

The Brooklyn Paper

Including Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill Paper, Downtown News, DUMBO Paper and Fort Greene-Clinton Hill Paper

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DUMBO's 200 new apartments

But civics slam Valentas over the impact on bridge views



The proposed building at Water and Dock streets sits between the Brooklyn Bridge and the planned Empire Stores shopping mall at left.

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Real estate developer David Valentas, known for converting DUMBO from an industrial area to a trendy residential neighborhood, is ready to start building an expansive, 16-story building near the Brooklyn Bridge, according to plans he filed with the city.

But local community groups are crying foul.

"We feel that the proposed building is too tall and too close to the bridge span," said Nancy Webster, president of the DUMBO Neighborhood Association.

The Brooklyn Heights Association, Fulton Ferry Landing Association and DUMBO Neighborhood Association are all calling on the developer to scale back the sweeping project at Water and Dock streets, saying that it is too tall considering its proximity to the iconic bridge.

"Brooklyn Bridge is a national landmark," said Judy Stanton, executive director of the Brooklyn

Heights Association, "and we think [this building] is intrusive."

The 200-unit residential and commercial building would rise at 38 Water St., currently a two-story building that is home to the St. Ann's Warehouse performance space, and extend down Water Street.

The plan also includes a three-story public parking garage facing Front Street with 327 spaces.

Because the area is currently zoned for manufacturing, Valentas, the principal owner of Two Trees Management, is seeking a variance from the city.

Valentas certified his plans with the Department of City Planning on March 24, starting the clock on the approximately seven-month city Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), which requires public review before the community board, borough president, City Planning Commission and City Council.

Community Board 2 will host a public hearing on the project at 6 pm on April 21 at Polytechnic University, at 5 Metrotech Center. [For more information, contact Commu-

nity Board 2 at (718) 596-5410.]

The 178-foot-tall, L-shaped building would be among the tallest in the neighborhood, and would include 8,000 square feet of retail space.

That retail space would fall along Water Street, opposite the Empire Stores, which are being converted into a major shopping mall by developer Shaya Boyemgreen. Gary Vanderputten, president of the Ful-

ton Ferry Landing Association, said he was disappointed that there are no plans for Front Street storefronts.

"This particular project just takes Front Street and will use it entirely as a facade of a garage," said Vanderputten, who is also concerned about the height of the building.

Dale Linton, a manager at 5 Front, a restaurant at Front and Old Fulton streets, agreed.

See **DUMBO** on page 6



The low-rise St. Ann's Warehouse will be replaced by 16-story building.



Sci-fi mural predicts bleak future for boro

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn Editor

In 1855, the Brooklyn Museum officially established its collection of American art by commissioning a work by painter Asher B. Durand. That work, "The First Harvest in the Wilderness" (1855), still hangs prominently today in the "American Identities" collection, and shows a farm carved out of

a bucolic wilderness. A shaft of light from the sky seems to hint that this is fate, destiny or divine intervention — progress, if you will.

The Brooklyn Museum's latest commission, an enormous painting by Alexis Rockman, doesn't have a similarly upbeat message about man's tangle with nature.

In "Manifest Destiny" (above) Brooklyn's DUMBO and other nearby neighborhoods have been submerged under water (as a result of global warming), and instead of hipsters coming in and out of the DUMBO General Store with their lattes, there are all kinds of amphibians scooting in and around the abandoned structures — like the Brooklyn Bridge — left behind by those long-gone bipeds.

On Saturday, April 17, at 6 pm, Rockman will discuss his mural with Marc Mayer, the museum's deputy director for art.

As part of its celebration of its new front entrance, the Brooklyn Museum is offering two full days of activities as well as two new exhibits: "Open House: Working in Brooklyn" (see review on page 7) and "Patrick Kelly: A Retrospective" (at left). On Sunday, April 18, at 2 pm, guest curator Thelma Golden will discuss the Patrick Kelly exhibit, which she orchestrated.

In addition, the museum is offering dozens more lectures, live music and dance performances, craft workshops for children, films and much more on Saturday and Sunday.

Admission is free on April 17, from 11 am to 11 pm, and on April 18, from 11 am to 6 pm. The Brooklyn Museum is located at 200 Eastern Parkway at Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights.

For more information, log onto www.brooklynmuseum.org or call (718) 638-5000.



The Brooklyn Papers: Lisa J. Curtis

GO
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PAPER

TICKETED TO DEATH

But tape casts doubt that agent ignored heart attack

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

A man whose family said he suffered a fatal heart attack while being given a traffic ticket was seen on videotape apparently helping his wife load groceries into their SUV after the traffic agents left.

Relatives of the man, 61-year-old Onofrio Avvinti, announced Wednesday that they plan to sue the city for \$100 million, charging that the agents ticketed Avvinti and left him to die without calling an ambulance after he collapsed.

The police department has said witnesses disputed that account, and that there was no evidence that the agents were aware of Avvinti's medical condition.

On Thursday, as mourners

packed into the Roman Catholic Church of St. Dominic, on Bay Ridge Parkway at 20th Avenue, for Avvinti's funeral, two Internal Affairs officers hand-delivered to the 62nd Precinct a CD containing the surveillance video captured by cameras at the Met Foodmarket on 20th Avenue between 72nd and 73rd streets.

The time-stamped tape appears to show Avvinti get out of his SUV to talk to the traffic agents and then get back into the vehicle. The videotape shows the agents drive away, and Avvinti appears to help his wife load groceries into the vehicle. He then gets back in again. About four minutes after the traffic agents have left, a crowd gathers around the SUV.

Paul Browne, the police de-

See **TICKET** on page 6



April showers

Dana Harris spills some pre-May flowers at the Borough Hall Greenmarket during Tuesday's downpour. This weekend's forecast is for sunny and warm days.

NOT JUST NETS • THE NEW BROOKLYN • NOT JUST NETS

Dock cruisin' to Red Hook

City: Pier 12 better for luxury liners

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

The city wants Red Hook's Pier 12 to host a new luxury cruise ship dock and expects to build it by next year, Economic Development Corp. officials announced this week.

With Manhattan's Westside Passenger Terminal operating at capacity and cruise lines threatening to flee to New Jersey, the city seeks to ready three piers in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn to entice the cruise lines to stay.

Carnival Cruise Lines had been eyeing Pier 7, just south of Atlantic Avenue, for its newest liner, the Queen Mary II. Carnival's premiere ship, the Queen Mary II, is the world's largest cruise ship, and too big to dock at the West Side Passenger Terminal in Manhattan. But EDC offi-

IKEA PLAN
Red Hook meeting coverage page 14

cials this week told members of a Community Board 6 committee that Pier 7 would not work for large luxury liners because of a reef off of Governor's Island.

"Pier 7 had some navigational problems so we're now looking at Pier 12," said Janel Patterson, a spokeswoman for EDC. The city is conducting a feasibility and traffic study for Pier 12 and expects to have the results next month. At the same time, EDC plans to release a citywide study on the cruise ship industry later this month, Patterson said.

Carnival referred calls for comment to the New York City Cruise Alliance. Gary Lewis, a spokesman for the alliance, said

See **CRUISIN'** on page 14

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See **LOVE THY PET** ad on page 5



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Man mugged on Court

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A pair of bandits in a car mugged an 85-year-old man walking along Court Street. The elderly victim was stopped by the pair as he walked between Degraw and Kane streets at 10:45 am on April 3. The suspects, sitting in a gray Chevy sedan, called the man over. Then the passenger pulled a black gun.

"Give me what you got," the bully demanded. The man handed over \$110 and the attackers sped down Court Street and turned on Sackett Street. The victim walked to the 76th Precinct, on Montague Street near Clinton Street to report the crime.

Citibank swipe
While most of us visit banks to withdraw money — and occasionally deposit a bit, too — we don't expect to have our money stolen there.

But a 72-year-old woman told police that while she waited on line at a Citibank branch on Montague Street near Clinton Street, at 3 pm on April 1, her belongings were lifted.

The victim told police she had \$260 in cash, four money orders totaling \$400, a loan letter and a letter from the IRS all swiped out of her bag.

Easter surprise
Long after churchgoers had returned from Easter services, an armed robber and two accomplices burst into a grocery store on Bond Street near Pacific Street.

84/76 BLOTTER

"This is a stickup," the bandit informed the store employees at 11:15 pm on April 11.

But when an employee, who was crouching behind the counter, yelled something back, the would-be robber and two cronies stationed at the front door ran away.

The trio fled southbound on Bond Street and the grocery owner ran after them. He watched long enough to see the group duck into a building at Hoyt and Baltic streets, police said. Two teens, ages 17 and 18, were later arrested in connection with the incident, police said.

Cash and carry
Another Easter Sunday holdup, on Court Street, didn't end well.

A man wielding a black 9-mm handgun walked into a grocery store between Sackett and Degraw streets at 11:40 pm and demanded money from the register.

A 32-year-old employee handed over \$800 in cash and the attacker fled out the front door.

The assailant was described as 5-foot-10, weighing 130 pounds, and wearing a black overcoat and white sneakers.

Polaroid picture
Two thifty thugs looking to score Polaroid film pocketed two packs of the instantly developing stuff at a drugstore at Atlantic and Third avenues.

wondering which of her friends was jealous after a diamond ring and other assorted jewels went missing.

The victim, 47, told police that her jewelry had been in her possession until March 27 at 7 pm. But by 7 pm the next day, the diamond ring — valued at \$2,000 — along with a pearl necklace and diamond emerald ring, were nowhere to be found.

The woman told police that many guests had visited her apartment near Pierrepont Street during the 24-hour period.

See **BLOTTER** on page 4

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Five new faces on CB6, 3 lose appointments

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Five new members will be joining the ranks of Community Board 6 this month.

Every year, half of the board's 50 members come up for reappointment. Johanna Buck, Jeremy Creelan, Sarah Hanson, Christopher Lanier and Elly Spicer are this year's new appointees.

According to the New York City Charter, half of all community board appointments are made by the borough president while the other half are made by the local council members with the borough

president's approval.

Creelan, 34, an attorney at the Brennan Center for Justice at the NYU School of Law, said he has been looking for a way to get more involved in local issues ever since he settled in Park Slope.

Having lived in Boerum Hill and Cobble Hill, Creelan says he is familiar with the entire community district and looks forward to learning more.

Creelan is also the lead attorney on a case that his particularly close to his home borough—judicial reform.

The Brennan Center filed a lawsuit last month against the New York Board of Elections challeng-

ing the state system for nominating Supreme Court judges at political conventions.

The case was filed on behalf of Margarita Lopez Torres, an 11-year-old girl, who was passed over twice by the Democratic Party for nomination to its slate. She believes she was shunned by the party for refusing to follow the rules of Brooklyn political-judicial backscratching by declining to make a

patronage hire requested by an assemblyman.

Johanna Buck, 49, a management consultant for community health care centers and hospitals that provide HIV care, will also be

appointed by DeBlasio.

My biggest credential is that I have been a resident for almost 20 years and an active parent in the schools," said Buck who has twin 13-year-old daughters.

Buck was appointed by Markowitz and will fill a vacant slot.

Elly Spicer, 46, a field representative for the New York City Carpenters Labor Management Cooperation Trust Fund, is a mother of two and has lived in Park Slope for the past 14 years.

"I got my feet wet with Little League and PTA, but I think there are some important issues facing the community," said Spicer, who was

appointed by DeBlasio.

As the executive director of the Environmental Grantmakers Association, Sarah Hanson says she works on national and international issues but has been looking for an opportunity to get involved locally.

After spending the past eight years in Brooklyn, Hanson, who lives in Park Slope, says she is excited about her appointment to the community board.

The 34-year-old Illinois native is particularly interested in local housing issues.

Christopher Lanier, 42, is the director of resource development for the Latino Commission on AIDS.

"I am interested in translating some of my non-profit development experience into contributing to neighborhood development," said Lanier who has lived in Park Slope for the past eight years.

Because of redistricting, which happens after the census every 10 years, Sunset Park Councilwoman Sara Gonzalez lost six seats on CB6.

Those were picked up by council members David Yassky and Bill DeBlasio, who gained three seats each on the board.

Judi Pfeiffer, president of the Fifth Avenue Merchants Association and owner of Bob & Judi's Collectibles, did not run for a

post on the board.

Anita DeMartini, Emma Boughton and Leonard Silver were not reappointed.

DeMartini, a former chairwoman of the board, has served on CB6 since community boards were founded in the mid-1970s.

Boughton, an active member of the Red Hook Houses tenants association, has served on the board for the past two decades.

Following an uproar by many members of the board, CB6 passed a resolution this week to send a letter to the borough president and local community members to have them reinstated.

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Brutal attack on 11th Street

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Three thugs attacked a man making his way home along 11th Street in the early morning hours of April 12.

The victim, 33, suffered a broken wrist and cuts to his face after the three men grabbed him from behind as he neared Fifth Avenue just before 5 a.m.

The group immediately began punching the victim, then pushed him to the ground and continued kicking him.

One of the assailants rifled through the man's pockets, but when he didn't find anything the pack fled.

Third Ave. mug

A Park Slope resident was attacked by a pair of thugs who pocketed his wallet.

POLICE BLOTTER

wristwatch and cell phone before running off.

The victim, 26, told police that the pair approached him at the corner of Third Avenue and Pacific Street at 2 a.m. on March 29.

After putting him into a chokehold, the pair helped themselves to the victim's belongings and then fled.

Fashion filchers

A pair of street toughs weren't looking quite so rough when they held up a woman on Baltic Street and made off with a white skirt and pink T-shirt.

The 31-year-old woman was walking home along Baltic Street at 8:49 p.m. on April 6

when the two men stopped her and demanded her cash as she neared Fifth Avenue.

"Give me your f---ing money or I'll slash you face," said one of the suspects while the other held her from behind. After searching her pockets and finding nothing, the men grabbed the bag with the clothing and fled down Fifth Avenue.

Honda stolen

A box of books and a green Honda Accord went missing this week.

A 60-year-old motorist from Massachusetts parked his car on Eighth Street between Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park West at noon on April 5, but he returned there the next day to find, or more precisely, not to find, his vehicle.

Along with the Accord, the Massachusetts man reported a table and box of books missing.

Flatbush burglars

A Flatbush Avenue resident took off for a couple of days to visit his parents, but when he returned to his apartment near Bergen Street he found a few things missing.

The victim, 25, left his apartment at 7 p.m. on April 4.

When he returned two days later, he discovered somebody had busted in the front door. The burglar made off with his Dell laptop computer, valued at \$1,900, a pair of speakers and a camera, police said.

A resident on the first floor also reported having her apartment burglarized.

The 29-year-old tenant told police that somebody broke in between 8:45 a.m. and midnight on April 5.

The thief made off with a pair of cameras, a camera lens, a Macintosh laptop computer valued at \$2,400, and a gold bracelet.

They got that

There's nothing like having a cell phone, or several dozen, stolen out of your car.

Just ask the salesman who parked his car in the Staples parking lot on Fourth Avenue near Fifth Street at 11 a.m. on April 6. The man dashed into the office supplies store to pick up a few items, but when

he returned to his green Mercury sedan 20 minutes later he found the passenger-side rear window smashed.

The bandit made off with \$12,700 worth of cell phones, headphones, accessories and chargers, police said.

Mugged on 5th

After withdrawing cash from an ATM machine on Fifth Avenue between 14th and 15th streets, a woman was approached by a stranger who asked for the time.

When the 46-year-old woman said he did not know the time, the stranger grabbed her by the throat and demanded that she hand over her money.

She passed over the \$60 she had just taken out, but the attacker fled down Fifth Avenue and ducked into a building.

Polaroid picture

A pair of thug thugs looking to score some Polaroid film pocketed two packs of the instantly developing stuff at a drugstore at Atlantic and Third

avenues.

The duo entered the store at 6:30 p.m. and tried shoplifting the film, worth \$30. But when an employee tried to stop them, they responded by hitting him on the head.

Two teens, ages 16 and 18, were arrested in connection with the April 12 incident.

Grand theft

A couple was left scratching their heads this week when they returned to fetch their 16-year-old car parked at Nevins and Wyckoff streets.

Only instead of a white, 1988 Pontiac Grand Am, the pair found a big fat nothing.

The 29-year-old owner said his girlfriend parked the car at noon on April 10. But by 2 p.m. on April 12, the car was nowhere to be found.

Along with the automobile, the couple reported missing a table saw and circle saw that had been stored inside the vehicle.

The car was valued at \$500, police said.

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Shots fired in tire shop

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Armed thugs hit a 24-hour tire shop on Fourth Avenue twice in the past two weeks.

In the early morning hours of April 13, a pair of gun-wielding bandits approached the shop at St. Mark's Place and demanded that an employee open up the front door.

When the clerk refused, one of the men pulled out a gun and fired a bullet through the glass door, striking the employee in the right shoulder. The victim, 42,

was taken to New York Methodist Hospital where he was treated and released, police said.

A trio of gun-wielding thugs burst into the same tire shop on April 2.

During the 3 a.m. attack, one man pulled out a silver revolver, forced a customer to the ground, and helped himself to \$200 from the patron's pocket. The other two unarmed ruffians forced the shop employee to fork over \$450 from his pocket.

The men then fled the shop down Fourth Avenue.

Police did not believe there was a connection between the two incidents.

LEGAL NOTICES

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, Kings County on the 16th day of April, 2004, bearing the Index Number No. 190504, a copy of which may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at CIVIL COURT, KINGS COUNTY, 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, in room 007, grants new rights for Abigail, the name of Jessica J. Johnson. My present name is April Anglin Anglin. My present address is 2425 Kings Highway, #F17, Brooklyn, NY 11229. My place of birth is Bala, Australia. My date of birth is 02/20/1994. MD15

Notice of Formation of CHAMPAGNE PRODUCTIONS FROM DEVELOPMENT STATE, L.L.C., a domestic Limited Liability Company (LLC), Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State on 3/10/04. NY office located in West County, Secretary of State is being rated as agent upon whom process against the LLC may be served. Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC, served upon together to 328 Fulton Avenue, PMB 100, Buffalo, NY 14203. Later date to dissolve there is no specific date of dissolution. Purpose: To engage in any lawful act or activity. P51-16

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Sunset Park activist Galarza booted in CB7 appointments

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

An outspoken critic of both Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the elected official who appointed him to Community Board 7 was denied a third term this week.

David Galarza, a Sunset Park activist who spearheaded community rallies against X-rated video shops and a power plant proposed for the neighborhood, believes that the snub by Councilwoman Sara Gonzalez was the result of controversial issues he repeatedly brought to the fore while sitting on the board's housing committee.

Since being appointed in 2000 by former Councilman Angel Rodriguez, who pleaded guilty to extortion charges two years later and resigned, the two-term board member has publicly criticized both Rodriguez and Gonzalez.

Galarza lashed out at Rodriguez in 2002 when the councilman chose not to endorse Civil Court Judge Margarita Lopez Torres' bid for re-election.

Lopez Torres, an 11-year civil court judge, was passed over twice by the Democratic Party for nomination to its slate.

She believes she was shunned by the party for refusing to follow the rules of Brooklyn political-judicial back scratching by declining to make a patronage hire requested by an assemblyman.

"It's always a shame when an elected official takes punitive action against a member of the community simply for having a difference of opinion," Galarza said in a prepared statement sent to newspapers this week. "It's politics a la Bloomberg. If you can't be a rubber stamp, you can't be on the board."

Galarza said that he first crossed paths with Gonzalez, then-councilwoman of Community Board 7, after he organized a vigil following the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. That demonstration, he said, upset Gonzalez, who questioned the costly burden it would put on police, who were to provide security that day, claims Galarza.

Gonzalez, who spoke at that demonstration, told The Brooklyn

Papers this week that those claims were untrue.

Galarza said his decision to support George Martinez, a former district leader from Red Hook and Sunset Park, in a special election to replace Rodriguez in 2002 may have added to the bad blood.

Gonzalez wouldn't elaborate on her decision to let Galarza go, but the councilwoman, who oversees 21 of the board's 50 seats, indicated that the two Sunset Park natives did not see eye to eye.

"He didn't reach out to me," said Gonzalez. "We wanted to reach out to people who were truly interested and wanted to work toward the betterment of the board."

Some community board members, including Chairman Joseph Longobardi, declined to comment on Galarza's sacking, saying that the decision not to re-appoint was between him and Gonzalez. Longobardi pointed, however, that the decision may have come as a result of Galarza's move less than a year ago to Windsor Terrace, which falls in Councilman Bill DeBlasio's district.

The City Charter does not, however,

require that a council member re-appoint or appoint based on the geography of their council district, only that the person being appointed live in or have a material interest in the community district.

But with four seats, DeBlasio's share of the board is minimal compared to that of Gonzalez. This term, he re-appointed two old members and selected one new, Raymond Goffio.

Galarza, who has lived in Sunset Park most of his life, moved with his wife and a son to a rent-stabilized home on Prospect Park Southwest, which is on the eastern border of Community Board 7.

"Some people probably want to make an issue of that, but I'm completely within the confines of the community board," said Galarza. "Nobody can argue that."

Despite vacancies on the board, which Gonzalez said were the result of several older members bowing out earlier in the term, Robert Pakruda was not re-appointed. Pakruda served on the board for 30 years.

Gonzalez's new appointees are: Edgar Alvarez, Amparo Alverio,

Beverly Kleinman, Cynthia Gonzalez, Maria Canales, Edward Rivera and Grisel Amador.

"I'm greatly appreciative of Bob Caputo's assistance for the betterment of these communities," said Gonzalez, giving a nod to Borough President Marty Markowitz's senior advisor for community relations. She added that in the coming term, the future of Sunset Park's waterfront would remain at the forefront for many board members, who say they would like to see affordable housing built along a portion of that stretch.

Markowitz appointed Leah Archibald, executive director of the South-west Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation. The Park Slope resident, and Buffalo native, said that she wants to work toward improving the business and residential sectors.

"I'll certainly be concerned with proposals concerning the waterfront and land-use issues," said Archibald, a musician and mother of two children. "Businesses and residents can coexist peacefully."

Boris Archibald, Markowitz appointed Ana Rivera and Darlene Caputo.

Tale of two sports complexes

Nets, Jets arenas tied up in eminent domain and traffic woes

By Karen Matthews
Associated Press

Ambitious plans for a Nets basketball arena in Brooklyn and a Jets football stadium in Manhattan could transform two underdeveloped neighborhoods — and give New York sports fans indisputable bragging rights over their friends in New Jersey, where both teams now play.

Or both projects could stall over traffic congestion, the loss of homes and businesses to the power of eminent domain and what critics see as the unseemliness of spending

tax dollars on stadiums while schools and other city services go begging.

"We're not refugees camping out in tents," said David Sheets, who lives in a four-story brick rooming house that would meet the wrecking ball under developer Bruce Ratner's plan for a Nets arena.

"I hang me that I have to explain to people ... why they should not come in and tear down our homes."

On Manhattan's West Side, City Councilwoman Christine Quinn vowed to fight the proposed \$1.4 billion Jets stadium "on the Council, in the streets and in the courts, if necessary."

"The New York City taxpayer

is being asked to subsidize a football team at the same exact time that cuts throughout the budget are leaving our schools and health care system short-handed," Quinn said after Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Gov. George Pataki announced details of the stadium plan on March 25.

A Quinnipiac University poll found that 60 percent of New Yorkers don't want public funds spent on the Jets stadium while 59 percent oppose using tax money for a Nets arena in Brooklyn.

Neither facility has to go before the voters in a referendum but their backers are courting public opinion none-

theless, as both projects could be delayed by lawsuits or by opposition from city and state legislators, who can rule over zoning and parts of the financial packages.

Delay would be especially costly to the West Side stadium because in addition to providing a home for the Jets, it is key to the city's bid for the 2012 Summer Olympics.

New York is one of nine cities vying for the 2012 Games. The International Olympic Committee executive board will decide in May whether to accept all nine bids or trim the field to around half a dozen, and the full IOC will choose one city in July 2005.

Intensive public relations campaigns are under way for both proposals.

Ratner assembled Brooklyn-based NBA greats including Connie Hawkins and World B. Free for a news conference last October announcing his bid to buy the Nets.

The Jets held a "Jets Fest" at a West Side park and invaded Manhattan bar owners to pore over stadium plans.

Jets President L. Jay Cross and Ratner, a Brooklyn-based real estate developer with projects around the metropolitan region, are both making the rounds of business breakfasts plugging their plans.

Both projects are being sold as sports facilities but as urban renewal plans that include a stadium or arena among their several components.

Skeptics say this strategy is the rigour nowadays since studies have shown that stadiums are not the engines of economic development their backers have promised.

"Since stadiums are seen as bad economic deals, they tend to throw in a bunch of other stuff to muddy the waters," said Neil deMause, co-author of "Field of Schemes: How the Great Stadium Swindle Turns Public Money into Private Profit."

An example is the San Diego Padres' brand-new Petco Park, which anchors a Ballpark District intended to revitalize an underused part of the city.

The proposed Jets stadium is part of a redevelopment plan for a vast stretch of Manhattan's far West Side that city officials see as the last remaining tract of available real estate close to midtown.

The plan includes extending the No. 7 subway line and building 28 million square feet of new office space over the next 30 years.

The Jets stadium, officially called the New York Sports and Convention Center, would double as convention and exhibition space. Its construction would be linked to the expansion of the nearby Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, which tourism officials say is too small to book major events.

The stadium would cost \$1.4 billion, of which the Jets

are promising \$800 million. The city and state would spend \$500 million each for a deck over existing rail yards and a retractable roof.

Bloomberg promised to bring the Jets "home" where they belong, capturing millions of dollars a year and thousands of jobs now lost across the river.

But the price tag dwarfs the going rate for stadiums. A new stadium for the Arizona Cardinals is due to open in 2006 — also with a retractable roof — at a cost of \$360 million.

The amount of money involved in the Jets deal is staggering. There's no way around that," said Tim Chapin, an assistant professor of urban planning at Florida State University.

In Brooklyn, Ratner has not yet announced the financing of his project or separated out the cost of the Nets arena from his \$2.5 billion plan for commercial and residential development.

But a source told the Daily News that the arena alone would cost more than \$500 million.

The complex — including 2.1 million square feet of office space and 4,500 apartments — is to be designed by Frank Gehry, renowned for the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles.

Bruce Bender, an executive vice president at the developer's Forest City Ratner Cos., said the arena would be financed through sales tax from concessions and income tax from the players.

He also said the city would have to come up with an estimated \$150 million for improving roads, sewers and utilities.

The arena would be built over rail yards at Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues, next door to where the Dodgers once planned a stadium before abandoning Brooklyn for Los Angeles.

Forest City Ratner officials estimate that about 150 residential units and several businesses will have to be demolished to make way for their plans but opponents of the plan put the number at more than 500.

Bender said the developer is "trying to minimize condemnation of people who live here" because "it's counterproductive to our objectives."

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CB2 set to count trees in Heights

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

As the temperatures start to soar and trees sprout new leaves, keep your eye peeled for pairs of computer-wielding volunteers conducting a special kind of count.

Starting this spring, Community Board 2 will kick off an in-depth survey of all the London planes, Norway maples, honey locusts and other assorted trees dotting the streets of Fort Greene, Brooklyn Heights, DUMBO, Vinegar Hill and Downtown Brooklyn.

Because of concerns that the area needs more trees, the community board has organized efforts to act as a pilot for an upcoming citywide tree census.

"We're very excited about this project — it's for the health of our community," said CB2 Chairwoman Shirley McKee.

Using Palm Pilots that are to be donated by companies in Downtown Brooklyn, the board will organize efforts to note every seedling, sapling and conifer on public space. In addition to tracking the type of tree, volunteers will note the height, diameter and overall health of each specimen.

That information will be directly downloaded into Department of Parks and Recreation computers, said Fiona Watt, chief of forestry and horticulture for the agency.

"This effort will essentially be a preview of what's to come when we do a citywide census in 2005," said Watt, who led the first tree census in 1995.

Because trees filter out many pollutants, McKee said, the board was concerned about maximizing the number of trees within its boundaries. Brooklyn has the lowest tree canopy average in the city, according to the 1995 tree census.

Community Board 2 also has the third lowest tree coverage in the borough after CB1, which includes Greenpoint and Williamsburg, and CB11, which covers Bensonhurst and Gravesend.

Sue Wolf, a CB2 member and executive director of the New York Urban and Community Forestry Council is heading the community board's effort. She attributed the low numbers to Downtown Brooklyn, which is long on concrete and short on green space.

According to the 1995 tree census, the board had 6,084 trees within its boundaries. While most were categorized as in "good condition," 122 were declared dead and another 333 in poor condition.

The board is hoping the census may lead to greener streets, but the city announced last week that there might be a hold on all tree planting this season.

Comptroller William Thompson ruled last summer that the city must hire laborers at a rate of \$40 per hour to plant trees instead of using gardeners at \$15 per hour.

Dead trees can actually pose a hazard to the community since they give off much of the carbon monoxide they took in while they were alive, said Watt.

The new information will also allow the city to put a dollar value on each tree based on how much pollution it removes each year.

"It's really exciting to tell people how valuable trees are in an economic sense which is not the way we're used to valuing trees," said Watt.

"They're green infrastructure, not gray infrastructure, and it's easy to take green infrastructure for granted, and it's difficult to quantify the work that it does," Watt said.

Volunteers interested in assisting with the tree count can attend a special training workshop on either May 4 or May 11 at Long Island University. For more information call the CB2 office at (718) 596-5410.

DUMBO...

Continued from page 1

"I think they should develop Front Street as much as possible. There are a lot of small businesses that could be useful to the neighborhood," said Linton. He said he would like to see more shops along that block of Front Street, which is currently filled by parking garages.

Walentas did not return calls seeking comment.

But his isn't the only new high-rise irking neighborhood residents.

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, commonly referred to as Jehovah's Witnesses, is looking to build a soaring, 1,000-unit apartment complex several blocks away at 85 Jay St.

That plan includes towers 14, 16, 18 and 20 stories high on the largest developable assemblage of property in the city after the World Trade Center site.

Several community groups have already expressed concern about the Watchtower project and have even started a Web site, 85JayStreet.org, to keep the community informed about the development.

The new Walentas building would also include an 8,000-square-foot performance space for a non-profit institution. That space would not be large enough, however, to house Arts at St. Ann's which is currently located in the 38 Water St. warehouse, which would have to come down to make way for the new project.

For the past two years Walentas has offered the space rent-free to the non-profit group, which lost its home at the Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn Heights several years ago.

Now it may be set a drift again.

"We would like to stay in DUMBO, but we knew they were always planning on developing that site," said Julie Feldman, the president and artistic director of Arts at St. Ann's.

The Walentas application also calls for rezoning another building, across the street.

Last year, home improvement guru Bob Vila renovated 85 Water St. for his television show, converting an old pepper factory owned by Walentas into three gleaming apartments and a ground-floor retail space. That space, however, is zoned for manufacturing.

TICKET...

Continued from page 1

partment's deputy commissioner for public information, confirmed the authenticity of the security tape.

"The tape corresponds with the traffic agent's version of events," Browne said.

An employee at the grocery store declined to comment, saying only, "I'm not giving away any information."

Avvinti, a Sicilian-born tailor, died on April 10, shortly after he was issued a \$115 ticket for double-parking in front of the supermarket, where he was waiting while his wife shopped for Easter groceries.

An Avvinti family member declined to comment when contacted by The Brooklyn Papers on Thursday. A vigil was scheduled to be held outside the Met Foodmarket on Saturday, April 17, at 11:30 a.m.

Sanford Rubenstein, the Avvinti family's lawyer, held a press conference Wednesday to announce the lawsuit and charged that the traffic agent, identified as L. Hinkson, and an unnamed partner, refused to call an ambulance even though Avvinti "was visibly suffering a heart attack."

Avvinti got out of the car and talked to the agent, and then got back into the car and began clutching his chest, Rubenstein said. The agent issued the ticket and left without calling 911, he said.

Saying simply, "Just tell him to pay his ticket," Hinkson walked off as Avvinti writhed in pain, Rubenstein alleged.

Avvinti's family filed a notice of claim — a precursor to a wrongful death lawsuit — against the city Wednesday, charging that the 61-year-old Sicilian immigrant might not have died if an ambulance had arrived sooner.

According to the notice to file suit against the city, the ticket was written at 12:07 p.m. and nobody called 911 until nine minutes later.

"What happened to Onofrio Avvinti was an outrageous disregard for the life of a New Yorker by a New York City traffic enforcement agent," said Rubenstein. "Had an ambulance been called immediately, this man may not have died."

Rubenstein, who has represented black activist Al Sharpton and police brutality victim Ahmer Louima, declined to comment further on the case when contacted by The Brooklyn Papers on Thursday.

A source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that members of the Avvinti family were angered by Rubenstein's decision to hold a press conference the day before the man's funeral.

Captain Frank Cangiarella, the new commanding officer of the 62nd Precinct, said that he and community affairs officers had contacted the Federation of Italian-American Organizations to let it be known that police sympathized with the Avvinti family, whose patriarch arrived in New York 33 years ago from Sicily.

"There's the investigation with the agents," said Cangiarella, "but we want to reach out to the community and address whatever their needs are."

Nancy Sottile, executive director of the Federation of Italian-American Organizations, said she had met with the family. She said they were heartbroken over Avvinti's death.

Sottile said, however, that many questions remained unanswered.

"The whole issue is to find out what really happened, which is what the family is concerned with," said Sottile. "The community is really upset about this incident."

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

April 17, 2004

'Open' season

Hundreds of works by boro's living artists at Brooklyn Museum

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn Editor

The sheer scope of "Open House: Working in Brooklyn" demands a mentally and physically exhausting — but spiritually exhilarating — trek across two floors of the museum (and a scavenger hunt of sorts throughout the rest of the institution) to see nearly 300 works of art by 198 Brooklyn artists.

"Open House" is as controversial, and at times, as confrontational, as "Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection," which, by the way, curator Charlotte Kotik also helmed. For evidence of my theory, examine the heap of mixed materials installed outside, against the backside of the museum, by Jesse Berowetz and Matt Bui (one of the many scattered, satellite installations); or the arrangement of clipped fingernails by Maria Elena Gonzalez; or John Klima's children's-size helicopter featuring a video game with Osama Bin Laden in its crosshairs; or an enormous installation of hair and glue by Wenda Gu running down a stairwell.

All of the artworks were created after 2000, so the exhibit could easily have been named "Brooklyn NOW!" But the art isn't just timely; many are timeless in their appeal and made the cut after careful consideration by Kotik.

Today, the Brooklyn Museum estimates that there are 5,000 artists and 50 galleries in this borough. From this large pool, Kotik culled just a few hundred works by established artists such as painter Danny Simmons and sculptor Louise Bourgeois as well as many emerging artists.

While this commitment to the borough's creative community may seem unprecedented, the museum has supported local artists throughout its history. The museum inaugurated the "Working in Brooklyn" series in 1985, and in the 1930s, the museum actually had a Gallery for Living Artists. "Open House," however, is the largest and most ambitious showcase of Brooklyn artists yet.

It would be impossible to look at this show and make generalizations about what Brooklyn's contemporary artists have in common aesthetically. If anything, the sheer volume of



Tree of life: Curator Charlotte Kotik (above) canvassed Brooklyn to find the 198 artists in the new exhibit "Open House: Working in Brooklyn." (At right) Artist Lorenzo Pace installs his multimedia work, "Jalani and the Lock Family History Tree."

artwork only serves to demonstrate the diversity of perspectives. In "Open House" there are natives of Asia, Africa, South America, Europe and even Jersey City.

Remember me

But for this viewer, it was often the contributions exploring African-American heritage and identity that had a visceral impact.

Williamsburg artist Lorenzo Pace offers an intimate look into his own family's history with his multimedia work, "Jalani and the Lock Family History Tree" (2004), which tells the story of his inheritance of a paludal that once chained his

enslaved great grandfather. Against a backdrop of electric orange, Pace has painted a family tree and mounted photos of his family, and the lock itself, in gilt frames.

His illustrated book about how this troubling piece of metal came to his family is displayed within a child's reach. The base of the artwork is a white picket fence — a symbol of the American dream that was not to be for the men and women brought here in chains — behind which are strewn artificial flowers and toys. The colors and the book are meant to lure youngsters, Pace told GO Brooklyn, so that this chapter of America's history will not be forgotten.

His installation also displays a model of the granite sculpture he designed for "Triumph of the Human Spirit" (1992-2000), "a monument installed at the African Burial Ground, in Lower Manhattan.

Kambui Oluji's "Something Like a Phenomenon" (2002) also brings past and present together in his black-on-white digital collage. In the lower left of the composition, a familiar, small figure leaps to put a basketball through a hoop. In stark contrast, a silhouetted mouse hangs down in the upper right corner.

Oluji's work is a reminder that lynchings are not events from America's distant past,



even if those events seem inconceivable today when black athletes have achieved superstardom and riches. The tiny athlete in this picture suggests that Oluji believes this is just the beginning of African-American recognition in this country.

Dr. Tracey Rico's quilts, "Mammy's Cake-walk" (2002) and "Bamboules" (2002) stitch together articles of clothing, fabric swatches and photographs. Like quilts embellished with symbols that were used as maps to enable refugees on the Underground Railroad to find the next safehouse, these textiles convey somber, complex examples of racism and oppression with their illustrations. Rico's blankets are the stuff of nightmares.

Revealing vulnerability

There were many works that hinted of the fragile, delicate nature of young life. Bryan Crockett's "Pride" (2001), which appears to be two naked mole rats reaching towards each other, is masterfully carved from pink, cultured marble. "Pride" demonstrates so much expertly executed realism that these sweet creatures, although made of marble, appear to have vulnerable, thin, translucent skin.

Katy Gramman's intimate photograph, "Angie and Betty, Shoeneck Creek, Nazareth, Pennsylvania" (2003), shows a wet, semi-nude woman standing on a riverbed, clutching her soggy clothes and staring into the distance. Her muscular dog looks up at her expectantly, perhaps wondering, as we do, if she's a modern-day Venus coming out of the water, or a cold, uncomfortable woman in need of a towel and a cup of tea?

Melanie Baker's enormous portrait "George" (2002) creates an aged visage of a certain leader of the free world from collage newspaper and charcoal. From the bridge of his nose on down, Baker's moody, looming technical achievement depicts deep lines in his face underscoring a determined intensity. The inevitable erosion of time and age on the face of this man could easily be the mask of grim determination any of us take on when boarding a subway in a new world filled with unpredictable dangers.

And that is just a brief introduction to our neighbors whose work is on display in "Open House." It is such an ambitious exhibition, in fact, that I'll be returning to visit this "House" many more times before it closes in August.

ART



Arts festival

From April 18 through April 25, The Bay Ridge Festival of the Arts will open to the public its galleries full of paintings, sculpture, prints and photography.

A highlight of the fine arts sale is the popular crafts fair on April 24, from 1 pm to 7 pm, and April 25, from 1 pm to 5 pm, featuring pottery by Judith Hooper (pictured), stained glass, jewelry, batik, holiday decorations, decorative plates, Rose-maling, crocheted and knitted items and quilts.

The mission of the festival is to promote the arts in Brooklyn and to raise funds for scholarships for area college students pursuing the arts. According to festival spokeswoman Mary Speers, the event has provided more than \$220,000 in scholarships since its founding in the 1960s.

The festival, which also features many special events including live musical performances and a stained glass demonstration, is free and is held at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 7420 Fourth Ave. at 74th Street in Bay Ridge. For more information about the festival or the scholarship, and for a complete schedule of events, call (718) 745-4374 or visit the Web site at www.brfaf.org.

— Lisa J. Curtis

DANCE



All hail Rex

National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica will bring a bit of sunshine to Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts on April 17 and April 18 with two unique, all-Caribbean programs.

Under the leadership of co-founder and artistic director Rex Nettleford, the troupe of dancers, singers and musicians will perform six New York City premieres including Nettleford's "Cave's End," choreographed to Jimmy Cliff's music and dedicated to Cliff (on April 17).

The other premieres are: Olive Thompson's "Folktales" (April 18); Jean-Guy Saintus' tribute to the bicentenary of Haiti's independence, "Incantation" (April 17); David Brown's "Labess" (April 18); Christopher Walker's "Fragile" (April 18); and the late Lester Horton's 1948 work, "The Beloved" (April 17).

Of course, not all of the programs' pieces are filled with hope and joy, as some address somber issues such as the importance of maintaining traditions in the face of oppression and gender conflict.

The troupe will also perform favorites such as Nettleford's "Tindanabulum" and "Gerelbenta," a dance that takes its name from two of the major traditional rites practiced in Jamaica (pictured above).

The musical selections will include both live performances by the company singers as well as recorded pieces by Cliff, David Rudder, Bob Marley, Sting, Zap Mama and more.

The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica will perform April 17, at 8 pm, and April 18, at 2 pm, in the Walt Whitman Theater on the Brooklyn College campus (enter at Campus Road at Hiller Place). Tickets are \$40 and \$35. For more information, log on to www.brooklyn-center.com or call the box office at (718) 951-4500.

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BROOKLYN Eats

Neighborhood Dining Guide

This week: PARK SLOPE

Biscuit

387 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Avenue, (718) 398-2227, www.norfolkatlantash.com (Cash only)
Entrees: \$6-\$16.50. ★
Carolina-style barbecue restaurant Biscuit is probably not the place to go if you're on a diet, as the most popular items on the menu are the half rack of ribs and the fried half-chicken. There are also dry-brined pork ribs, smoked chicken and salmon, craft sandwiches and sides like red beans and rice, collard greens and cheese grits. Biscuit also offers a monthly "pig-picking" for \$30 per person. The pig is dry-rubbed, hot-smoked, and slow-cooked. It includes all sides and can feed 15 people. All parties are made fresh daily on the premises by Maio Martinez, who co-owns Biscuit with Josh Cohen. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Delices de Paris

321 Ninth St., at Fifth Avenue, (718) 768-5666 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Pastries: \$1.55.
This cheerful bakery in Park Slope sells more than five international pastries. Delices de Paris offers a wide assortment of cakes, breads, pies, tarts, croques, breakfast items, coffee, hot chocolate, salads, sandwiches and more. Renowned chef Michael Martin's foie gras, spinach and Gruyere quiche are legendary. And if you're looking for a last-minute gift idea, come here to choose from among the imported cheeses, Italian oils and Belgian chocolates that can be wrapped and shipped in a lovely gift basket. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The Ginkgo Leaf

788A Union St., at Seventh Avenue, (718) 399-9976 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$28-\$19. ★
Designed by artist Toshio Sasaki, Ginkgo Leaf's new indoor garden offers a serene atmosphere for authentic Japanese dining. Whether seated near a waterfall or beside the sushi bar, there is plenty to enjoy. The cafe serves shabu shabu at lunch as well as a variety of plates. At dinner, the daily specialties like belly tuna (toro) tartare with black truffle (Bling fish roll) or fresh macaroni mantar with rice vinegar. Ginkgo Leaf offers more than 20 different types of fish and a sushi bar with three types of pure sushi on hand in Japan.

Ginkgo Leaf serves brunch on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, from noon to 4 p.m. and hosts private parties for groups of 20 to 30 people in the garden. Open daily for dinner. Closed Wednesdays.

Inaka Sushi House

436 Seventh Ave., at Fourth Street, (718) 499-7856 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$9.60-\$16.50.
The making of those beautiful little rolls of art called sushi is so fascinating many people will prefer sitting at the bar where owner Joanne Wu's cadre of superb chefs work their magic. Others may prefer the comfort of Inaka's dining room. Either way, a good idea for beginners is to order chef Jack Chen's nine-piece sushi deluxe box, which contains yellow tail, salmon, mackerel, fan fish roll, crab meat, white fish in several sauces, shrimp and tuna roll. Sushi can also be ordered a la carte and is more readily combinable. Teriyaki fans will find Inaka's dishes expertly seasoned and melt-in-your-mouth tender. Open Monday through Saturday for lunch and dinner. Dinner only on Sunday.

JRG Fashion Cafe

177 Flatbush Ave., at Pacific Street, (718) 399-7079, www.jrgentertainment.com (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$10-\$20.
This Guyanese-Caribbean cask blends owner J.R. Giddinger's twin passions for fashion and food. Expect dressed-up versions of West Indian favorites — collard and ackee gets reinvented here as a tempura fish cake — or cold stew served with a side of rice and beans. As the name would suggest, Giddinger hosts a fashion show in the cafe on the last Thursday of each month, and displays clothing from local designers on mannequins throughout the space. Every Monday, JRG hosts a singles night offering an open bar from 7:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., after which beers are \$3 and mixed drinks \$4 until close. The cafe is open until midnight, Sunday, Thursday, and until 4 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

Latin American Cafe

661 Sackett St., at Fourth Avenue, (718) 857-7720 (MC, Visa) Entrees: \$7-\$15.
Open for just over a year, Latin American Cafe serves

★ = Full review available at



Abbreviation Key: AmEx= American Express; Disc= Discover; MC= MasterCard; Visa= Visa Card

Biscuit co-owner Maio Martinez with some of the eponymous product.

Spanish-influenced dishes in a cozy setting. With brick walls, hardwood floors, French doors and 12 tables, the restaurant resembles a Paris bistro. Latin American Cafe also has tables outside, under a canopy.

Naidro's

384 Seventh Ave., at 11th Street, (718) 565-7585 (Cash only) Pastries and dishes: 75 cents-\$7.
Naidro Miller has created a cozy vegan and vegetarian-friendly cafe nestled on the south end of Park Slope's Seventh Avenue. The cheerful staff serves up locally roasted coffees, fresh loaves and homemade pastries and muffins. Eclectic menu items include organic oatmeal and their own granola. For lunch, try a delicious soup, salad or a spicy chicken or roasted veggie sandwich. For a great afternoon pick-me-up, try the fruit protein smoothie. And nightly dinner dishes include homemade chicken paparriccio, macaroni and cheese. Naidro's is the place for breakfast, coffees, desserts and good company. Breakfast, lunch and dinner served daily.

Second Helpings

448 Ninth St., at Seventh Avenue, (718) 965-1925, www.secondhelpings.com (MC, Visa) Entrees: \$6-\$12.
Dedicated to serving the best-tasting, healthiest food possible, Second Helpings will keep you coming back for more. Using mostly organic produce and only the freshest fish and free-range poultry available, this friendly neighborhood cafe-kitchen offers fresh, healthy, vegetarian, fish and poultry dishes to please every palate. Try the butternut squash chowder with roasted corn or the vegan yuba manicotti — both local favorites. And the kids love the organic macaroni and cheese. Boasting incredible brownies (vegan and wheat free), their desserts are fresh, healthy, and delicious! Do your taste buds a favor: come back for Second Helpings! Breakfast, lunch and dinner served Monday through Friday. Brunch and dinner served Saturday and Sunday.

12th St. Bar & Grill

1123 Eighth Ave., at 12th Street, (718) 965-9526 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$14-\$25. ★
Bistro sophistication in a friendly, neighborhood restaurant. There's steak au poivre for meat-lovers and potatoes and steamed chocolate pudding cake for vegetarians. Chef Paul Viorio also serves burgers and sandwiches — including the panino press, a combination of fontina cheese, portobello mushrooms, tomato and salad. Appetizers include lightly curried mussels and shrimp and crab cakes. Saturday and Sunday brunch, Monday and Tuesday prix fixe \$22 dinner. Open daily for dinner.

200 Fifth Restaurant/Bar

200 Fifth Ave., at Union Street, (718) 638-2925, www.200fifth.net (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$6.50-\$24.95. ★
Open since 1986, 200 Fifth Restaurant/Bar offers a 40-foot bar, more than 25 TVs, a pool table and Internet jukebox. Let's not forget the 40 types of beer on tap. Their state-of-the-art sound system gets put to the test on Friday, also known as "Latin Night," with a live band. On Saturdays, there is a DJ spinning salsa, merengue, house, hip-hop, reggae and classics. Not to be edified by the entertainment, 200 Fifth's chef, Mandy Maphre (formerly of Knickerbocker Grill and The Grocery), offers dinner daily specials as well as a long list of affordably priced entrees: steak au boeuf, pan-seared salmon, burgers and pastas. Dinner served daily and brunch offered on Saturday and Sunday.

Born again

Couple raises Sixth Avenue's Bar Toto from ashes of Luce

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Papers

One of the most difficult lessons in life is giving people what they want, rather than what you want them to have. It took some trial and error, but Peter Sclafani and Kristin Halzlet, the husband-and-wife team behind the former Luce in Park Slope, and Luce's reincarnation, Bar Toto, now understand that concept.

Luce was a moderately priced, casual restaurant with good food in a location on Sixth Avenue that was, and continues to be, a culinary no man's land. The restaurant, which opened in 2002, had a following of older, affluent din-

ers for those who can afford a \$12 splurge. The rest of the dishes are priced at \$6-\$9 — a tab that enables diners to visit several times a week.

On one visit, I tried a simple arugula salad with shaved Parmesan. It was reminiscent of the salad I tasted at Luce two years ago, but better. The greens were tossed with a sharper, lemony dressing that nicely offset the salty richness of the Parmesan. On another evening, the panzanella salad was a surprise. Panzanella, as I've enjoyed it before, is a mix of ripe tomato, and cucumber chunks, sometimes with a few anchovies, and large chunks of Italian bread tossed in a light oil and vinegar dressing. The salad is served when the bread absorbs just enough of the dressing to soften it but not turn it soggy. This panzanella is actually a caponata, a slightly sweet one, but very good. Tomatoes, roasted peppers, olives and capers are mixed in a sweet and tart dressing. The bread cubes

DINING

Bar Toto (411 11th St. at Sixth Avenue in Park Slope) accepts Visa, MasterCard and American Express. Entrees: \$12. From April 15-22, Bar Toto is participating in Dine in Brooklyn restaurant week, offering three-course dinners for \$18.98. The restaurant serves dinner seven nights a week. From 11 pm to 2 am each evening there is a "happy hour" with tap beers and well drinks for \$3. For reservations, call (718) 768-6698.

In October, Bar Toto (his father's nickname) replaced Luce. Only minor changes have been made. The pressed-tin walls and ceiling and vintage tile floor remain. A long bar replaces a smaller one, and that's about it for the decor.

Stephanie Markowitz, the sous-chef under Luce's former executive chef Andrew Blackmore-Dobbin, developed the new menu. Markowitz has added simple dishes such as panini with a huge pile of delectable, matchstick fries, a few good burgers and crisp, grilled pizzas. Several simple pasta dishes are offered and new pizzas — four exactly — are included

add a chewy component.

Pizzas are individually sized, topped with fresh cheese and light, well-balanced sauces. The "Quattro Formaggi," or "four cheeses" — fresh and smoked mozzarella, gorgonzola and Parmesan — is cheese overkill saved by a sprinkling of pine-scented fresh rosemary.

The tomato sauce on the "Margherita," the simplest of the four pies, is slightly spicy with just enough garlic and fresh basil. Grilling crisps the pie's crust and lends a smoky flavor.

The way a short stint on the grill has changed Bar Toto's simple pies into something exceptional, careful and cre-



Eat your heart out: At Bar Toto in Park Slope, chef Stephanie Markowitz's hot panini sandwich is stuffed with housemade sausage, caramelized onions, pesto and taleggio cheese.

ative handling of ingredients elevates many of the other dishes.

Take the eggplant Parmesan, for instance. It is as commonplace a dish as scrambled eggs and bacon, as it shows up on hero rolls in pizza-by-the-slice places, cheap red-sauce restaurants and better Italian cafes. Often it's over-breaded, oily and dull. But when this dish is made well, it's a wonder. Bar Toto's rendition is light, not greasy, with the cheese and tomato enhancing the flavor of the eggplant. Each layer of eggplant in Markowitz's version is gently breaded with just a touch of tangy tomato sauce and fresh Parmesan. It is lovely.

Another winning entree is the braised sausage with grilled polenta. The pork sausage is housemade, not too garlicky and studded with fennel seeds. Slices of the savory meat are stewed with fresh spinach, garlic and whole plum tomatoes that are slow-

roasted until they're sweet. Elegant it's not, but this simple, deeply flavored stew is soul-satisfying.

I loved a light, creamy cheese cake offered as a special, but pairing the rich dessert with a puddle of creme anglaise made little sense — the two similar components canceled each other out. The cake needed something tart — maybe a bit of fruit compote or even a few simple berries — to balance its richness. And, I'm not a big fan of that old workhorse tiramisu, but this dessert's tiers of sponge cake were airy yet moist and layers of mascarpone cheese were whipped until pillowy and delicate.

It's not easy to step away from something you believe in and say, "This isn't working. Let me rethink it." Having done that, Sclafani and Halzlet's Bar Toto is the kind of easy, inexpensive neighborhood spot with good food everyone wants and so few of us are blessed with.

Latin beat

Bay Ridge isn't known as a destination for Nuevo Latino cooking, but Samba, which opened in September, may change that.

Ridgite Mark Dubundo, Samba's owner and chef whose recent stints include C3 in Greenwich Village and Mazzei on the Upper East Side, says, "One thing I knew, there were enough Italian restaurants in Bay Ridge."

In his new restaurant, Dubundo serves Mexican, South American, Peruvian and Cuban dishes. "The flavors are familiar but their plating is modern," he says. To begin, try ceviche (fish marinated in citrus juice) and fresh spinach, or an empanada filled with chicken, pork or steak.

For entrees, there's an Argentine skirt steak with spinach and spicy chimichurri sauce (parsley, oregano, oil, vinegar and garlic) and Cuban-style roast pork marinated in mojo (orange and lime juices and vinegar) and served with black beans and rice.

For dessert, Dubundo cools down over-spiced palates with "chocolate a la bamba," a warm chocolate cake

served with dulce de leche ice cream and a delectable Cuban-style bread pudding flavored with coconut cream and topped with house-made Tahitian vanilla ice cream.

When the weather warms up, the floor-to-ceiling front windows will slide open, the seating will be pushed to the walls, and on Friday and Saturday evenings a DJ will spin disco, jazz and Latin sounds.

Need a drink to get you on the dance floor? The "Sambapolita" is a heady mix of blood orange and lime juices, with Gyo Grosse and Cointreau.

Samba (9604 Third Ave., between 96th and 97th streets) accepts American Express, Visa, MasterCard, Discover, Club and Discover. Entrees: \$15-\$25. Serves three-course prix fixe dinner served each evening. Samba serves dinner Wednesday-Sunday from 5 pm to 11 pm. Beginning April 20, dinner will be served Tuesday-Sunday. A late-night menu of light snacks is served from 11 pm to 1 am. Samba is closed Mondays. For reservations call (718) 439-0475.

— Tina Barry

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Hard to Handel

Director Jorge Lavelli talks about mounting rare opera, 'Siroe,' at BAM

By Kevin Filipksi
for The Brooklyn Papers

George Frederick Handel composed more than 30 operas in 50 years, and so it is not surprising that, three centuries later, a forgotten Handel opera would make a comeback.

Actually, "Siroe" received 18 public performances after Handel composed it in 1728, but here has it that the opera has not been staged since. Now, in a production first seen in Venice in 2000, Handel's "Siroe" arrives at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Harvey Theater April 17-24, for its United States premiere.

"I don't think this opera was done since it was written," said Jorge Lavelli, who directs the production that will be performed by the Venice Baroque Orchestra under the baton of conductor Andrea Marcon. "There might have been a radio production in England at some point, but I'm pretty sure this is the first 'real' production."

Lavelli, an Argentine director currently residing in France, has staged operas and plays for three decades. Although he's built a substantial career in Europe, he has not directed in America since his 1978 "Faust" at the Metropolitan Opera. (Asked why, he shrugs and says, "I'm very busy.")

Sitting down with GO Brooklyn and a translator in BAM's offices during a break in rehearsals last week, Lavelli discussed directing in general, and opera and "Siroe" in particular.

"There are problems doing baroque operas because today it's difficult to make these stories work," Lavelli said.

Indeed, the formality of Handel's operas would seem a monumental handicap with modern audiences, but the music's beauty, along with the universality of these characters' travails, have made Handel the hottest opera composer around. (New York City Opera, which schedules a Handel opera every season, is currently reviving "Xerxes.")

"Siroe" follows the Persian prince of the title, heir to the throne, who is in love with Princess Emira. She has disguised herself as a man to avenge



MUSIC

The Venice Baroque Orchestra's production of Handel's "Siroe" will be performed April 17, 20, 23 and 24 at 7:30 pm in the Howard Gilman Opera House at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Harvey Theater, 651 Fulton St. between Ashland and Rockwell places in Fort Greene. Tickets are \$30, \$55 and \$80, and they can be purchased by calling BAM Ticket Services at (718) 636-4100, or by visiting the Web site at www.bam.org. A BAM Dialogue with director Jorge Lavelli and conductor Andrea Marcon will be held April 20 at 6 pm in the BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene; tickets are \$8.

her father's murder at the hands of none other than Siroe's father, the King of Persia. With a libretto by eminent poet Pietro Metastasio, Handel's "Siroe" manages to resolve its many conflicts by avoiding the tragedy it seems to be heading toward.

Lavelli described his approach to this tale: "It was originally written to be performed in a place that should hold no more than 600 or 700 people. For our production, there was a small performance space with the audience on each side of the performers and orchestra. Since the audience surrounds the performers, they become participants in the opera. It was an in-

teresting experience for the audience, actors and orchestra."

But staging "Siroe" at BAM, because of the BAM Harvey Theater's design, is not the same. Not better or worse, Lavelli insists it is "just different."

"At BAM, you cannot separate the architecture of the space from the performance, so we've redone this production especially for [the Harvey Theater]. The interesting thing at BAM is that it's an open space and it's not brand new, it has a lived-in feel that I like. It's not artificial at all, it's simply strapped bare."

"Everything starts with what is inside the actors-singers," he continued. "They act out, not just the story, but what they feel inside, which is very important. But most important is the text — Metastasio's story is mostly about power, along with love, and of course frustration. These elements jell to make it a tragedy, and it's very well-structured."

"So how can we stage this today, after 300 years? Well, really nothing has changed — it's seems to be permanent that we have these dramatic



Photo: L. P. P.

conflicts."

Along with his extensive opera experience, Lavelli has staged European versions of plays by luminaries like Tony Kushner, Brian Friel and Arthur Schnitzler.

"When I start [to direct a play], it's exactly the same [as an opera]: I ask myself, 'How do I tell or re-imagine the story within the space of the theater?' But it ends there," said Lavelli.

"In opera, the conductor runs the show, and in the theater, it's the director who makes the decisions. The conductor can decide to slow down or speed up the music. So the stage director is at the conductor's mercy, because there has to be the perfect balance between the music we hear and the action we see," he said. "As long as I am in control of how the singers are acting, then the words and music will take care of themselves."

Of course, two other people must

be taken into account.

"There must be a perfect marriage between composer and librettist," said Lavelli. "When you're looking at operas of the 20th century, it's very clear that in 'Lulu,' 'Die Soldaten,' or 'Pelleas et Melisande,' it's a meeting between music and words. Often, the text itself isn't great. [Maurice] Maeterlinck's text for 'Pelleas' is old-fashioned, but Debussy made this strange world fascinating and touching through his music. Handel, too, does the same thing with Metastasio's words."

Lavelli can't yet answer whether he is enjoying his first trip to Brooklyn.

"Right now, I go from the hotel to BAM for rehearsals and back to the hotel every day, so I haven't seen much else," he said with a laugh. "But I'm looking to discover the rest of Brooklyn."

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Fire & nice

Ridge author Shelly Reuben creates a modern-day Nancy Drew who investigates fires

By Lisa J. Curtis
 OCB Brooklyn Editor

Mystery writer Shelly Reuben is cheerful and upbeat, not what you'd expect from someone who deals with liars, arsonists and murderers all day.

The author, from Bay Ridge, whose day job is that of a private investigator specializing in fires, has brought her twin passions together in her fifth book, "Weeping" (Kate's Mystery Books/Justin, Charles & Co., 2004).

It is the first in what Reuben hopes will be a series featuring Fritillary Quilter, a young woman whose work as an insurance claims investigator sparks an interest in fires. She teams up with seasoned fire investigator Isaac "Ike" Blessing to unravel the mystery behind a deadly blaze in a Victorian house in Riverdale.

But don't look for similarities in "Weeping" between the naïve, bumbling 25-year-old Fritillary — frequently on the receiving end of one of Ike's handkerchiefs — and the capable, witty Reuben, who would not divulge her age, saying only that she was old enough to "remember Audrey Hepburn before she became a star."

"One of the reasons I didn't yet do a female protagonist was I didn't want to steal my own life," said Reuben. "I never want to put my life in my fiction. You end up needing to live up to a fictional character. It took me a long time to give 'Tilly' a legitimate entree into the field."

Reuben has been a licensed private investigator in New York and New Jersey for more than 20 years, and her first-hand experiences have enabled her to heat up the narratives of her previous books with forensic details. "Spent Matches" (Scribner, 1996) is about an investigation of a fire in a museum in Manhattan and "Origin and Cause" (Scribner, 1994) is about a torched pre-war antique car.

"All the forensics [in 'Weeping'] are true," said Reuben. "Everything I write

about fires is inspired by a case, but the facts, I change."

In "Weeping," Reuben takes the reader on a tour of the charred remains of the home, and we learn, along with Fritillary, about the house's construction and how to follow a trail to a fire's origin and cause.

"It's so hard to write about fires and make it comprehensible," said Reuben. "To make it worthy of being in fiction, you don't want to stop the action and write a treatise. You want readers to luxuriate in suspension of disbelief. What they want, and what I want to give them, is the fun of a story, make that technical information buyable as fiction."

In real life, Reuben and her husband, former fire marshal Charlie King, a 23-year veteran of the New York City Fire Department, ran their Bay Ridge home-office Charles G. King Associates Inc., together.

King, who died last July, was part of the inspiration for

"Whatever nobility I could give the character — to the extent I was capable of in any way projecting even a smidgen of what Charlie had, was based in reality," said Reuben.

But like is more of a handsome, father figure to Fritillary than a potential beau.

Named for a butterfly, Fritillary was described by Publisher's Weekly as "a young New York insurance claims investigator who will either charm or cloy, depending on how you feel about Nancy Drew."

Typically, Reuben takes the barb in stride and with a sense of humor, as she brings to mind why the Nancy Drew series was as big with the Baby Boomers as it was with Generation X.

"I'm taking it as a compliment because I'm a private investigator and she did investigate — although she was an unofficial girl detective. But Nancy had more guts than me, because she would go into caves and dark stairs without a



Hot topic: Author Shelly Reuben incorporates her first-hand experience as a private eye specializing in fires into her mysteries.

backup. I wouldn't go into a cave alone," said Reuben.

But unlike a Nancy Drew mystery, the author believes that "Weeping" will appeal to a wider range of fans who appreciate a wholesome read in the mystery genre.

"Adult readers have a right to enjoy a book without putting it down and feeling guilty about enjoying other people's misery, like most books give you nowadays," she said. "For a while I was going to movies and leaving angry that I spent two whole hours there and what I saw did not make me feel like a good person, or a better person or happier person."

"In my book, a nice lady was murdered and someone cared enough to find out who did it," she said. "The characters in my book, I want them to be morally above the crimes they are investigating. That's in the tradition of Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie."

Reuben's affection for time-honored tradition even extends to the way she

writes — in long hand.

"It's not for lack of technical ability that I write them out," she said. "I want to feel a spiritual connection to great writers of the past. And there's some editing function that happens between thought and when it comes out your hand that doesn't happen when you type it into the computer — because I'm such a fast typist."

Reuben says that as she continues to come to terms with the loss of her partner in life and work, she will continue the tradition that her husband Charlie started at their company.

"When he was analyzing a fire, it is what it is," said Reuben. "He didn't tailor a case to what the client wants. We tell the truth."

And if Reuben gets a book deal for another Fritillary mystery, readers will enjoy a reunion between the novice investigator and her mentor Ike as they again pursue the origin and cause of a fire — this time in Coney Island.

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PARLOR JAZZ: 7 Stephens and his Romantasy Trio. \$15 for two sets, includes refreshments. Sets at 9:30 pm and 10:45 pm. 119 Vanderbilt Ave. (718) 855-1981.

COMEDY: The Brooklyn Brew Ha-Ha at the Boulder Bar. \$10, 9 pm, 11 pm and 12:30 am. 351 Flatbush Ave. (718) 396-5413.

FREDDY'S BACKROOM: Two dozen bands perform. No cover. 9:30 pm. 485 Deen St. (718) 622-7035.

JAZZ: Magnolia Restaurant presents Jeff and Dave. No cover or minimum. 10 pm to 1 am. 486 Sixth Ave. (718) 207-3611.

WILLIAMSBURG MUSIC CENTER: Gary Estman, Karen Francis and Roland Alexander play Others. 10 pm. 384 Bay Street. (718) 596-2094.

MUSIC: Peter's Candy Store live up with Mike Bala Smolaski. 9 pm. 154 Vesel at 10 pm. Cynthia Hopkins and Matt Charles at 11 pm. No cover. 709 Lorimer St. (718) 302-7700.

BROOKLYN LUCEUM: "Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind" (30 plays in 60 minutes). \$15 online. (www.governors.com) or \$9 plus the rol of a single for cash. 11:30 am. 222 Avenue C. (718) 770-2234.

CHILDREN
BARNES AND NOBLE: Reading of book "Duck for President," with author Doreen Cantor. 11 am. 106 Court St. (718) 246-4996. Free.

BROOKLYN CHILDRN: Learn about butterflies, also known as cocoonchairs. \$4, free for members. 2 pm to 4 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

CIRCUS IN PROSPECT PARK: "Sold in the City" by Universal Circus. \$10. 10:30 am to 4:30 pm. 5 pm and 6 pm. Wollman Rink lot, near Parkside and 5th Avenue. Prospect Park. (718) 625-8300.

YOUNG ARTISTS WORKSHOP: WYCA of Brooklyn offers a program for young artists, preteens and teens. Eight-week course. Call for details. 30 Third Ave. (718) 857-8855.

OTHER
BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART: weekend celebration for opening of museum's new entrance and public plaza. Indoor and outdoor events, exhibits, block party, music groups. Jazz singer Sheila Cooper performs. 3 pm to 5 pm. Dance performance at 4 pm. Scavenger hunt at 4:30 pm. Jackie Robinson Stadium. Marching Band at 5 pm. World music at 5 pm. 11 am to 11 pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000. www.brooklynmuseum.org. Free.

OPEN HOUSE: Waterbury Bridge Theater. Flatbush Avenue Extension and DeKalb Avenue. (718) 486-1051.

SOUTHWEST CAFE: Inexpensive Mission performs. Doors open at 6:30 pm. 125 Fifth Ave. Call: (718) 220-0236.

CASINO NIGHT: Brooklyn Philharmonic Chorus presents a casino-fundraise. \$25, 7 pm to 11 pm. Bethlehem Church Community Center, 490 Pacific St. (718) 596-2094.

BARBES BAR: Christiana Dragakis sings. \$5, 7 pm to 9 pm. 376 Ninth St. (718) 965-9177.

BARBECUE: chamber music concert of Western, Dvorak and Beethoven. \$35, 7:30 pm. Flatiron Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE: "Turning," a real-time video event and installation, features music from Antony and the Johnsons' new album, and a live video landscape by Charles Allen. \$25, 8 pm. 38 Water St. (718) 258-5279.

HEIGHTS PLAYERS: "Diary of Anne Frank." \$15, 8 pm. 25 Willow Place. (718) 237-1752.

CBCC: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College presents National Dance Theater Company of Jamaica. \$40, \$38, 8 pm. Brooklyn College, Walt Whitman Theater, one block from the intersection of Flatbush and Nassau avenues. (718) 951-4500.

BRIC STUDIO: Theater Nexus presents "11 Playwrights," a collection of emerging writers. \$10, 8 pm. 57 Rockwell Place. (718) 855-7882.

JAZZ: Brooklyn Conservatory of Music presents jazz vocalist and pianist Andy Bey. \$25, \$15, 8 pm. 58 Seventh St. (718) 622-3035.

BARBES BAR: Moonlighting. No cover. 9 pm. 376 Ninth St. (718) 965-9177.

MUSIC: improv jam hosted by Don Sings. \$5, 7 pm. Brooklyn, Locum, 227 Fourth Ave. (718) 237-1752.

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Compiled by Susan Rosenthal
HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY: 6 pm. Eighth Avenue and Clinton St. (718) 768-1453. Free.

MON. APR. 19
CIRCUS IN PROSPECT PARK: 10:30 am, 7:30 pm. See Sat., April 17.

FEST OF ARTS: Bay Ridge Festival of Arts presents a stained glass demo. 2:30 pm. Also, Young Dancers in Revue. 5:30 pm. Lighthouse Church of the Good Shepherd, 7420 Fourth Ave. (718) 745-4374. Free.

PUBLIC MEETING: Congress Island Greenway area hosts a talk on Sustainable Development. Transportation Study. 6 pm to 8 pm. 711 Third Ave. Call for reservations. Ocean Parkway. (212) 442-7909.

MEETING: C2C Traffic and Transportation Panel. 6 pm. NYU College of Technology. 300 Jay St. (718) 596-5410.

CONTAINER GARDENING: Brooklyn Botanic Garden offers a class for urban gardeners. 6 pm to 8 pm. Registration required. 1000 Washington Ave. (718) 723-7220. Free.

BAMCINEMATEK: "What About Bill Murray?" 7:30 pm. See Sat., April 17.

MEETING: C810. 7:15 pm. Fort Hamilton Senior Center. 9941 Ft. Hamilton Parkway. (718) 745-6827.

GALAPAGOS ART SPACE: Multimedia comedy show. \$5, 7 pm. Also, burlesque. 9:30 pm to 1 am. 70 North Sixth St. (718) 518-5188.

DOCUMENTARY: Park Slope Haddam. 7 pm. See Sat., April 17.

GALAPAGOS ART SPACE: "Severely Indisposed." 8 pm. 70 North Sixth St. (718) 518-5188.

JAZZ: Up Over Jazz Cafe presents Cleopatra. 8 pm. 351 Flatbush Ave. (718) 396-5413.

SLAVY LIT: Series of stories, printed as small stand-alone pamphlets, centered out to entertain-thirsty commuters on their way to work. 7:30 pm. Seventh Avenue train station. Seventh Avenue and Ninth Street in Park Slope and Bergen Street in Downtown. Bergen Street and Smith Street in Boerum Hill.

MEETING: C810. 7:15 pm. Fort Hamilton Senior Center. 9941 Ft. Hamilton Parkway. (718) 745-6827.

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SLAVY LIT: Series of stories, printed as small stand-alone pamphlets, centered out to entertain-thirsty commuters on their way to work. 7:30 pm

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Where to GO...

Continued from page 13...

Williamsburg Savings Bank, 1 Hanson Place. (718) 788-8500, ext. 208.

OPEN STUDIO TOUR: Visit the studios of 10 visual artists. Works include paintings, photography, drawing, printmaking, sculpture and printmaking. Noon to 6 pm. 295 Douglas St. **www.growartists.com**/295DOUGLAS

ELECTRIC BOATS: Take a tour of Prospect Park Lake by boat. \$5 for ages 13 and up. \$3 for ages 3 to 12. Noon to 4:30 pm. Audubon Center, Prospect Park. (718) 963-8999.

PARK SLOPE TOUR: Big Orion Tours explores Brooklyn's "Gold Coast." \$12, \$10 students and seniors. 1 pm. Meet at southwest corner of St. John's Place and Plaza Street West. (212) 429-1000.

NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR: Mauricio Lorenzo leads a tour of Ft. Greene, Clinton Hill and Brooklyn Heights. \$25 per person. 2 pm to 5 pm. Meet at New York Marriott Brooklyn, 333 Adams St. (718) 789-0430.

PERFORMANCE

BAM: "Sine," Handel's forgotten opera, in its first fully staged modern day production. Venice Baroque Orchestra and conductor Andrea Marcon lead. Performed in Italy with Ensembles. \$55 and \$30. 7:30 pm. Harvey Theater, 651 Fulton St. Also, the Lyon Opera Ballet performs Philippe Decoules' "Tricoulet." \$50. 7:30 pm. Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 634-4100.

SCHOOL PLAY: Packer Collegiate Institute presents "Sweet Charity." \$5. \$6 kids. 2 pm and 7 pm. 170 Joralemon St. (718) 875-6644.

JAZZ: Sugarhill Restaurant Supper Club presents "For Dancers Only." Hosted by Jazzpazz. Call for ticket info. 615 Dela

CONCERT: Friends of Middle School 51 presents "Polygraph Lounge" with Melissa Fattman. \$30 includes meet-the-artists reception and the show. Reception at 6 pm. General Admission at 7 pm. Silent auction and social at 8:30 pm. Brooklyn Lyceum, Fourth Avenue and President Street. (718) 623-3347.

BARGE MUSIC: chamber music of Schubert, Mendelssohn and Chopin. \$35. 7:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE: presents "A Woman Who Outshone the Sun," an urban musical. \$15, \$10 members, \$8 low-income. 8 pm. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-0018.

THEATER: Waterford Bridge Theater Company presents "Ghosts, Giants and Gales: Three Oscar Wilde Stories." \$15, \$10 students. 8 pm. 475 Third Ave. (212) 502-0796.

SCHOOL THEATER: Xavarian Drama Society presents "Les Misérables." \$18. 7 pm. 730 Shore Road. (718) 836-7100.

POP OVER JAZZ: presents Alex Blake Quartet. \$18 plus \$5 minimum. 10 pm to 1 am. 486 Sixth Ave. (718) 207-3613.

BROOKLYN LYCEUM: "Too Much Light Makes The Baby Go Blind" (80 plays in 80 minutes). \$15 online (www.gowanus.com) or \$9 plus the roll of a single-sided die. 11:30 am. 221 Fourth Ave. (718) 670-7234.

MUSIC: Paul Sullivan Quartet performs. Waterfront Ale House, 155 Atlantic Ave. Call for time and cover. (718) 526-3131.

CHILDREN

FAMILY ARTS WORKSHOP: Brooklyn Historical Society and The Roundabout Gallery host "All That Jazz: Create a Jazz Collage Album Cover." \$10, \$5 members. 10 am to noon. 128 Piermont St. (718) 222-4111.

AQUARIUM: Kids are invited to Jelly Jam! an exploration of the lives of sea jellies, corals and anemones. \$27, \$22 members. 10:30 am to noon. NY Aquarium, West Eighth Street and Surf Avenue. (718) 265-3448.

ARTY FACTS: Brooklyn Museum of Art invites kids to "Spaces and Places." \$6 adults, free for members and children 12 and under. 11 am and 2 pm. Also, classic and modern nursery rhymes with Chorus Bay 4 pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000.

BBCB: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College presents "Charlotte's Web." \$15. 2 pm. Valt Whitman Theater one block from the intersection of Flatbush and Nostrand avenues. (718) 951-4500.

BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: UM: the art of Chinese shadow puppets. Appropriate for ages 6 and older. \$4, free for members. 2 pm to 4:30 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

SHEEP SHEARING: Park Slope gives a sheep a haircut. Also, arts and crafts, wool processing demo, weaving demos, games and more. \$5, \$1.25 seniors. \$1 kids 3 to 12 years. Noon to 4 pm. 450 Flatbush Ave. (718) 599-7339.

HAVDAAH SERVICE: Post Jewish Center invites the community to experience a potluck dinner as well as a meditative service. \$15, \$10 members. 7:20 pm. Eighth Avenue and 14th Street. Call (718) 768-1453.

OTHER

CPR CLASS: Bensonhurst Volunteer Ambulance Service offers an American Heart CPR class. Learn to do CPR on an infant, child and adult. 9 am to 4 pm. Call for info. (718) 537-5032.

REUNION: Brooklyn Tech. \$50. 10 am to 4 pm. 29 West Greene Place. (718) 797-8255.

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CONFLICT TALK: Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture hosts a talk "Non-Violent Solutions for the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict." Talk led by member who recently returned from area. 10 am to noon. 53 Prospect Park West. (718) 768-2972. Free.

HEALTH SCREENING: Resource Day for artists, their families and residents from the Williamsburg/Greenpoint area. Noon to 6 pm. 135 Broadway in corner of Bedford Avenue. (718) 486-4012. Free.

ARTIST RECEPTION: Pratt Institute hosts a meet and greet the artist showcase. Art available for sale. \$5. \$3 members and students. Noon to 6 pm. 200 Village Ave. (718) 624-8372.

FILM SERIES: Lili hosts the "Mercedes Film Series," focusing on the global issue of police brutality and reform. Detailed film schedule can be found at www.opedivina.com/marcelles. Spike Lee Screening Room, DeKalb Avenue and Flatbush Avenue Extension. (718) 488-1601.

FEST OF ARTS: Bay Ridge Festival of Arts invites the community to a craft fair and sale. 1 pm to 7 pm. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 7420 Fourth Ave. (718) 745-4374. Free.

DONORSHIP: Brooklyn Public Library, Central branch, presents several authors reading from their works. 2 pm. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-1100.

DINNER AND AUCTION: St. Thomas Aquinas Church hosts a buffet dinner and sale. \$25. 6 pm to 11 pm. 249 Union St. (718) 768-1453.

SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE: Urban Park Ranks celebrate Earth Day by exploring the skies in search of our planet's near and distant neighbors. 7 pm. Prico House, Prospect Park, near Third Street entrance. (718) 965-8965. Free.

DINNER DANCE: at St. Finbar. \$40 includes hot buffet. 7:30 pm. 84th Avenue and Bay 20th Street. (718) 226-3132.

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Ikea brings its show to Hook

Presents plan at CB6 meeting to residents concerned over jobs and traffic

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

As Ikea gears up to submit its application to build a mammoth home furnishings store on the Red Hook waterfront, an all-out public relations war has been mounted by the company against a group of vocal opponents.

Armed with a slick presentation, a well-known traffic consultant, a human resources representative and public relations specialists, Ikea was up to the test Thursday night at a public meeting hosted by Community Board 6 at the P.A.L. Mexico Center, on West Ninth Street.

But while Ikea has been in contract for two years to build a 346,000-square-foot retail store at the former New York Shipyard site, just last week, a major Baltimore developer has put forth a proposal to build a sweeping retail, residential and marina development on the site instead.

The Ikea site is bounded by Beard and Hallock streets to the north, the Erie Basin to the south, Columbia Street to the east and a deep-water slip roughly at Dwight Street to the west.

Asked at this week's meeting about the "alternative plan," as the proposal by Struover Bros., Eccles & Krouse has come to be known, the Patrick Smith, real estate developer for Ikea, emphatically stated that the Ikea proposal was the only one on the table.

"This Ikea will be built!" he said in response to a question posed by a community member that asked whether Ikea would remain committed to providing Red Hook residents with jobs should the company have to look elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

Another Ikea official called the alternate proposal "transparent" and "cynical," implying that the plan was just a ploy to thwart the Ikea effort.

Before the meeting, Ikea officials passed around copies of a letter blasting opponents for posting "numerous exaggerations, misrepresentations and outright fabrications" on a Web site devoted to opposing the big box store.

At the same time, opponents passed out a flier containing those same points, claiming the store would attract 2.5 million cars and trucks to Red Hook each year.

"We shouldn't give our waterfront away for free," said Declan Walsh, a Red Hook resident and local property owner who is advocating for more "waterfront appropriate" development.

Walsh also noted that Ikea, whose president was recently named the wealthiest man in the world, would make a fortune on the adjacent restaurant and retail space it plans to build on the site.

From the start, CB6 Chairman Jerry Arner made it clear that the meeting was to remain orderly.

"This is not the meeting where you are going to be making statements... tonight we are in to find out what the project is all about," Arner told a crowd of about 100 residents and community board members.

The Ikea plan has already split the community into two camps — those who want jobs and those who are concerned about traffic, and each



Ikea's plan for a 346,000-square-foot store on the former New York Shipyard is detailed at left, including retail, parking and greenspace. At right is a rendering of an alternate plan put forth by a Baltimore Harbor developer, including mixed residential, retail and open space with a marina.

side was equally represented at the meeting.

Ikea has reached out to the Red Hook Houses city housing projects, which are home to 75 percent of the neighborhood's residents.

Some of those residents attended Wednesday's meeting to press Ikea officials about jobs.

"We want to be clear that these Red Hook residents are going to have jobs. We want a job and that's why we're here supporting you," said Stanley Morrison, a member of the Red Hook Houses East Tenant's Association.

In an effort to hire locally,

Ikea is opening up the hiring process to residents within the 11231 ZIP code two weeks before everybody else. Ikea officials estimate that they will hire 600 people for the new store.

For the most part, Ikea officials outlined the modifications to their plan, as first reported in The Brooklyn Papers last week, which include leasing four piers to the neighboring Erie Basin Barge Port, which is home to 200 working vessels. Ikea also

would maintain a dry dock, convert an existing pier into a public area and maintain five gantry cranes on the site so visitors can learn about waterfront activities.

The changes include increasing a public esplanade along the water to 6.4 acres, or a mile end to end, and building a "green roof" with solar panels atop the store. And the plan also includes 71,400 square feet of additional retail and restaurant space and 1,400 parking spaces. The store would be elevated 18 feet to allow for 600 parking spots underneath.

The slick presentation, which included a computer-

generated tour of the built site to the strains of Dire Straits' "Walk of Life," elicited more than a few chuckles from those in attendance.

Confronted with concerns about traffic, Ikea consultant Sam Schwartz, a former city Transportation commissioner, better known as "Gridlock Sam" for his newspaper advice column, said that even at peak traffic times there would be just an additional 10 cars per minute in the area.

"New Yorkers are good shoppers," said Schwartz, who stressed that many shoppers would come by public

transportation or ferry and either haul their goods home with them or pay for delivery.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority has agreed to extend the B61 bus to the store, Schwartz said, noting that the store would also provide bus drivers with a needed amenity — a place to go to the bathroom.

Ikea would also provide free shuttle bus service from subway stations at Borough Hall, Smith/Ninth Street and Fourth Avenue/Ninth Street, and free ferry service between the store and Manhattan, Schwartz said.



The view of 360 Furman St. from the Brooklyn Heights promenade looking toward Atlantic Avenue.

Furman-Atlantic Witness building goes to contract

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A developer is in contract with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society to buy the religious order's mammoth, 12-story waterfront building at 360 Furman St.

While several developers expressed interest in the site, RAL Development Services purchased the Brooklyn Heights property for an undisclosed sum and plans to convert the 1 million-square-foot book and video distribution center into waterfront apartments, as first reported by The Brooklyn Papers.

The Manhattan-based company is best known for converting the Arthur Levitt State office building at 270 Broadway into residential and commercial use.

The Furman Street building, which rises at the end of Atlantic Avenue, between the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and the East River, will serve as a gateway to the planned Brooklyn Bridge Park, a 1.3-mile commercial and recreational waterfront development between Vinegar Hill and Brooklyn Heights.

David Semonian, a spokesman for the Watchtower Society, commonly known as the Jehovah's Witnesses, declined to comment on the sale price of the building but said all the proceeds would go towards "worldwide Bible education work."

According to sources, the building sold for \$200 million.

The Watchtower society acquired the property in 1983 and own approximately 35 buildings throughout DUMBO and Brooklyn Heights. They have moved some of their printing plants

to upstate Wallkill.

"It was our aim to not only sell the building but to locate a buyer who was interested in the objectives and goals of the community," said Semonian.

Robert Levine, president and principal owner of RAL, says he is currently in discussions with the city and state to determine the future uses of the building and what relationship it will have to Brooklyn Bridge Park.

"We plan to use 360 Furman St. to enhance the southern gateway to the new park and provide an exciting waterfront destination," Levine said in a written statement.

Details of the relationship between the building and the park are still being hashed out.

In November, Councilman David Yassky sent a letter to Deputy Mayor Daniel L. Hodouin questioning the taxes generated from the sale going to fund the park. Any new taxes generated from the building would be new revenue since the building has been tax exempt because it is owned by a religious organization.

"In this fiscal crisis, New York City has little money to create and sustain parks, we need to find creative ways to guarantee income for the Brooklyn Bridge Park," Yassky wrote.

Deborah Wetzell, a spokeswoman for the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corp. (BBPDC), a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corp., charged with building the park, said BBPDC officials are in discussions with the developer to determine whether the building should be included in the boundary of the park.

The deal is expected to close in May and the Watchtower society will remain in the building for one more year.

Taxes should be used for brains, not gladiators

To the editor:

My husband, family and friends of Brooklyn could not agree more with Larry Penner's letter in the March 27 edition of The Brooklyn Papers. "No subsidies for sports," is an excellent take on the problem presented by Ratner's inhuman and indifferent arena plans, and the borough president's foolery when it comes to sports arenas.

There are so many better and more aesthetic ways to develop the community and its financial soundness than subsidies of our tax dollars to the multimillion-dollar sports industry, which has made our young men dumb to the real problems and issues of their adult lives on this planet.

Go into any classroom in Brooklyn and ask who some scandalous basketball or baseball player is and every hand will go up.

But ask who our real heroes, ask who John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., or even the polio vaccine or the scientist

who tried to save us from our nuclear follies. Ask who Margaret Sanger or Mother Cabrini or Jane Addams were and no hands will rise to recall these giants of humanitarian endeavor. Ask the name of your congressman and senator and what legislation is before the federal or state senate affecting the fairness of their votes and what legislation on education, or environmental well-being and you will illicit a blank stare. But, the names of football players, basketball and baseball players will tumble off their tongues.

This is a nation drunk on sports! One feels it is deliberately engineered thus to keep the young men ignorant of what really matters — to put false hopes in their minds of billion-dollar careers in basketball when only a precise few make it to that level out of many millions.

Often, sports scholarships end up as nothing more than usury of young athletes who end up penniless and ignorant of skills for earning a living.

And why should our tax dollars go to subsidize this cultural deficit?

We have a president who, when interviewed as to what his favorite cultural activity was, said, "Baseball" — not a cultural activity at all. We have a president who knows nothing about other cultures and languages, who has professed his aversion to reading good literature, and who grew up drinking his brains out.

There is something very wrong with a culture that values sports over learning and spends as much time on sports on the nightly news, or more, than on world affairs. This is social engineering at its most evil and decadent. This is Spartan ways over Athenian wisdom!

Playing a little ball for the health of your own body is a good thing, but sitting like a fat, screaming spectator in the stands who has paid an expensive

ticket price is just slovenly and wasteful and smacks of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Sports fans behave like jackasses, drinking beer, screaming for dear life and fighting like animals over nothing important — a silly game! If there's anything that bores an alert and learned mind, it's sports spectacles as low-life as gladiator fights.

We're furious that our tax dollars will subsidize Ratner's "Trump Towers of Brooklyn," his "edifice complex," and his gladiator arena. We're disappointed that Marty Markowitz is all for our tax dollars subsidizing this sports arena. We're disgusted with the indifference of the city government to the quality of life and environmental issues involved.

Who will really profit from this arena? Not Brooklynites!

I'd rather see nature centers, trees, parks for which we pay

entry fees, theaters, music and poetry reading halls, universities, hospitals and, most of all, schools built with my tax dollars, instead of sports arenas that will congest a congested area and spoil the small businesses.

Man-sized homes and buildings of the future, instead of the miserable construction and traffic jams and detours with which we are surrounded!

I do not want the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower to be dwarfed by tall buildings that will make for gray, sunless streets!

Rise up, Brooklyn, and fight for your human lives against profiteering developers who care only about their own pocketbooks and self-aggrandizing visions! End the arena, not the people from their homes and small businesses.

Why should we the people pay our hard-earned taxes — so needed for our schools, healthcare facilities and libraries — for their decadent, multimillion-dollar endeavors?

"We are such stuff as dreams are made of," wrote Shakespeare. Dream of sports arenas and get jocks. Dream of schools and hospitals and get teachers and medical.

Dr. and Mrs. Lionel R. Luttinger, retired professors of science and literature, Brooklyn Heights

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By e-mail: Newsroom@BrooklynPapers.com

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Register now for camp

The Brooklyn Papers

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763 President St., Park Slope
(718) 230-5255
Directors: Randie Bader and Gary Siegel
Ages: 2-1/2 - 5 years
June 21 - Aug. 2
Full day (9 am - 4 pm)
Half days (9 am - noon or 1 pm - 4 pm)

Activities: private backyard with water play equipment, trips, art, music, indoor gym.

Beth Elohim Summer Day Camp

274 Garfield Place, Park Slope
(718) 768-3814, ext. 210
www.congregationbethelohim.org

Director: Bobbie Finkelstein
Ages: 2-1/2 to 5-1/2
June 21 - Aug. 13

Full Day (9 am - 3 pm) and Half Day (9 am - 12:30 pm)
Activities: swimming, weekly trip for 4- and 5-year-olds

• **Elementary Division**
Ages: entering 1st - 4th grades
June 28 - Aug. 13
Full day (9 am - 5 pm)
Extended hours (8 am - 6 pm) available

Activities: swimming (instructional and recreational), arts and crafts, music, nature, sports, gymnastics, trips 2 days per week

• **Movie On Travel Camp**
Ages: entering 5th - 9th grades
June 28 - Aug. 13
Full day (9 am - 5 pm)

Activities: Daily trips, swimming, two overnights

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www.parkslopedaycamp.com
e-mail: office@parkslopedaycamp.com
Director: Ronny Schindler

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July 4 - Aug. 30
Full day (9 am - 5 pm), early dismissal optional for young kids; Extended hours (8 am - 6:30 pm) available
Transportation: free morning shuttle from all Brownstone Brooklyn neighborhoods and

Bay Ridge

Activities: outdoor camp with sports, trips, gymnastics, drama, nature, olympics, sports academy, travel camp.

YMCA camps

Park Slope & Bensonhurst
(718) 768-7100, ext. 153
email: drizzolo@ymcayc.org
Ages: 5 - 15 years
Full day (8 am - 4 pm)
Extended hours (4 pm - 6 pm) available

Activities: visiting Prospect Park's many places of interest, trips to theater performance, swimming.

Location: PS 321, Park Slope
June 28 - Aug. 27

Ask about the progressive swim camp (instructional swim 4 days per week)

Location: PS 200 and 205 in Bensonhurst
July 6 - Aug. 13

Ask about the sports camp (intensive focus on basketball, baseball, soccer and volleyball, plus trips to games)

Kim's Kids Summer Camp

Park Slope location
(718) 768-6419

Director: Dan Moinester
Ages: 5-1/2 to 11-1/2 years

Activities: swimming in lakes, pools and beaches, hikes, trips to Sesame Place, Brooklyn Cyclones game, amusement parks, museums.

A Montessori Summer

185 Court St., Cobble Hill
(718) 858-5100, ext. 18 or 19
www.bhmsny.org

Director: Zach Hinkle
Ages: 3 - 13 years
June 21 - Aug. 6

Full day (9 am - 3 pm)
Extended day (8:15 am - 5:30 pm) available

Activities: sports, swimming, the arts, outdoor activities with focus on the environment

YWCA Summer Camp

Third Ave. at Atlantic Avenue, Boerum Hill
(718) 875-1190, ext. 250

Activities: swimming, arts and crafts, guest speakers, team sports, field trips

Better Brooklyn Community Center

408 Jay St., 5th floor
(718) 624-1992

Ages: entering K-9th Grades
June 28 - Sept. 3

Full day: 8 am to 6:30 pm
Activities: dance, music, baking, Olympic games, video games, arts & crafts, swimming in indoor pool, martial arts, weekly trips, gymnastics, team sports, rock climbing, horseback riding, mathematics, writing, reading, library visits

• **Park Explorers**
The Corner at Second
298 Sixth Ave., Park Slope
(718) 788-3620
parkexplorers@yahoo.com
Ages: 4 - 14
June 28 - Sept. 3

Full day 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Extended day (8 am-6:30 pm) available

Activities: sports, arts & crafts, drama, pool & beach trips, nature study, theater arts, gymnastics, soccer, and old fashioned play.

Middle School Marine Ecology Camp

Bedford Ave. & Ave. H
(718) 951-5777
nrenek@brooklyn.cuny.edu

Director: Nava Renek
Ages: entering grades 6-8
July 6 - July 31

\$1,300 for 4 weeks (payment plan available)

Full day: 8:30 am to 4 pm
Activities: A scientific exploration of self and the environment. A fun, hands-on laboratory experience studying marine ecology and aquaculture on the Brooklyn College campus. Also swimming and field trips to NYC wildlife centers and cultural institutions.

Berkeley Carroll Creative Arts Program

181 Lincoln Place
(718) 789-6060, ext. 245
Director: Marlene Clary
mclary@berkeleycarroll.org

Ages: 8 to 14 years
June 28 - July 29

Full day: 9 am-4 pm
Extended day 8 am-6 pm

Activities: theater arts, music, film, photography, visual arts, computer animation, creative writing, recreational sports including swimming.

Berkeley Carroll Children's Day Camp

701 Carroll St.
(718) 788-0710, ext. 2

Ages: 3 to 8
Director: Judy Valdez
jvaldez@berkeleycarroll.org

Full day: 9 am-4 pm
Extended day 8:30 am-3:30 pm

Extended hours 7:30 am-6 pm
Activities: recreational sports including swimming, music, art, field trips, theater arts & early childhood programs.

Jewish Sports Academy

215 Pacific St.
(718) 596-4840, ext. 15
Director: Simcha Weinstein

Ages: 5 to 9 years
June 28 - Aug. 13

Full day: 9 am-3 pm
Activities: arts & crafts, boating, computers, dramatics, farm animal care, pony riding, karate, ballet, multimedia, trips, gymnastics, hiking, hockey, Jewish culture, music & dance, physical fitness, ping pong, swimming, tennis. Campers will be enjoying the St. Francis College gym and Olympic-sized swimming pool.

Camp Olympia

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211 72nd St.
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campolympia@hotmail.com

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June 28 - Aug. 13

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Stressed-out students

Q: My 14-year-old daughter is used to making nearly all A's, but she recently made a C on a math exam. She didn't even want to talk about it, much less have me talk to the teacher. I'm worried that she's so upset about her grade that she can't talk about it but doesn't want any help from me to see if there's something she's missing." — a father

A: Don't fret. Results of an unofficial poll: Teenagers are mortified at the thought of mom or dad calling their teachers.

"I'm a junior in high school. I was used to making A's in math, and I recently made a low C on a test," says one teen. "I did not want to talk to my mom about it, and I certainly did not want my mom to talk to the teacher, because that would be embarrassing. While I was disappointed, I got over it by talking to friends and realizing stuff happens. So unless this becomes a regular event, I wouldn't push it too much."

Perhaps dad inadvertently puts too much grade pressure on his kids, some parents say, and should back off. Kids have off days like everyone else, and don't need much adult morale on an occasional low grade.

The trick for parents is to know how to show positive interest without stressing their kids out, when to get involved with teachers, and how to give them the skills to handle disappointments.

In her book "Raising a Self-Starter" (DaCapo Press, 2004), Elizabeth Hartley-Brewer talks about a strong link between motivation, self-learning and motivation. Learning is risky, she says, in that it raises the possibility of failure. It's the kids who can cope with any setbacks, learn from them and move on.

Children who have a strong self-esteem can face challenges at school, such as harder and harder courses, without giving up.

What's a bigger deal than one low grade here or there is a pattern of grades below what a child is actually capable of. In the big transition from elementary school to middle school, for example, some kids get sidetracked by the social scene and put peers ahead of academics. Or as schoolwork gets harder in middle school, students who have always been forgetful and sloppy will have even more trouble and will need their parents to step in and work with their teachers.

One mother says when her 15-year-old daughter's grades plummeted across the board, she discovered the teenager suffered from depression. The girl reluctantly let her parents intervene.

Talks with her teachers, a counselor and medication — plus a lighter course load — are helping the child.

The goal with a teenager,

Parent-to-Parent

By Betsy Flagler

many psychologists say: Influence more than control, and a relationship rooted in honesty and communication to build the child's emotional intelligence — not just academics.

In a healthy home, a teenager pulls away from her parents but feels safe enough to return to the family fold. In the case of a low grade, a teenager could handle it on her own or ask dad for help — but she would come to him instead of the other way around.

Another teen was used to dealing with his teachers himself and built up a suitable independent style in a high-achieving program. That was until he ran into a problem with his new high school band teacher who expected the young musician to know much more than he had learned in middle school band.

Even though the child was trying to put on a tough face, his mom recalls, she was tuned into him enough to realize he was quite upset after those first few days of class. The solution: music lessons.

Other ideas from parents: • Set a family reading time each evening where your child can wrap up his homework without distractions. Be available for questions as needed or to talk about concepts, without actually doing the homework.

• Be sure your child has your support for attending study groups or after-school tutoring.

Can you help?

"I need to fly alone with my three boys, ages 4, 7 and 9. The flight makes one stop. I've not flown in awhile and need suggestions since families can no longer help at the gates." — a mother

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