



Gentle 'SOB martyr' comment brings flush to BRCC luncheon



COUNCILMAN VINCENT GENTILE, AT THE BRCC LUNCHEON, CALLED STATE SEN. MARTY GOLDEN AN SOB — "SENATOR OF BROOKLYN."

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Touting Brooklyn as a 2012 Olympic destination and home to future national conventions, both Democratic and Republican, Borough President Marty Markowitz, roundly praised plans to build a professional basketball arena in the Downtown area for the National Basketball Association Nets, during his address at the Bay Ridge Community Council's annual President's Luncheon at the Bay Ridge Manor Saturday.

But it was a pregnant pause by Councilman Vincent Gentile, a Democrat, that held the rapt attention of more than 150 dignitaries and community leaders attending the 53rd annual luncheon.

Playing on his rocky relationship with Marty Golden, the former Republican councilman who in 2002 unseated him as state senator, Gentile briefly silenced the room with a quip that eventually had those in attendance laughing or at least sighing in relief.

"Ever since he stole my job, Marty's been a real S-O-B," Gentile said, pausing before further explaining, "A 'Senator Of Brooklyn,' that is."

A laughing Golden, who hosted the luncheon at his 76th Street catering hall, came up to Gentile after and shook his hand.

As always, the luncheon attracted Bay Ridge's most active community board members, religious leaders, business owners, and elected and appointed officials. Between bites of chicken or salmon, the audience applauded Irene Sacco, chairwoman of the Bay Ridge Community Council (BRCC), who spoke of the past year's successes and failures.

"We've won some and we've lost some," said Sacco. "Some of the issues have stayed the same — we want good schools and safe streets. But other things have changed," she said, referring to the ever present threat of terrorism.

The BRCC, which was formed in 1951 to promote issues of importance throughout Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights, is an umbrella organization consisting of more than 100 area organizations.

Among its accomplishments, the BRCC helped lead a campaign to save the Fort Hamilton Army Base from being closed and put the kibosh on plans for a jail to be built in Bay Ridge. As early as 1969, it fought on behalf of students living east of Third Avenue who, because of district zoning, were kept from attending Fort Hamilton High School. Along the way, the council has organized political, public and school board forums.

"Many organizations together can roar," said Sacco.

Praising the council for "making Brooklyn, Brooklyn," Markowitz named Jan. 31 "Annual Luncheon Day in Bay Ridge," a similar honor to the one he bestowed last year, when he declared Feb. 1 as Bay Ridge Community Council Day.

Markowitz, whose idea it was to lure a professional basketball team to Brooklyn, spoke with pride of the pending move of the New Jersey Nets to Downtown Brooklyn by developer Bruce Ratner. Although the proposed Frank Gehry-designed arena, office tower and housing complex to be built at Atlantic and Flatbush avenues has been a bone of contention for residents in that area, it was hard to gauge whether the arena was on the hearts and minds of many living in Bay Ridge.

"I predict that it will be the center of city life," said Markowitz, noting that the arena could one day be included among venues for the 2012 Olympics if New York is chosen to host the summer games.

"Brooklyn," he added, "is on the threshold of getting back the respect it deserves."



STATE SEN. MARTY GOLDEN IS ALL SMILES AT SATURDAY'S BAY RIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL LUNCHEON IN HIS BAY RIDGE MANOR ON 76TH STREET AT FIFTH AVENUE.

VINCE DIMICELI

Ratner's suburban nightmare

WHEN it comes to construction, Brooklyn needs Bob Vila, not Bruce Ratner. For years now, Ratner has forced his suburban blight on the Borough of Kings, using Brooklyn as his personal strip mine, ripping out its streets and small buildings to make way for his behemoths that turn their backs on what's left of the neighborhoods they invade.

It's been said that Ratner's plan for Downtown Brooklyn is to Manhattan-ize it — as if the skyscrapers he foresees are the only things that define a city.

But the fact is Ratner is trying to create a new suburbia, smack dab in the middle of the city, by using suburban ideals to create the "New Brooklyn."

Don't believe me? Take a look at some of his other projects.

Atlantic Center Mall. The epitome of the suburban mega-mall gone bad in the middle of the city, complete with parking (for a fee). It's back is literally turned on Fort Greene, where there are no entrances for local residents, who have to walk around the complex and onto Atlantic Avenue. All this for the pleasure of shopping at the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Empire State Development Corporation, in office space created and paid for with our tax money after several mall merchants failed, ostensibly because of Ratner's poor design and promotion.

Metrotech. A suburban business campus, self-sufficient right down to the nearby hotel and airline ticket office. Employees who work there eat in tasty, inexpensive corporate cafeterias because the campus' design makes it impractical to walk over to Montague Street or Fulton Mall or even Willoughby Street. Stores located on its center "park" don't survive because the campus' fortress-like perimeter discourages foot traffic on the streets that used to be there. And nightlife is nonexistent. Remember Casey's Cafe? Neither do I.

Now, Ratner wants to do the same thing with his proposed Atlantic Yards complex (and presumably in the overlying Downtown Plan district) where he'll again close streets and construct skyscrapers up to 600 feet tall that would by design separate the complex from the neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Prospect Heights.

Ratner's plan, designed by Frank Gehry, would again have a "park" in its middle, and it will probably get as much use as the one at Metrotech — which means very little.

NOT JUST NETS



In the meantime, a neighborhood that was developing just fine on its own gets condemned.

I was inside 24 Sixth Ave. on Saturday. It's the former Spalding factory, recently turned into condos. Close to 100 people live there in large studio apartments. One of those residents, Stuart Plesser, showed me his plans to add walls in his 1,500-square-foot, exposed-brick and wood-columned apartment. Those plans are now on hold, as he waits to see if his new home will be torn down.

Last year, for his television show "Home Again," Bob Vila showed how he restored and then converted to residential use a former spice factory on Water Street in DUMBO, another hot neighborhood which, over the past 10 years, has been reconstructed from the inside out.

DUMBO's conversion from manufacturing to both housing and office space, has taken place without the clearing of blocks, removal of streets or insertion of suburban-style complexes. Instead, the neighborhood has been re-born rather than rebuilt. In time, the same thing would happen around the Atlantic Avenue rail yards, with or without Ratner.

Ratner's vision, as designed by Gehry, just isn't Brooklyn. It has no place in our low-rise urban landscape.

Maybe Ratner needs a new architect, someone who would appreciate the things Brooklyn already has to offer and those that deserve to be preserved. Maybe he should put in a call to Bob Vila.

Or, he could just take off and find another city to strip mine.

Vince Dimiceli is senior editor and production manager of The Brooklyn Papers. E-mail: Production@BrooklynPapers.com

'LOOK BOTH WAYS' DOT: Illegal trucks hard to prevent

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Police issued 11 summonses after the driver of a private garbage truck struck and killed a 70-year-old Bay Ridge woman last month, including one for straying from designated truck routes.

The accident marked the second time in just over a month that a Bay Ridge woman was fatally struck by a truck driving on a street that prohibits large, commercial ve-

hicles. And while the Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst communities have been pushing for tougher enforcement against truck drivers who veer from the designated routes, there seems to be little additional penalty when their actions lead to a fatality.

A city Department of Transportation spokesman said this week that while the agency was taking the issue very seriously, short of fines, little could be done to prevent such an accident from happening again until the city completes its own truck

management study. "It's a matter of enforcement," said DOT spokesman Keith Kalb. "I will have the borough commissioner contact the local precinct. But our agency doesn't have any way of enforcing that."

In August, Gov. George Pataki came to Bay Ridge to sign the "No Through Truck Traffic Bill," which went into effect on Nov. 1, providing stiffer penalties to trucks who veer off the city's truck routes.

Under the new law, trucks will be fined up to \$500 for the first offense and

could face 15 days in jail. A second offense, if committed within 18 months of the first, will carry fines of between \$500 and \$1,000 and could include 45 days in prison. Repeat offenders with three or more violations within 18 months face fines of up to \$2,000 and 90 days in jail.

But the law carries no provision for a fatal accident as a result of a truck driver straying from his designated route.

The city currently employs more than 1,800 Traffic Enforcement Agents, with 84

See TRUCKERS on page 14



Borough President Marty Markowitz holds up proclamation in honor of Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio (far left) and his left) Community Board 10 Chairman Craig Eaton, New York State Conservative Party leader Mike Long and 49th District Democratic Leader Joseph Bova (at right) give him a hand.

Bishop DiMarzio honored

Borough President Marty Markowitz holds up proclamation in honor of Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio (far left) and his left) Community Board 10 Chairman Craig Eaton, New York State Conservative Party leader Mike Long and 49th District Democratic Leader Joseph Bova (at right) give him a hand.

CB10 to spin Web site

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Even now, Carolyn DeLuca chooses as her weapon of choice an old Panasonic word processor, the type favored by journalists and secretaries a couple of decades ago.

The assistant district manager of Community Board 10 confides that since being hired to the district office in 1979, she has favored the typewriter-like word processor, even though an IBM computer given to the board by then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani six years ago sits beside her at the office on 86th Street at Gating Place.

"We have some antiquated equipment," she said.

But the community board's struggle to adapt to the 20th, if not the 21st century, may be coming to an end. District Man-

ager Josephine Beckmann quietly announced at a Jan. 26 board meeting at St. Anselm's Meletia Hall on Fourth Avenue at 83rd Street that the board's day-to-day business could be making its way online within months.

"We want something that's good, but also affordable," Beckmann said of her plans to create a Web site for the community board.

The upload would make CB10, which primarily serves the neighborhoods of Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights, one of just seven boards in Brooklyn — the borough has 18 community boards — to have their own Web site. In contrast, all 12 Bronx boards are on the Web.

Beckmann said that barring unforeseen community developments the board will likely discuss details of the project by

the end of February. First, however, the board's Communications and Public Relations committee will mull over the idea, and the costs involved, before the issue is brought up at a full board meeting. The next general meeting is set for Feb. 23.

The slow, dial-up-like transition, said Beckmann, is the result of the board's small annual budget — \$175,000, according to a mayoral spokesman. Whether the allotment is spent on postage or upkeep of the office's copy machine, the money goes fast, said Beckmann. Add to that, salaries for herself, DeLuca and assistant Jacqueline Gallo, and the decision to go online doesn't seem so obvious. Beckmann said that employing a staff of three isn't typical of most community boards.

"We're staff-heavy," she said, adding, See CB10 on page 14

S'Park may get new HS

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

School over-crowding in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights will get some serious attention in the next five to six years, according to a preliminary expenditure plan unveiled by the Department of Education Tuesday.

Included in the Education Department's preliminary budget is a new high school for Sunset Park, which would alleviate some of the over-crowding at Bay Ridge's Fort Hamilton High and Bensonhurst's New Utrecht High.

The plan also calls for eight new elementary schools in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights — four in brand new buildings and four in existing buildings — accounting for 3,118 additional seats.

The still-tentative plans were revealed Feb. 3 with the release of a second draft of the Education Department's Five-Year Capital Plan. For now, the proposal shows plans for 66,000 new classroom seats citywide.

The two-year, \$64.4 million construction project in Sunset Park could begin in September 2005, according to the budget proposal. A spokesman for Bay Ridge-Dyker Heights Councilman Vincent Gentile said that the school could be built on the site of a warehouse on Fourth Avenue at 38th Street, but added that the Department of Education hadn't revealed details.

"They aren't telling us anything," said Gentile spokesman Scott Gastel, adding that he thought the high school would be built from the ground up.

Sunset Park and Bay Ridge officials are also reserving their joy because the high school plan was also included in the last five-year plan, only to be axed at the last minute to close the city's budget gap.

If built, the 1,106-seat high school would free up space at vastly overcrowded New Utrecht and Fort Hamilton.

See SCHOOL on page 14

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Driver clubs man who took spot

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

A short-fused golfer added several strokes to his handicap after a dispute over a parking spot left him enraged and swinging his clubs.

The Jan. 26 incident started around 5 pm when the driver began arguing with another motorist who snagged a parking spot that he had wanted on 23rd Avenue at 86th Street. In response, the 25-year-old darted from his black Hyundai and hit the parked driver over the head with a golf club, causing bleeding and swelling.

When he was finished, the irate, golf club-swinging man fled south in his car on 23rd Avenue. Police described the attacker as white, 5-foot-9 and weighing 180 pounds. They did not, however, describe his form.

9-to-5er
He came in through the bedroom window.

But a burglar who broke into a home on 77th Street at Fifth Avenue Jan. 26 left through the front door, carrying with him more than \$8,000 in cash and jewelry.

The burglar broke in sometime after the 64-year-old woman who lives there left for work, just before 9 am. When the woman returned to the apartment after 5 pm, she noticed her front door was unlocked.

Police say the bandit

crawled in through a window that faces a large courtyard and proceeded to loot both the living room and bedroom, pocketing \$5,600 worth of metal bracelets, rings, earrings, chains and watches. He also found \$2,500 in cash, according to the police report.

Stickup limo
A limousine driver was robbed at gunpoint while driving two men to a destination in Bensonhurst, police say.

The Feb. 1 incident happened around 9:30 pm, when the 26-year-old driver dropped the men off at their requested destination, the corner of 82nd

62/68 BLOTTER

Street and 23rd Avenue. Before getting out of the limo, one of the men, described by police as a white male in his 40s, about 6-foot-1 and 180 pounds, pulled a gun on the driver.

"Give me all your money," he said. The driver gave the man \$200 before the two ran into a building on 82nd Street at 23rd Avenue.

Police described the other man as 33, white, about 5-foot-6 and 140 pounds.

Teen thugs

A gang of teenagers rushed a 32-year-old Bensonhurst woman on Jan. 30 knocking her to the ground and nearly making off with her purse.

The ruffians were diverted, however, when a bystander came to the woman's aid. The two girls and one boy ran off without any of the woman's belongings.

Before the witness came, two of the thugs were punching the woman in the face

while another pulled her hair. Police arrested a suspect, a 16-year-old girl, at 76th Street and 19th Avenue.

They are still searching for a 17-year-old boy and another girl, for whom there was no description available.

Station robbers

Two crooks got a special surprise when they demanded money from a woman waiting for a southbound N train—a \$2 bill.

The Jan. 27 incident happened around 7:30 pm, while the 35-year-old woman was waiting on the train platform at West Seventh Street and Bay Parkway.

Cops say that one of the men grabbed the victim and covered her mouth with his hand, demanding, "Give me your money."

While the crook held her, his accomplice snatched the handbag from her left arm.

The muggers jumped on a train and made good their escape before she could notify police. They got away with two credit cards, a college ID and the somewhat rare \$2 bill, one of only about 9.5 million still in circulation, according to the Treasury Department, which last printed the denomination in 1996.

Golden's Caddy broken into

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

State Sen. Marty Golden stepped out of his Bay Ridge home last week expecting to drive his 2002 Cadillac Escalade to his office on Fifth Avenue, as he does most days that he's not in Albany.

But Golden soon discovered that, while crime is down in most categories in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights, auto-related theft is alive and well. At 1 pm, on Jan. 28, Golden alerted police at the 68th Precinct that his car had been broken into and that intruders had stolen some \$10,000 worth of property, including video equipment. Police say the crime happened sometime between 8 pm, when Golden parked the SUV, and the following afternoon.

According to police crime statistics, reported incidents of grand larceny auto are up 64 percent over this time last year within the 68th Precinct, which encompasses Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights. But a vast majority of auto-related crimes involve the theft of headlights, airbags and other items from vehicles, which generally fall under the broader category of grand larceny.

Because Golden's car wasn't stolen, and the crime involved the theft of more than \$1,000 worth of property, that is how the incident was filed with police.

Police say that a computer chip that controls the car's electronic security system was removed from below the dashboard, likely in an attempt to steal the vehicle. While the car never strayed from where Golden had parked it, near his home on 79th Street, police say it was gutted from the inside, with seats

and the dashboard ripped to shreds.

The alarm system was circumvented, and police didn't find evidence that the door locks or windows had been tampered with. The outside of the car, including its wheels, rims and headlights, were untouched.

"We're working on the problem," said Capt. William Aubry, commanding officer of the 68th Precinct. "This is a high-end crime ring and the people doing this are very sophisticated."

Golden declined comment on the burglary. The vehicle itself may have been a tempting target. According to Kelley Blue Book recommendations, the sleek, four-door Escalade has a resale value of more than \$40,000.

Police say that Golden's was the only car broken into in the immediate area that evening.



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Victory Memorial to get super-sized E-R

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Officials from Victory Memorial Hospital on Monday announced a \$3 million renovation project that will nearly double the size of its emergency facilities.

When it is completed next spring, Victory Memorial's emergency room will have grown from just over 5,000 square feet to 9,720 square feet, much of it occupied by a renovated triage unit, nurse stations and a bereavement room.

The expansion of the department, the first in more than 25 years, will put the hospital on Seventh Avenue at 92nd Street in line with Lutheran Medical Center, among others in Brooklyn currently undergoing emergency room upgrades.

A sign of the post-Sept. 11 times, the department will also install a decontamination room for treating victims exposed to hazardous chemicals. Dr. Mark Kindschuh, the emergency department's medical director, said that the self-contained room isn't common in most hospitals.

"Given what happened post-9-11, with threats of anthrax, or Sarin nerve gas in Japan, it's something we think is necessary," said Kindschuh, who said that in place of the decontamination room, most hospitals have less-effective "tub rooms."

Nearly \$1 million for the project was funded privately and in some instances by individual donors, including many from the emergency department's staff of 10 physicians. In all, the department employs those physicians, six staff nurses and two board-certified physicians.

"We're always at risk of losing our financial footing, but it's partly because of the drive and determination of the attendants here that we were able to finally raise this money," said Kindschuh, who as a young doctor in Texas watched as community hospitals like Victory Memorial slowly disappeared from the small towns. "This speaks volumes about their commitment

to the community."

Rep. Vito Fossella, who represents Bay Ridge and Staten Island, secured \$100,000 for the upgrade and the Department of Housing and Urban Development granted a \$2 million loan. Kindschuh said that a number of the hospital's largely senior clientele come from Staten Island.

"Very often, the first line of defense is this emergency room," Fossella said at a press conference at the hospital Monday. "I want to underscore how important it is to have a successful Victory Memorial."

The first of four phases of the project will begin in March, said Kindschuh, who noted that the emergency department would remain functional throughout construction.

At the top of the list, he said, is an expanded waiting room, which currently seats 18. Ironically, on Monday, many of the people waiting in those seats — either for a patient, or to be treated themselves — were whisked away to a hallway in order to make room for the

press conference during which Fossella announced plans for the expansion.

When the first phase of the project begins about 12 seats will be added, part of a plan to reduce the amount of time patients spend waiting for treatment, which varies too widely to be averaged, said the doctor.

"Clearly what we have now is insufficient," said Kindschuh. Lutheran Medical Center, on 55th Street between First

and Second avenues, undertook construction in April that included renovations to its 11,500-square-foot emergency department, which when finished in September will occupy 16,000 square feet.

The project, which is due for completion in September, was funded almost entirely by \$3.4 million in HUD loans. Unlike Victory, Lutheran is a level-one trauma center that treats life- and limb-threatening accidents.



Rep. Vito Fossella presents check for \$100,000 to Victory Memorial Hospital President Donald DiCunto (center) and Emergency Department Director Dr. Mark Kindschuh.

Cops: Teen hurt in drunk-drive crash

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Police say an unlicensed, underage and drunk Bay Ridge man was arrested Wednesday afternoon after he crashed into a lamppost and injured two of his passengers, including a baby boy.

The 20-year-old was drunk, police say, when at 3:20 pm his 1999 Nissan swerved out of control and smashed into the post, on Bay Ridge Avenue at Narrows Avenue.

A Brooklyn District Attorney's office spokesman said the Bay Ridge man was expected to be arraigned on

charges including two counts of operating a motor vehicle under the influence, endangering the welfare of a child, reckless driving, unlicensed operating of a vehicle and consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages.

He was also issued a citation for not wearing a seat belt.

Cops say the infant, a 1-year-old, was wearing a seat belt but was not strapped into a child safety seat. He and a 17-year-old male, Tony Cava, who suffered a broken leg, were treated at Lutheran Medical Center after the accident.

According to the criminal complaint, Belem had a

blood-alcohol level of .04 percent. Police found an opened bottle of Corona beer inside the vehicle.

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New Downtown will be filled by corporate welfare

To the editor:
Kado's for your balance coverage. I submit the following for your consideration:
Since Mr. Ratner plans to add 2.4 million square feet of office and retail space to the new, improved, expanded and geographically puzzling Downtown Brooklyn (when did that happen? Why did I never notice how long the walk was from Dean Street down to Fulton Street?) it is instructive to see to what ends he and the city had to go to keep Bear Sterns at Metrotech last year, when they made the 20-year deal that will keep 1,500 of its employees there.
After demanding city incentives enabling Bear Sterns to relocate to Lower Manhattan, they had already received as much as \$111 million in public largesse in two separate packages — \$36 million in 1991 and \$75 million in 1997.
This latest giveaway involved \$48 million from unused sales tax breaks that Bear Sterns got as part of its incentives for first moving the operation to Brooklyn in 1991, and was shifted into property tax exemptions, which were another component in Bear Sterns' 1997 subsidy package.
In this case, the Bloomberg administration stood firm in limiting the level of corporate extortion, and Mr. Ratner publicly acknowledged the mayor's role in keeping those 1,500 jobs in New York. [Deputy Mayor Dan] Doctoroff said, "The era of handouts to get companies to stay in the city is nearing an end."
Develop, don't destroy.
—Lee Rubenstein, Prospect Heights

LETTERS

To the editor:
I write regarding the letter by Borough President Marty Markowitz in last week's edition, "Markowitz: Hagan's got some chutzpah!"
I am disgusted by the manner in which Mr. Markowitz wrote about Patti and Schellie Hagan. Just because he made a campaign pledge to bring a major sports team and arena to Brooklyn doesn't mean that they don't have the right to oppose it. These women, who are for all my neighbors in Prospect Heights, are fighting for all of us who will be displaced should the stadium project go forward.
My husband and I own one of the businesses on Dean Street that Bruce Ratner is trying to snatch using eminent domain. We manufacture fine painting supplies for artists, conservators and museums worldwide, and hardly consider our commercial space "blighted."
I would say that Mr. Ratner and the rest of his governmental supporters, Governor Patanki, Mayor Bloomberg, Mr. Markowitz and Senator Schumer are the ones with "chutzpah" for ignoring some of the very constituents who voted for them.
Those of us in jeopardy will not give up our homes or our businesses so that one greedy developer can snatch private land and use it for his own benefit.
—Susan Goldberg, Prospect Heights

Send us a letter

• By mail: Letters Editor, Brooklyn Papers, 55 Washington St., Brooklyn, NY 11201
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• By e-mail: Newsroom@BrooklynPapers.com
All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's neighborhood and street name are published with the letter). Letters may be edited and will not be returned.

Wealth of new info sheds light on Nazis

By Larry Neumeister
Associated Press

With their newly disclosed stories expanding knowledge of World War II atrocities, some 1,778 survivors of Nazi medical experiments were sent checks Monday from the proceeds of Holocaust lawsuits.
The \$5,400 payouts are considered symbolic by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany.
But the conference hopes the new information will promote further research on the experiments — one of the less-documented aspects of the Holocaust. It sent letters to survivors asking permission to release their statements anonymously to Holocaust museums.
"Sixty years after the fact, you're suddenly piecing together history," Gleason Taylor, the conference's executive vice president, said after the new claims were announced at a press conference Monday.
Taylor said attorneys who filed lawsuits seeking reparations for Holocaust survivors never imagined that so many people would provide information about medical experiments.
In all, people from 33 different countries responded, describing experiments of a magnitude not previously known.
Greg Schneider, chief operating officer of the conference, said two of six people handling claims by Nazi experiment survivors had to quit because "they just couldn't handle how emotional it was."

The staff has compiled a list of experiments conducted in more than 30 concentration camps and ghettos from 1942 through 1945. The large majority were known from prior research, books, camp archives and claimants to a 1951 fund.
But more than a dozen have been added based on the 1,778 submissions. The new statements show torture-like experiments were more widely practiced than previously known, conference leaders said.
"It's unbelievable how many are alive and they were courageous enough to come forward," said Eli Zborowski, chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem and a Jew who survived World War II hidden by non-Jews in Poland.
"This is the least available, documented part of the Holocaust," he said.
Zborowski said some questions still need to be answered — such as how the experiment program could develop among highly educated doctors, and where and when the experiments began.
Zborowski said he believed the doctors were recruited gradually as Jews were dehumanized in a process that began with discrimination and evolved into the murder of millions.

Choosing your child's pre-school

Q: It's time to register for preschool. I've chosen one that my friends recommended, but I'm not sure whether it will be a good fit for my 3-year-old son. —a mother
A: If your son is assigned nurturing teachers and the school's philosophy is "children learn through play," you're off to a good start.
"Preschoolers are wigglers and doers," says Alan Simpson, communications director of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. "They need activities that engage them."
Research shows that young children learn best through manipulation of materials and age-appropriate hands-on experiences, Simpson says.
In a high-quality preschool, learning is embedded in activities that engage the senses," he says. "It's crucial for programs to recognize that preschoolers are not high school students."
Sandra Heidenmann, an early childhood specialist, agrees the best early childhood programs use play to get at academics. One doesn't rule out the other. "I worry people are cutting back on playtime," she says.

Parent-to-Parent



By Betty Flinger

"What kids learn through play is phenomenal." For example, children learn problem-solving, how to enter a group and work on their language skills as they pretend, says Heidenmann, co-author of "Pathways to Play: Developing Play Skills in Young Children" (Redleaf Press, 1992), a book geared toward teachers.
A lion puppet used during reading time motivates kids to learn as they act out animal sounds. Alphabet puzzle pieces let a child feel the shapes of the letters. Finger paints provide a calm way for a child to form letters, smear the work and start over. Kids build math skills with blocks.
If your child's teachers offer fun activities that engage him and work with you as a team, you've probably found a good match. When learning is through play, there is no right or wrong answer.
Age 3 or 4 is far too young to be told you're failing at something," Simpson says.
When you observe a classroom, you should see several clearly divided learning centers: a special table full of water, rice or grits where kids can measure, sift and pour; an art station; an area for play-dough; a table for matching games, puzzles and stringing beads; a woodworking table; a block area; a housekeeping center; and a quiet reading corner.
Ask about the class schedule. How much time do the kids get to "work" in all the stations? What about playtime? One mother moved her 4-



year-old out of his preschool and put him on the waiting list at another one, partly because he could not adjust to the rigid way that transitions were handled, and it was upset that he rarely got to finish what he was doing in a center before it was time to move.
"The more we learn, the more we realize children can accomplish in the early years," Simpson says. "Then we create settings that defeat curiosity for learning just as it is beginning to develop."
If a program is rigid and a child is acting out, it may not be the best place for him, Simpson and Heidenmann agree. For example, one Parent to Parent reader says that her 4-year-old son gets frustrated and lashes out at his teachers during daily workbook and journal times, and has outbursts when it's time to move to a different task.
In an evaluation of a preschool, Simpson says, teacher training, the ratio of teachers to students, the turnover rate of teachers, the size of the groups, and the health and safety of the program, are all important to look at.

Other concerns are more difficult to measure: Does the class feel warm and inviting? How do the teachers strengthen social and emotional skills within the class?
Can you help?
My husband and I recently moved next door to a family with two children, a boy, 3, and a girl, 8. They all play, unsupervised, in their driveway and in a common yard area between our houses. The girl's friend often bullies the boy often and his sister goes along with it.
My home-office window overlooks their play area, and I've seen the girls push the boy down, smack him on the face, pull his pants down and spank him, and drag him around. The mother doesn't respond to the boy's screams. My husband says they're just "kids being kids," but my heart breaks for the boy.
Should I talk to my neighbor, confront the children myself or do nothing?" —reader
If you have tips or a question, call our toll-free hotline any time at (800) 827-1092 or e-mail us at p2ppips@att.net.

Share and share alike

Kids are pros at playing one parent off the other. However, many couples with kids are getting wise to this play and are standing firm, at least Mars Venus-Readbook poll.

Of the 883 female poll participants, 42.3 claim to be in sync with their spouses when it comes to disciplining their children. Another 33.1 percent, however, claim that they take the lead in controlling the kids, while 11.6 percent let their husband be the tough guy.
For 13 percent of lucky kids, both parents are sofies.
Full poll results are shown below. To take part in this week's Mars Venus-Readbook Poll, log on to www.marsvenusreadbook.com



MEN ARE FROM MARS WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS
By John Gray

Who do your kids listen to?
Me, I'm the disciplinarian. — 33.1 percent
My husband, because I'm a sofie. — 11.6 percent
Both of us. — 42.3 percent
Neither of us. — 13.0 percent
Total votes: 884
NOTE: Because poll percentages are rounded, total values may not work out to 100 percent. Poll results are not scientific and reflect only the opinions of those users who choose to partake.

Dear John:
Why do some in-laws meddle in their children's relationships?
Dear Privacy Deprived:
Mothers and dads get involved because of the love they have for their children. When their child comes to them with a relationship problem, sometimes parents forget that they are only hearing one side of the story and responding accordingly. Even when the adult child has resolved the issue, the parents may not be aware of this, and so they may still resent the spouse's actions.
For this reason, I implore couples to work out their issues with each other first or with an unbiased mediator. If the issues are big enough, preferably that person would be a professional counselor. Together, the couple should work out boundaries for parental involvement, then let their parents know the ground rules, and keep their commitment to each other to hold to these rules of fair play.
Dear John:
My fiancée is the greatest. We have, however, had our share of fights, usually when she gets really jealous and feels that I look at other women. I tell her that I mean nothing to me, but I don't think she believes me, so how do I convince her?
— Couple in Calamity
Dear Couple in Calamity:
From what you say, these insecurities are drawn from your actions — even if you don't mean to give the impression that you are interested in others. Many guys don't realize it, but sometimes they have a tendency to stare at particularly pretty women.
In the future, when the two of you are together in public, give her your full attention. This is the perfect time to demonstrate small acts of kindness, such as pulling out her chair or opening the door before she walks through. When she is at your side, put her arm or her back, or give her a reassuring kiss on the cheek. Actions speak louder than words, so don't just tell her, but demonstrate your love, and all her insecurities will begin to fall away.

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PLANS 'S THE WORD

Confused Community Board 2 fails to speak on massive D'town Plan

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

THE MOST COMPLEX rezoning plan in city history, which would convert Downtown Brooklyn into a booming metropolis with soaring towers and require the taking of seven acres of private land, is moving forward through the city review process — without input from Community Board 2.

Following years of planning, months of discussion and a four-hour public hearing, the Downtown Brooklyn board effectively removed itself — and the communities it represents — from the process when it gathered Tuesday night at Brooklyn Technical High School in Fort Greene to vote on the multi-layered application.

That's because most board members were baffled as to what exactly they were voting on.

"The proposal was too big — why didn't they break it down?" asked board member Irene Van Slyke, who voted to adopt the recommendations of CB2's Land Use committee.

That panel effectively culled down a more than 210-page ULURP application and its companion 3-inch-thick Draft Environmental Impact Statement into a two-page report recommending that the board approve the zoning of the Downtown area to allow for sweeping towers but disapprove of eminent domain takings of private property that would allow the city to seize 100 apartments, 130 commercial units and a college, all of which city planners say is needed to achieve much of the specific development outlined in the application.

Rather than —

- vote to recommend approval or rejection of the entire massive city application, or
- vote individually on each of the application's 22 independent actions, or
- vote to recommend disapproval unless certain aspects of the plan, like the eminent domain property takings, were removed,

the board decided to cast just one vote on the Land Use committee's report.

BECAUSE THEY HAD to vote yes or no to a report that contained both approvals and disapprovals, board members were confused as to precisely what they were voting on.

Following a brief discussion by board members about the plan, including traffic concerns and the need to fully study the implications of such a big build-out in conjunction with other developments around the area (many of them enumerated on a satellite photo of greater Downtown Brooklyn on the front page of last week's Brooklyn Papers), the board voted 19-17, with three abstentions, in favor of adopting the committee's report.

But according to board rules, a majority of the board members in attendance is required to pass a resolution.

With 36 board members voting, three (Gloria Andrews, Edward Carter and Hemalee Patel) abstaining and one board member (Rachel Foster) actually ducking the vote — she hid in the hallway saying she felt pressured by the hundreds of vocal protesters, according to a source — there were 40 board members in attendance. Therefore, 21 votes were needed to adopt the committee report.

Thus, the committee's report was rejected.

Adding to the strange happening, before the final tally was counted, Patel asked her request for an abstention to an actual vote. He changed her vote from abstention to a yes vote.

Foster did not return telephone messages left on her cell phone.

Irene Van Slyke, a longtime community board member, jumped up and took the microphone after the votes had been cast and McRae was still speaking.

"Now the borough president won't understand what this vote means," she said.

"We just weren't finished," said Van Slyke, who is opposed to most parts of the Downtown Plan.

She explained that a "yes" vote actually meant voting down eminent domain portions of the plan and several street dempings that would make way for larger development sites.

LOCATED JUST BLOCKS from the proposed Atlantic Yards site where developer Bruce Ratner is looking to construct a \$2.5 billion residential and commercial village centered around a professional basketball arena to house his recently purchased New Jersey Nets, some of the approximately 400 protesters who packed the high school auditorium thought CB2 was actually voting on the arena plan.

Draped in American flags and armed with placards and balloons they cheered after it was announced that the board had failed to make a recommendation, thinking that meant they decided to not approve the arena plan. Others in attendance wanted the Downtown and arena plans considered together and still others were protesting the eminent domain portions of the Downtown Plan.

"There was a lot of misinformation," said McRae, explaining before the board adjourned that contrary to the belief of many, the board's vote had no bearing on the arena plan.

The two plans which cover adjacent areas and whose impact on each other cannot be separated, are in fact linked physically, overlapping on the site at Atlantic and Flatbush avenues where Ratner wants to build a 620-foot office tower adjacent to a Nets arena.

For the most part, Ratner's Atlantic Yards project will likely skirt community board and city review by going through the much less rigorous state review process.

The community board is the first step along the approximately seven-month City Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) and is followed by public hearings before and votes by the borough president, City Planning Commission and City Council.

While the role of the board is purely advisory, its ULURP vote and recommendations send a clear message to elected officials about the concerns and wishes of the communities it serves.

Except in this case where it sends no message at all. "I know they voted against the committee recom-



Above is a rendering of open space encased within a complex of skyscrapers that the Downtown Plan envisions along Wiloughby Street between Duffield and Gold streets. The open space would be created by the seizure of private property through the state's power of eminent domain and street dempings. The tree-lined triangle at the top would cover the site now occupied by the 57-year-old Institute of Design and Construction. Below is a Frank Gehry-envisioned mega block in developer Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards site — surrounded by Dean Street and Carlton, Atlantic and Vanderbilt avenues, east of Ratner's proposed Nets arena — that would likewise be built on condemned property and dempung streets. As in the Downtown Plan, which is its neighbor, green space would be surrounded by skyscrapers, creating a fortress-like environment. Downtown Plan renderings, like the one above, portray proposed structures as only a dozen or so stories tall, cutting off their tops to avoid picturing their intended heights — possibly exceeding 60 stories — that would dwarf Brooklyn's existing skyline.



Below is a rendering of a stadium, which would be built on the site of the former Coney Island Race Track. The stadium would be built on a site that would be seized through eminent domain. The stadium would be built on a site that would be seized through eminent domain.

mendation," is all Hardy Adasko, senior vice president of the city Economic Development Corporation, would say when asked to interpret the vote.

Some feared that a vote against the committee recommendation could be viewed as a vote in favor of eminent domain, since the committee had voted down those portions of the plan.

"The community board has essentially taken no vote on anything," said CB2 member Ken Diamondstone, who made a motion before the vote to consider each of the 22 actions and vote on them individually.

That motion was voted down by the board.

"It was strange that the meeting didn't continue with some request for another resolution," said Diamondstone. Asked afterwards why she did not take action to ensure the board adopted some resolution or recommendation on the application or took another vote, McRae said it was not her role to tell board members to make a motion.

Responding to the loss of 21,000 city jobs to New Jersey in the 1990s, the Bloomberg administration announced the Downtown Brooklyn Plan last April.

The mayor pledged to fund \$100 million in infrastructure improvements and construction over the next 10 years, but the project would still be largely dependent on market conditions and the ability to lure business and developers.

Critics have called the \$100 million "chicken feed" and said much more would be needed for traffic mitigation and subway construction alone.

Just last week, as CB2 was gearing up to vote on the plan, Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff sent a multi-page letter to the board outlining a number of traffic mitigations the city would consider studying.

But many members said it was too little, too late and urged the city to do the traffic studies before pushing ahead with the plan.

"Let's do the birth control planning now, not after the baby is born," CB2 member Bill Harris wrote in a Jan. 28 letter to fellow board members.

So what happens now? The massive application goes to Borough President Marty Markowitz, who was hosting a reception in honor of Bishop Nicolas DiMarzio, spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn Tuesday night and did not attend the vote.

"Although the community board took no clear position on the Downtown Plan many important issues were raised during the several committee and general board meetings," said Markowitz, adding, "I look forward to hearing more about these issues."

The next public hearing on the Downtown Plan will be hosted by Markowitz on Feb. 18, at 6 pm, at Borough Hall. "We have to have the borough president do the right thing," said Nancy Wolf, chairwoman of the CB2 Traffic and Transportation committee, who is asking Markowitz to advocate for the committee's extensive list of recommendations with regard to the Downtown Plan.

JOHN MANBECK A tale of stabilia past

Many years ago, Brooklyn had its very own major league baseball team, the Dodgers. You may have heard of them.

In 1955, Walter O'Malley, president and owner of the Dodgers, complained that the team had outgrown Ebbets Field, so he sold the stadium to Marvin Kratter — later the creator of the Ebbets Field Houses on the site — intending to lease it back for the next three years. He wanted a new, larger, round, domed ballpark which he thought would be fine at Atlantic and Flatbush avenues. Then the team left for Japan to play exhibition games.

Then-Brooklyn Borough President John Cashmore approved of the planned new ballpark but Parks Commissioner Robert Moses did not. Moses said he did not want public money involved in the construction of a new stadium. Then he chastised O'Malley for even thinking of using public money and the city's powers of eminent domain to build a sports stadium.

"Walter honestly believes that he, in himself, constitutes a public purpose," said Moses.

The Board of Estimate, the city's funding agency at that time, agreed with Moses. Then O'Malley called Los Angeles.

O'Malley had no more of a stadium to offer than did Brooklyn. New York Mayor Robert Wagner, concerned that he was losing two baseball teams, the New York Giants as well as the Brooklyn Dodgers, tried to mend fences. Then Moses offered to build a stadium for the Dodgers in Flushing Meadows, Queens, at Parks Department expense. If O'Malley didn't accept, he concluded, "It won't happen."

Moses was right. The estimate on the proposed stadium and land was revealed to be \$307 million. But L.A. was more accommodating. They were willing to dedicate land in Chavez Ravine — land that had been designated for public housing for poor Mexican immigrants — as a stadium site for the Dodgers.

O'Malley counter-offered Moses by saying he would buy the Atlantic Avenue site — if the city only would condemn the land, filled with "slums," according to journalist Doris Kearns Goodwin in her book "Wait Till Next Year." Meanwhile, on the West Coast, the ante was 300 acres of the ravine plus \$4 million for preparation. O'Malley would pay for the \$10 million stadium, writes Michael Rodgers in his "The Last Good Season: Brooklyn, The Dodgers, and Their Final Pennant Race Together."

The Board of Estimate never acted. They refused to condemn the Atlantic Avenue land; they hesitated to build a \$30 million stadium.

October 1957, O'Malley flew to L.A. with a contract for his Dodgers. After several ugly scenes in which people were evicted, Dodgers Stadium opened in 1962. Two years later, Shea Stadium opened in Flushing Meadows.

Professional baseball, of course, returned to Brooklyn in 2001. Fostered by a mayor who drove to

have two farm teams in the city no matter what the cost, the Cyclones opened in Coney Island's brand new Keegan Park.

It was a dream that O'Malley could only wish for. Not only did the city pick up all expenses, it built on city park property taken over when developer Fred Trump defaulted on old Steeplechase Park land. The only condemnation was of the Thunderbolt, a privately owned roller coaster relic of the old Coney Island. The winners were

Fred Wilpon, who owns the Mets and Cyclones, baseball fans in Brooklyn, and the Coney Island neighborhood.

So Brooklyn is having a renaissance, a rebirth of its better days. Risky neighborhoods are being gentrified, gourmet chefs have commandeered key neighborhood strips, condos are replacing parking lots, and even our prison has closed for lack of business.

Now we have new developers and politicians to fill in for the Moses' and O'Malleys of yesterday. Their names are Ratner and Bloomberg, Pataki and Markowitz, Kalikow and Gargano. And the scenario hasn't changed much. They all want the same results: big profits at the expense of taxpayers.

In the 19th century, owners of railroads had their own bag of tricks to "condemn" land. Courts were closed on the weekends so railroad condemnations started late on Friday. Once the rails ran over private land, the railroads had the right of way, which the courts — when they opened on Monday — recognized. After all, railroads were a public convenience.

Rudy Giuliani understood this when he ordered the Thunderbolt demolished on a Friday night. Robert Moses understood it when he confiscated Long Island farms and Brooklyn neighborhoods for his beloved highways. Now we have the Nets coming to the same neighborhood O'Malley desired, which happens to involve a railroad: the LIRR. The winner is not only a stadium but the extra-condemned land that goes with it — at taxpayer expense.

The prize that Bruce Ratner wants is land that Moses refused to give to O'Malley. Now Ratner has the governor willing to confiscate land, the MTA willing to offer rights and the borough president willing to be a cheerleader.

My, how times have changed!
John Manbeck, the former Brooklyn Borough Historian, is a columnist for The Brooklyn Papers.

Neil Sloane / CB2 blows it bigtime

IMAGINE it's the Super Bowl. Your team is down by three points but has the ball on the 1 yard line. Then the coach sends the quarterback in to take a knee.

Game over. What happens next? The coach gets canned.

For Community Board 2, Tuesday's vote on the Downtown Brooklyn Plan was the big game, and they had it in their hands... and they blew it.

The coach, in this case the board's chairwoman, Shirley McRae, didn't make a bad call — she made no call at all. In fact, she literally came into the most important vote the board will likely ever be asked to make with no game plan.

What should happen next? McRae should resign her executive position, if not remove herself from the board all together.

And she's not the only one. Ten board members could not be bothered to attend the momentous vote, or send their proxy; three board members abstained from voting and one, incredibly, came to the meeting and then hid in the hallway to avoid voting. She

should get the boot first. Her name is Rachel Foster, and she is an appointee of Councilman David Yassky.

McRae was appointed originally by the late Councilwoman Mary Pinkett. She now serves at the pleasure of Councilwoman Letitia James.

All board members ultimately serve under the appointing authority of the borough president. After her ill-prepared board failed to reach a consensus on the one vote they took, McRae had the gall to say it was not her role to tell board members to make a motion.

Foster, the one who hid, claimed she was too intimidated by the 400 or so anti-Nets arena and anti-eminent domain protesters in the audience, according to a source. Given the circumstances of the confusing vote, and the confusion of many of the protesters as to what was being voted on, she had nothing to worry about.

I think we can do better on the board without her cowering and McRae's hands-off leadership style.

With the responsibility of rendering a recommendation on the most sweep-

ing redevelopment proposal this borough has ever seen, McRae allowed her, through either gross incompetence or a willful desire not to get in the way of the dream of developers that would turn Brooklyn into Manhattan, to take itself out of the process.

The board is chosen to represent the community. In the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) the board is the first to review an application, the first to hold a public hearing, and the first to render a recommendation. That

recommendation goes to the borough president and to the City Planning Commission and is generally taken into consideration (although with a majority of the planning commissioners serving at the pleasure of the mayor, the fix may well be in at that level of review).

Still, especially since the city rushed such a voluminous and complicated proposal before them — dumping the 210-page ULURP application on the board right before the December holidays, leaving less than the required 60 days for actual consideration — the chairwoman should have scheduled a special meeting for her members to discuss and clarify each action within the plan before the meeting at which they were to vote.

The board's job was not to decide whether or not to make a recommendation — it's job was to decide what to recommend.

To quote from ULURP rules in the City Charter: "The community board shall have the right to weigh in, for itself and for the board and any conditions attached to its vote. The community board may also be asked to provide a conditional approval shall be considered a negative recommendation... if conditions that it considers essential

to minimize land use or environmental impacts are not adopted by the [City Planning Commission]."

With such an involved plan before them — in which the city has unfairly combined a massive rezoning with a massive urban renewal expansion to allow for a massive build-up — it was essential that the board be instructed to vote separately on the rezoning proposals and the urban renewal-eminent domain proposals within the plan, or at least separately vote on each of the land use committee's five recommendations.

Those votes would have formed the basis for an overall recommendation, which could have been made conditional.

Board member Ken Diamondstone got it. He stood up and called for an item by item vote. His fellow board members, including the chairwoman, overwhelmingly shot that proposal down.

McRae just stood by and watched as her board relinquished the community's right to weigh in. She rendered herself and her board irrelevant. Someone in authority should make it official.

Neil Sloane is a columnist for The Brooklyn Papers. E-mail: Newsroom@BrooklynPapers.com

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

February 7, 2004



Seasons greetings

Rediscover the four seasons thru Japanese kids' ideas and artifacts

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn Editor

If you've lost that naive rapture at the sight of snow and ice, it's time to take your child — or borrow a niece or nephew — to visit an exhibition that celebrates the best aspects of winter, spring, summer and fall: the Brooklyn Children's Museum's "Japan and Nature: Spirits of the Seasons" exhibit.

On display in the lower level of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Steinhilber Conservatory, the installation of objects, activities, videos, games and more will make both children and adults appreciate nature's charms in a whole new way.

By interviewing Japanese children about their favorite aspects of the four seasons, and their holidays and traditions, and incorporating artifacts provided by the children as well as the Newark Museum and the Brooklyn Children's Museum, exhibition developers Elizabeth Rawson and Emily Timmel have created much more than an exhibit. "Japan and Nature" is an environment where American children and adults can re-discover the seasons through the unique perspective of the Japanese — although Rawson said the exhibit's target audience is ages 4 through 11.

The winter section has a heated table typical of homes in the city of Sapporo, on the northernmost island of Japan, where children can kneel and share a meal of tea and faux sushi; learn how to hold chopsticks; watch a video of an elaborate ice festival in Japan; make New Year's cards; and create a display in an alcove, a *tokonoma*, with scrolls and a plum blossom, a flower that signifies that spring is not far behind.

Japanese children start school in the spring, so that area of the exhibit is where you'll find a classroom where children can practice brush painting Japanese words and watch a short video of an elementary class learning how to tend to animals and plant rice, an integral part of the Japanese curriculum.

While American kids might sing, "Rain, rain, go away, come again some other day," Japanese kids have their own version of the song, which can be heard in the exhibit, and *teru teru boko* dolls, made to wish rain away, are on display. They can raise a carp wind-

EXHIBIT

"Japan and Nature: Spirits of the Seasons" will be on display at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Steinhilber Conservatory, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway in Prospect Heights, through June 6. Pick up timed exhibit tickets, free with garden admission, at the Visitor's Center. Admission is \$5 for adults 16 and older; \$3 for adults 6-15 and older and students with valid IDs; and free for children under 16. The Brooklyn Botanic Garden's hours, October through March, are Tuesday through Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm, and Saturday, Sunday and holidays, 10 am to 4:30 pm. Closed Mondays, except on public holidays. Events related to the exhibit will take place at the Botanic Garden and at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Mark's Avenue in Crown Heights, through the run of the exhibition. For more information visit their Web sites at www.bbkg.org and www.brooklynkids.org, or call the hotline at (718) 623-7380.

sock in honor of Children's Day, "which represents strength and courage because the fish swim against the current," explained Timmel. Kids can also enjoy spring in Fukuoka, the largest city on the island of Kyushu, by spreading a blanket beneath a stylized cherry



The Rev. Mitsutaka Inui, chief officer of the International Shinto Foundation, blessed the exhibit with folded paper and rope on Jan. 22 to bring it and all involved good fortune during its travel.

tree and having a picnic with a cooler-full of supplies.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden is famed for its annual cherry blossom festival, which culminates with a weekend straining at the seams with activities ranging from flower arranging to concerts. (This year the festival will be held May 1-2.) Children can don cotton yukatas, according to the exhibit instructions, which are decorated with flowers, and marvel at the doll display featuring elaborate *hinu* dolls that are passed down from mother to daughter, or the warrior dolls in the Children's Day display.

In the summer area, a tent is set up near backdrops of Lake Biwa, Japan's largest and deepest lake, which is a popular recreation area. Children can try their hand at catch-and-release fishing with soft, sculptured fish and enjoy the ancient Japanese hobby of bug collecting by going on an insect scavenger hunt and making rubbings of their findings. (One of the curators pointed out a box of beetle food sent to the museum by a Japanese child.)

"The activities and things emphasized here are based on research with kids in Japan,"

said Rawson. "This is what's important for kids here to know about them. That's what makes this exhibit so special."

It wouldn't be a vacation without a snapshot, so children can pose in front of several different backdrops featuring views around Lake Biwa.

In the fall area, visitors will recognize the *torii*, the large vermilion structure that is also in the Botanic Garden's 90-year-old, outdoor Japanese Hill and Pond Garden. The *torii* signifies that a shrine is near. In the exhibit the shrine, Kyoto's Fushimi Inari, is evoked by a mural and steps. Nearby, children can write their prayers and wishes on paper and hang them on a wall, just as is done at the shrine. Kids can also play with fox puppets or wear fox masks whose mythical significance is explained in books in the exhibit.

Children can also wear the jackets and headbands worn in the harvest festival — which can be watched on a monitor — and bang on the festival drums. The exhibit is decorated with haikus and has a globe and an interactive station where the viewer can see Japan from above and zoom in on the regions explored in the exhibit.

"Japan and Nature," produced by the Brooklyn Children's Museum with a \$750,000 grant from the Freeman Foundation Asian Exhibit Initiative, closes June 6 and will travel from Maine to Hawaii on its tour of the 10 member institutions of the Association of Children's Museums.

Throughout the Brooklyn run of the exhibit, both the Children's Museum and Botanic Garden will have activities related to the exhibit at their institutions. Among the complementary activities planned for the exhibit will be a *shodo*, or calligraphy, workshop at the Children's Museum on Feb. 14, from 3 pm to 5 pm, and at the Botanic Garden on Feb. 15, from 1 pm to 3 pm.

By organizing the exhibit around universal aspects of childhood — family, school, play and holiday celebrations — "Japan and Nature" makes it possible to appreciate the common ground between American and Japanese youth — even encouraging the study of natural science — and it's also a gentle reminder to enjoy the beauty each season brings.

CINEMA



Schmelvis lives

The Jewish Executive Learning Annex will kick off its Brooklyn Heights Jewish International Film Festival on Feb. 7 with the 2001 Canadian film, "Schmelvis: In Search of Elvis Presley's Jewish Roots."

This utterly unpredictable documentary by writer-director producer Max Wallace claims to be a journalistic endeavor to make the case for Elvis' ties to Judaism. Instead, it becomes clear that this behind-the-scenes film is helmed by a band of directionless filmmakers intent on a road trip to Graceland with an Orthodox Jewish Elvis impersonator, Schmelvis, in tow.

While they make half-hearted attempts at their research (they wander around a cemetery, looking for the grave of Elvis' Jewish great-great-grandfather but don't seem to know for sure if she's even buried there), and when the infighting overcomes them, they run off to the unlikely destination, Israel, for clues.

"Schmelvis" is at times Woody Allen-esque (the filmmakers practically taunt the southerners and then dejectedly admit, to humorous effect, that they can't elicit any anti-Semitic responses) but more so like "Project Greenlight," HBO's reality series filming the unpleasant quarrel of self-righteous novices attempting to make a movie. On camera, a filmmaker actually hits up his Aunt Pearl for money to make the movie by bribing her with a paper bag full of chocolate bars.

But the film is worth it for those few and far between comic moments, like the visit to the unsuspecting Auntie. And when the anti-Semitism does rear its ugly head, it's an unvarnished, deeply affecting surprise not provoked by either Schmelvis or his cohorts.

Although Schmelvis often ran from opportunities to perform in the documentary, there will be a post-film concert and dialogue with the yarmulke-wearing crowd. The screening is free and begins at 8 pm at the Jewish Executive Learning Annex in B'nai Avraham, 117 Remsen St. in Brooklyn Heights. Reservations are necessary. Call (718) 596-4840 ext. 15.

— Lisa J. Curtis

DANCE

Hot stuff

Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana will perform their potent concoction of flamenco music and dance at Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College on Feb. 7, at 8 pm.

Singers Aurora Reyes and Jose Salinas will join guitarists Calvin Hazen and Basilio (Georges) to form a galvanizing, rhythmic backdrop for the six dancers performing this special, 20th anniversary program.

Artistic Director Carlota Santana told GO Brooklyn this week that her company distinguishes itself from other flamenco companies, in part, because while traditional flamenco dances are about certain feelings or moods, "We do a lot of theme-based works, works with a story line. The one piece we're being to Brooklyn Center that is theme-based was choreographed in 1986 by my partner and co-founder of the company, Roberto Lopez.

"[Luz Sombri] is a piece about the light side of life and the dark side of life, which he choreographed when he was diagnosed with AIDS," said Santana. "Initially it is bright and fun, a couple in love, and then enters a figure in flamenco folklore, a very sexy woman who breaks men's hearts. In this piece, it's the angel of death and there is a fight between the male dancer and the angel of death. He set this when he was diagnosed with AIDS and was working through his own death."

Lorca died in 1987, but his legacy is evident in the first half of the Flamenco Vivo program, which features dances from the early '80s, when the company started.

The program's second half is much more modern choreography, said Santana. It will include excerpts from "Ballet de Ilay Vuelca," a new work choreographed last year by Flamenco Vivo member Antonio Hidalgo, with music by Calvin Hazen and Fernando de la Rúa. The title means "Comings and Goings," she explained.

"These dances are influenced from the migrations from Spain to Latin America and back to Spain, that have been happening since the time of Columbus," said Santana. This work has lighter music and will include "Columbianus," the Argentinean-influenced "Mikonga" (featuring Santana) and the Cuban "Guajiras."

Because flamenco is a particularly emotive art form, Santana said the audience is encouraged to applaud when they feel moved to — they don't have to wait until the end of a piece, and the occasional shout of "Ole!" is appreciated, too.

The performance will take place at Brooklyn College's Walt Whitman Theater, one block from the junction of Flatbush and Nostrand avenues, in Midwood. Tickets are \$30. For more information, call (718) 951-4500 or visit www.brooklyncenter.com.

— Lisa J. Curtis

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All for 'Love'

One World Symphony delivers 'Love Letters' program to Brooklyn Heights audiences

By Kevin Filipksi
for The Brooklyn Papers

Sung Jin Hong will conduct the One World Symphony in a unique Valentine's Day program — aptly titled "Love Letters" — on Feb. 13 at the Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, in Brooklyn Heights.

"All of the works were chosen for their sheer feeling of romantic love," Hong told GO Brooklyn in an exclusive interview. "Love Letters" juxtaposes five works with excerpts of letters from composers on the program and their loved ones, read by two actors.

"The crux of the program is Mahler's 'Adagietto,' a short movement from his Fifth Symphony," said Hong, "which has become very well-known and through the [1971] movie [by Luchino Visconti] 'Death in Venice,' where it was featured very prominently."

In a move away from conventional concert practice, the orchestra will play Mahler's "Adagietto" twice,

"It's a very passionate work, and our two performances of it will show that," Hong explained. "The first time will be the modern orchestral setting where the violins are all together, but in Mahler's era, he wanted the violins across from each other because of the way that he wrote — he composed lots of counterpoint between the first and second violins, and this is a very effective way for audiences to hear it."

"The major advantage is that the audience will be able to experience two ways of hearing Mahler's work," he said. "I will ask the audience during the concert if they hear a difference between both ways of performing it."

For Hong, this encore makes the concert a new experience for audiences.

"Orchestras are struggling and are looking for ways to survive and gain audience support," said Hong. "We're trying to find our own creative ways of doing that without being too lecturing or intellectual — this is the way Mahler wanted it heard, so let's see if



Please, Mr. Postman: Conductor Sung Jin Hong's Feb. 13 program will include readings by actors of love letters written by the featured composers.

there's a difference to our ears." While in the podium, Hong, who just won a spot as an active conductor in Kurt Masur's Conducting Seminar at the Manhattan School of Music Symphony, is in position to manipulate the audience's experience.

"I'm tempted to perform it two ways," he said. "There's the original, slow, weighty, tragic way, which was made famous by conductors like Leonard Bernstein, and then there's the 'love letter to Alma' [Mahler's wife] way, which is less ponderous but still dramatic. When I conduct, I like to move it along and let the music speak for itself."

Following the Mahler work, a movement of Beethoven's final string quartet, "Cantata," will be played in an arrangement for string orchestra. That final quartet was dedicated to Beethoven's nephew, with whom he shared a close relationship throughout his life, which is how it fits into this program. Hong also sees a link between "Cantata" and Mahler's "Adagietto."

"Mahler was directly influenced by Beethoven's last string quartet," Hong explained. "Both Beethoven and Mahler

See ONE WORLD on page 13

MUSIC

One World Symphony's performance of works by Gustav Mahler, Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Leoš Janáček and Gary Surden takes place Feb. 13 at 8 pm at the Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, on the corner of Montague and Clinton streets in Brooklyn Heights. Tickets are \$20 at the door, \$15 in advance and \$12 at the door, \$10 in advance for seniors 65 and older and students (with ID). For tickets, call (718) 788-7138 or visit www.oneworldsymphony.org.

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Saturday, February 7, 2004 • 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Schmelvis: In search of Elvis Presley's Jewish Roots (2001)
Director: Max Wallace; Canada • Runtime: 76 minutes; MPA Rating: Not Rated

Wie "The King" looked? Following the clues that his great-grandfather was Jewish leads a diverse group of filmmakers, including an ultra Orthodox and Jewish Elvis impersonator, a rabbi and the filmmaker, on a quest to Memphis to find out what Elvis fans think of this revelation. He did wear a Chai around his neck! By the time the group heads off to bed to plan a new film, it's all over in a flash. Funny, suspenseful and wondrously witty, Schmelvis brings a unique spin on celebrity, Judaism and religious perceptions. It's a hoot!

Post-film concert and dialogue with Schmelvis,
the world famous Orthodox Jewish Elvis impersonator.

Saturday, February 14, 2004 • 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Welcome to the Waks Family (2002)
Director: Barbara Chobodsky; Australia • Runtime: 52 minutes; MPA Rating: Not Rated

With 17 children from the same two parents, the Orthodox Waks family is one of Australia's largest. Everyday life in the Waks household is a logistical challenge of monumental proportions. Having two main houses for transportation and live-over for kosher cooking help. The director followed the warm and lively Waks family over years and was privy to the wedding of the eldest daughter and the struggle of one son to break away from the religious life of his parents.

Post-film dialogue with Waks family member, Yossi Waks.

Saturday, February 21, 2004 • 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
One Day in September (1999)
Director: Kevin Macdonald; USA • Runtime: 92 minutes; MPA Rating: Not Rated

Munich, August 1972. The Olympics of peace and joy commence, symbolizing Germany's post war rehabilitation in the eyes of the international community. That same day into the games, eight Palestinian terrorist break in and take eleven Israeli athletes hostage, demanding the release of hundreds of political prisoners. As the world watches, the West German Police plan to overpower the captives. This Academy Award-winning documentary includes archive footage, eyewitness testimony, and the only interview ever recorded with the sole surviving member of the terrorist group.

Post-film dialogue with Simcha Weinstein,
former associate of the British Film Commission.

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Go West

Borough Park native conjures the spirit of Brooklyn legend Mae West in new play

By **Paulanne Simmons**
for The Brooklyn Papers

Playwright LindaAnn Loschiavo was born in Borough Park and raised in Bensonhurst. But she never had much interest in fellow-Brooklynite Mae West until she moved to Manhattan.

There Loschiavo's curiosity about the history of the block where she lived, West Ninth Street near Sixth Avenue, led to some surprising discoveries.

"As I started doing the research, I realized that many judges had lived on the street, because the Jefferson Market Courthouse was there," Loschiavo told GO Brooklyn.

It was at the courthouse that, in the spring of 1927, a 35-year-old rising star named Mae West was sentenced to 10 days at the Women's Workhouse on Welfare Island (now Roosevelt Island) for obscenity in a Broadway play titled "Sex." And it is at that same building — now the Jefferson Market Courthouse Library — that Loschiavo's play, "Courtin' Mae West," will have its first staged reading on Feb. 7.

Loschiavo says her play is about a journalist who wants to become romantically involved with West.

"She's interested in him because he can give her editorial coverage," said Loschiavo. "There are no courtroom scenes, but the play does talk about her arrest. Through Mae West, I can tell other stories, too — like the story of [New York call girl] Starr Faithful, who died at the age of 25 while at a boat party and inspired John O'Hara's novel later turned into a film



Jail bait: Mae West, in a scene from "She Done Him Wrong" (1933), is the subject of LindaAnn Loschiavo's new play.

West was often referred to as "the German girl," by neighbors.

West's mother, Matilda (Tillie) married the Anglo-Irish John West. West was a former featherweight prizefighter nicknamed "Battling Jack." Tillie was a corset model.

"We can assume that Mae, who was barely 5 feet tall and always wore platform shoes, had pretty much her mother's taste for those 'beautiful men' with 'magnificent muscles.'"

Backed by a pushy stage mother, West started in vaudeville, appearing alongside Harry Houdini and Dan the Drinking Dog. By the time she was 8 years old, West was appearing regularly at the Gotham Theatre in Bushwick, which originally included what is now Greenpoint, Williamsburg and Ridgewood, was once home, in its eastern edge, to many of the city's best theater and was considered an

Brooklyn raise music

Brooklyn Symphony presents work by Greenpoint composer Evan Hause

By **Kevin Filipksi**
for The Brooklyn Papers

Even with works by eminent composers like and Dmitri Shostakovich on the bill, the main attraction of the Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra's upcoming concert is a new work by a local composer.

The Brooklyn premiere of the Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra by Evan Hause, a North Carolina native who now lives in Greenpoint, will be part of the orchestra's Feb. 11 program in Walt Whitman Hall on the Brooklyn College campus.

"Evan's a Brooklyn composer, and we have a commitment to doing at least one composition by a Brooklyn composer every year," said Nick Armstrong, the orchestra's artistic director. "Evan's name was known to me through conversations I was hearing from different musicians. But I never knew his music, so it was a most fortuitous meeting when he showed me his work."

cernible theme to them, but this time, these are all just pieces I wanted to do," he said.

Still, some sort of thematic allusions presented themselves during rehearsals. "Actually, as a few of the musicians pointed out to me, there are some similarities between the Shostakovich symphony and the Hause trumpet concerto, even though they were written nearly a hundred years apart," he noted.

"Some of the orchestral textures and rhythms are very similar. That being said, the Hause concerto is clearly a more contemporary work, and it's not Russian in its sound at all — on the contrary, it's very American."

The final piece in the program is the overture from the operetta "The Gypsy Baron" by Johann Strauss II, composed in 1885.

The orchestra's next concert is March 31 at the Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, at Montague and Clinton streets in Brooklyn Heights, and will be led by

By **Johann Strauss II**, composed in 1885.

The orchestra's next concert is March 31 at the Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, at Montague and Clinton streets in Brooklyn Heights, and will be led by

MUSIC

The Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra performs works by Johann Strauss, Dmitri Shostakovich and Evan Hause on Feb. 11, at 8 p.m., at Walt Whitman Hall, on the Brooklyn College campus, one block from the junction of Nostrand and Flatbush avenues, in Midwood. Admission is free but a \$10 donation is suggested. For more information, visit www.brooklynphilharmonic.org.

guest conductor Arkady Ledvash. The program consists of two audience favorites: Edward Grieg's Concerto for Piano in A Minor (with young pianist Fan Yang as soloist) and Brahms' Symphony No. 4 in E Minor.

Noting the differences between his Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra and the better-known Brooklyn Philharmonic, Armstrong said, "We appeal to a different audience in that it's very much a local audience, and we aim at local neighborhoods in our audience-building. These neighborhoods are not really served by the Brooklyn Philharmonic."

The orchestra's mission is to serve the local community, and the concerts are free, with a suggested donation of \$10. That effort, Armstrong noted, seems to be working. "At the last concert, it was probably the best attendance we had in a long time," he said, "and it was very gratifying that we did so well."

THEATER

A staged reading of LindaAnn Loschiavo's "Courtin' Mae West" will be presented at the Jefferson Market Library, on Feb. 7, at 2 p.m. The library is located at 425 South Ave. at West 10th Street in Manhattan. Dress to Revere! Twenties garb to attend a private after-party at 3:30 p.m. at a nearby location. The event is free and open to the public. RSVP to norostopolny@aol.com or (212) 243-4334.

starring Elizabeth Taylor) "Butterfield 8"; the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti; and the exploits of Annelia Earhart, who was created by the press even before her first solo flight.

West was born Mary Jane West, in 1893, on Herbert Street, in what is now Greenpoint. Later, her family lived on Bushwick Avenue and Euclid Avenue. At that time, Bushwick was the capital of beer making. West's maternal grandfather, Jakob Delker Doelger, was a Jewish-Bavarian brewmaster, and

alternative to Manhattan's theater district.

"Sex" was West's first venture on Broadway. It was followed by "Drag," a play about transvestites. Although "Drag" did moderately well in New Jersey, West chose not to take it to Broadway. Finally, in 1928, West had her first Broadway smash hit with "Diamond Lil" — the play that created the wisecracking, warm-hearted persona we all came to know.

But above all, West was known for her enthusiastically salacious one-liners. Her words of precious wisdom include: "It's better to be looked over than overlooked"; "When women go wrong, men go right after them"; "When choosing between two evils, I always like to try the one I've never tried before"; "I generally avoid temptation unless I can't resist it"; and "It's not the men in my life that counts — it's the life in my men."

Looking back on Mae West's long and lusty career, it's easy to see that she was everything Madonna could have been — if she'd only been born in Brooklyn.

Backed by a pushy stage mother, West started in vaudeville, appearing alongside Harry Houdini and Dan the Drinking Dog. By the time she was 8 years old, West was appearing regularly at the Gotham Theatre in Bushwick, which originally included what is now Greenpoint, Williamsburg and Ridgewood, was once home, in its eastern edge, to many of the city's best theater and was considered an

important part of the city's cultural life. West's long and lusty career, it's easy to see that she was everything Madonna could have been — if she'd only been born in Brooklyn.

World of dance

The Brooklyn Arts Council presents "Folk Feet: Celebrating Traditional Dance in Brooklyn" at Brooklyn College's Walt Whitman Theater on Feb. 8. The day-long event features dancers that are participating in a year-long documentation project, helmed by BAC's Kay Turner, exploring the diversity of community-based dance traditions in Brooklyn.

The day of dance begins with an afternoon program, from 2 pm to 4:30 pm, dance workshops from 5 pm to 6:30 pm, and an evening program, from 7 pm to 9 pm, featuring many dance troupes including the Polish American Folk Dance Company, whose "Kashubian Medley" (pictured) is influenced by the Baltic sea-port of Gdansk.

Among the cultures that will be featured are those of Norway, Georgia, the Ukraine, Bangladesh and Trinidad. Not to mention performances of Irish step dancing, Yemese traditions, the Puerto Rican bomba and much more.

In addition to surveying, documenting and presenting the range of community dance traditions in Brooklyn, the "Folk Feet" project will produce an archive of video and audio interviews, photos and transcripts.

The project is sponsored by Danskin and the National Endowment for the Arts' Preservation and Heritage Program.



Admission to all of the Feb. 8 events is free. The theater is located on the Brooklyn College campus, one block from the junction of Flatbush and Nostrand avenues in Midwood. For more information, call (718) 625-0090. — Lisa J. Curtis

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WEEK THREE - February 18th The Poet - R. Eliezer Eitzi (Method: Hisadim/Visualization)	WEEK EIGHT - March 24 The Loner - R. Nachman Bravler (Method: Hitkovevut/Isolation)
WEEK FOUR - February 25th The Innovator - R. Yitzhak Luria (Method: Tichudim/Unifications)	WEEK NINE - April 3 The Ethicist - R. Yisroel Salanter (Method: Chesbon HaShefa/An Accounting of the Soul)
WEEK FIVE - March 3 The Disseminator - Baal Shem Tov (Method: Devuteit/Adhesion)	WEEK TEN - April 21 The Educator - R. Nisimim Kalimich of Peseznitz (Method: Hasakata/Quering the Mind)

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ONE WORLD...

Continued from page 11

ler were revolutionaries — the sheer length and difficulty of Mahler's symphonies harks back to Beethoven's last string quartets, which were — and still are — considered among the most complex music ever written, with the partial exception of the relatively straightforward last quartet.

Also on the program is Brahms' "Ophelia Lied," originally scored for voice and piano, here orchestrated by composer Arribert Reimann for strings, and sung by mezzo-soprano Natalie Anne Havermyer, a Bronx resident.

"That's a real interesting piece, re-orchestrated very simply and sensitively," Hong noted. "Ophelia's madness is depicted in a very gentle way. And Natalie is a fantastic vocal artist who will sing in our 'Marriage of Figaro' in March."

Leon Janacek's second string quartet, titled "Intimate Letters" after his correspondence with his late-career muse, Kamilla Stosslova, is represented on this program by its slow movement. Some of Janacek's and Stosslova's letters — along with Mahler's and wife Alma's — will be excerpted during the concert.

Last but not least, a short work by Park Slope resident Gary Sunden will be played. His seven-minute "Vivace for Strings," composed in 1995 as the prelude to an opera Sunden adapted from Moliere's "Sganarelle, ou le Cocu Imaginaire," came to Hong's attention in quite a strange way.

"Gary's actually a lawyer who has been attending our concerts, which I wasn't aware of," said Hong. "He wrote a nice letter to me complimenting us and telling us that he believed in our mission, and I thought, 'What does this lawyer know about music?'"

"But I listened to his work and it was very fresh to hear," said Hong. "The opera the prelude is from is about two young lovers, so it fits into the theme of our program — I was surprised at how well it does fit. He's very excited to hear it played... just as we are to play it."

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