the MTA board to jack up the base fare to \$2.50 from \$2 and monthly passes to \$105 from \$81 effective

for the MTA fare hike.

HE'S PISSED: Joshua McEnney shows his 'support' for the MTA fare hike.

See **UNFARE** on page 11

This 'mob' is angry — yet McMahon votes against it

The Brooklyn Paper

Freshman Rep. Mike McMahon was the only Democrat in New York State to vote against last week's House bill to put a 90-percent tax on AIG's "ou-



rageous" (in the words of the president) bonuses.

What the hell is wrong with McMahon — doesn't he know people are grabbing pitchforks, torches, buckets of tar and down

pillows?

That seemed like a good jumping off question for our weekly feature, "McMahon on line 1."

What, Congressman, the hell

is wrong with you?

"A lot of my colleagues here in D.C. were caught up in the passions of the mob," said McMahon, who was on the losing side of the 328-93 populist in-

spired landslide. "The bill went through so quickly that many people weren't conversant in the details."

McMahon said the AIG "bo-

See **LINE 1** on page 11

Squadron: Taxes to build Bridge 'Park'

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

State Sen. Daniel Squadron unveiled a radical new proposal for the underfunded Brooklyn Bridge Park development that would eliminate hundreds of planned condos from the park and, instead, use property taxes from nearby landowners to pay for the controversial park project's upkeep — but several critics immediately punched holes in the plan.

Squadron's initiative would siphon off some of the taxes on any rezoned property within 4 miles of the planned 85-acre park along the

Brooklyn Heights and DUMBO waterfront — some of the very landowners who are expected to see their property values rise due to their proximity to the proposed 1.3-mile-long park.

He said his plan could rake in \$20 million over five years, though it's largely reliant on being in place before the city rezones DUMBO, a lengthy process that is underway.

Instead of entering the city's general fund, those taxes would be restricted to paying for the park's annual maintenance, which is estimated to be around \$16 million.

See **SQUADRON** on page 12



PACK IT UP NICE

Paper moving up to D'Town

The Brooklyn Paper

So long, DUMBO. Hello, "Metrotech."

On Friday, The Brooklyn Paper packed up its office and headed to the Metrotech complex in the heart of Downtown Brooklyn.

All week, the staff packed up our valuables (including boxes upon boxes of awards and honors, photo right) in preparation for our departure from the office that has been our home since our move from Court Street in 2004.

Starting Monday, The Brooklyn Paper will be happily ensconced in Metrotech, where our

colleagues in the News Corporation-owned Community Newspaper Group were waiting for us.

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NICOLE DeVINCENTIS, PA

Bastards! Someone stole my bike — for the second time this year

Two bikes. Four wheels. Eight months. Sixteen curses.

That's the two-times table governing my life now, thanks to the theft of another one of my bicycles this week.

As you know — as everyone in Brooklyn knows — a thief took an ice pick to the tire that is my heart back in July when he stole my bike from in front of my 13th Street home.

Then, this week, my replacement bike was stolen from the ground-floor storage area provided for workers in The Brooklyn Paper's 55 Washington St. home.

The bike was locked to a specially provided bracket and chain on the wall!

Clearly, someone doesn't want me biking to work. The good news is that we can probably rule out my cardiologist.

The better news is the outpouring of support I'm getting from the biking community. Not since I broke my ankle last year has Brooklyn been so riveted by yet another one of my highly public tragedies.

"You can quote me as saying that Transportation Alternatives was devastated to learn that Gersh Kuntzman's bike had once more been stolen," said Wiley Norvell, a spokesman for the bike-advocacy group.

Norvell tried to perk me up (but failed) by telling me that 60,000 to 80,000 bicycles are stolen of New York streets each year. And then he made me feel like I'd lost a battle when he said that the NYPD has a less than one percent recovery rate for reported bike thefts. (For the record, the 84th Precinct was professional and courteous when taking the theft report; now let's see if they can crack this case.)

I could look on the bright side, I suppose. "New York City is the nation's capital



Editor Gersh Kuntzman's bike was stolen — again! — by thieving, car-loving hoods! Here, he shows where it had been locked in his DUMBO office.

THE BROOKLYN ANGLE

By Gersh Kuntzman

of bike theft," Norvell said. "This city has the craziest bike thieves."

Of course, the politicians are already riding over the nine miles of bad road that is my life.

Councilman David Yassky has been pushing an entirely reasonable bill that would allow bikers to bring their wheels inside their office buildings. Even though the bill would not require the building owners to provide anything for the bikers except safe passage to their offices, the legislation is being fought by Big Real Estate.

That could change, given my latest Troubles.

"The theft of your bike could push this bill over the top," Yassky said.

Then again, maybe the theft is a good time for me to take stock of my riding obsession. I mean, last year, the bastards stole my bike. A year earlier, I was run down on South Street and decided it was a good idea to pre-write my obituary (which is in a file marked "Gersh's Obit" in my computer). A year before that, I wiped out in a pothole on my way to the opening day of the Red Hook Fairway (and bled all over then-Department of Transportation Commissioner Lisa Weinshall who, frankly, deserved to be on the receiving end of my oozing fluids for how little concern she showed for my fat lip and cut up face).

Then — indignity of indignities! — a woman named Bernice Kuntzman and claiming to be my "mother," wrote a letter to the editor of this newspaper in which she

wished me a "long, productive and happy life."

Fat chance. Mom (if that's her real name). Until I can get around under my own power, putting my mettle to the pedal, if you will, I'm a slave to the MTA and its 23-percent fare hike.

Not to paraphrase the governor of California, but I will be back — though given the economy, it would be nice if someone had a spare bike he'd like to donate.

In case no one caught it, that was a hint, people.

No one caught it, by the way, not even Jane Valentas, whose mogul husband David owns the building where the bike was stolen.

"Sorry about your bike," the multi-millionsaire wrote to me in an e-mail. "I hope you recover it."

Thanks, I guess. That, and \$2.50, gets me a ride on the subway.

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SEEDS...

Continued from page 1

to stand up and take charge of areas that seem to possess a wild for the neighborhood," said event organizer Emily Gallagher. "Whether you're a longtime resident or a new transplant, I think we can all agree that a few flowers and leaves help to take the edge off of the concrete jungle."

And in North Brooklyn, there are plenty of places that could be perked up with plants, said Gallagher, who chairs the open space committee of Neighbors Allied for Good Growth (formerly Neighbors Against Garbage).

"There is a lot of land that could use some help," she added. "The long-empty lots, the idle, trash-covered patches that no one cares for — these orphaned sites are a part of our community, too, and we've got to start taking direct action to clean up our home."

Clean means green for the gardeners, whose golf-ball-sized globes — commonly called "seed bombs" — can bloom on almost any terrain.

"How else are you going to plant something over a fence?" asked eco-artist David Cohen, who once orchestrated a similar "seed bombing" project and is now in the process of launching an environmental art non-profit. "I think the idea is interesting because it mixes the metaphors between war and growth."

But talk of war is exactly what the radical botanists are hoping to avoid. In fact, the group have deemed their project as "seed casting" — not "seed bombing."

"We're trying to steer away from violent imagery since what we're doing is positive," said Gallagher. "We're also not doing anything illegal or requiring permission. Many years ago, when there was an abundance of plant life and greenspace in Greenpoint and Williamsburg, the wind would carry and plant seeds. Now, buildings block the airways and cement covers everything — so we've got to give Mother Nature a helping hand."

Bombs away!



Foliage fiends prepare seed-filled dirt pellets for tossing into empty lots.

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NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT

PARK SLOPE

Is the fix in for Flatbush?

By Evan Gardner
 for The Brooklyn Paper

"Someone wants to fix Flatbush Avenue? Good luck with that."

Put aside the knee-jerk cynicism because the North Flatbush Business Improvement District has hired a Manhattan landscape-architecture firm to give a facelift to the shabby strip between Grand Army Plaza and Atlantic Avenue.

"We want to make [Flatbush Avenue] look more 'small-town main street,'" said Sharon Davidson, the vice president of the BID, which hired W Architecture and Landscape Architecture on March 9 with a \$25,000



The North Flatbush BID wants to fix the gritty street by improving areas like this under-used plaza at Eighth Avenue and St. Johns Place.

grant from the city. "We want to put in more seating areas, green spaces, trees and plazas."

its narrow sidewalks, gritty stores, subway vents and awkward, angled intersections have foiled urban planners for decades.

Barbara Wilks, the firm's head architect, said it's too early to know what the fix will be, but the firm will submit its proposals later this year.

In the meantime, business owners are cautiously optimistic.

"It can't hurt," said Martin Gobbie, who is the manager at Franny's, a pizzeria between St. Marks and Prospect places. "It's sad to see all the storefronts shuttered up, and I think something like this would definitely help."

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

Sour 'Chef' turns 'Sweet'?

Sweet Melissa considers former Busy Chef location

By Ben Muessig
 The Brooklyn Paper

It could be a sweet ending to a sour story.

The pastry chef behind the Sweet Melissa Patisserie mini-chain is considering opening in the Henry Street storefront where Busy Chef Dan Kaufman allegedly swindled \$25,000 from patrons' credit cards, the Brooklyn Heights Blog reported on Monday.

Melissa Murphy, who already runs two popular shops

on Seventh Avenue in Park Slope and Court Street in Carroll Gardens, told The Brooklyn Paper that she has always wanted to open in Brooklyn Heights — even though the storefront has a bad history. "I love that spot. I love Brooklyn Heights, and I think that Brooklyn Heights would be receptive to us," said Murphy, a regular Brooklyn Paper contributor.

Murphy, who is still negotiating the lease with for-



Melissa Murphy is looking to bring her sweet treats to Brooklyn Heights.

mer Busy Chef partner Alan Young, said she might take over the adjoining storefront at the corner of Cranberry Street that once housed the high-end pizzeria Oven and the ice cream shop Blue Pig.

The details have not yet been finalized, but it is possible that the shop — which would be made-over in a Sweet Melissa farmhouse style and could boast a sidewalk café — might open as early as June.

WILLIAMSBURG

Thief preys using Craigslist

By Ben Muessig
 The Brooklyn Paper

If a job sounds too good to be true — it probably is, according to cops at Williamsburg's 9th Precinct.

Several North Brooklynites have been the repeat victims of an online scam that preys on people who are looking for a dream job as a "paid shopper," said the precinct's crime prevention officer, Thomas Brown.

The scheme starts with a Craigslist post offering jobs whose main require-

ment is that workers shop 'til they drop — with the promise that all the purchases will be reimbursed.

Of course, what actually happens is a bit different.

The victims shell out hard cash for household appliances and clothing — and then are compensated with a check that is actually larger than the amount they spent.

The victim — who doesn't know he's a victim yet — is then instructed to deposit the check and wire the ex-

cess cash back to the company.

Of course, when the check bounces, the victim is not only out whatever amount he sent to the company, but he's also holding the bag on the bounced check fee!

"If one person gets hooked, these guys make their money," said Brown, who claimed that the scam appears on Craigslist once or twice per month.

One recent Division Avenue resident lost \$2,480 to the scam artists Feb. 21 and March 23, police reports indicate.

BAY RIDGE

Closing the book!

Two libraries will be shuttered for repairs

By Ben Muessig
 The Brooklyn Paper

The Brooklyn Public Library is closing the book at Bay Ridge readers, shuttering the neighborhood's second branch library for renovations even before repairs to the first one are finished.

Even though the Fort Hamilton branch at the corner of Fourth Avenue and 95th Street has been closed for rehab since last spring, library officials revealed that they will also shut the Bay Ridge branch at the corner of 73rd Street and Ridge Boulevard for three and a half weeks of repairs — leaving the neighborhood's literati without a place to score free books.

The Bay Ridge branch will be closed from April 17 until May 11 while workers replace the existing self-check-out machines with new models, remove a second-floor circulation desk, and install a new first-floor checkout desk and book return slot.

"These changes will allow us to fully implement Brooklyn Public Library's new model for public service at Bay Ridge which allows patrons to borrow and return books without staff intervention, and for staff to spend more time with patrons," said library spokeswoman Malika Granville.



The Bay Ridge branch will close for one month, even though renovations have shuttered the neighborhood's other branch.

The Brooklyn Public Library decided to overlap the \$100,000 renovation of the Bay Ridge branch and the \$3.6-million rehab of the Fort Hamilton branch — a project complicated by the discovery last month that termi-

had devoured structural supports in the 104-year-old library — in order to take advantage of state dollars, she added.

"While we know it is not ideal to close Bay Ridge while Fort Hamilton is also closed for renovation, we wanted to take the opportunity to spend New York State capital funds for this project before those funds expire at the end of this fiscal year," said Granville, who urged neighborhood readers to turn to branches in Borough Park, Sunset Park, and Dyker Heights until the work is completed.

Councilman Vincent Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) — chair of the Council's Libraries Committee — said that if Bay Ridge readers can get through the closures, they'll be pleased with the conclusion.

"It's a major inconvenience for two neighborhood library branches to be closed at the same time — the upside, though, is that the Bay Ridge Library will [be better] at the end of this project, which is a win for our community in the long run," he said.

While the Bay Ridge branch is closed, a bookmobile will park in front of the library on Tuesdays, from 1 to 6 p.m., and on Thursdays, from 11 am to 4 p.m.

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Don't look down!

84TH PRECINCT

Brooklyn Heights-DUMBO

Boerum Hill-Downtown
A perp tricked a man into looking down while he pulled out a gun on Pierrepont Street on March 16.

The 38-year-old victim told cops that he was on the block between Clinton Street and Cadman Plaza West at around 5:40 pm when a man yelled out, "Hey, you dropped something."

The victim looked down and found nothing. But when he returned to an erect position, he discovered a gun pointed right at him.

"Give me the money," the thief said.

The man handed over \$460.

Shabbos mug

A teenager walking home from synagogue on March 6 was mugged by six men.

The victim, 13, told cops that he was near the corner of Remsen and Clinton streets in Brooklyn Heights at around 5 pm when a posse of six rolled up.

One of the thugs said, "Give me your wallet or I'll beat you up."

The teen complied, turning over \$20.

Court mug

Five thugs — all young teens — surrounded a 12-year-old on Court Street on Feb. 28, demanding money.

Police said that the gang of three boys and two girls surrounded the victim at around 3 pm.

The boy handed over \$10 and the gang fled from the corner of State Street.

— **Gerdy Kuntzman**

78TH PRECINCT

Park Slope

Sickening steal

A burglar stole \$2,800 in rent money from a 10th Street resident in a March 16 break-in that sent the victim to the hospital.

The unfortunate owner returned to her house, which is between Fourth and Fifth avenues, at 10:50 am and noticed that the money had been stolen from a living room table. Later, when police tried to interview her, the 16-year-old victim became so overcome by the emotional trauma that she fainted and had to be taken to nearby New York Methodist Hospital.

Rash of thefts

Park Slope laptops were in high demand last week.

• Someone walked into a Garfield Place house and stole \$1,400 worth of stuff while the family was out to lunch on March 13. The residents returned to the house, which is between Fifth and Sixth avenues, at 2:15 pm to find a digital camera, a laptop, and a gold ring missing.

• Someone smashed through the front door of a Ninth Street apartment on March 18 and stole a laptop and an antique gold watch. The owner returned to his apartment, which is between Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park West, at 8 pm to find the valuables gone.

• A crook broke into a President Street house on March 19 and stole a laptop. The owner noticed that the computer was missing, along with its carrying case and an extra set of batteries, when she returned to her house at 8:55 pm. Police believe the burglar entered the house, which is between Fourth and Fifth avenues, by breaking through the rear storage door.

— **Evan Gardner**

76TH PRECINCT

Carroll Gardens

Cobble Hill-Red Hook

Camera men

Wily crooks burglarized a West Ninth Street apartment overnight on March 16.

POLICE BLOTTER

Find more online every Wednesday at BrooklynPaper.com/blotter

as he played the mobile video game machine in front of his South Third Street home at around 9:30 pm, hitting him with the bottle and punching him in the face.

The assault left the teen cut and bruised, and the thieves fled from the block, which is between Bedford and Driggs avenues, with the game device.

— **Ben Muessig**

94TH PRECINCT

Greenpoint-Williamsburg

Art attack

A graffiti artist left his mark on Williamsburg wall — and on a North Brooklyn's head — when a neighborhood do-gooder tried to prevent the vandal from scribbling his tag on March 16.

The victim attempted to stop the perp from painting at the corner Berry and North 10th streets at around 12:30 am, so the graffiti writer slashed the victim in the head with a can of paint, leaving the Good Samaritan with a laceration across his forehead.

Paper hate

A student at a Bedford Avenue high school proved true the adage that the "pen is mightier than the sword" when he stabbed a classmate in the head with one of the ink-filled writing utensils on March 18.

Cops locked up a 17-year-old suspected of jabbing a victim in the head with a disposable pen at around 10:50 am at Automotive HS, which is between North 12th and Lorimer streets.

— **Ben Muessig**

98TH PRECINCT

Fort Greene-Clinton Hill

Mugger mugged

Police arrested a 46-year-old man after an early morn-

ing mugging on Fulton Street on March 19.

According to the victim, 34, the suspect asked him for some change at 6:15 am. The victim — perhaps taunting the panhandler or perhaps teaching him the value of a dollar — held out a \$10 bill and said, "This is work money," implying that he had earned it from the sweat of his brow.

Seeing green, the moocher grabbed the cash. The younger man demanded it back, but the thief brandished a crowbar and said, "If you don't leave, I'm going to hit you with this." The victim called 911 from a nearby phone, and an officer was able to track the culprit to an apartment on Downing Street, where he arrested the suspect.

Need not apply

An industrious burglar claimed he was merely "looking for work" he encountered a startled resident inside her Clermont Avenue home on March 18.

The man fled after the 31-year-old woman blocked him on the stairway leading up from the basement of the house, which is between Wiloughby and Dekalb avenues, at 2:40 pm. She followed him down to the cellar and saw that the burglar had damaged the door, but apparently had not stolen anything.

— **Mike McLaughlin**

68TH PRECINCT

Bay Ridge

Brutal mug

A group of men and women beat and robbed a 43-year-old man on Fifth Avenue on March 17.

The 43-year-old victim told cops that he was at the corner of 85th Street at around 2:15 pm when the suspects walked up, grabbed him from behind and began punching and kicking him.

The victim fell to the ground, and the thugs grabbed \$60 from his front pocket before fleeing toward Fourth Avenue. — **Emily Lavin**

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

March 28, 2009

Get your ping on

Table tennis is big action all over a big borough

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

Ping Pong has bounced back. Table tennis is finally out of your parents' suburban basement and entering a golden — and urban — age with mini-courts popping up in bars, restaurants and even retail shops.

"It's become Ping Pong world," said Frankie Violante, the owner of Ocean's 8, a longtime hangout with table tennis, air hockey and pool tables on Flatbush Avenue in Park Slope.

He said popularity spiked over the last two years when he started selling booze, a lubricant that somehow complements many of the nation's most popular recreational activities.

The suburban sport of kings is literally becoming the sport of Kings County. Perhaps not since the heady days of "Ping Pong" diplomacy in 1971 between President Nixon and Chairman Mao of Red China has the sport had such a presence in the public consciousness.

"Oh yes, it's getting more popular," said Nison Aronov who played 35 years of professional ball on table tennis courts in the

SPORTS

Brooklyn Table Tennis Club (1100 Coney Island Ave., between Glenwood Road and Avenue H, (718) 421-2200); **Mike's Hook Up** (70 Front St., between Washington and Main streets, (718) 596-1312) and (88 N. Sixth St. between Wythe Avenue and Berry Street, (718) 599-9906); **Ocean's 8** (308 Flatbush Ave., at Park Place, (718) 857-5555); **Royale** (306 Fifth Ave., between 12th and 13th streets, (718) 840-0089); **Water Street Bar and Restaurant** (64 Water St., between Main and Dock streets, (718) 625-9352).

frozen tundra of the former Soviet Union. He's seen explosive growth since he opened the Brooklyn Table Tennis Club on Coney Island Avenue, a mecca for skilled combatants, six years ago.

Aronov has room for players of any skill level, he said. In DUMBO, the Water Street Bar and Grill recently began setting up a court for pickup matches after the kitchen closes.

And late night paddlers have started crawling out of the woodwork. "We get a lot of people from the River



Ball buster: Tanairi Clavijo takes part in the latest sports craze, Ping Pong at Ocean's 8 in Park Slope.

Cafe," said Nina Guardione, a waitress. The action has been sizzling for about three months.

"We get regulars now," Guardione said.

The passion culminated in a recent grudge match between the Water Street staff and its counterparts at the River Café. The Water Street gang allegedly won and

See **PING PONG** on page 7

We paddle up!

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

The Brooklyn Paper has caught Match Madness — and given the resurgence of Ping Pong, there was only one cure: An NCAA-style, bracket-enabled, three-round grudge match.

In this corner, The Brooklyn Paper's under-rated table tennis team Mike "Paddles" McLaughlin, "Kosher" Gersh Kuntzman,

Vince "Illegal Serve" DiMicieli and Ben "Nails" Muesig.

Opposing us was a rag-tag band that included Mike Weiss and Tim Cunnane of Mike's Hook Up, Sarah "The Big Bigger" Portlock, and Eric Demby of the Brownstoner Flea, a crafts market (every weekend in DUMBO).

The favorite? Weiss, of course. He not only plays the game on specially installed tables at both his DUMBO and Williamsburg

stores, but his brother played table tennis in the Junior Jewish Olympics.

Round 1 matches

Weiss vs. McLaughlin: Alas, McLaughlin, whose prior experience at Ping Pong consisted solely of some semi-pro ball in his native

Mohegan Lake, was the sacrificial lamb, falling to Weiss 11-1.

Demby vs. Muesig: The Brooklyn Paper's junior reporter fell to Demby, who obviously learned spin during his time as a speechwriter for Borough President Markowitz.

DiMicieli vs. Kuntzman: Brooklyn Paper Senior Editor

stores, but his brother played table tennis in the Junior Jewish Olympics.

Round 2 matches

Weiss vs. Cunnane: This was a bit of a grudge match, and the PC-loving Kuntzman jumped

out on an early lead over Mac-man Weiss. But Kuntzman collapsed

in a blizzard of Weiss backspin, falling 11-4.

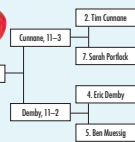
Cunnane vs. Demby: In the closest-fought match of the day, Cunnane bested Demby, 11-4, on a bad unforced error by the Flea man.

The championship

Weiss vs. Cunnane: Perhaps it was to be expected — that The Brooklyn Paper's March Madness Classic would come down to two men who spend half their

workday playing ping-pong. The game was close, of course, but Weiss won it on a backhand smash that was good enough to be in a Senior Jewish Olympics!

PING PONG CLASSIC



Watch all the action in our exclusive podcast at www.BrooklynPaper.com.



Mike Weiss won the final. The Paper didn't make it.

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BOOKS

Home run!

Alyssa Milano sure knows how to titillate male readers.

Not only will the TV vixen — famous for her best-selling "Who's the Boss" and "Charmed" — read from her new book in Bay Ridge on March 30, but the actress' tone is about her love of baseball.

Milano, who runs a popular blog about the national pastime and has been romantically linked to hurlers Barry Zito, Brad Penny and Carl Pavano, will share passages from "Safe at Home: Confessions of a Baseball Fanatic," which details her lifelong love affair with the game (and its players).

"Baseball is a mirror to my life experiences, and memories, dating back to my childhood," said the Hollywood star and dihard Dodgers fan on her Major League Baseball blog. "The result is part memoir and part philosophical love letter to the sport that found me when I needed it most."

Fittingly enough for Milano — who was born in Brooklyn, but left the borough of Kings — the introduction to her book is penned by another Brooklyn ex-pat: former Yankees manager and current Dodgers honcho Joe Torre.

Alyssa Milano will read from "Safe at Home" at the BookMark Shoppe (8415 Third Ave., between 84th and 85th streets in Bay Ridge, (718) 833-5115) on March 30 at 7 pm.

— Ben Muesig

NIGHTLIFE

Yuri's night!

It's going to be a night of a hundred billion stars!

On April 4, Yuri's Night, a global space travel blowout, will turn the Galapagos Art Space in DUMBO into a Galapagos Space Center in celebration of man's first foray into the cosmos 48 years ago.

"It'll have a really spacey feel with good music and lots of dancing," said Liz Kennick, a Boerum Hill resident who runs the Brooklyn chapter of the Space Tourism Society, a California-based group dedicated to furthering the idea of recreational spaceflight.

The celebration, which honors Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's 1961 flight, and the Space Shuttle's maiden voyage exactly 20 years later, is part of a global week-long party in 35 countries on six continents, and will include live DJs, a futuristic light show, a costume contest, freeze-dried astronaut food, a space trivia contest, a play about the man who discovered dark matter, and, best of all, light saber duels.

Yuri's Night 2009 will be on April 4 at 8 pm at Galapagos Art Space (16 Main St., between Plymouth and Water streets in DUMBO, (718) 222-8500). Tickets are \$16 online, \$25 at the door.

— Evan Gardner

MUSIC

Jazzed up

The hills of Brooklyn will be alive with the sound of music — jazz music — throughout April.

The 10th annual Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival returns this year with such syncretism luminaries as Dave Valentin, Melba Moore, Houston Person, and world-renowned drummer Roy Haynes (pictured).

"This year's festival offering will be a knockout," said the always understated festival chairman, Jitu Weiss.

Started in 1997 as a week-long event, the now-month-long festival honors Brooklyn's key role in the development of a music form that is arguably America's greatest contribution to human creativity.

The festival is spread across Bed-Stuy and Clinton Hill, featuring nightly events in churches, restaurants, libraries and auditoria.

The music fest will also include lectures, poetry readings, and art shows, as well as an induction ceremony in the Brooklyn Jazz Hall of Fame at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

The Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival, April 1-30. Tickets are free-\$40, depending on the show. For info, call (718) 467-1527 or visit www.cbjazz.org.

— Evan Gardner

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HERE TO GO

EDITORS' PICKS

SUNDAY
March 29

Monday
March 30

THURSDAY
April 2

FRIDAY
April 3

SATURDAY
April 4

Alyssa on 1st
Charming "I Charming" star and easy baseball groupie Alyssa Milano will read from her new book, "Safe at Home: Confessions of a Baseball Fanatic." The Brooklyn-born television actress, who also starred in the classic 1980s sitcom, "Who's the Boss?" is a long-time baseball fan and sex symbol. We know — where was she when you were getting married, right?

Paul's gospel
Everyone remembers the scene with the raw eggs, but did you ever think of "Cool Hand Luke" as one of the great Christ references in American pop culture? As part of the Brooklyn Academy of Music's ongoing tribute to the late great (and Jewish) Paul Newman, watch as Luke Jackson lives out the passion of the Christ decades before Mel Gibson took it literally.

Olga in bloom
Olga Bloom, founder of Bargemusik, Brooklyn's favorite waterborne concert venue, celebrates her 90th birthday in globetrotting style with serenades from the Shanghai String Quartet and St. Petersburg String Quartet, as well as several other acts and a special performance by the birthday girl herself.

Monster mash
Do you love Japanese B-movie monsters (and who doesn't??) Then head to Warsaw in Williamsburg for Kaiju Big Battle, a mock fight between towering, city-crushing Nipponese nemeses. These stage traveling multi-media kitch-fests feature costumed monsters, referees, an MC, and an "urban renewal expert" who rebuilds the cityscape after each encounter.

Bring in da Norse
Here she comes, Miss Norway of Greater New York! Straight from the land of Vikings, fjords, and herring, this beauty contest brings you the finest ladies that the Nordic New York-area community has to offer. Festivities will also include the anointing of Miss Norwegian Heritage and Little Miss Norway, as well as a coffee and live accordion music.

NINE DAYS IN BROOKLYN

SAT. MARCH 28

OUTDOORS AND TOURS
BIRDWATCHING: Free. Noon. Prospect Park Audubon Center (Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue in Prospect Park, (718) 267-3400). www.prospectpark.org/audubon

DISCOVERY TOUR Meet birds and other wildlife, guided by a naturalist. Free. 3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center (see venue info above).

PERFORMANCE
THEATER, "BUS STOP": The Gallery Players present this William Inge classic. \$18-\$14 for seniors. 2 and 8 pm. Gallery Players 199 14th St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues at Bay Ridge Parkway in Bay Ridge. www.brooklynplayers.com

SATURDAY JAZZ SERIES Hosted by Calley Bliss. Free. 3 pm. Spike Hill Tavern 184 Bedford Ave. at North Street in Williamsburg. (718) 215-9737. www.spikehill.com

BELLA VOICE SINGERS Women's choir presents work by American composers. Free. 3 pm. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church 7420 Fourth Ave. at Bay Ridge Parkway in Bay Ridge. www.bellavoicesingers.com

STREET DANCE TROUPE Elizabeth Streib's high-flying dancer present "Carnegie." \$20-\$10 kids. 3 pm and 7 pm. Streib Lab for Action Mechanics (S) N. First St. between Wythe and Kent avenues in Williamsburg. (718) 384-6491. www.streib.org

MUSIC, "CORPUS AND EVIDENCE" Brooklyn Repertory Opera presents Gluck's opera. \$20-\$10 students and seniors. 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Lyceum 227 Fourth Ave. at President Street in Park Slope. (718) 857-4810. www.brooklynlyceum.org

THEATER, "IN LOVE WITH MOM" Play by Lola Cooper. \$20. 7 pm. Japanese Cultural Center at Woodhull Street in Downtown Brooklyn. (718) 856-4701

78th Precinct Community Council Monthly meeting. 7:30 pm. Prospect Park 1037 North St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues in Park Slope. (718) 789-8170.

TUES. MARCH 31
Community Board 2, Economic Development and Civic Creation Committee. Monthly meeting. 6 pm. Long Island University 1 University Place corner of Flatbush and Dekalb avenues in Fort Greene. (718) 596-5410

Sunset-Ridge Waterfront Alliance VIP night. Hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and a screening of "City of Water" \$50. 7 pm. TRAC (8014 Third Ave. between 88th and 89th streets in Bay Ridge. (917) 971-0007. www.sunsetridgealliance.org

WED. APRIL 1
Community Board 2, Health, Environment and Social Services Committee. Monthly meeting. 6 pm. Brooklyn Hospital 1271 DeKalb Ave. at St. Felix Street in Fort Greene. (718) 594-5410

THURS. APRIL 2
Park Slope Civic Council. Monthly meeting. New York Methodist Hospital 1506 Sixth St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues in Park Slope. (718) 633-8277

SAT. APRIL 4
Town Hall Meeting. Reps. Ed Towns and Yvette Clarke speak about the stimulus package. 9:30 am-2:30 pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music 130 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene. (202) 225-9948. www.house.gov/edtowns

See 9 DAYS on page 8

CIVIC CALENDAR

SUN. MARCH 29
State Liquor Authority. Session for restaurateurs on how to comply with tricky state liquor laws. Free. 9:30 am. Brooklyn Borough Hall 209 Joralemon St. between Court and Adams streets in Downtown Brooklyn. (718) 486-4701

MON. MARCH 30
Borough President Markowitz's Core Island public hearing. 5 pm. Brooklyn Borough Hall 209 Joralemon St. between Court and Adams streets in Downtown Brooklyn. (718) 852-3650

78th Precinct Community Council Monthly meeting. 7:30 pm. Prospect Park 1037 North St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues in Park Slope. (718) 789-8170.

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See 9 DAYS on page 8

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Bushwick Paper, Greenpoint Paper, Williamsburg Paper.

BAY RIDGE ZONE
Bay Ridge Paper, Bayside Paper.

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PING PONG...

Continued from page 5

is now challenging that other DUMBO institution, The Brooklyn Paper, in a winner-take-all duel.

The competitive spirit overtakes Royale, a Park Slope saloon, which hosts a double-elimination tournament, often with a cash prize, for all comers on the first Monday every month.

"I knew we were getting a following when a guy showed up with his own paddle — in a case," said James Bradley, a bartender who often oversees the games.

The table is often available for casual play, when there are no live shows in the bar, several other nights a week, "strictly for the love of the game," said Bradley.

That love has sparked an ongoing schism within the Ping Pong community over whether game should even be called "Ping Pong." Some people, like Volante at Ocean's, say that only "table tennis" is acceptable.

"I have no feeling about it whatsoever," said Mike Weiss, an artist player who owns Mike's Hook Up, a Mac store with a Ping Pong table in both its DUMBO and Williamsburg branches. "It's like saying 'soccer' or 'football.'"

In fact, Ping Pong is a copyrighted brand name like Xerox or Kleenex — in this case, owned by Parker Brothers since the turn of the 20th century. The proud tradition of the sport stretches back to the rarefied airs of upper class Britons in the 1880s, but eventually became a prime example of Americana.

Weiss said he learned to handle a paddle — which he does really, really well (see sidebar) at family gatherings.

"I learned to play in the backyard," said Weiss, whose brother played table tennis in the Junior Jewish Olympics.

Another devoted player said his commitment to the game was fortified at a young age.

"It was definitely something I grew up with in southeastern Ohio," said Michael Masse, who works in East Ashley's photo studio in Williamsburg, which has hosted table tennis tournaments in years past.

Aronov, the seasoned Soviet server, explained the universal appeal of table tennis, what some people say is truly the Beautiful Game.

"It's exciting and very good exercise," he said. "You can play 365 days a year without any injuries."

Players' Player

New Slope theater director speaks!

Brooklyn's premier Off-Off-Broadway theater company, the Gallery Players, has a new executive director. Just because there's a shakeup at the top of the Park Slope ensemble, don't expect a revolution on stage. Neal Freeman, who took over quietly in January, is aiming for a seamless transition into his reign that upholds the troupe's reputation as "the best Off-Off-Broadway," according

CHECKIN' IN WITH...

to legends Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara. Freeman, who has many directing credits under his belt, will focus more on the business side of showbiz and says one of his top priorities is to improve the bottom line. Bottom line? He spoke to Brooklyn Paper theater critic Mike "The Butcher of Flatbush Avenue Extension" McLaughlin about what's happening on- and off-stage.

Mike McLaughlin: Do you think of the Gallery Players as Off-Off-Broadway or On-On-Fourth Avenue?

Neal Freeman: I like to think that we're both. We're proud to be part of the Off-Off-Broadway tradition that goes back further than the Gallery Players, but not by much. And we love being part of Park Slope.

MM: Now that you're in control, are there any plays you're dying

to produce? NF: For myself as an artist, there are plays I'd like to see us do. But when planning a season, and with our tradition, we balance the things our subscribers would like to see, things we think we can do well and also things we can get the rights to. Let's not overlook that just getting the rights can be tough. In Cleveland is Rust Belt city in Ohio, we could probably get the plays we want, because no one would worry that there's a Broadway

production coming. Often the rights companies don't want to talk to you so far ahead, which makes it hard to plan a season.

MM: What sets the Gallery Players apart from other companies of comparable size?

NF: There are other Off-Off-Broadway companies that produce in their own space, but most companies tend to be itinerant and do one or two productions a season. [The Gallery Players have a



Top player: The Gallery Players have a new artistic director, Neal Freeman.

permanent home on 14th Street in Park Slope. We do the Broadway in Brooklyn tradition. Often as part of our season, a couple of shows a year are something that played in New York in the last five or 10 years and we think de-

serve another shot, or didn't get enough traction or that it's time to come back. Like "The Who's Tommy." We think it's a show that people want to see and we're fortunate to do an ambitious musical like "Tommy" following an American classic like "Bus Stop" [which The Brooklyn Paper called a rare misstep for the troupe] and not feel like we're taking a big risk.

MM: Do you want to make any artistic changes?

NF: Artistically, no. Heather [Curran, the company's artistic director] has a great vision. We think it's working for us and we're going to continue it.

MM: Should ticket-holders bring their own earplugs for your version of The Who's seminal rock opera "Tommy"?

NF: I hope not. We are playing a lot with the sound and the amplification of things. We're obviously aware that we're in a small theater, but the rock and roll nature of the show will require us to be clever.

MM: Will the cast at last destroy the set after each show in homage to the legendary band?

NF: That would be expensive. I'm going to say no to that one.

MM: Good answer, because it always seemed gimmicky when Pete Townshend and the rest of the band did it.



Norse code

One of the few reminders of the bygone days of Norwegian hegemony in Bay Ridge — the annual Miss Norway of Greater New York pageant — returns on April 4.

Participation in the 55-year-old celebration of Nordic heritage (and, let's face it, the celebrated Nordic physique, too) has fallen dramatically, but a dedicated band of Scandinavian descendants promises that the springtime return of the pageant is as certain as a good pillaging by Vikings in the Middle Ages.

"We expect to have about 10 contestants this year," down from 15 last year, said Beverley Skaar, a member of the Miss Norway events committee. (Last year's winner, Sarah Lindland, is pictured.)

"Most of the participants are not from Bay Ridge, but very often their parents lived there at some point."

Those family ties were strongest in the 1960s and earlier, when Bay Ridge had huge Scandinavian populations. The neighborhood is still a Little Oslo, well a Very Little Oslo at least.

"We were pretty much the dominant ethnic group," said Arlene Rutledge Bakke, who co-owns Third Avenue's legendary Nordic Delicacies with her mother.

"You would walk along Eighth Avenue and it was all Norwegian. The younger generation doesn't have any memories of that."

Unlike the Miss America competition, which is sometimes criticized for the bathing suit competition, the Miss

Norway contest has only two question-and-answer rounds. The poise and elegance of the entrants, aged 17-24, is a factor, but unlike other beauty contests, contestants are not required to flash their flesh all over the Norwegian Christian Home and Health Center, though they are dressed elegantly.

"It's a very simple event with two rounds of appearances on the stage," Skaar explained. "The judges look for their interest in Norway, their enthusiasm about their Norwegian heritage and their prospects for the future."

Miss Norway of Greater New York at the Norwegian Christian Home [1250 67th St. between 12th and 13th avenues in Dyker Heights, (917) 656-1552], April 4, 2 pm.

—Mike McLaughlin

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Marisa Mastropietro, M.D., Chief of Urogynecology

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9 DAYS...

Continued from page 6

Academy of Music (30 Lafayette Ave. near St. Felix Street in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100), www.bam.org

ART OPENING: "Surface" Contemporary Artists Interpret Landscape" group show. Free. 6 pm. Brooklyn Artists Gym Gallery (145 Seventh St. between Second and Third avenues, third floor in Gowanus, (718) 658-9099, www.brooklyn-artistsgym.com)

BENEFIT DINNER AND DANCE: Party in support of MS 51. \$50 (\$45 in advance). 7 pm. Beth El Synagogue (274 Garfield Pl. at Eighth Avenue in Park Slope), www.ms51.org

ART OPENING: Scott Greenberg's digital collages. Free. 7 pm. Open Source Gallery (250 7th St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues in Park Slope, (646) 679-3960), open-source-gallery.org

ART OPENING: The Bruh-miesters' "Transition: Where the Wind is Blowing." Free. 7:11 pm. 9th Street Salon (1022 Ninth St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues in Park Slope), bruhiemiesters.com/brooklyn.net

SUN, MARCH 29

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

CENTURY OF BIRDWATCHING: Walk through history of bird spotting in Prospect Park. Free. 7:30 pm. Bartel Pritchard Square (Prospect Park Southwest in Prospect Park), www.prospectpark.org/jacobson

TUNNEL TOUR: Explore the abandoned railroad tunnel under Atlantic Avenue. \$15. 1:15 pm. Meet in front of bank building (Atlantic Avenue and Court Street in Cobble Hill, (718) 941-3160), www.tunnelart.net

TOUR RED HOOK: Francis Morrone leads tour of the changing neighborhood. \$15. 1:15 pm. Meet at Columbia and Carroll streets, (718) 788-8500 ext. 217, www.thecure.org

DISCOVERY TOUR: 3 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

PERFORMANCE

THEATER, "PENNY DREADFUL": 2 and 6 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

THEATER, "BUS STOP": 3 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

MUSIC, "ALL THAT JAZZ" CONCERT: Regina Opera presents Broadway favorites. \$10. 3 pm. Regina Hall (1230 65th Ave. in Dyker Heights, (718) 232-3555), www.reginopera.org

BELLA VOCE SINGERS: 3 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

CLASSICAL CONCERT: 3 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

STREET DANCE: 3 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

MUSIC, "ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE": 3:30 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

THEATER, "THE HEAVENS OF HELL": 4 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

THEATER, "LA DIOÑE": 7 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

FORGECLOSURE IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR: Benefactors served. Free. 6:30 pm. Brooklyn Law School, 1st fl. (105 State St. between Court Street and Bevier Pl. in Downtown Brooklyn), www.brooklynlaw.edu

MON, MARCH 30

TALK, INTERFAITH RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Rev. Anthony Tuckey, Rabbis Joseph Potansky and Immanuel Medgar Evers College/CLUNY (1650 Bedford Ave. at 66th Street, (718) 270-2057)

FORGECLOSURE IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Benefactors served. Free. 6:30 pm. Brooklyn Law School, 1st fl. (105 State St. between Court Street and Bevier Pl. in Downtown Brooklyn), www.brooklynlaw.edu

FILM, "LOVE ONE ANOTHER"

117 piano accompaniment by Donald Sosin. 7 pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music (30 Lafayette Ave. near St. Felix Street in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100), www.bam.org

READING, ALYSSA MILANO

TV star and author of "Safe at Home: Confessions of a Baseball Fanatic." Free. 7 pm. BookMark Shoppe (8415 Third Ave. at 84th Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 833-5155), www.bookmarkshoppe.com

TUES, MARCH 31

FILM, "VAMPYR"

6:50 pm. 7:15 pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music (30 Lafayette Ave. near St. Felix Street in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100), www.bam.org

READING, JENNIFER EPSTEIN AND JOANNA HERSHORN

Authors of "The Pioneer from Shanghai" and "The German Book." Free. 7 pm. Book Court (163 Court St. between Pacific and Dean streets in Cobble Hill, (718) 875-3677), www.bookcourt.org

CHRISTIAN ART HISTORY LECTURE

Artist Henry Arto speaks of Caravaggio. Free. 7:30 pm. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (1275 N. Eighth St. at Havemeyer Street in Williamsburg, (718) 384-0223)

THEATER, "LA DIOÑE"

\$37.50-\$52.50. 8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

WED, APRIL 1

COMMUNITY DAY JAZZ CONCERT

Part of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival. Free. 6 pm. Supper Club (609 DeKalb Ave. at Nostrand Avenue in Bedford Stuyvesant, (718) 569-1896), www.centralbrooklynjazzconcertum.org

BROOKLYN BRIDGE HISTORY

Sponsored by the Society of Old Brooklynites. Free. 6:30 pm. Supreme Court Building, third floor (360 Adams St. between Johnson and Jerusalem streets in Downtown Brooklyn)

READING, RACHEL SONTAG

Author of "House Rules." Free. 7 pm. BookCourt (163 Court St. between Pacific and Dean streets in Cobble Hill, (718) 875-3677), www.bookcourt.org

THEATER, "LA DIOÑE"

\$37.50-\$52.50. 8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

THURS, APRIL 2

TOUR BROOKLYN BRIDGE AND BROOKLYN

Heights. \$15 (\$12 students and seniors). 1 pm. City Hall Park (Southeast corner of Broadway and Chambers Street, Manhattan in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 499-3001), www.brooklyn.org

OLGA BLOOM'S 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Performances by the Shanghai String Quartet, the St. Petersburg String Quartet, FLUX Quartet, Takt Quartet and Olga Bloom. \$90. 6:10 pm. Bargemusic (Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River



Strum thing else: Danny Schmidt will play the always-excellent Jalopy on Tuesday, March 31.

Find our Nightlife listings online at BrooklynPaper.com/Nightlife

SALES AND MARKETS

WINTER ANTIQUES MARKET:

See Saturday, March 28.

FLA MARKET:

Free. 9 am-3 pm. St. Fabian Center (138 Bay 20th St. at Bath Avenue in Bensonhurst, (718) 236-3172)

OTHER

FILM, "COOL HAND LUKE"

It's got Paul Newman. \$15. 3 pm, 6 pm, 9 pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music (30 Lafayette Ave. near St. Felix Street in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100), www.bam.org

READING, MONICA FERRELL

Author of "Beasts for the Chase." Free. 7 pm. Freebird Books (102 Columbia St. at Kane Street in Columbia Street Waterfront, (718) 643-8484), www.freebirdbooks.com

FILM, "DESCENT—THREE STORIES OF FAMILY"

Three short films explore family relationships. \$5 (suggested). 2 pm. Union Docs (322 Union Ave. at 4th Street in Williamsburg, www.uniondocs.org)

FILM, "STANCE"

\$5. 7 pm. Convent (117 Remsen St. between Henry and Clinton streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 596-4840 ext. 115), www.brooklynlaw.edu

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FRI, APRIL 3

JUJU JAZZ AND SPOKEN WORD

Part of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival. Free. 6:30 pm. Biko Transformation Center (1425 Bushwick Ave. between Pilling Avenue and Washington Park in Fort Greene, (718) 233-5181)

STREET DANCE:

7 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

ART OPENING: "Interface"

Nature, a group show. Free. 7 pm. MURT URETT Gallery (710 Grand St. between Vester Street and Morgan Avenue in Bushwick, www.murturart.com)

FILM, "BLACK GOLD"

Documentary about the coffee trade. Free. 7:30 pm. Park Slope United Methodist Church (410 Sixth Ave. at Eighth Street in Park Slope, (718) 768-3093), www.blackgoldmovie.com

THEATER, "LA DIOÑE"

\$47.50-\$62.50. 8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

THEATER, "TIMES 365:24:7"

8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

THEATER, "THE HEAVENS OF HELL"

8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

CLASSICAL CONCERT:

Aspen Ensemble presents works by Haydn, Beethoven, Sch

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Aspen Ensemble presents works by Haydn, Beethoven, Sch

Cumulo leads tour of the diverse neighborhood. \$13 (88 students and seniors). 1 pm. Meet at Fulton Street and Greene Avenue, (718) 788-8500 ext. 217, www.thecure.org

DISCOVERY TOUR: 3 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

PERFORMANCE

JAZZ WITH THE RANDY WESTON TRIO:

Part of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival. Free. 1:15 pm. Greenwich Theater at Brooklyn College (2700 Bedford Ave. at Avenue H in Flatbush, (718) 631-5655), www.brooklynjazz.org

STREET DANCE:

3 and 7 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

MASTER CLASS WITH GUILLARMO VITOLLO HOWARD ALDEN:

\$10. 5:30 pm. Belarussian Church (407 Atlantic Ave. at Bond Street in Boerum Hill), www.constructionworks.org

THE ROY HAYNES FOUNDATION OF YOUTH BAND:

With Amiri Baraka and Vanessa Rubin. Part of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival. \$20 (\$40 \$10 students). 6:30 pm. Brooklyn Tech Auditorium (51 Elbert Place, between DeKalb and Lafayette avenues in Fort Greene, (718) 569-1896), www.cbjazz.org

THEATER, "LA DIOÑE"

\$47.50-\$62.50. 8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

THEATER, "TIMES 365:24:7"

8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

THEATER, "THE HEAVENS OF HELL"

8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

MUSIC, SARA BOUCHARD:

Singer performs from her "Songs of Lewis & Clark" album. Free. 8 pm. Open Source Gallery (250 7th St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues in Park Slope, (646) 279-3960), open-source-gallery.org

CLASSICAL CONCERT:

Aspen Ensemble presents works by Haydn, Beethoven, Sch

JAZZ WITH GENTLEMAN MANDUO AND THE ANAT COHEN/HOWARD ALDEN QUARTET:

\$10. 8 pm. Belarussian Church (407 Atlantic Ave. at Bond Street in Boerum Hill), www.constructionworks.org

JAZZ WITH SONNY FOR TUNE QUARTET:

\$15-\$25. 8 pm. Brooklyn Conservatory of Music (35 Seventh Ave. between 5th and 6th streets in Park Slope, (718) 622-3300), www.brooklynconservatory.org

DANCE, THE UPSTART FESTIVAL:

8 pm. See Friday, April 3.

MUSIC, TROMBONE FESTIVAL:

Ryan Snow's "Puff" (8 pm). John Rosemary Water

THEATER, "THE HEAVENS OF HELL"

8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

THEATER, "TIMES 365:24:7"

8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

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8 pm. See Saturday, March 28.

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JAZZ WITH SONNY FOR TUNE QUARTET

BROOKLYN POLITICS

THE SMOKE-FILLED ROOM

DiBrienza to city: Investigate me!

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

Enraged former councilman Steve DiBrienza asked the city to release information about his neighborhood non-profit group in the wake of reports in The Brooklyn Paper and the New York Post about the group's alleged misuse of taxpayer money.

Critics of DiBrienza, who is one of seven candidates for his old Council seat, mocked the former lawmaker's sudden call for the city to reveal the finances of his own group. One of those candidates, Josh Skaller, called for an investigation a week earlier, officially requesting "copies of all contracts, audits, program

evaluations and correspondence" between DiBrienza's Neighborhood Assistance Corporation and the Department of Youth and Community Development, which funneled cash to the group. DiBrienza's call for the city to "release all of its information on NAC's admin-

<http://www.brooklynpaper.com>
Read DiBrienza's side at BrooklynPaper.com

istration of grants," which was made in a statement to The Brooklyn Paper and other news outlets, came four days later.

The agency has not complied yet.

But aside from his prepared statement, DiBrienza has ducked calls from The Brooklyn Paper to further discuss his calls for transparency about his organization and his candidacy for Council. He had said last week that he would talk to The Paper if it published his lengthy defense of his agency — which ran on this newspaper's award-winning Web site all week.

Instead, The Brooklyn Paper was the subject of a less-than-convincing orchestrated letter-writing campaign to stem the questions about the work of Neighborhood Assistance Corporation, such as its role as an intake center for people applying for discounted utilities.



Steve DiBrienza

"NAC is a satellite office for National Grid's Neighborhood Heating Fund program and Con Edison's Energy Share program," wrote Julia Ross of Windsor Terrace. "Every year, the staff at NAC helps many area residents, like myself, obtain our energy grants, helping to relieve some of the financial stress our families face. Your story got it completely wrong. NAC provides a valuable service to our community."

perwork people fill out in NAC's office.

Other letter writers from youth sports leagues also said that NAC funded them. "I strongly disagree with your one-sided article," said Ray Goffio, a Windsor Terrace resident. "Post-9-11, I ran a stickball league, sponsored by NAC, giving the kids valuable lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork and community."

Goffio told The Brooklyn Paper that he ran the informal program for two summers with about \$1,200 each year from NAC. That money funded the six-week camp, which attracted 75 kids.

Meanwhile, staff salaries and benefits dwarfed those program expenditures and consumed between 73 percent and 76 percent of the budget those years. Since 2002, the group has collected \$1.19 million from the city for youth sports and to organize anti-graffiti drives. In the wake of the City Council's "slush fund" scandal last year, the names of councilmembers who steer money to non-profit groups are now identified. Councilman David Yasky (D-Brooklyn Heights) requested

that \$15,000 be steered to DiBrienza's group in 2007. That grant came one year after DiBrienza endorsed Yasky in his failed congressional bid. Before that, an unidentified councilmember steered \$40,000 to the neighborhood group. DiBrienza did not return

repeated calls. That gave Skaller's camp the last word. "Josh hopes that Mr. DiBrienza will also disclose the source of \$40,000 in Council funds that were awarded to NAC in 2006 so that there is a full accounting to the public of all taxpayer dollars."

Secular healing!

Club moves its political forum to secular venue

By Ben Muessig
The Brooklyn Paper

Talk about separating church from state.

Just two days after The Brooklyn Paper reported last week that City Council candidate Isaac Abraham would not attend a political meeting in a church basement because of his religious views, the group behind the forum has found a new — entirely secular — venue.

The Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats had planned to hold its April 23 endorsement meeting in the cellar of the Park Slope United Methodist Church, but Abraham — an Orthodox Jew and longtime activist in Williamsburg's Satmar community who is vying to succeed Councilman David Yasky (D-Williamsburg) — said that his faith barred him from entering the building.

"I asked my rabbi and [he said] it was better that I not go," Abraham told The Brooklyn Paper earlier this week. Abraham was criticized by club President Lucy Koteen, who suggested that Abraham

could not represent a secular community if he "has so many restrictions on his life."

"When you are on City Council, you have to go to funerals — if someone gets shot, are you not going to go because it's a Catholic church?" Koteen asked.

But in the ensuing controversy, Koteen's group found a new location for the forum, which will test the six candidates fighting to win the 33rd Council District that covers Brooklyn Heights, Greenpoint and parts of Williamsburg, Boro Park, and Park Slope.

"We respect the diverse populations and we want to hear from all candidates," Koteen said on Friday. "We respect anybody who puts themselves out there to run as a public servant, and we want to hear from all voices."

The endorsement meeting will take place at an Eighth Street venue — fittingly named Camp Friendship — that is down the block from the Park Slope United Methodist Church.

For his part, Abraham said that he is eager to show Brownstone Brooklyn his political views next month.

"I will attend and make my position and platform clear to the people," he said. Camp Friendship — that is down the block from the Park Slope United Methodist Church. For his part, Abraham said that he is eager to show Brownstone Brooklyn his political views next month.

"I will attend and make my position and platform clear to the people," he said.

Park Slope should go both ways

Locals: Make Eighth Ave and Pros Park West two-way

By Dustin Seplow
for The Brooklyn Paper

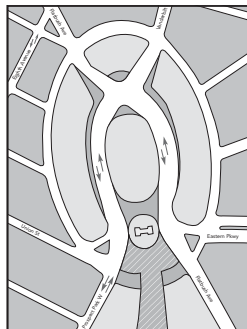
The people have spoken — and they want two-way streets to fix the mess of Grand Army Plaza and the dangerous "speedways" of Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park West.

A community survey released this month by the Park Slope Civic Council shows that the neighborhood believes that converting those currently one-way highways into two-way local streets would not only increase pedestrian and cyclist safety, but solve the traffic snarl on Union Street, between Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park.

The danger stems from cars exiting off the Prospect Expressway and barreling up Eighth Avenue — a shortcut to Flatbush Avenue and the Manhattan Bridge beyond. Several participants in the survey called the one-way avenue a speedway and said that crossing it is like putting your life into your hands.

Some attempts have been made in the past to alleviate the problem, but some Slopers say it has been too little.

"The Department of Transportation has added traffic signals and has worked on signal timing to make condi-



tions on these avenues safer," said Michael Cairl, chair of the Civic Council's Livable Streets Committee, which led a neighborhood-wide workshop in February. "But the consensus is that much more needs to be done."

The two-way "solution" has been a major part of many redesign plans for Grand Army Plaza, including several finalists in last year's Design Trust for Public Spaces competition. "We're convinced that re-

storing two-way traffic flow to Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park West is the best way to... make these streets safer for all users," said Eric McClure of Park Slope Neighbors.

The conversions were not the only suggestions made. Other participants want to close off Union Street completely in order to reunite Grand Army Plaza with the rest of Prospect Park, another idea popular from the "Reinventing Grand Army Plaza" competition.

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OUR OPINION

Let's build a real park

State Sen. Daniel Squadron's proposal for maintaining open space in the Brooklyn Bridge Park development reminds us again why the state's current financing scheme for the park is so flawed.

Squadron's legislation calls for an as-yet-unstated portion of property taxes on any newly rezoned lots within 4 miles of Brooklyn Bridge Park to be siphoned off to pay for the \$16-million maintenance budget for the open space portion of the 1.3-mile-long development.

In doing so, he seeks what this newspaper has long championed: the elimination of one of the most loutish elements of the Brooklyn Bridge Park development: luxury housing inside the footprint of the 85-acre project.

The proposal would not — at least not yet — raise or change taxes on existing properties in the 4-mile zone. It would only affect land that is rezoned from manufacturing to residential — a move that typically yields a huge windfall for developers.

If Mayor Bloomberg and state Sen. Daniel Squadron really want a park, not a waterfront development.

Squadron is correct in arguing that normal property taxes — not the 1,200 luxury units slated to be included inside the park itself — should be the financing mechanism for Brooklyn Bridge Park.

But Squadron's plan has one central flaw: the notion that a dedicated revenue stream needs to be created to pay for the park. Brooklyn Bridge Park, like every other public park in the city, does not need to be self-sustaining.

If Squadron is correct, and residential rezoning in and around booming DUMBO do indeed generate property taxes, all of that money should go, as property taxes currently

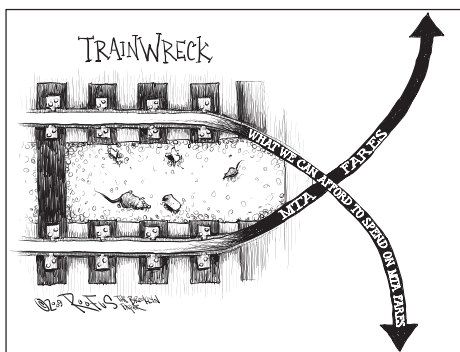
go, to City Hall, where priorities for citywide spending are hashed out as part of the normal budget process. Our elected officials would then have to advocate for our park, just as electeds from other parts of the city will champion their districts' needs.

Squadron's proposal comes at a critical moment for Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Mayor Bloomberg has said that he wants the city to take over the project — though Hizzoner has not clarified the most important detail: would his "Brooklyn Bridge Park" continue the failed financing scheme that puts housing and retail inside the development or would the city run Brooklyn Bridge Park as a real park?

If Bloomberg and Squadron truly want a city park along the gorgeous Brooklyn waterfront, they will do what city park-builders have done for years: build a park and maintain it by allocating city budget money to do so.

ALL DRAWN OUT



LETTERS

Hey Brooklyn Paper! You gotta be kidding!

To the editor,

I am a regular reader of The Brooklyn Paper, so I certainly understand and appreciate Editor Gersh Kuntzman's sense of humor, but the headline on the article about Isaac Abraham ("I've gotta be kidding! Isaac skips church forum," March 21) went way too far.

This is not a Right or Left issue, but that headline is flat out racist against Jews, of which Kuntzman is one. It's not a funny headline. It's smelly.

At this time, when there is so much bad stuff going on in the world, headlines like that don't help.

I have always appreciated Gersh Kuntzman's friendship, and the Brooklyn Pa-

per's support of my musical ventures, but this time, The Paper went way over the line.

Danny Kalb, Park Slope

The pong show

Great idea about the ping pong tournament — NOT! ("The Brooklyn Paper's March Madness Ping Pong Classic," online, March 20).

Two weeks ago, River Cafe challenged Water Street Restaurant to a ping pong tournament. It lasted for two days into the wee hours of the morning, and Water Street was triumphant. Afterwards, I called your paper and challenged you and

your inborn co-workers to take us on. Now I see you are doing your own thing, despite our generous offer of our venue and table.

OK, that's fine. But once you have completed your games, we at Water Street Restaurant challenge you to a winner-take-all contest. Put that in your smoke and pipe it. I will even provide a hamburger as we discuss the particulars. I await your call.

Jeffrey Rodman, DUMBO
The writer is owner of the Water Street Restaurant & Lounge.

Editor's note: When challenged so boldly, the Brooklyn Paper's policy has been to publish a three-word response: Bring it on. But

given the promise of a free hamburger, we've included some extra words: Bring it on — and we like our burgers medium rare.

Singing out

To the editor, I saw your story about Community Board 10's rejection of a karaoke bar ("Name this tune? Karaoke bar says board is clueless," March 21) and have to remind everyone there are already plenty of karaoke bars around Eighth Avenue and 64th Street.

But, more important, the board is acting in a racist manner to say that there will be prostitution at the bar.

Kevin Chen, Bensonhurst

You're wrong

To the editor, Your editorial last week ("No to MTA bailout," March 21) rejects widespread calls by transit advocates to rescue the MTA. And it glosses over an inescapable reality: unless the state legislature intervenes, transit service will be cut dramatically and fares will skyrocket, with riders assuming the entire economic burden.

We agree that the MTA needs reform and support the Ravitch Commission's reform recommendations.

The MTA also should provide more detailed reporting on its finances. Unfortunately, MTA reform without a massive infusion of funding will not solve the crisis. New York transit riders simply cannot afford a system-wide reduction in service and double-digit fare increases during one of the most challenging economic environments in American history.

Mary Barber, Manhattan
The writer is managing director for living cities at the Environmental Defense Fund.

Send a letter

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All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's name and neighborhood are published with the letter). Letters may be edited and will not be returned. The earlier in the week you send your letter, the better.

Our Web site's debatable

Last month, readers of the award-winning BrooklynPaper.com checked out more than 650,000 Web pages — and many are commenting on what they're reading. This week, our online exclusive about David and Jed Walentas's Dock Street project unleashed an outpouring of debate. Here are some excerpts (though you can read them all on our Web site — and have a chance to comment).

which was handed to them.

Ken Fisher's attempt to spin the issue of improper due diligence fails.

Many of the options that were not examined by SCA are existing structures, such as 360 Furman St., St. Charles Borromeo school, etc. That defies Fisher's point when he compares his cost savings only to alternate new development sites. It's the difference between consumption of existing supply vs. new supply.

Even when presented with evidence that something is rotten in SCA-land, the pro-Dock St. crowd is content to leave all its chips on something that MAY be built (where is the capital?) instead of (there I go again) an existing building.

Andrew Stengel, DUMBO

...

The opposition to Dock Street is playing their last card. Nothing of substance here.

Councilman David Yasokis is playing politics as usual. David saying Goliath (in this case, the School Construction Authority) is just what a city controller should do. Very convenient, don't you think?

Yasokis and his staff have been working on solving the middle school problem for years. He didn't know the SCA was negotiating with Two Trees? Where was the good councilman? At a fund raiser?

Carlo Trigiante, Brooklyn Heights

...

Carlo, now I see what a Two Trees story you really are. What the freedom-of-information act documents show — and what the pro-Dock Street crowd should have known (but chose to bury your heads in the sand about) — was that the School Construction Authority wasn't really interested in building a school in the neighborhood, only in helping Two Trees with its precious development project.

Dave, DUMBO

...

It's clear that the School Construction Authority failed to consider any existing buildings, other than PS 8.

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The Brooklyn Paper

KIDS • SCHOOL • STYLE • TEENS • CAMPS • MUSIC

Hepcat's resentment is building

In honor of the Oh So Feisty One's 12th birthday, Hepcat and Smartmum decided to buy her an IKEA loft bed as part of the total room makeover she's been waiting for ages.

A loft bed would be just the thing to make her tiny bedroom seem a whole lot bigger. She'd have room underneath for a dresser, desk and even a beanbag chair. OSFO was stoked.

So one recent Saturday, Smartmum drove OSFO over to Red Hook, had a quick lunch of gravlax and Swedish meatballs, and then went hunting for loft beds.

Smartmum had her heart set on the Tromsø that had a steel gray frame with an attachable desk. Sleek, streamlined, it seemed perfect for a bedroom/work space.

"It's disgusting," OSFO said when she saw the model in the IKEA bedroom showroom. "I hate the color!" Instead, OSFO made a beeline for the Morrum, a black and white wooden loft bed that is, truth be told, quite snazzy.

Smartmum lobbied some more for the Tromsø, but soon realized that the Oh So Feisty One had made up her mind. They trickled down to the self-service furniture area and found the Morrum in a two incredibly heavy boxes that they couldn't lift without the help of a nice, beefy IKEA employee.

One home, Smartmum remembered the last time they bought a loft bed. It was for Teen Spirit's tiny bedroom and it was a million pieces, and Hepcat, who grew up on a farm and loves to put things together, almost went out of

his mind. Hepcat doesn't remember it that way. All the grunting, cursing and sighing is just part of his process. But over the years, Smartmum has lost her stomach for it. She didn't think she could endure another scene like that.

Smartmum is smart. Sometimes. She called Urban Express, an IKEA-approved company that for a relatively small fee — \$80 — will assemble a Morrum loft bed. Bingo. Smartmum had the call and arranged to have them come over the very next day.

But Hepcat was fit to be tied. Hiring a company to assemble IKEA furniture was an insult to the intelligence of his masculinity. He said it was like paying someone to do his job.

Back then, she knew that Hepcat's plate was full; he was in the midst of preparing for a show of his photography at the Old Stone House (opening April 1, by the way — though Smartmum failed to get Dumb Editor the details by the end of the day Tuesday).

To get ready for the show, Hepcat has printing to do. Matting to do. Framing to do. And when that was all taken care of, he has to lug the pictures over to the Old Stone House and hang the damn things. Smartmum figured he was busy enough without having to put together a loft bed.

The very next day, Urban Express came and went. Two men and the Morrum together. OK, so they didn't do the best job. Some of the screws weren't tightened enough,



By Louise Crawford

and one of the slats broke when Hepcat climbed onto the bed.

Needless to say, Hepcat felt vindicated. He couldn't believe what a careless job they'd done. He ranted. He raved. He waved the broken slat like a victory flag. He

had to do some screw tightening.

Oh, and they argued. Smartmum wanted him to admit that she'd done a good thing by calling Urban Express. He re-

fused. Egos were bruised. Unpleasant words exchanged. Situations like this always bring into play the big differences between them. Hepcat, raised on a farm, almost never asks for help. Smartmum, raised in an

apartment building with a less-than-handy dad, is more of a "call the super" kind of gal.

But the bed was up, the job was done, and it all happened, somewhat effortlessly, in less than three hours. Later, when OSFO got home, she was thrilled. Her bedroom did feel twice as big. She loved the way her new loft bed looked and spent the next few hours in it. Smartmum was happy for her girl. But she still had a sad feeling inside. She and Hepcat, married for almost 20 years, still fought like newweds.

FAMILY CALENDAR

To list your event, visit: BrooklynPaper.com/events/submit

SAT, MARCH 28
10 am Fitness Walk in Prospect Park. 310. Bartel Pritchard Square (Prospect Park West and Prospect Park Southwest in Prospect Park). www.brooklynrun.org

11 am Storytelling workshop led by Tracy Cook-Peters. Caribbean food served. \$10 (child and adult). \$5 (bedtime story). The Legends Center (85 South Oxford St. between Lafayette and Greene avenues in Fort Greene). (718) 488-9233. www.innordale.org

11:30 am and 3 pm: Learn about rainbows. Brooklyn Children's Museum (145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant). (718) 735-4400. www.brooklynkids.org

1 pm: Toddler tour of the Aquarium. \$24 (\$16 member). New York Aquarium (502 Surf Ave. between W. Eighth and W. Fifth streets in Coney Island). (718) 265-3474. www.nyaquarium.com

1 pm: Nature Crafts. Free. Prospect Park Audubon Center (Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue in Prospect Park). (718) 282-3400. www.prospectpark.org/audubon

12:30 and 2:30 pm: Puppet show, "Sleeping Beauty." \$8 (\$7 kid). Puppetworks (338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street in Park Slope). (718) 965-3371. puppetworks.org

4:30 pm: Drum and dance party and fundraise. Prospect Park YMCA (357 North St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues in Park Slope). www.ymcasouthbrook.org

SUN, MARCH 29
11:30 am and 3 pm: Learn about rainbows. See Saturday, March 28. Noon: Solar Fair. Hannah Se-



"Sleeping Beauty" at Puppetworks this weekend.

Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant. (718) 735-4400. www.brooklynkids.org

1 pm: World Record Day. Kids challenged to invent and set their own world records. To reserve a spot, visit www.beacamp.com/news. \$5. Brooklyn Lacrosse (227 Fourth Ave. at President Street in Park Slope). (718) 857-4816. www.brooklynlacrosse.com

1 pm: Nature Crafts. See Saturday, March 28.

1 pm: Learn bike safety. Weimann Park. Enter park at Grand Army Plaza and Lincoln Road in Prospect Park. (718) 965-8960. www.prospectpark.org

1 pm: Spring Wash Day. Do the laundry. 19th-century style. Free. Leftists Historic House (Enter park at Flatbush and Ocean avenues in Prospect Park). www.prospectpark.org

12:30 and 2:30 pm: Puppet show, "Sleeping Beauty." \$8 (\$7 kid). Brooklyn Arts Exchange (421 Fifth Ave. at Eighth Street in Park Slope). (718) 532-0018. www.baa.org

2 pm: Baby Loves Dogs. \$15 (\$12 in advance). Southpaw (125 Fifth Ave. at St. Johns Place in Park Slope). See Saturday, April 4.

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UNFARE...

Continued from page 1

tive May 31, while cutting the Z line entirely, shuttering some stations late at night and eliminating popular bus routes throughout the borough in a sweeping reduction that had been threatened months in advance of the meeting.

The reaction showed that MTA now stands for Make Them Angry.

"It's a disgrace, a disaster! It's terrible!" choked Eugene Flannery, a Brooklyn Heights retiree. "There are so many unemployed people; how can they afford the new fares?" The younger generation joined in.

"I can't believe they have the nerve to raise the price!" carped Letisha Morris, a college student from Bedford-Stuyvesant. "I always have to re-adjust my life every time there's a service change."

But it wasn't just the riders who were railing; there was anger from all quarters after the MTA approved its so-called "doomsday budget," which the agency said was necessary to close a \$1.2-billion budget gap after a proposal by Gov. Paterson and Assembly Speaker Silver (D-Manhattan) to impose tolls on the East and Harlem river crossing, raise area payroll taxes and increasing fares by eight percent stalled in the Democratic-controlled state Senate.

• Sens. Kevin Parker (D-Flatbush) and Carl Kruger (D-Brighton Beach) vociferously opposed any bailout for the MTA, even one that would keep fares down for the vast majority of their constituents who ride the rails or buses rather than drive to jobs in Manhattan.

• Borough President Markowitz fumed, although the MTA's decision spared him his biggest fear — East River bridge tolls.

• Rep. Mike McMahon (D-Bay Ridge) and Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) galled on the effect the cuts will have on their outer-borough constituents. McMahon said the vote was "a disgrace."

But whose voice is the angriest? Yours.

"Here's my comment," said Joshua McKenney, as he exited the L-train station at Lorimer Street on Wednesday. His comment? An upraised middle finger, a salute to the MTA and Albany that was in wide use this week.

— with Evan Gardner



Tini Wine Bar, on Van Brunt Street in Red Hook, will move a few blocks north on Sunday, thanks to help from the neighbors. Chef Jenn de Vega will finally get a real stove.

A 'Tini' move for Hook wine bar

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

Almost everyone hates moving, except for the folks at the beloved Red Hook eatery, Tini Wine Bar, which is turning its relocation into a parade.

The popular Van Brunt Street café is packing up its hot plate and parade press this Sunday morning to set up shop in new digs just a few blocks away near the corner of Pioneer Street — and the staff is asking everyone to lend a hand.

The owner of the restaurant, which opened in 2006.

So Tini's owner is turning Van Brunt into a procession with three flatbed trucks pulling the furniture down the street — with a police escort — and has issued an open call for volunteers to carry a box or two from the old location, which will be open until Sunday night, into the new storefront.

There will be complimentary coffee and pastries at the start of the move, and at the end, a meal cooked by Monica Byrne, Tini's chef.

because its lease expired, but the new restaurant will have a bigger kitchen, which means the trademark hot-plate-cooked eggs will be a thing of the past.

The new space will offer a few other improvements.

"I'm going to be able to make my famous grilled pizzas," said Byrne, who perfected them at the now-closed Liberty Heights Tap & Grill. "And we'll have a backyard with fabulous rustic German beer tables."

A mid-April official opening is planned.

LINE 1...

Continued from page 1

mus tax" bill — which has stalled in the Senate, by the way — was flawed for three reasons:

1. **It was too broad:** It would have covered bonuses received by any employee at any bailed-out financial institution with a household income over \$250,000.

"So if you work as a bank manager and you're married to someone, like a principal or a fire battalion chief, who also makes a decent income, suddenly, a bonus that you've rightfully earned would be taxed at 90 percent," he said.

2. **It's unconstitutional:** "The government should not use confiscatory tax policy — besides, this was probably a bill of attainder, which is unconstitutional," he added.

"It is not something that the legislature of a democracy should be doing. The founding fathers objected to that kind of arbitrary monarchical approach."

3. **Um, it punished an important New York industry:** "We can't tear down the financial-services industry, which is an important economic engine that helps put teachers in the schools, firemen in the firehouse and cops on the street."

McMahon said he fully understands the anger out there, what the very Wall Street guys who created the mess walking away with huge bonuses. But now is not the time to lose our heads (or, alas, theirs).

"We have to go after the bad guys, but we can't throw out the baby with the bathwater," he said. "Government has to have a reasoned approach to solving problems, not following the headlines on CNN."

McMahon said he was gratified that many people along the route of the St. Patrick's Day parade on Sunday cheered him on.

"Several people specifically thanked me for that vote," he said. "That was very gratifying because you never really know how a vote will be received."

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him to stay at City Hall."**

**— Paul Sternblitz,
Brooklyn**



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