

INSIDE

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Aged diner gets glam facelift

The Bay Ridge Paper

Brooklyn Papers

Including The Bensonhurst Paper

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Protesters from the Brooklyn chapter of the National Organization for Women, including President Shirley Ranz (center), march outside the Bay Ridge Manor Wednesday to voice their disapproval of state Sen. Marty Golden's staunch anti-abortion stance.

Abortion rally at Ridge Manor

NOW protests Marty Golden's stance

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

Sporting signs with pictures of wine hangers and the words, "We won't go back," a small group of demonstrators gathered outside the Bay Ridge Manor Wednesday afternoon to protest what they are calling state Sen. Marty Golden's "War on Women."

Commemorating the 30th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the landmark Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion nationwide, protesters came out against Golden, who is making his anti-abortion views known.

"Marty Golden would want New York State to restrict abortion out of existence," said Shirley Ranz, president of the Brooklyn chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), the key organizer of the event.

Under layers of hats and scarves in the sub-zero wind, protesters marched back and forth in front of the catering hall owned by Golden, a former city councilman who defeated Vincent Gentile in the race for the newly drawn Bay Ridge-Bensonhurst-Dyker Heights district in November. Golden has been using office space at the catering hall until his district office is ready.

"I had no idea he was pro-life," said Janice Groff, a Bay Ridge social worker passing by the protest on 76th Street between Fourth and Fifth avenues. "I didn't vote for him, but now I really wouldn't vote him."

Protester Maritza Shelley, who carried a sign reading, "Golden, anti-abortion? Don't have one!" said she remembered her best friend having an abortion on her kitchen table when they were still illegal.

"Hangers are not just a symbol," Shelley said. "They were actual tools. We have fought too hard for this to just let it go."

Reached for comment after the protest, Golden said it was much ado about nothing. "Roe v. Wade is not going anywhere, it's a part of New York State's fabric," said Golden, who nevertheless told The Bay Ridge Paper that he was against abortion in all cases, including rape.

See **ABORTION** on page 2

Hit-run victim killed on b-day

Not bouncer's day to die

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

A Bay Ridge man celebrating his 78th birthday on Sunday was killed by a hit-and-run driver on the corner of Fourth Avenue and 92nd Street.

Frank Voci was crossing the street at 8:25 pm to buy a lottery ticket while his only son, Christopher Voci, 39, parked

the car. Voci was moved down by a light blue or green minivan heading north on Fourth Avenue.

He was taken to Victory Memorial Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. No arrests have been made and police are asking anybody who may have witnessed the incident to contact them. "We need everybody's assistance and cooperation," said Deputy

Inspector Mathew Pontillo, commanding officer of the 68th Precinct.

"I was shocked," said neighbor Esther Friedman, who described Voci as a caring man who fed all the animals in the neighborhood.

"The birds would come at 2 o'clock because they knew Frank was there," Friedman said. "And our squirrels would come."

See **HITRUN** on page 2

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

A bouncer at a Bay Ridge bar came about as close to death as you can without dying early Sunday morning after a man he ejected from the bar returned with a loaded .45-caliber gun, put the gun to his head and pulled the trigger.

The incident began at 3 am on Jan. 19 when bouncer Jaen Pawlak, 27, with the help of another bouncer and a bartender, threw Wayne Braga, 32, out of Lily's Public House, a restaurant and bar on Third Avenue between 88th and 89th streets, after employees found Braga in the women's bathroom.

After a scuffle with employees outside, Braga returned to the bar, pointed the barrel of his gun at Pawlak's head and pulled the trigger. When the gun did not fire, three off-duty police officers from the 60th Precinct who were in the restaurant tackled Braga. He tried to fire at them as well, but again, the gun misfired.



Lily's Public House on Third Avenue at 88th Street. The Brooklyn Papers / Greg Mangos

Braga then pistol-whipped one of the officers about the head and escaped out the front door.

The off-duty officers called 911 and gave chase as Braga ran down Third Avenue and ducked into The Loft, a bar at 91st Street.

After the bar turned their lights on, he killed the music, the bar on the 68th Precinct located Braga, once again, in the women's bathroom.

Police found five live rounds in Braga's gun.

See **BOUNCER** on page 2

Yemeni launderer confesses

Associated Press

A group of Yemeni shopkeepers in Brooklyn who were arrested during an investigation into secret funding for terrorist organizations have agreed to plead guilty to non-terrorism charges of money smuggling.

The lead defendant, Mohamed Ali Alriyani, admitted transmitting up to \$7 million without a license Tuesday during his plea in federal court in Brooklyn, prosecutors said.

Under a plea deal, Alriyani could receive less than four years in prison at a May 2 sentencing if his 14 co-defendants also agree to change their pleas to guilty. To date, six have done so.

Alriyani, 56, a naturalized U.S. citizen with no prior criminal record, and the other men were rounded up earlier this year for allegedly smuggling money to Yemen through his gift shop. The men, who initially pleaded innocent, claimed the money was going to their families.

Supporters of Alriyani, who has been held without bail, accused authorities of persecuting law-abiding immigrants in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Prosecutors have refused to discuss the case. But court papers revealed that the FBI had investigated Alriyani's links to a Brooklyn mosque that authorities once considered a breeding ground for terrorists, including the man who bombed the World Trade Center in 1993.

Ridgite's Miss NY

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

Bay Ridgites who have long prided themselves on the beauty of their neighborhood now have a new beauty to which to boast.

But while Ridge native Nadia Behette will be representing the Empire State in the Miss USA beauty pageant on March 24, which for the first time will be broadcast live on NBC, she is quick to tell you that the contest is not just about looks.

"A lot of people have misconceptions about pageants," said Behette, who was born in Bay Ridge to a Lebanese mother and Syrian father. "It's not just about beauty. It's about confidence, time management and seeing something through to the end."

Crowned as Miss New York at the statewide competition in December, Behette beat out more than 100 other women competing for the title.

"I couldn't believe I won," said the 25-year-old Behette, who attended Our Lady of Angels and the all-girls Fontbonne Academy before going off to Pace University in Manhattan.

"It was doing 100 things when I was in college," said Behette, who worked fulltime at IBM while attending Pace, where she was voted

freshman class president, was an active member of the Mayor's Volunteer Action Center (now the Mayor's Volunteer Center of New York City), and also volunteered with Inner-City Games, a foundation providing city children with the opportunity to participate in sports, cultural events and community activities.

But after she graduated and was "just working," Behette said, she needed something else to get involved in. That's when she got the idea to try out for a beauty pageant.

She says she opted for the Miss USA pageant over Miss America since the former does not have a talent component. But she is quick to add that applicants must be, "intelligent, poised and articulate."

Her first stab at the contest landed her second runner-up and gave her the drive to go for it again.

So the next year Behette went through the application process all over again, which included submitting photos and answering questions like, "What pets do you have?" "What are you most proud of?" and "What is your most prized possession?"

Behette also had to fulfill other criterion including not being married (there is a Mrs. USA pageant for that), and not having any children.

It was strange at first, Behette says of wearing an evening gown. "It was like playing dress-up." But she adapted quickly and found that it "gives you a chance to show your feminine side," something she says she wasn't able to do while working in corporate America.

Behette took the state crown wearing a light-blue V-neck dress from a boutique in Long Island and is now having one made by a designer in Rhode Island (although she wouldn't reveal any specific details).

"My family is used to me doing crazy things like this," says Behette, who is busy trying to drum up sponsorship from local Bay Ridge businesses to help raise the \$15,000 she says it will cost to bring her family and friends down with her for the Miss USA competition in San Antonio, Texas. "And let me tell you," Behette said, "that support is critical."

The grand prize for Miss USA, besides the crown, the sash and the title, is an apartment in the Trump Towers for a year (Donald Trump owns the pageant), a Ford Mustang, a year's salary and a cash award. During the year, in addition to representing the pageant, she must also serve as a spokeswoman for 2

See **PAGEANT** on page 2



Nadia Behette has been named Miss New York. Next up is Miss USA. The Brooklyn Papers / Greg Mangos

Shuffle boards

Ridge district to include S.I.

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

Brooklyn parents made their voices heard Thursday at a public hearing held by a special state task force charged with deciding what will replace New York City's 32 school boards.

"We have always relied upon our district office and community school board to be our eyes and ears where children and community were concerned," Fern Rossi, a District 21 parent, told the members of the Assembly and state Senate, eliciting cheers from the packed Diner Auditorium at Polytechnic University on Jan. 16.

The locally elected school boards are slated for elimination in June in a final shift of power that will put control of the city's public schools in the mayor's hands for the first time since 1969.

The all-day hearings in Downtown Brooklyn — there was a morning and an evening session, the final of five held around the city — provided the last opportunity for elected officials, parents, students and community members to tell the Task Force on School Governance Reform just what they wanted to see in

See **SCHOOL** on page 4

Polis come to B'klyn to salute Martin Luther King

By Patrick Gallahue

The Brooklyn Papers

Elected officials who spoke at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's 17th annual tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday all strove to measure their own successes and efforts — however partisan — against the principles of equality the slain civil rights leader advanced.

And all who spoke, including cultural and spiritual leaders, and original members of the civil rights movement, maintained that King's work remained unfinished.

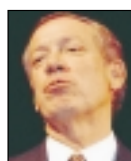
The guest list of prominent elected officials at the celebra-

tion included U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, Gov. George Pataki, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and Borough President Marty Markowitz. Each introduced their own policies as offshoots of the civil rights movement before more than 2,000 people in attendance on the national, state and city holiday, five days after what would have been King's 74th birthday.

Schumer pointed to his resistance of Mississippi Judge Charles Pickens, nominated by President Bush for the U.S. Court of Appeals, who is widely opposed by Democrats and civil rights groups because of his civil rights record, which



Chuck Schumer BP / Mangos



George Pataki BP / Mangos



Marty Markowitz BP / Mangos



Mike Bloomberg BP / Mangos

included his efforts as a judge to reduce the sentence of a man convicted in a 1994 cross-burning case.

"We have a long way to go and I will lead the fight against Judge Pickens," Schumer said. Bloomberg touted his recently announced reform of

the public school system, which proposes to unify curriculum and streamline the city's education bureaucracy.

"The right to a good educa-

tion is just as important as the right to vote," He said.

Spitzer announced that he would file an amicus brief backing the University of

Michigan's policy for giving preferences to black and Hispanic applicants, which the president this week opposed.

"We are trying desperately to create institutions of higher learning that are diverse, that include all people, but what did the president say?" He said, "No I am against that affirmative action plan!" Spitzer said, "Shame on him. I am your attorney general and on your behalf I am filing a brief that opposes the president."

Those elected officials were allowed to continue their speeches uninterrupted. But as Pataki spoke of education and healthcare as the hallmarks of equitable policy he was greeted by a few shouts of "what

about the money?" seemingly in reference to the state's appeal of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity's successful lawsuit against the state to increase funding to city schools.

Those shouts, however, were isolated and quickly hushed down by members of the audience.

"Let's work together, not just today, but everyday to keep the dream of Martin Luther King alive," Pataki said.

Markowitz touted Brooklyn as a microcosm of the "dream" articulated in King's famous speech, delivered at the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 28, 1963 as the culmination of the March on Washington.

See **KING** on page 4

R train kills man on attacks

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A man was struck and killed by a Manhattan-bound R train at the 77th Street station shortly before 6:15 pm on Jan. 21. The 22-year-old victim, who police believe was visiting New York from Virginia, was declared dead at the scene and was taken to the Kings County morgue where a medical examiner will rule on whether the victim jumped or was pushed, police said.

Steak knife

When two acquaintances got into a tussle on Coney Avenue at Bay 28th, one drew a steak knife and sliced the left side of the other man's head. The fight broke out at 2 am on Jan. 20. The victim was taken to Coney Island Hospital where he received stitches and was released. His blade-happy friend, who was described as a 38-year-old man, was wearing a black skullcap and blue jacket, police said.

Cleaned out

Burglars broke into a Laundromat and cleaned out its cash register, police said. Sometime between 10 pm on Jan. 19 and 7:50 am the next day, the thieves forced open the rear door of the laundry at Bath Avenue and Bay 25th Street and made off with \$400.

Bad trip

A man visiting Brooklyn from Randle, Wash., parked his car on 67th Street between 10th and 11th avenues on Jan. 13 at 2:30 pm. When the man returned 24 hours later to pick up his Honda Accord, he found the car had been towed. Police reported to police that the rear driver's-side window had been busted and his stereo, reportedly worth \$3,500, taken.

Diamond dogs

A woman said goodbye to a very expensive watch on Jan. 17. Sometime between 9:40 am and 7:45 pm, a thief broke into her home on 67th Street

62/68 Blotters

Between 10th and 11th avenues through the rear door, ransacked the place, and fled with the Rolex watch, valued at \$5,500, as well as a pair of diamond stud earrings, reportedly worth \$2,500, and a diamond ring valued at a cool \$1,000. The 36-year-old woman said the thieves also got her jewelry box.

Shoots, misses

Three thugs approached a man on Coney Avenue at Bay 28th Street on Jan. 20 around 2 am and, after saying something in Spanish, one of the men pulled out a silver handgun. He fired the gun, missing the victim, who had started to run away, police said.

No arrests have been made. The perpetrators are described as Hispanic males, around 5-foot-3 and weighing from 110 to 180 pounds.

Time to mug

A woman heading from work to her car at around 3 am on Jan. 17, was stopped by a man who asked her for the time. Before she had time to reply, the thief, who was wearing a red baseball cap and black jacket, slammed her into the side of the car and made off with her purse.

The 19-year-old victim was left with a bump over her left eye and was out \$240 in cash and a cell phone. The incident occurred on Third Avenue at 93rd Street.

Gun to chest

A woman walking along Bay Ridge Avenue was stopped at New Utrecht Avenue by a man wielding a gun. The thug approached his victim from behind and said, "If you don't give up everything, I'm going to kill you." When he pointed a black gun at her chest she handed over \$50 and her black leather suitcase, police said. The incident occurred on Jan. 20 at 9:30 pm.

Hands over zip

A cashier at a supermarket on 18th Avenue between 66th and 67th streets, called out for the manager when a man passed by with a note that read, "Be quiet. I have a gun. Give me the money."

The bandit, who also asked her for a roll of \$20 bills, fled without getting anything. The incident occurred at 5:10 pm on Jan. 19.

Water main leaves sub riders stranded

The Brooklyn Papers

The N and R trains, unaffectionately nicknamed the "Never" and "Rarely," lived up to their reputations and ceased early Friday morning when service between Bay Ridge and Park Slope was halted due to a water main break, leaving thousands of stragglers stranded at bus stops in the freezing weather.

A water main at 19th Street and Fourth Avenue ruptured in the pre-dawn hours flooding subway tunnels and interrupting M, N and R train service between 36th Street and Pacific Street.

The Fire Department said a combination of contractor work and the below-freezing temperatures caused a cap to pop off the main.

Commuters attempting to board the subway south of Pacific Street were apprised of the situation at stations and directed to nearby bus stops at Fifth and Third avenues.

The B63 bus, along Fifth Avenue, and B37 bus, along Third Avenue, filled up almost immediately and riders were left stranded as the billboards of passing buses read, "Next Bus Please."

— Patrick Gallahue

HIT-RUN...

Continued from page 1

the fastest around because Frank was always sure to feed them." "He wasn't a bench sitter," Friedman added, explaining that Voci would walk all along Shore Road feeding whatever animals passed his way.

Voci moved into the apartment building where he lived, on Shore Road and Oliver Street, almost 50 years ago with his wife, Shirley, who died seven years ago.

Voci's neighbor, Mary, described him as "a wonderful person."

"I lived in this building for 32 years and he was here well before that," Mary said, adding that she also knew his son, Christopher, who had grown up in the building and still shared an apartment with his father.

"I used to see the birds follow Frank when they saw him going down to the park with a bag of food. It was unbelievable," Mary said. "I think they're missing him already."

A wake was held for Voci on Wednesday. High funeral mass is scheduled for Thursday morning at St. Bernadette's Church on 13th Avenue at 83rd Street at 9:30 am.

Boy, 11, latest hit-run victim

In a week that had already seen three fatal hit-and-run incidents in Brooklyn, an 11-year-old boy was struck by a car at 8:10 am on Wednesday as he was crossing 80th Street between Ninth and 10th avenues, police said.

The car fled and the boy was taken to Lutheran Medical Center where he was treated for a broken arm and released.

Continued from page 1

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The three off-duty officers — John Brennan, Phillip Roy and Eric Castiglione — were all unarmed, police said.

Brennan, who suffered the brunt of Braga's pistol-shooting, was treated at Lutheran Medical Center for abrasions to the head and back. He was involved in the fatal Bensonhurst police shooting of suspected car thief John Lagatta on Jan. 2.

Brennan's gun may have accidentally fired the run-in with Lagatta when he broke the driver-side window of the stolen Mazda minivan Lagatta was driving with the butt of his gun, police said. The shooting was one of four fatal police shootings of suspects in the first few days of the new year.

Brennan has been on desk duty pending the outcome of an investigation into the shooting.

Deputy Inspector Matthew Pontillo, commanding officer at the 68th Precinct, called Brennan's actions "nothing short of heroic."

Brennan was one of four to tackle Braga at Lily's Public House.

"Here you have a police officer who is unarmed," Pontillo said. "When everybody was running for their lives, he ran toward a man with a loaded weapon. Talk about a selfless act of bravery."

Braga was arrested and arraigned on Jan. 19. Charges against him include attempted murder in the second degree, attempted assault in the first degree and criminal possession of a weapon.

Braga was last arrested in 1999 at the Verrazano Narrows Bridge toll plaza in Staten Island for drunken driving and resisting arrest.

Bail was set at \$50,000 and Braga will face a grand jury on Jan. 24.

Continued from page 1

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ABORT PROTEST...

Continued from page 1

"What we're really discussing here are restrictions," he said.

Those restrictions, which are decided on the state level, include parental notification, an

enforced waiting period, parental consent, and a ban on late-term abortions, all of which Golden said he would support. He also supports legislation

that would recognize a fetus as a life. "When a fetus is killed in a criminal act, the perpetrator should be charged with manslaughter," said Golden, who believes abstinence-only

sex education should be taught in schools. He called condom distribution in high schools "ridiculous."

Phillip Bennett, who traveled from Brooklyn Heights to join the march said he used to be anti-abortion. "And if I changed my mind, Marty can too," Bennett said.

The protest in Bay Ridge was one of many nationwide on Jan. 22.

Ranz said she considered the event a success and attributed the small turnout to the bitterly cold weather and weekday scheduling.

"We were just trying to make a point," Ranz said.

PAGEANT...

Continued from page 1

Carol M. Baldwin Breast Cancer Research Fund.

While her parents are supportive, Belette says they weren't thrilled about her parading around in a bikini in front of thousands of strangers.

And neither was Belette, who says she took it a lot of guts (not to mention a special spray-on glue to hold her bikini in place).

In preparation for the big day, Belette has tried to cut her sweet tooth and no longer allows herself to eat anything at her favorite Bay Ridge eatery, except for interviews. During a chat there with The Bay Ridge Paper, Belette sipped herbal tea and occasionally eyed longingly at the pastries on offer.

Representing New York, Belette must for Belette must look put-together every day. She's gotten her make-up application

time down to about 20 minutes, but then there's the blowout on her long, dark curls to a more "sleek" and manageable style, which can take another 20 minutes.

In addition to her training regimen, which includes a daily school, taking broadcast classes in the continuing education department at New York University.

After quitting IBM after 9-11, Belette joined an international business vision start-up, ART (Arabic Radio and Television) because she wanted to dispel some major misconcep-

tions that Arabs abroad held of Americans and vice-versa, she says.

Brennan's other big cause is fighting breast cancer. As the daughter and granddaughter of breast cancer survivors, Belette feels passionate about fighting the disease.

"If I win Miss USA," Belette says, quickly correcting herself, "I mean, when I win, I am going to focus on breast cancer survivors."

But for right now, Belette is just focusing on winning the Miss USA crown.

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Lutheran Medical Center

As part of "play therapy," young children are crashing into plants and knocking down tall building made of blocks, encouraged by counselors and therapists at the new Healthy Connections Wellness Center in Bay Ridge.

The toys and blocks used in play therapy provide the children with their only direct way to articulate their grief and emotions in response to a real world that had turned scary overnight.

While 9-11 maddens for some, the attacks and their aftermath are just beginning to disturb the minds of the children who had family members directly affected in some way. Help these distressed children, particularly important to Bay Ridge because no other Brooklyn community suffered more deaths from the Sept. 11 attacks.

Traditionally home to many families of New York City firemen and police officers, Bay Ridge has a direct express bus service to Wall Street and a heavy concentration of people who work in the area near Grand Zeno.

In addition, many of the diverse neighborhood's communities — Hispanic, Asian and Arab-American — have been disproportionately affected by the economic downturn and/or ethnic prejudices over the past year. The Healthy Connections Wellness Center reflects this diversity with its multilingual delivery systems, offering services in both Arabic and Spanish.

"The Bay Ridge community continues to face significant problems and obstacles after 9-11," said Orianne Sharif, Director of Healthy Connections. "As the long-blocked fears and anxieties are rising to the surface for many of these children, it is more timely than ever for us to meet their needs. The immediate positive response we've received makes it clear that this community truly needs this Wellness Center."

Lutheran Medical Center President Wendy Z. Goldstein said, "We are extremely pleased to provide these much-needed free services to

a Brooklyn community that is so unique in its connections to the Sept. 11 attacks and their aftermath.

The new Healthy Connections Wellness Center, enabled by a \$750,000 Federal Health Resources and Services Administration grant, the largest of its kind — will help Brooklyn residents of all ages deal with lingering anxiety and mental anguish through multilingual counseling services, art and play therapy for children, parent workshops, crisis intervention services and links to preventive and primary care resources.

The funds for the Healthy Connections Center are part of more than \$2 million in grants recently given to Lutheran Medical Center to provide health care, training and support for Brooklyn communities affected by 9-11 and its aftermath.

Lutheran also received a Project Liberty grant for \$696,062 to provide short-term crisis counseling and community outreach throughout Brooklyn for all individuals affected by the 9/11 attacks, and a FEMA/OMH grant for \$700,000 to provide mental health treatment and services for primarily Hispanic fourth and fifth graders and their parents in Sunset Park.

"The grants we've received for these important mental health programs are a reflection of our success in meeting the needs of Brooklyn's diverse communities," said Lutheran Medical Center executive vice president Jim Siles.

"Our community-oriented multidisciplinary system targets the neighborhood's specific needs, produces a detailed annual demand analysis, and partners with community-based organizations to effectively reach out to the residents, rather than expecting them to come to us."

With over 600,000 patient visits a year, Lutheran's Bay Ridge Family Health Center — one of the largest such networks in the country — sees twice as many patients as most hospitals, including some of Manhattan's large medical centers. Lutheran's nine full-time community health centers, 12 school-based health centers, and 30 medical partnerships bring healthcare to Brooklyn's diverse communities — many of which are made up largely of recent immigrants — in settings designed to ensure the patients' comfort by reflecting their cultural backgrounds, with physicians and nurses who speak the languages that are spoken in the communities.

The recently-opened Brooklyn's Chinese Family Health Center was designed using feng shui principles and is open on Sundays to accommodate many of the community's residents' work schedules, while the Park Ridge Family Health Center includes a prayer room for the large Moslem population in the neighborhood.

'Stars' out for MMC

Maionides Medical Center

It was a magical night recently when 700 Maionides supporters came together at the Winter Garden in Lower Manhattan to honor their favorite hospital and bid on "viral masks" decorated by stars at stage, screen, and sports pages.

The auction for the masks created for the Star Project, said Maionides' President and CEO Stanley Breznoff, "injected the evening with significance and fun. And it was great to be supported by both Muhammad Ali and Evander Holyfield."

The Star Project was launched this year to raise funds for the expansion of the Brooklyn Infants and Children's Hospital at Maionides.

In addition to the boxing world champions, star masks were also auctioned by Oscar winners Tom Hanks and Marisa Tomei; actors John Travolta and Chevy Chase; baseball stars David Cone, Mike Piazza and Don Larsen

represented; Beverly Sills; Donald Trump; and jewelry designer Stephen Dweck, whose mask was made of silver.

The annual Kids' Night on Broadway organizers held a star-masking party that drew Broadway actors such as N' SYNC member and "Rent" star Joey Fatone, Soprano daughter Jamie-Lynn Sigler, now in "Beauty and the Beast"; and Marissa Janet Winkler, star of the new hit "Happily."

In addition to Mr. Breznoff, Pamela S. Brier, executive vice president and COO, and Martin Payton, chairman of the board of trustees, presided over the event.

Senior sex ed

CNR Health Care Network

"Sex and Seniors: Being Safe While Staying Active," is a new educational pamphlet sponsored by CNR Health Care Network.

The CNR Health Care Network has developed this new educational pamphlet designed to inform senior citizens on the subject of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). This pamphlet includes information for sexual

ly active seniors about how they can avoid contracting STDs and what to do if they become infected. Additionally, the pamphlet discusses menopause, medications, impotence, and the effects they have on the sex life of seniors.

For a free copy of "Sex and Seniors: Being Safe While Staying Active," or any other educational pamphlet, call toll-free at 1-877-4CNR-CALL (1-877-426-7225).

Last-minute candidate in Ridge council race

Gentile challenges Seminara over top ballot position

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A last-minute candidate and petition challenge have heated things up in the race to capture the Bay Ridge-Dyker Heights-Beinstein City Council seat.

A relative unknown, Daniel Maio, 42, a Republican registered with the Board of Elections in Brooklyn but who currently lives in Queens, surprised his five opponents when he filed nearly 2,000 signatures with the Board of Elections just hours before the midnight deadline on Jan. 14, possibly securing a position on the ballot.

Maio, who owns a business called Identity Map Company, has already run in two elections — for Manhattan borough president in 2001 and for state senate last year against Tom Duane.

While he lost both elections, Maio, who was born in Taiwan, said he decided to enter this race because he feels the Chinese community "is not well represented."

In such a crowded field, he believes he can pull enough Asian-American votes to make a difference.

Because it is a non-partisan election, all candidates who get on the ballot will have to choose a name for their line. Maio has chosen "Verzazano



Gentile BP/PH

Seminara BP/PH

Scisura BP/PH

Harrison BP/PH

O'Keefe BP/PH

Coalition" because, he said, he wants to stress the diversity of the community.

Other candidates running in the special election to fill the seat vacated by Marty Golden when he took office as state senator on Jan. 1, include former state Sen. Vincent Gentile, 60th Assembly District Leader Joanne Seminara, Community Board 10 Chair on Steve Harrison and Community School Board 10 Vice President Carlo

Scisura, all Democrats. The only other Republican in the race is former Giuliani commissioner Rosemarie O'Keefe, who has the strong backing of the Republican and Conservative parties.

Maio said O'Keefe "did everything possible to get me off the ballot."

Former Republican candidate Bob Caputo, an assistant professor at St. Francis College and community liaison for

Borough President Marty Markowitz, gathered upwards of 2,000 signatures but decided to drop out of the race.

O'Keefe, 59, a longtime community activist, has received staunch GOP support across the city and state including endorsements from Giuliani, who will be hosting a fundraiser for O'Keefe at the Bay Ridge Manor on Feb. 10, Golden, Rep. Vito Fossella, Kings County Republican

Committee Chairman Hy Singer and Brooklyn Conservative Party boss Jerry Kasar.

Now that petitions have been filed candidates are vying for the first position on the ballot.

That place, so far, belongs to Seminara, who filed first with four signatures on Jan. 2, the day the mayor declared the Feb. 25 election.

Gentile, 44, a three-term state senator who lost his bid for re-election to Golden last November, filed specific objections to Seminara's peti-

tions, claiming that those signatures should not give her credit for having filed first. Instead, Gentile says, whoever filed the required 1,385 signatures should secure first place on the ballot.

Under those rules, Gentile would grab the coveted first ballot position.

But Board of Elections spokeswoman Naomi Bernstein said Seminara was in compliance, since she filed the rest of her signatures before the Jan. 14 deadline.

The way the filings stand right now, Seminara filed first, followed by Gentile, then O'Keefe, Harrison, Scisura and Maio.

While Seminara is claiming that Gentile is trying to knock her off the ballot, Gentile's campaign manager, Elanot Rudolph, said, "We're only objecting in terms of ballot position."

Seminara, 46, called the challenge an attack on the Democratic process. "Elections are

won at the ballot box, not in the courts," Seminara said. She added that she had no plans to file any petition challenges.

In the meantime, Harrison, who registered under the "Neighborhood First" banner, will have to change his party name because it is too similar to Seminara's "Neighbors First," Bernstein said.

Maio, who will have to move to the district by the day of the election, said that if elected he plans to approach the job with the same precision and planning he uses for the maps his company makes.

"The way I approach a map is to collect as much information as possible, understand every detail," Maio said. "Politically, that's what I'm bringing to the table."

On Jan. 30, the Board of Elections commissioners will officially announce the candidates who will appear on the ballot.

Trial program helps recruits

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Gizenia Lasalle, a 24-year-old receptionist from Coney Island, says she has always wanted to enlist in the Army.

Frustrated after two failed attempts to pass the required written tests, Lasalle finally passed on her third try, in December, thanks in no small part to March 2 Success, a new, free online pilot program created in tandem with Princeton Review, the renowned if not prohibitively expensive test preparation company.

"March 2 Success teaches you test-taking techniques and enhances a person's chances of passing the Army test," said Sgt. Kevin Thomas, recruiting

commander for the Bay Ridge Station. The recruiting station is known as the Bay Ridge Blazers, he said, because "they are always on the move."

At least 15 recruits at the Bay Ridge Station, on Fourth Avenue between 85th and 86th streets, have used the testing program since it was launched on Nov. 15.

In response to the growing number of recruits interested in enlisting in the Army, but not able to pass the written test, the armed forces teamed up with Princeton Review to offer free online test-taking tutoring to all who are interested. Anybody can register at www.march2success.com.

Those trying out the service can indicate if they would like to receive enlistment materials

from the Army, but Thomas stressed that there is no obligation. "This program is open to everyone," he said.

Even the sergeants have been checking it out. Sgt. Felix Rodriguez, 30, says he likes the verbal drills and tests them out when he gets the chance.

"I like to know what I'm referring the recruits to," Rodriguez said.

Major Brenda Arzu, education officer for the city recruiting battalion, said the program is being tested and will be evaluated after the pilot program ends on Feb. 15.

"We have a lot of kids interested in joining the Army, but they have to wait because they can't pass the test," Thomas said.

Once a recruit fails the test, they have to wait 30 days before trying again.

The Blazers recruit in schools, colleges and malls and say that almost 30 potential recruits come into the office each month. Out of those, about a third enlist.

While the pending war with Iraq has not changed that number, the number of recruits fluctuated after Sept. 11, 2001, because of a sense of patriotic duty that people felt, Thomas said. That patriotic feeling died quickly, however, and according to Thomas, most young recruits now come in for more practical reasons — money, college and a job.

"The Army is the largest and best corporation," Thomas said, noting that in these trying economic times, the monetary



Sgt. Barry Walker, Shelligann Harrack Singh and Sgt. Felix Rodriguez at the Blazers Fourth Avenue recruiting station.

and educational benefits are strong incentives. Worried that those incentives have caused a disproportionate percentage of the military burden to be borne by the poor and members of minority groups, Rep. Charles Rangel, a 30-year congressional veteran who fought in the Korean War, and a strong opponent of war with Iraq, is drafting legislation to reinstate the draft. Rangel says that if there is a draft, and the people who

make the decisions have kids in the military, they will be less likely to rush into war.

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Ridge woman, 94, quits day job

Heads west to family

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A mere 29 years past the standard retirement age, Alma Chagnon has decided to leave her job, leave Bay Ridge and head for sunny California.

But the decision didn't come easy for the 94-year-old Bay Ridge native, who credits her job for her good health and sharp mind, not to mention her longevity.

Chagnon has assisted thousands of senior citizens at the Bay Ridge Center for Older Adults over her 20 years of working there.

During that time she has helped clients apply for Medicaid and food stamps and instructed them on how to fill out tax forms.

"She's a real powerhouse," said Linda Farrell, the center's office manager, who added that nobody could get anything past Chagnon.

A driving force behind the construction of the Shore Hill Towers, an extensive senior housing development on Shore Road and 91st Street, Chagnon moved into the West Tower when the buildings were completed approximately 25 years ago.

She worked for the Bay Ridge Association of Senior Citizens, but when their of-



Shore Road's Alma Chagnon is all packed up and bound for California. The Brooklyn Papers / Margo

fices closed in 1983, Chagnon moved over to the Bay Ridge Center for Older Adults.

Up until a year ago, Chagnon drove to the office on Ovington and Fourth avenues, three days a week. She has since donated her car and relies on the free van and mini-bus services for seniors in the area.

"Rather than sitting at home doing nothing, I was helping people," said Chagnon, who has mixed emotions about moving to Rancho Murietta, Calif., where she will live with her nephew, his wife and their three children.

Born in Coney Island, Chagnon's family moved to Bay Ridge when she was less

than a year old. "I remember when it was country here," Chagnon said, reminiscing about taking walks with her brothers Joseph and Dominic along the shore when the water used to come right up to their feet.

After Joseph, 93, and Dominic, 89, both died within a month of each other last January, Chagnon decided that it might be time to move closer to her family in California. Dominic had lived just a few doors down from Chagnon.

"I hate the thought of sitting home all day," Chagnon said. "California is a beautiful place, but it's nothing like Bay Ridge, Brooklyn where I can see the bridge, the

water and Staten Island."

Chagnon is already thinking about places she can volunteer once she arrives out West.

"I only retired one week ago and I already miss everybody there dreadfully," Chagnon said. "I worked with a wonderful bunch of people."

On her last day, the center organized a party with a cake, which Chagnon described as "so beautiful it was a sin to cut."

There will be a dinner in her honor on Jan. 23, but Chagnon said, "It will be hard to say goodbye all over again."

"I will miss her hugs," said Vladimir Viner, a co-worker at the center. "Everyday she had a hug for me and for anybody else who needed one."

KING...

Continued from page 1

"We can share Dr. King's audacious dream by working together to create stronger neighborhoods all over Brooklyn," the borough president said. "I ask you to take a look at what's going on in your own community and find a contribution you can make."

Following those speeches a civil rights veteran and friend of King shared memories of the movement.

Fred Gray, who was the attorney for King and Rosa Parks, gave the keynote speech. Gray, who is also an author, held aloft the lesser-known heroes of civil rights, such as Claudine Colvin, a 15-year-old girl who refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Ala., bus to a white man nine months before Parks.

Colvin, who now lives in the Bronx, was summarily dragged off the bus, but efforts to stage a boycott proved unsuccessful.

SCHOOL...

Continued from page 1

the committee's recommendations, which they will deliver to Gov. George Pataki and the Legislature by Feb. 15.

The hearing came on the heels of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's major announcement last Wednesday in which he revealed his plan for a sweeping overhaul of the city's educational system.

Bloomberg's proposal would replace the city's 32 community school districts with 10 instructional leadership divisions called Learning Support Centers. These centers would be guided by one of 10 regional superintendents. Each of these superintendents would have 10 local instructional supervisors, who would oversee no more than a dozen schools.

Under the current proposal, School districts 20 and 21, covering Bay Ridge, Bensonhurst, Dyker Heights, Gravesend, Brighton Beach and Coney Island would join with all of Staten Island to form District 7, the largest of the 10 proposed districts, with 137,186 students, according to the Department of Education.

School Board 20 Superintendent Vincent Grippo declined to comment on the proposed restructuring.

Districts 13, 14, 15 and 16, including Brooklyn Heights, Park Slope, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Sunset Park, Red Hook, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, Boerum Hill, Downtown Brooklyn, Fort Greene, DUMBO, Prospect Heights, Crown Heights, Williamsburg,

Greenpoint, and portions of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights, would become District 8, with 82,593 students.

Curriculum would be controlled from the Tweed Courthouse, and would be the same citywide, except in 200 "successful schools," which, the mayor said, would be allowed to continue to dictate their own curriculum, hire their own teachers and set their own budgets.

At Thursday's hearing, Schools Chancellor Joel Klein and Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott outlined the proposal to replace the community school boards with "Parental Engagement Boards."

"Community school boards were conceived with the intent of giving a voice to the under-represented. However, they have failed to give voice to those with the most at stake," said Walcott, whose four children have all gone through city public schools.

The mayor's proposal, however, did not sit well with everyone.

Cesar Soccia, a parent in District 21 and a former PTA president, said in her testimony, "We want our superintendent in our school district — not the Tweed Court House in Manhattan. We need local governance."

Carlo Sciscusa, vice president of School Board 20, said the district was advocating for Parental Engagement Boards, "but the think members should be elected and there should be a role for community members on the boards as well," Sciscusa said.

In addition to the Parental Engagement Boards, the mayor is proposing that each school will have a parent coordinator, selected by the principal, who would also function as an ombudsman. These coordinators would be "trained to play a key role in listening and responding to parent concerns."

Klein announced the new uniform curriculum on Jan. 21, stressing reading and math skills, to be adopted citywide. The chancellor made an announcement from PS 172 in Sunset Park, which he identified as one of the city's 200 top-performing schools, which will be exempt from implementing the uniform curriculum.

Gray recalled. It was his bravery in the face of injustice, however, that "gave us the model courage to boycott," Gray said.

Saying the "dream has not been fulfilled" and pointing to the shortage of jobs for black people and the corollary high rates of incarceration, he said, "There are still problems ahead of us not withstanding our rights."

Then, making a less partisan call for action than some of those that preceded him, Gray said, "Our lives should be geared towards the manifestation of right-

eousness of the heart."

Where there is righteousness of the heart there is beauty in the character, and if we have beauty of the character we will have harmony in the home, and if we have harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation, and when we have order in the nation there will be peace in the world," Gray said.

The event was sponsored by BAM, Markowitz and Medgar Evers College, and was followed by a free screening of the film "The Rosa Parks Story,"

with introductory remarks by Cicely Tyson.

The speeches, which included remarks from Dr. Edison O. Jackson, president of Medgar Evers College; Rabbi Art Kohnblitt, of Temple Shalom; Imam Mohammad Hafiz, of the Makki Mosque; and the Rev. Clinton Miller of the Brown Memorial Baptist Church, were preceded and followed by stirring performances from the Grammy-winning Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir and Atlanta-based vocalist Lizz Wright.



Child's grief needs special attention

Q: "My granddaughter, 4, was 2 when her mother was killed in a car accident. Last year, at her church preschool, they were good about telling the children to take their work home to their parents. This year, in public school, the teacher tells them to give their work to Mommy. My granddaughter will rip her work up or start throwing things. When she calls me, she cries and begs me to please go get her mommy." — a grandmother

A: What may seem like a harmless request can become another painful reminder for a child dealing with a major loss.

"My father died when I was 3, and I hated things like Father's Day cards and father-daughter breakfasts," said reader Laurie Glisco. "I didn't understand why my father wasn't here anymore. However, I knew he wasn't coming back."

Although it's difficult to help a preschooler understand that death is final, Glisco says, it's important to do so.

"The best part is the child's crying. The ones you have to worry about are the quiet ones," she says. "They may look like they are being brave, but they're in much worse shape than the ones who cry and scream."

The loss of a parent stays with a child forever, but there are many ways to ease the journey, says Lynne Hughes, founder of Comfort Zone

Parent-to-Parent



By Betsy Flanger

Camp, an organization that holds grief camps for kids.

"Be an advocate for the child. Tip off adults, new teachers, and guidance counselors along the way to help them be more sensitive about things from Mother's Day to mother-daughter activities to who crafts are made for."

"Children need a buffer to make the wound a little less painful," says Hughes, whose mother died when she was 9 and whose father died when she was 12.

"Without going into graphic detail, clarify in concrete terms that Mom died in a car accident and will never come back. Make it clear that the girl had no role in her mother's death, and that her mother loved her very much."

• Keep Mom's legacy alive by talking about her, and through connections such as a photo album or memory book.

• Preschoolers, who are too

young to pinpoint their feelings, typically express themselves in their actions. To help an unsettled child feel secure again, grief counselors suggest that caregivers should keep up routines as much as possible, teach phrases that express feelings, and express their love more often.

"A simple first step to help this 4-year-old girl, several readers suggest, is to let her teacher know that the girl's mother is dead."

"There are many children who do not live in a two-parent household," says a Girl Scout leader who has dealt with a similar issue in her troop. "A one-word change will make a world of difference for this child and will not put the teacher out at all."

But reader Linda Kinnaman, who was orphaned as a child, says the solution is more complex than simply talking to the teacher.

"The child should be offered grief counseling if she hasn't already," Kinnaman says. "Telling this teacher to not refer specifically to 'Mommy' won't solve the real problem. There will be many Mother's Day cards to be drawn throughout elementary school... Her mother's death will be an issue for the rest of her life. Thoughts of her mother being somewhere will soften the sense of loss, even into adulthood."

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B'KLYN PAPERS

OPINION

Corporate national pastime

FOR THOSE of you boomers out there, remember when a professional football game began at 1 p.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m.?

As a young adolescent in Brooklyn, I was part of a family ritual every Sunday afternoon. Being Italian-American, we would have a nice pasta dinner around 2 o'clock, then dad, brother and myself would retire to the living room to catch the second half of the Giants game. By 4 p.m., the Farnuccio family would be on our way to catch the late-afternoon movie first feature at our local movie theater (in the '50s, you got two movies for the price of one).

Boy, have things changed! Today's professional football games are really "marathons," lasting three-and-a-half to four hours. The going joke is, "I watched a football game yesterday in between the commercials!" Alas, the corporate sponsors have taken over our game. So much so, that they have even altered the rules of engagement. Did any of you catch the playoff doubleheader on Saturday, Jan. 11? In the old days, when the sport was still mostly sport, they played the early playoff game at 1 p.m. Eastern time. The second game followed at 4 p.m. Part of the reason was that in December and January, especially in Eastern and northern cities, it gets really bitter cold by sunset. Having played football in college, I can attest to that.

No rational, sensible athlete, who cares about his health, wishes to play in temperatures (wind chills) below 30 degrees. All that macho baggage is just that — in bitter cold weather the playing field becomes concrete (especially artificial surfaces) and simple "bats" become deadly. Yet, the yuppies who run television, set the schedule so that the "early game," the Tennessee-Pittsburgh game, began at 4 p.m., which meant that by dusk, that field was cold and those hits really damaged.

Look at how many players got injured, some seriously. All for the purpose of bringing in more "consumers." Fast forward to 8 p.m., the Philly-Atlanta game (in Philadelphia, not just downstate brutal. The wind chill must have been below 10 degrees, and the fans looked too cold to wave as the camera zoomed about the stands. Imagine how the players hurt themselves each time they landed on the frozen tundra or received a pounding? All for a few dollars more.

They even changed the rules in football, to allow for more commercial time. It seems that a few years ago people were complaining about the length of games — you know, two hours of action and two hours of luxury car commercials was getting to be too much, even for Joe Coach Potato. So, in its infinite wisdom, the NFL rules committee helped "speed up" the game — at the EXPENSE of the game! It used to be, since the days of Red Grange, that when a player stepped out of bounds the clock would stop until the next snap of the ball. Made sense, part of the allure of the strategy of the game itself. Well, the television yuppies decided to give away their precious commercial time, and the game speeded up. Now, up until four or five minutes to go in each half, even if a player steps out of bounds, the clock keeps running.

That made it that much more difficult for teams far behind to come back late in a game, as they are able to do in college games. All for the mighty commercial. Speaking of commercials, this writer recalls the days of two-and-a-half hour Giants game and off to the movies. In those better times, a one-minute timeout was just that — remember Julie London singing for some cigarette brand and having her song cut short for the next snap from center? A minute was a minute!

When will the fans out there flood the league and the networks shouting "enough is enough!" When will the NFL Players Association (where are you Ed Gargery now that we need you?) stop sacrificing its players' health and well-being for fat wallets? They took my game away, and I don't even know if I want it back. Perhaps I'll move to the continent and watch soccer, the world's greatest "football" game. They got it right, two hours and you go to the nearest pub!

Philip A. Farnuccio is a baby boomer, Brooklyn born, bred and educated (Brooklyn College '74). He can be reached at brooklynphilly@aol.com.

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LETTERS

Bloomie should focus on classes

Song for a king.

The Brooklyn Papers' Greg Margo

I was very interested in reading your article regarding Mayor Bloomberg's school reform ("Mayor dooms districts," January 20). However, I didn't see anything mentioned that will make that much of a difference in my children's classrooms to enhance their learning.

When I hear Mayor Bloomberg say he would like to get the class size down from 32 students to 28, I realize that he really doesn't care. He's just saying that to the public. For example, a typical class size in our school is 38 to 40 students, squeezed into a room with four computers that are very rarely used — a room meant to hold 50 students at the most.

When he talks curriculum, my only wish is that the teacher would be allowed to use textbooks in the classroom again and promote expository reading, i.e., social studies and science. Forget the new theory of group work. It doesn't work. Not in a class of 30. It's only promiscuous socialization. The kids know there's not enough time for the teacher to get around to all the groups to check on their progress. Children are passed on to the next year without grade-levels because there is not enough time in the new class coming up. A child can fool around and disrupt an entire class all year, fail the course, and as long as he or she shows up every day for summer school, whether he or she passes the test or not, the child will be promoted. The children and teachers have figured this out. The Board of Education administrators have not.

If a teacher has 40 students, five classes, that's 200 students he's responsible for. If he gives homework once a week of five questions, that's 1,000 answers he should grade. I know for certain, my child's homework is not checked because the same question he got wrong in his science homework was the same question he got wrong on the test. There's not enough time in a day for a teacher to save everyone. It is not the teacher's fault, it's the

administrators of the system.

So, while Mayor Bloomberg reforms the educational system on paper, I'm waiting to see reform in the classroom.

—Ms. L. Rosado, Bay Ridge

Keep fence

To the editor:

The article "Flip-flop on park fence" (Dec. 30) makes it seem the \$400,000 fence around Steadman Square is the reason vagrants are going to the park. As a Parks committee Chairman, Eleanor Petty says in the article "has kept neighborhood people from using the park." Say what? The fence is actually a safety barrier for any vehicle that may crash into Steadman Square. Take a look and you will see a very sturdy and attractive wrought-iron fence that has two openings for safe pedestrian travel.

I implore Brooklyn Parks Commissioner Julian Spivack to make every effort to preserve the fence. I also congratulate the Senator Stein 300 Block Association on the recent approval regarding the historic significance of the lovely brownstones on that street. Having been a member of the 200 Block Association for many years, I know how important it is to keep Bay Ridge looking good. And having cars parked all around lovely Steadman Square (on the 200 Block) is not a step in that direction.

—Jack La Torre, Bay Ridge

Right on gays

To the editor:

I would like to commend former state Sen. Vincent Gentile on his stance on the Gay and Lesbian bill that recently passed in Albany ("Gentile: 'no' to gay bill," Dec. 30). While I don't agree with his vote, politicians are supposed to listen to their constituency, regardless of their own personal feelings. He voted his constituents' best. Hopefully others will learn from you and listen to the people they represent!

—Diane Hunt, Bay Ridge

Historically speaking

Tinseltown rebellion in B'klyn

GENERALLY, MOVIES are associated with the brown hills of California and a sign on them that once read "HOLLYWOODLAND." But the origins and early development of the motion picture industry started right here in Brooklyn.

Of course, making movies was not an industry exclusive to Brooklyn. Experimenters also worked in Manhattan, the Bronx and in a laboratory in New Jersey run by Thomas Edison. But the first commercial film shot in New York was filmed by Charles E. Chiniquin on a rooftop on St. Marks Place in 1894. From there, it was a straight line to the Academy Awards.

Brooklyn was an ideal location for filmmaking in the early 20th century. It had people and city scenes, woods and farms, railroads, mountains and a beach. And in 1905 it had a studio, Viatragraph, in the wilds of Midwood.

Viatragraph's studio on today's Avenue M and East 16th Street had a resident acting troupe headed by John Bunny, Clara Bow, Jack Haley and several great hourly hires: Cecil B. DeMille, Rudolph Valentino and Lev Trotsky.

Outside the studio, actors performed on Kings Highway, Flatbush Avenue and the sands of Coney Island. In the workshop, they recruited a newspaper cartoonist, Winsor McCoy, from his sketching Bay home to originate Gertrude the Dinosaur, one of film's first animations, "Little Nemo" and "Buster Brown."

Soon other companies invaded the Brooklyn territory, namely, Edison and American Mutoscope and Biograph. Edison started with the Brooklyn Bridge and

CAPITOL CONNECTION

Shrike kills middle class

ALAN S. CHARTOCK

RAISING TUITION at the State University of New York is a move fraught with danger for the Pataki administration. The handpicked Pataki-ites on the SUNY board of trustees have moved to raise tuition at the university by an almost unbelievable 41 percent.

Tuition will increase by \$1,400 per student to \$4,800 a year, which is more than many middle-class parents can afford, especially when you consider that the tuition is only the beginning. Then comes room and board and many, if not most, of these parents will be faced with humongous real estate property tax hikes as well.

Maybe, if Mayor Mike Bloomberg gets his way, with increased property taxes.

The Pataki-ites counter that the State University hasn't raised its rates for years, that private colleges cost a lot more money; and that the poorest students will be taken care of by special scholarship programs like TAP (the Tuition Assistance Program). There is a certain logic here since it is Pataki who, above all, has recognized that the key to electing the governor is the middle class. Without that demographic, you can't win in New York. And if you can't win with middle class votes, you can't give back taxes to the rich.

You can be sure that this budget will slash and burn programs for the mentally ill, the incarcerated, the homeless, and the elderly. And if you can't win with middle class votes, you can't give back taxes to the rich.

But when you start up with middle-class folks who are just trying to educate their children, you are playing with political fire in the same way that you play with fire when you attempt to take control of their apartments. All of a sudden, those quiet, apathetic voters start to roar.

When I went to the City University Hunter College, there was a great inscription, the tuition was zero. The city's philosophy about education was the same in that institution, the tuition was zero. The city's philosophy about education was the same in that institution, the tuition was zero.

Every time the state faces a fiscal crisis, whether under that fraud, the faux-Democrat

Hugh Carey, or under his Republican friend, Pataki, it is seen as an excuse to tax the middle-class parents who just can't keep up. As a SUNY college professor, I have known one kid after another who didn't qualify and because their parents earned just a little too much money. So the kids are forced to take loans that will plague them for years and to work several jobs when they really ought to be studying.

There are just as many kids who can't afford to go at all. That's why all city and state college tuition should be free. Not too much to expect in the richest country in the world.

If you look at most (but not all) of the Republican state senators, you will find folks who sent their kids to private schools. The fine, I told you, and it was incredibly expensive but I was proud to do it.

There are many parents and students who cannot afford it. I have always been convinced that in the hearts of many of the elected politicians who went to private schools there is a preference to help out their alma maters by hurting the State University.

From Manhattan to Buffalo, young people have received a wonderful education because of the state and city colleges. To his credit, the Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver has said that a tuition raise isn't going to happen. I hope he's right. This is the Democratic Party at its best.

Now a Republican, however, one Nelson Rockefeller, who had a vision of a great State University. He built it, and he knew what he was doing. In his great wisdom, he put a unit of that university in almost every senatorial district in upstate New York. These are districts where they elect Republican senators. In many of these districts, the State University campus is among the largest employers. A tough dilemma for these folks to vote against the interests of middle-class parents who voted them in, and can just as easily vote them out.

Let's hope that for once, someone does something for both reasons.

Alan S. Chartock is the executive publisher of The Legislator Gazette, a weekly newspaper about New York government.

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John Manbeck is the former Brooklyn borough historian. He was recently appointed to the state Local Historians Advisory Council.

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INSIDE

THEATER

PAGE 60 2

Kudos for 'Uncle Vanya' at BAM

DANCE

PAGE 60 3

Kids Cafe premieres new Byrd work

BROOKLYN EVENTS CALENDAR: GO 2

The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

(718) 834-9350 • January 27, 2003

Miller's time

Makeover for one of boro's oldest diners

By Tina Barry

for The Brooklyn Papers

Miller's Famous Restaurant in Borough Park has undergone a radical facelift. Joe Miller, son of Michael "Mike" Miller (the second owner of Miller's Famous Restaurant) and the grandson of Chris Miller (originally Christopher Mylonopoulos of Cypress), the restaurant's founder, is the new co-owner. With John Odorisio, a patron of Miller's since childhood and a butcher with 20 years of meat-cutting experience, the two transformed the aging restaurant, a neighborhood institution since 1947, into a gleaming replica of a 1950s diner.

"I was adamant that the new design should stand out from other diners," says Miller.

It does. Surrounded by stores whose facades were new 30 years ago, the refurbished restaurant, with its shining red-and-white tiled exterior edged in chrome, looks more like something you'd see along Route 66 than a diner nestled under the shadow of the old El train track.

"Even the design of the tiles on the wall are a replica of a subway station," says Miller, who sketched his ideas on a napkin before consulting an architect.

To expand the diner's seating capacity from 35 to 75, Miller designed two replica subway cars and had them built on site and attached to the outside of the diner. Patrons can now enjoy a hamburger, comfortably seated in one of the deep, red vinyl booths, while looking out the train's window.

Continuing the subway motif, a miniature train runs along a track that hangs directly over the funky, '50s-style chrome counter.

"We want people to be reminded of a Manhattan restaurant," Miller says of the renovation, then adds, "but we don't have Manhattan prices. Two guys can eat here like kings. We give a lot of food. That's what we're known for."

Chef Miller will do the cooking following the recipes handed down from his father and grandfather. His four-course dinner special, served each evening, features a fruit cup or cup of soup du jour, an entree of prime roast sirloin, turkey, ham or brisket served with a potato and vegetable, coffee or tea and Jell-O or rice pudding—all for \$8.95.

"Never leave the restaurant hungry" was my grandmother Electro's motto, and it's our motto as well," Miller adds.

Serving quality cooking in enormous portions is a practice Miller intends to continue.

"Everything here is homemade. We make our own corned beef, our own brisket. We cook our own roast beef, our own fresh ham and our own turkey. When someone orders a turkey sandwich, I'm cutting them turkey that I roasted that morning. Nothing is pre-made!" Miller says with pride.



New look for old friend: (Top) The newly renovated Miller's Famous Restaurant at New Utrecht Avenue and 56th Street. (Above) The restaurant before its makeover. (Right) Owner-chef Joe Miller's cherry-lime Rickey.

He hopes that Miller's Famous Restaurant will be considered a destination for hamburger aficionados the way Nathan's has become dog lovers to Coney Island.

"We closed [in June 2002] with an 8-ounce burger, and that's a pretty nice size. Now we have the biggest with our 9-ounce burger, and it's delicious — juicy and so fresh," he says.

"We use hand-boiled eggs but no anchovies. We put in the eggs, and the feta cheese, and the oil and vinegar and the olives, and we turn the salad ourselves. We mix it together like they do in Greece, in the old town. We are famous for our Greek salads."

Disappointing customers who might compare him unfavorably to his predecessors isn't an option for Miller.

"People come in here, and they see a young kid — I'm 32 years old," explains Miller. "And if they say, 'Oh, the kid made it all fancy but the food stinks,' then

I have no business. I'm feeding people who my grandparents served 50 years ago."

As if on cue, an older couple, with unmistakable Brooklyn accents, walks in. "Hey, Hey Joey," they say. "Whazzy Jimmy Bow's picture?"

"That's hah brotha," says the man pointing to his wife. "Yeah," she says, "Jimmy was the baltendah at the El-al-got. Yaw fatha had thah pictuash hangin' behin' the counta for a thousan' yeas."

Miller promises to re-hang Jimmy Bow's picture before the diner's Jan. 18 opening. "If God is willing."

The couple leaves happy.

"This is perfect!" says Miller. "This is not staged! If you stay here all day, you'll see people dropping in saying, 'I remember your grandmother!' They tell me, 'When I came to America we couldn't afford to eat. Your grandmother used to give us french fries with cheese and a lime Rickey.' [The lime Rickey is still on the menu.] She never let anyone leave without being fed."

"Tell Tina how long you've been coming here," Miller asks Al, the diner's fruit man, who wanders in to say hello to Mike and "the boys."

"Oh," says Al. "Like, 40 years! I knew



his grandparents when his father was this big." He holds his hand near his knee.

Patrons who remember the original Miller's, which opened in 1947 on 13th Avenue at New Utrecht Avenue, and have seen the restaurant evolve since 1957 in its present location on the corner of New Utrecht Avenue and 56th Street, needn't worry about a rocky transition. After 36 years of 18-hour days, the still youthful Mike Miller has retired, but he plans to continue as a consultant, whenever "the boys" need him, and adds, "Joey and John are both young and they have a lot of incentive. The diner will be excellent."

When I visited, the kitchen was not yet open, so instead of food, Miller searched for gifts for "The train ride back home." He gave me a large polo shirt with the Famous Miller's logo — a train — on its back; a wooden massager in the shape of a bird; a plastic key chain; and a denim, snap-bracelet for my daughter.

"You have to leave with something," he says, "so you don't forget us."

DINING



Pre-show eats

Four-star, wunderkind chef Thomas Ferlesch (pictured), most recently of Cafe des Artistes and before that Vienna 79, has opened his first restaurant, Thomas Beisl, across Lafayette Avenue from the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

"In Vienna," says Ferlesch, "bistros serve the young and the old, intellectuals and students, plumbers, doctors, artists, everyone. It makes a wonderful atmosphere." It is just that "some one, come all" spirit that Ferlesch hopes his Thomas Beisl (beisl means bistro) will be to the Fort Greene neighborhood.

Ferlesch did most of the renovation himself, stripping and staining antique chairs that he picked up on Atlantic Avenue. The lighting is moody and romantic with amber-tinted sconces and candles on the tables.

Thomas Beisl's location — there's BAM of course, Mark Morris' dance studio is up the street, and Urban Glass, a glass-blowing studio, is a few blocks away — all but ensures an art-loving crowd. Plan on seeing black-clad diners eating velvet, eggplant terrine topped with goat cheese or a seafood salad with scallops, parsley and jalapenos. Wiener schnitzel with cucumber salad and parsley potatoes, and beef goulash made with braised beef cheeks and served with spaetzle, are among the entrees.

No one skips dessert in a Viennese restaurant. (What do you think inspired the Viennese dessert table at all those Bar Mitzvahs?) There's palatschinken, crepes stuffed with apricot jam or chocolate hazelnut cream, and a Linzertorte. Ask for the torte mit schlag — that's with whipped cream.

Thomas Beisl (25 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street) accepts American Express. Entrees: \$13-\$16. The restaurant is open daily, from noon to midnight, and serves brunch Saturdays and Sundays, from 10 am to 4 pm. For reservations, call (718) 222-5800.

— Tina Barry

MUSIC

Pied piper

Omni Ensemble's flutist broadens audience for eclectic classical music

By Kevin Filipksi

for The Brooklyn Papers

"For our 20th anniversary season, we wanted to do music that we liked," explains flutist David Wechsler, a native of Midwood and founder of the Omni Ensemble, which has brought chamber music of all stripes to enthusiastic Brooklyn audiences for two decades.

Omni Ensemble's upcoming concert, Feb. 1 at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, pits two giants of the 18th and early 19th centuries — Bach and Beethoven — with a triumvirate of French composers from the 20th century — Claude Debussy, Albert Roussel and Jacques Ibert.

The eclectic program is par for the course for the ensemble, as Wechsler says, "One of the reasons I started this group to begin with is that there are certain contemporary and 20th-century music that people would want to hear." Along with Wechsler, the Omni Ensemble includes cellist Sara Wollan — who's been with the group for four seasons, and pianist Jim Labit, a composer who joined the ensemble at the beginning of last season.

Wechsler and pianist John Creek started the group in 1983. Pairing weighty works by two acknowledged masters with lesser-known but no less forceful music by three 20th-century Frenchmen is typical of the ensemble's programming method: its first concert this season included works by Ravel and Richard Strauss alongside Norman Dello Joio's 1948 Trio and pianist Labit's own Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano.

Wechsler enjoys finding works that fit the players' sensibilities, including the great artists for this concert, violist Sam Kephart and harpist Laura Sherman.

"The Bach G-minor sonata (originally for flute and harpsichord) is done with a transcription for harp," he notes. "Since the pedaled harp is relatively recent invention — it came into use in the mid-19th century — there's no baroque music written specifically for it."

Also being performed in a transcription for harp is Ibert's

See OMNI on page GO 4



Be our guest: Harpist Laura Sherman is one of the guest artists performing with the Omni Ensemble on Feb. 1.

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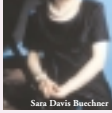
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Play it again, Sam

Mendes directs, and Emily Watson stars in top-notch double-bill at BAM Harvey

By Lisa J. Curtis
The Brooklyn Papers

On Saturday night, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Harvey Theater, theatergoers gazed stary-eyed at actors Harvey Keitel, Bernadette Peters, Kate Winslet, Frances McDormand and Nathan Lane. And they were just in the audience.

The giants of the Great White Way came out for the Donmar Warehouse production of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night." Both "Twelfth Night" and Donmar's "Uncle Vanya" are directed by Sam Mendes ("Cabaret," "American Beauty"), and his efforts were met with standing ovations and three curtain calls each—and for good reason.

Both "Twelfth Night" and "Uncle Vanya" will be presented in repertory at BAM through March 9. (On six Saturdays it will be possible to see both "Twelfth Night" and "Uncle Vanya" with a matinee and evening performance.) The comic "Twelfth Night," however, can't help but seem less important than the powerfully affecting "Uncle Vanya."

physically, embodying the comedy of a Charlie Chaplin or Jerry Lewis.

Selma Cadell's metamorphosis from disapproving mother of Uncle Vanya to the saucy gentlewoman Maria in "Twelfth Night" has an equally jaw-dropping effect.

Of the two plays, Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya" (newly updated by Brian Friel) is especially delightful—albeit in a mournful way. The workaday world of Uncle Vanya's estate is turned on its ear by the arrival of the professor and his young wife, Yelena, played by Helen McCrory.

Even the train of Yelena's skirt is a delight, McCrory.

The aptly named Mark Strong gives the kind of a strut that Cleo does should also go to costume design and the Donmar's Mark Thompson, when McCrory, as Olivia, comes to seduce—Ce-

scenario, the gasping in the audience is as much for her hold gesture as it is for the exquisite art de down she wears so well.)

The aptly named Mark Strong gives a commanding performance as Dr. Mikhail Astrov in "Uncle Vanya." It is an impeccable exhibition of barely restrained vigor, lust (for Yelena) and self-destruction, all the while managing to create a sexy, cool confidence.

It is the tormented, real performance of the exquisite art de down she wears so well.)



Top-notch cast: Simon Russell Beale (left) in the title role of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," and Emily Watson as Viola, disguised as Cesario, in Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night."

When in the role of the most beautiful woman in the play's power.

Beale is again excellent, this time as the supercilious, paternalistic servant Malvolio with his grand ambition of a union with his mistress, Olivia. When his love for Olivia is mistaken for madness, his anguished pleas for help—even while hidden behind a mask and straitjacket—

When in the role of the most beautiful woman in the play's power.

Beale is again excellent, this time as the supercilious, paternalistic servant Malvolio with his grand ambition of a union with his mistress, Olivia. When his love for Olivia is mistaken for madness, his anguished pleas for help—even while hidden behind a mask and straitjacket—

subject is a mournfully shrouded and grieving Olivia, and other times, it is Viola, missing her own brother, believed to have been drowned in their shipwreck.

Mendes, director of the Oscar-winning film "American Beauty," the Tony Award-winning production of "Cabaret" and the scandalously made Nicole Kidman in "The Blue Room," returned to BAM to direct these two productions as a grand finale to his 10-year run as founder and artistic director of the Donmar Warehouse. (Next, he will direct the Broadway revival of "Oystrer," starring audience member Peters, which opens in April.)

To understand why Mendes is so highly respected is to watch McCrory make her first entrance as Yelena. All is silent as she saunters across the width of the stage and lets a flower in her hand slowly swing through the air in an enu-

filled circle until it lands on the table in a satisfying whack. This is a perfect example of the perfect visual wit with which Mendes directs his actors.

Whether you see both plays on separate evenings or on the same day, the opportunity to see such talented actors undertake such radical transformations and still render top-notch performances in each, is too important to miss.

THEATER

William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" and Anton Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," adapted by Brian Friel, will be presented by the Donmar Warehouse at the Brooklyn Academy of Music through March 9. Tickets are \$30, \$55 and \$75. For show details, call 718-636-4100 or visit www.bam.org.

BAM's dialogue with director Sam Mendes will take place Feb. 5 at 6 pm at BAM Rose Cinema. Tickets are \$8.

WHERE TO GO

compiled by
Nathan Rosenblatt

THURS, JAN 23

HEALTH LECTURE: Luthar Medical Center offers a talk on cardiac and lung disease, 2:30 pm. Show Hall, 1100 Broadway, 1100 Broadway. (718) 630-9230. Free.

COMMUNITY MEETING: Transportation Committee of Community Board 6. Discussion of planned subway station booth changes, 6:30 pm. St. Mary's Rectory, 41 First St. (718) 645-3027.

FILM AND FUNDRAISER: Brooklyn Museum of Art, 1200 Eastern Pkwy., presents "The Lives of the Artists and the Artists of the Lives of the Artists," 7:30 pm. Fullerton Ferry Landing, (718) 624-2083.

MEETING: Union Center for Women hosts an open meeting and welcome night for potential members, 7:30 pm. Myra Park, 1200 Eastern Pkwy., (718) 748-7708. Free.

WORKSHOP: Susan Margolis offers a talk on her business Sanity 1 program to help self-employed professionals and small business owners, 7:30 pm. Park Slope Food Coop, 282 Union St. (718) 499-2831. Free.

LECTURE: Stefano Carboni, associate curator, department of Islamic art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, presents slide lecture, 7:30 pm. PS 321, 180 Seventh Ave. (718) 262-8475. Free.

LOW BAR: Playwrights Center, 1000 Broadway, presents a staged reading, 8 pm. 1000 Broadway, (718) 222-1100. Free.

GALAPAGOS CAFE: Shakespeare, Teenage Prayers and Qatze perform, 8:30 pm. 710 North Sixth St. (718) 384-4356.

BARBES BAR: presents a "Summer Jam," 9 pm. 376 North St. (718) 965-9177. Free.

RED ROOM LOUNGE: presents saxophonist Andy Parsons, 55 cover, 9 and 10:30 pm. 444 Court St. (718) 875-1981.

GALLERY PLAYERS: presents "Don't Call Us..." a musical revue, 8 pm. See Sat.

IMPACT THEATER: presents "The Golden Boy," 8 pm. See Sat.

BROOKLYN LYCEUM: presents "31 Bond," 8 pm. See Sat.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "Twelfth Night," 7:30 pm. See Sat.

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Fri, Jan 24

AUTHOR TALK: Ken Blanchard is guest speaker at Power of One Productions. He talks about his book "One Minute Manager," 9 am. Brooklyn Bridge Marriott, 333 Adams St. Call for ticket information. (718) 246-7000.

SUPPORT: Maintaining Medical Center hosts a group for those who have been affected by

Tiny dancers

Kids Cafe Fest features 'Pucci: Sport' and new work by Byrd

By Paulanne Simmons
for The Brooklyn Papers

Dancers aren't born but nurtured, often starting from a very early age. And that's exactly what Diane Jacobowitz has been doing—with a little help from a roster of celebrity choreographers—for nine years with Kids Cafe Festival.

The festival is produced by Dance-ware, an organization Jacobowitz founded in 1979 to produce arts events, festivals and educational workshops for children and young adults. This year's Kids Cafe Festival, at the Brooklyn Music School and Playhouse, included dance and sport workshops on Jan. 19, taught by the Peter Pucci Plus Dancers, a modern dance troupe whose namesake founder is a former all-American athlete and member of the modern dance group Phobias.

There will be an opening night benefit concert on Jan. 24, featuring Jacobowitz's own Kids Company in the world premiere of "Memories of Bitter-sweet Lives," a newly commissioned work created by modern dance

DANCE

"Kids Cafe Festival 2003" will be held at the Brooklyn Music School and Playhouse, 120 St. Felix St., at Lafayette Avenue, in Fort Greene. The benefit concert, featuring "Memories of Bitter-sweet Lives" by Donald Byrd, is at 8 pm on Jan. 24. Tickets are \$100.

Festival performances of "Pucci: Sport" are at 3 pm on Jan. 25 and Jan. 26. Tickets are \$10 for children, \$15 for adults. For more information about the schedule, call (718) 522-4976. To make reservations for the festival performance or the benefit concert call (718) 622-2548 or visit www.kidscafe.com (NYC event) on the Web.

choreographer Donald Byrd. Kids Company has been working on the piece for an intensive 10-week rehearsal period with Byrd and his assistants.

The Peter Pucci Plus Dancers will also host Kids Cafe Festival performances and perform excerpts from "Pucci: Sport" on Jan. 25 and Jan. 26 at 3 pm. Kids participating in the workshops will perform in the part called "Basketball." And Nana Simopolous,

another festival host, will perform her own Greek and Middle Eastern-influenced music at the festival.

Other festival performance highlights include the Shomandosh Contemporary Dance Theater and Gestures Ensemble from the Harbor Conservatory for the Performing Arts in Harlem.

Jacobowitz's Kids Company started in 2000 with "kids who really wanted to study dance more seriously," she says. Teenagers from throughout the city, who make it through an audition process, benefit from the program's professional environment that both challenges and encourages.

Using space in the Berkeley Carroll School in Park Slope and the Mark Morris studio in Fort Greene, the teenagers work with internationally known American choreographers like Twyla Tharp, David Dorfman, Doug Varone and Bill T. Jones. This spring Kids Company will again work with Morris, who since his group's move to Fort Greene, has been closely involved with the company, creating original pieces just for them.

Noah Weiss, a junior at Stuyvesant High School, has been with the company since his group's first year. "Being a part of a company and not in a class makes me feel that what I'm doing is more important. You don't only have an obligation to yourself, but also to everyone else in the company. There's a sense of camaraderie," he told GO Brooklyn.

Noah, who lives in Park Slope, has danced in pieces by Mark Morris, David Dorfman and Donald Byrd.

"This gives me an opportunity to have a challenge in dance because we're working with professional choreographers and doing professional pieces," he said.

In December, Noah performed with Kids Company at the Dancers Responding to AIDS benefit concert at the St. Marks in the Bowery Church, and at a Christmas concert at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center.

These kinds of events help Noah "get a taste of what it might be like to be a professional dancer." And he's excited, he says because "I get to share months of work with an audience, and I get a feeling of accomplishment."

Noah is not sure whether he wants to be a professional dancer, but he does know that dance will always be a big part of his life. He is one of a group of 20 youths, choreographer-dancer Jacobowitz is working with this year.

"I've worked with kids my whole life," she says. "I became a mother in the early '90s. I got the idea then of focusing on kids. It's an important focus now. It's close to my heart."

The festival gives youngsters in Kids Company and throughout the city and beyond the opportunity to learn, to share and to show off. And it gives proud parents the chance to see their kids at their most enthusiastic and graceful.

PERFORMANCES

LIBRARY EVENT: Brooklyn Public Library, Central Branch, observes Chinese New Year and celebrates "Year of the Sheep" with performances and programs. 2 pm. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

BROOKLYN LYCEUM presents "31 Bands," a play based on a real 1980s party house in Virginia. \$40. \$15 students and seniors. 7 pm. 227 Fourth Ave. (718) 866-8000.

THEATER: XO Projects and Theater present "Craw," a play about four people crawling each other and the need to break free. \$15, \$10 students, 3 and 7-15 pm. Old American Can Factory, Third Street and Third Avenue. (718) 608-6336.

BARGE MUSIC: chamber music program of works by Gershwin, Beethoven, Mozart, Dvorak and Debussy. \$35, \$20 pm. Also free midday concert at 1 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music

presents Donmar Warehouse's production of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night." \$75, \$55, \$30. 2 pm. Also "Black Veil." \$35, \$30, \$20. 7 pm. Harvey Theater, 551 Fulton St. (718) 636-4111.

GALLERY PLAYERS: presents "Don't Call It...," a musical revue. \$15, \$12 children 12 and younger and seniors. 8 pm. 199 14th St. (718) 595-0547.

CONCERT: Frederick Ivins conducts a concert of works by Mozart, Albin, senior songs by Morley, Elgar, Rutter, Thompson and others. \$5 donation. 8 pm. All Saints Church, Seventh Avenue and Seventh Street. (718) 636-1492.

IMPACT THEATER: presents Clifford Odets' drama "The Golden Boy." \$15. 8 pm. 190 Underhill Ave. (718) 390-7163.

ABOVE THE RIGHT BANK: Music by a variety of groups. \$5. 6 pm. 409 Kent Ave. (718) 388-3929.

VOYEURIST THEATRE: presents its new work "Meat is Floating

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By: Performers, bands, rants, cabaret acts, notes, drink and torture one another. In small ways. \$12-9 pm. 146 Metropolitan Ave. (718) 388-2251.

ABOVE THE RIGHT BANK: Music by a variety of groups. \$5. 6 pm. 409 Kent Ave. (718) 388-3929.

VOYEURIST THEATRE: presents its new work "Meat is Floating

CONCERT: Plymouth Church presents Dan Zanes in a musical performance. 3 pm. Call for ticket information. 75 Hicks St. (718) 624-4743.

KIDS CAFE: Danceware Inc. presents its ninth annual Kids Cafe Festival, a performance of dance, music and theater hosted by Peter Pucci Plus Dancers and World Music of Nana. \$15, \$10 children. 3 pm. 120 St. Felix St. (718) 622-2548.

BEHIND THE SCENES: Brooklyn Museum of Art invites you to discover real and imaginary adventures that take place in the quietest corners of the museum. \$6, free for children

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BEHIND THE SCENES: Brooklyn Museum of Art invites you to discover real and imaginary adventures that take place in the quietest corners of the museum. \$6, free for children

12 and younger and museum members. 4 pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000.

OTHER

THEATER: The Brooklyn Museum of Art presents a performance of "The Golden Boy." \$15. 8 pm. 190 Underhill Ave. (718) 390-7163.

CONCERT: Plymouth Church presents Dan Zanes in a musical performance. 3 pm. Call for ticket information. 75 Hicks St. (718) 624-4743.

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The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob

Sat. Feb. 15th 8-10:30pm

A New York rabbi travels to Paris and gets mixed up in a comedy of errors. This is complicated by a broad slapstick farce about a bigoted businessman (Louis de Funes as Victor Pivert) who is forced to disguise himself as a rabbi. With echoes of silent-screen humor, this film is regarded in some circles as one of the funniest films ever made. Nominated for the 1974 Golden Globe Awards.

Featuring post-screening discussion with Mr. Paul Rothman, Independent filmmaker/Founder of the Brooklyn Jewish Film Festival.

Time of Favor

Sat. Feb. 8th 8-10:30pm

Winner of six Israeli Oscars including Best Picture, Time of Favor is a taut thriller about the tense relationship between Orthodox Jewish Nationalists and the military. An Orthodox soldier finds his loyalty torn between his Rabbi and his commanding officer.

Featuring post-screening discussion with a representative of the Israeli consulate.

Leon the Pig Farmer

Sat. Feb. 15th 8-10:30pm

In this young British satire, Leon Geller is a "nice Jewish boy" who accidentally discovers that his biological father is a gentle pig farmer in Yorkshire. As he considers the differing lifestyles of the two sets of parents, Leon has to make a decision about his future.

Featuring post-screening discussion with Simcha Weinstein, former associate of the British Film Commission.

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Sheer poetry

Poet laureate looking to reward borough's budding wordsmiths

By Paulanno Simmons
for The Brooklyn Papers

What Whitman must be smiling. His beloved Brooklyn, the borough that inspired his greatest work, is finally giving poets the recognition they need. Borough President Mary Matarazzo is launching "Brooklyn Poetry Outreach," a monthly poetry reading series at the Park Slope Barnes & Noble, 267 Seventh Ave. at Sixth Street. The reading will feature an adult poet selected by Brooklyn Poet Laureate Ken Siegelman followed by an open mic and finally a young poet chosen by Siegelman.

Siegelman is inviting students from elementary through high school to submit their best work to him. The selected young poet's parents, relatives and friends, as well as community leaders and the public are invited to attend the readings, during which the youngster will be awarded a certificate of recognition from the borough president. [All winning poems will appear on the borough president's Web site at www.brooklyn-usa/index2.html, along with the poet laureate's poem of the month.]

The program is really the brainchild of Siegelman, who was appointed poet laureate on Jan. 24, 2002.

"The position of poet laureate was left open to whatever ideas the poet laureate had," Siegelman told GO

POETRY

"Brooklyn Poetry Outreach," a monthly poetry reading series hosted by Brooklyn Poet Laureate Ken Siegelman, 267 Seventh Ave. at Sixth Street, begins Jan. 27 at 6:30 pm with poet-singer Marion Palm. Open mic sign-up begins at 6 pm. For more information, call (718) 855-9066.

Poems will be judged by their artistic use of poetic devices, sensitivity to social issues and the inventiveness of their personal search. Send entries to Ken Siegelman, 2225 W. Fifth St., Brooklyn, NY 11223.

Brooklyn. "I expanded it to include the reading series to make poetry a more inclusive vehicle for all Brooklynites."

Siegelman believes the position should not be merely an honorary one to advance the career of the poet. "There are many different poets in Brooklyn, but they are not localized and don't meet each other," he said. "I thought it would be a good idea to bring together all these groups in a prestigious place — Barnes & Noble — a beautiful, beautiful place."

Siegelman, who will be 57 on February, taught social studies for 34 years, 32 of them at Abraham Lincoln High School in Coney Island. While

he was teaching, Siegelman came up with the interesting innovation of using poetry to teach social studies to his students, many of whom were learning English as a second language.

"Language was the only thing that stood in their way," said Siegelman. "I used my poetry to bridge the language gap."

At first teachers and publishers were skeptical. Siegelman said they asked, "What would a social studies teacher know about poetry?"

He showed them that poetry could personalize the subject and induce critical thinking.

"In two of my books, 'Urbania' and 'American Imprints,' for each poem I created a brief synopsis of the social and political context with which the poem was written and one or four critical thinking questions, which forced the reader to question what the poet was actually saying," he said.

Despite the initial skepticism, "When it took off, it was extremely slow," said Siegelman.

Today, Siegelman is the author of nine books of poetry, three of which have been distributed by Teacher's Discovery, Discovery Enterprises and the Gifted Education Press, as well as Siegelman's daughter, Imma Updell. And three of his books have been purchased by the Rockefeller Library at Brown University.

Brooklyn's Poet Laureate Ken Siegelman

The Brooklyn Papers / Craig Margolis

One of Siegelman's favorite subjects is the neighborhoods of Brooklyn in all of their glorious diversity. In "Gerritsen Beach" he writes, "Green cut-out Shanties/Still trial many of the front windows, clustering/At Easter/Much the way some outside Christmas lights/Always seem to linger well into mid-February." In "Bensonhurst," Siegelman gives Brooklynites heroic grandeur. "It was the fathers, Grandfathers/And all their sons/Conceived in parked Buicks with the passion/Of hot blooded Romans who never read/Shakespeare/Or heard of the Renaissance..."

The poetry series will begin on Jan. 29 with poet-singer Marion Palm reading. Palm, who lives in Sunset Park with her son and their two cats, is the borough president's plan to grants. Her work is archived in the Oral History collection at the National Museum of Naturalization and Im-

migration on Ellis Island, where she is recorded reading a poem about her grandmother Theresa coming to America with her son, Sven. Palm is the author of six chapbooks. Her poetry speaks to the condition of recent immigrants: separation from family, striving to fit in, expectations and disappointments of those who must negotiate between two languages and two different cultures.

After working with Markowitz on this project, Siegelman believes he and the borough president have something in common.

"All his life Marty aspired to be a borough president," says Siegelman. "And all my life I've wanted to be poet laureate."

Now Siegelman is proud to be part of the borough president's plan to "provide morale and a revitalized sense for Brooklyn and to reach out to Brooklyn's rich heritage."

OMNI...

Continued from page G 01

"Enti" act, a lovely miniature originally composed for flute and guitar. The Debussy Sonata for Flute, Viola and Cello are being performed, because, as the flutist says, "they're for odd combinations of instruments, and are really beautiful pieces to hear."

Interestingly, Wechsler and Wolfman have never performed in concert the second Beethoven sonata for piano and cel-

lo — marked by a lengthy and exquisite first movement adagio — which should only add excitement to their interpretation.

The ensemble plays in the intimate confines of the renovated concert hall at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, where Wechsler is a member of the faculty. With 100 seats, he considers it "the perfect size for this kind of music."

After 20 years of performing for loyal audiences in Brooklyn he also plays flute in the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra — Wechsler weighs in on the continuing debate of classical music.

"But it's not an entirely dead issue," he continues. "Opera is growing, and has been for the last 10 years. And with 'La Boheme' on Broadway and Mark Morris' version

MUSIC

The Omni Ensemble, with guest artists Laura Sherman and Sam Kephart, are performing by Beethoven, Debussy, Ravel and Bartok. Tickets are \$15, \$12 students and \$8 seniors. Tickets are available at Lincoln Place in Park Slope. Tickets are \$15, \$12 students and \$8 seniors. Visit www.omniensemble.org on the Web or at (718) 859-8649.

of 'The Nutcracker' [the 'Hard Nut'] at BAM, it opens up standard places to new audiences with a new look and sensibility. I think there's hope."

Show must go on

The fallout from 9-11 continues. The Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music scheduled to perform a Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music recital with pianist Sara Davis Buechner at 3 pm on Jan. 26, however, the Vancouver, Canada-based group is unable to enter the country in time for the concert due to the indefinite extension of the visa application process put into place by the Immigration and Naturalization Service following the terrorist attacks, according to Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music manager Wanda Fleck.

Instead of cancelling the performance, Buechner will give a solo recital on that date and time at the same location, the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, on Lafayette Avenue at Forest Street. Buechner — a faculty member of New York University who has performed with the New York Philharmonic and has just returned from a Japanese tour — will perform a program featuring music from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Opening with Mozart's Sonata in D major, Buechner then plays Chopin's Sonata No. 3 in B minor before entering into the trodden piano territory. The six "Salon Pieces" of Rudolf Frick are lighthearted works, as are George Gershwin's five "Rhapsodies." Buechner wraps up her recital with George Wein's "Rhapsody in Blue," in a solo piano version.

The Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music hopes to have Buechner and the Sorella Quartet return to perform the cancelled Schumann quintet next season, said Fleck. Tickets are \$15, \$5 students. For reservations, call (718) 855-3053.

Part of that hope is a musical group that Wechsler has helped form at the Conservatory of Music.

"We've started a community group, and there's been a big response from people looking to participate in the music in a more hands-on fashion," he explains. "This, in turn, makes them better audience participants. The biggest challenge is to get a response from the younger generation, which we are — we're getting a range from high school kids to adults in their 50s."

Such groups take Wechsler back to his youth: "When I was growing up in Brooklyn, there were several groups like this, including one in Borough Park that I played in. Education is the key, and we are now bringing music education to schools. It's music through the ages, from baroque to contemporary."

Through its concerts and teaching, Wechsler is trying to ensure that audiences of all ages enjoy the delights that classical music can bring.

"When you're young, you think it's old-fashioned," he says. "But that always changes the more you learn, the more you know and the more you hear."

WHERE TO GO...

ILLUSTRATIONS AND COMEDY. \$2. pm. St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 140 Montague St. (718) 768-9471.

PUPPETWORKS: "The Prince and the Pea." 7:30 pm. Jan. 25. 2:30 pm. See Sat. 2:30 pm.

BASEBALL REGISTRATION: Prospect Youth Council has registration for the spring season. 1 to 5 pm. See Sat.

KIDS CAFE: Canceled. See: presents Kids Cafe Festival. 3 pm. See Sat.

OTHER:

BLOOD DRIVE: at East Midwood Jewish Center, 815 10th Ave. 12:30 to 4 pm. 1625 Ocean Ave. (800) 852-8000.

TALMUD CLASSES: Congregation Beth El, 177 Remsen St. (718) 596-7772.

LECTURE SERIES: Congregation Beth El, 177 Remsen St. (718) 596-7772.

CONCERT: Brooklyn Philharmonic Chamber Series features music by Western composers that have been influenced by Indian and Persian musical forms. Presented in association with "The Adventure of Harnam," the current exhibit of paintings from the 16th century. \$10, \$10 seniors and students, 3 pm. Brooklyn Museum of Art, 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 620-0853.

CHAMBER MUSIC: Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music presents a program featuring works by Mozart, Chopin, Fauré and Gershwin. \$15, \$5 students, 3 pm. Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Avenue at Forest Street. (718) 855-3053.

BARGE MUSIC: chamber music by Beethoven, 7:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

BAROQUE MUSIC: Sympatica, a new early music ensemble, performs selections by Handel, Purcell and Telemann. \$10, \$5 students, 3 pm. Clinton St. (718) 624-0083.

BAROQUE MUSIC: with the Weavings and Turn of Love. Sun. 12:30 to 2:30 pm. See Sat. 2:30 pm. See Sat. 2:30 pm.

THEATER: 10 Projects and Theater presents "Crawd," 7:30 pm. See Sat. 7:30 pm. See Sat. 7:30 pm.

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Shows must go on

The fallout from 9-11 continues. The Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music scheduled to perform a Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music recital with pianist Sara Davis Buechner at 3 pm on Jan. 26, however, the Vancouver, Canada-based group is unable to enter the country in time for the concert due to the indefinite extension of the visa application process put into place by the Immigration and Naturalization Service following the terrorist attacks, according to Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music manager Wanda Fleck.

Instead of cancelling the performance, Buechner will give a solo recital on that date and time at the same location, the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, on Lafayette Avenue at Forest Street. Buechner — a faculty member of New York University who has performed with the New York Philharmonic and has just returned from a Japanese tour — will perform a program featuring music from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Opening with Mozart's Sonata in D major, Buechner then plays Chopin's Sonata No. 3 in B minor before entering into the trodden piano territory. The six "Salon Pieces" of Rudolf Frick are lighthearted works, as are George Gershwin's five "Rhapsodies." Buechner wraps up her recital with George Wein's "Rhapsody in Blue," in a solo piano version.

The Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music hopes to have Buechner and the Sorella Quartet return to perform the cancelled Schumann quintet next season, said Fleck. Tickets are \$15, \$5 students. For reservations, call (718) 855-3053.

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