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P.S. 207 PERFORMS MARY POPPINS



Photo by Brian Moreno

Story on page 12



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Canarsie Courier

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Thank You, Canarsie's Bravest

By Jibreel Jalloh

In the early hours of January 8, 2025, Canarsie's firefighters once again demonstrated why they are a part of the heart and soul of our community. Braving freezing temperatures, crews from FDNY's 58th Battalion tackled a dangerous blaze on East 105th Street with courage and precision. While extinguishing the flames that engulfed a second-floor home, these heroes went beyond their call of duty, rescuing a beloved pet and reuniting it with its owner. This selfless act reminds us of the countless sacrifices these men and women make daily to keep our community safe.

Firefighting is not just about extinguishing fires; it is about preserving lives, homes and memories. The firefighters of Canarsie, particularly those of Engine 257, Ladder 170 and Battalion 58, embody this mission. With every alarm, they put their lives on the line to protect ours. Their actions this month, as well as their storied 100-year history of service, demonstrate their unwavering commitment to our neighborhood.

As we reflect on their bravery, we are reminded of the challenges firefighters

face across the country. From battling relentless wildfires in the West to freezing temperatures here in Canarsie, these men and women perform heroic work under unimaginable conditions. While the scale of the fires may differ, the dedication and courage of firefighters remain universal.

Canarsie is fortunate to have such dedicated professionals who not only respond to emergencies but also serve as role models of resilience and teamwork. Their bravery during this recent fire is a testament to the legacy they have built – a legacy that includes responding to thousands of alarms, braving extreme conditions and providing critical aid during our most vulnerable moments.

This month, as the smoke clears and families rebuild, let us take a moment to honor these heroes. Let us recognize the sacrifices they make – sacrifices that often go unnoticed. Let us celebrate the firefighters who have served Canarsie over the past century and those who continue to protect our future.

To the firefighters of Canarsie, on behalf of the entire community, thank you. Your courage, dedication and service inspire us all. You remind us that even in our darkest

hours, there are those who will face the flames to bring us back to safety. Canarsie is proud to call you our own.

Jibreel Jalloh is an award-winning organizer with experience working at the highest levels of government. He is the Founder and Executive Director of The Flossy Organization, a nonprofit dedicated to closing the advocacy gap through education and activism. Over the past few years, they have worked to end gun violence, increase transit options and secure investments in local green spaces. Jibreel recently won the prestigious Obama Foundation Scholar award at Columbia University. You can learn more at theflossy.org and follow @theflossyorg.



New Year, New You

By Audrey Jackson

It is the beginning of a new year, the first month of 2025. It's January y'all! Some of us are on our Daniel Fast, others are not fasting, but working on eating less, eating differently and let us not forget the Gorilla in the room, EXERCISE. We are definitely doing more of that, or so we say. Anyhoo, I have a friend who took a bold step to curate intentionality for herself and others as a 30-day challenge at the end of 2024. Shout out to @ama_africanqueen; she didn't wait for the New Year to do something for herself. By the way, apparently by the time you read this, over 85% percent of those who made resolutions gave up by the 18th of



Norbrook, Saint Andrew, Jamaica

January. Hopefully, some of the following reminders will soothe our worried souls and help us to organically do some things we desire to do.

PLEASE REMEMBER and never forget that we are meant to live in community, so if your resolution had anything to do with drinking your water and minding your business, or staying in your lane, baby we tribal. God lives in community; remember he is a triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), who created humans, so that he would have company during his walks in the garden. I am not encouraging you to, in the words of Auntie Tabitha, be in "people bizness," but we are meant to support each other. We just need to be more discerning about when and how.

GENTLE REMINDER, what we have become accustomed to calling sin, is not sin. It is the evidence of stinking thinking, which leads us to viewing ourselves negatively; then we start to behave the way we see ourselves, which leads us to treating our neighbor as we treat ourselves, so now we are cussing, and arguing and picking fights, because we can't regulate our emotions, all because we cannot see ourselves the way God sees us. Sin is being out of alignment with the first relationship. Our relationship with God. Please believe me when I say, that is not church legalism. You are reading the words of a mother who lost her son and who believes that God could have prevented it but did not. I have learned a few things, and it is my hope to share them with you as we walk together in 2025.

SUGGESTION, when you remember,



Faith and Drill

Audrey Jackson

put love and care in action. I read, in my Mom's Devotional Bible, that the Hebrew word for remember translates to love and care in action, so when you are feeling exasperated with your child, remember. After the breakup, and you're feeling down, remember. When the embarrassment or disrespect comes to mind, remember that you are wonderfully and beautifully made. Do something with the emotion that honors what you are feeling. Write a letter, on paper or in your notes. Do something that shows you love and care for you.

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Flatlands

Woman Shot on Ralph, Suspect on the Run

By Lloyd Mitchell

A 30-year-old woman was shot while crossing the street early Sunday morning.

Officers from the 63rd Precinct responded to 1610 Ralph Avenue, near Farragut Road, around 1:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 26th, where they found the victim suffering from a gunshot wound to her right leg, police said. The victim said she was walking across the street when she heard gunshots and felt pain in her leg.

EMS took her to Kings County Hospital in stable condi-

tion, according to police.

Officers recovered four shell casings at the scene. There is no description of a suspect at this time.

There are no arrests, and an investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information regarding this shooting is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers Website at crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/, or on X @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.



East Flatbush

Arrest Made in Fatal Stabbing of East Flatbush Woman

By Baqir Ahmad and Linda Steinmuller

A 45-year-old woman was stabbed to death, and the suspect, who is her son, is now in custody.

Police arrested Weverton Lino, 29, a Bronx resident, and charged him with murder and criminal possession of a weapon on Saturday, January 25th. Lino allegedly stabbed his mother, Roselene Oliveira, of East Flatbush, to death around 11:40 p.m. on Friday, January 24th, according to police.

Police from the 67th Precinct responded to the sixth floor of 333 East 92nd Street, an apartment building located between Lenox Road and Clarkson Avenue, where an assault was in progress. Upon arrival, they found Oliveira with multiple stab wounds to her body.

The victim was taken to Brookdale Hospital where she was later pronounced dead.

Photo by Baqir Ahmad



East New York

Man Shot on Pennsylvania Avenue Following Vehicle Collision

By Baqir Ahmad and Linda Steinmuller

A man who was waiting for a tow truck after he was involved in a vehicle collision got into a dispute with another man, which led to a shooting in East New York last week.

Police said the incident occurred around 10:10 p.m. on Thursday, January 23rd, at 690 Pennsylvania Avenue, between Hegeman and New Lots Avenue, within the confines of the 75th Precinct. The 34-year-old victim got involved in a dispute with an unknown male who fired two shots at him, striking the victim in the legs. The sus-

pect fled the scene, according to police.

The victim was taken to Brookdale Hospital via private means.

There are no arrests, and an investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information regarding this shooting is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers Website at crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/, or on X @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.

Photo by Baqir Ahmad



Flatlands

Firefighters Battle Bitter Cold While Tackling Three Alarm Fire

By Lloyd Mitchell

It took over 100 firefighters more than three hours to contain a raging, three alarm fire at 1005 East 38th Street that broke out shortly after midnight on Wednesday, January 22nd.

Units arrived around 12:30 a.m. to find heavy fire on the first and second floor of the two-story private dwelling, located between Avenues H and I. As temps hovered around a frigid 8 degrees, members were hampered by several frozen fire hydrants, as the fire extended to the attic of the home.

Following a partial roof collapse, Fire Department personnel, consisting of approximately 130 members, were forced

to leave the building due to unsafe conditions. Tower Ladders 157 and 159, and five hose lines, were used to extinguish the three alarm fire. A neighboring home was also damaged by the intense blaze, which displaced around 12 people. One witness said, "This is absolutely devastating for our community."

Firefighters were able to reach a semi-conscious victim who was overcome by smoke. He was transported to a local hospital in serious but stable condition.

Division 15 placed the fire under control at 3:42 a.m.

The FDNY Fire Marshal's Office will determine the cause of the fire.



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Citizens Won't Take 'Yes' for an Answer: Lawsuit Planned Against City of Yes

By Robert Pearl

Back in October 2024, the first of a series of rallies in opposition to the “City of Yes for Housing Opportunity” took place in Marine Park. Now that the controversial zoning reform was recently passed by the City Council and Mayor Eric Adams, citizens are not taking “yes” for an answer.

In early January, community leaders and activists, convened by the Coalition for Better Communities and New Yorkers First, came together to strategize their opposition to the City of Yes.

The initiative, approved by the New York City Council in a 31-20 vote, aims to create 80,000 new housing units over the next 15 years in response to the city’s housing crisis. However, many civic groups argue that the one-fits-all plan overlooks local input, strains infrastructure and threatens the character of individual neighborhoods.

Paul Graziano, an urban planner and advocate, explained the legal strategies being prepared to challenge the reform. “The Article 78 proceedings will target government agencies and their processes,” Graziano said in an exclusive interview. He emphasized the importance of timing, as multiple lawsuits are being coordinated to secure a temporary injunction and prevent the implementation of the new law from moving forward while litigation unfolds. The lawsuits are planned in the coming weeks, due to statutory deadlines, coinciding with increased public outreach to garner broader support.

Although many community boards voted against the City of Yes, City Council members still pursued their agenda to pass this into law, in which Graziano noted, “Obviously, there will be political implications as every council seat is up for election this cycle.” Supporting the lawsuit, leaders remain united in their determination to fight for their neighborhoods and their distinct character. They argue that the zoning changes disproportionately benefit developers while ignoring the long-term impacts on residents. Graziano and others believe this fight is crucial to preserving the quality of life and equitable development across the city.

A GoFundMe campaign (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-our-fight-against-nyc-city-of-yes-re-zoning>) has been launched to raise the funds needed for what is expected to be a lengthy legal battle. Fundraising efforts garnered sufficient support to begin the legal process, according to Graziano, having “received large contributions from civic and homeowner associations.” Organizers stress that the effort is rooted in grassroots activism, calling on residents to contribute and support their shared vision for the city’s future.

While the mayor praised the reform as “bold and brave,” opponents view it as an overreach that sacrifices community interests for the sake of rapid housing expansion. Graziano summed up the sentiment driving the lawsuits: “The City of Yes has forced us to say no.”



Paul Graziano, urban planner and key advocate in opposing City of Yes, at Marine Park rally in October 2024.

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Assemblywoman Jaime Williams and Assemblyman Michael Novakhov join Paul Graziano and others in protest of City of Yes at Marine Park rally in October 2024.



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Flatlands

Bishop Robert Brennan Leads Diocese of Brooklyn in Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Bishop Robert Brennan with four members of the Vicariate of Black Catholic Concerns Youth Leadership Ambassador Program, which seeks to empower, engage and increase self-awareness among young adults.

The Diocese of Brooklyn held a special Mass remembering the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday, January 20th, at the Church of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1550 Hendrickson Street.

Father Alonzo Q. Cox, Diocesan Coordinator for the Vicariate for Black Catholic Concerns and Secretary for the Diocesan Commission on Racism and Social Justice, served as the homilist.

In his homily, Father Cox said, "We gather to thank Almighty God for the gift of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King proclaimed and preached the Gospel by the very example of his life, to the point of shedding blood for it. His unwavering belief in the potential for positive change, justice and equality propelled the Civil Rights Movement and continues to inspire people around the world."

"I was inspired by the words of Father Alonzo Cox's homily, highlighting Dr. King's fearless commitment to see the dignity of every human being, created in the image and likeness of God, be treated equally. Let us each do our part to bring about greater respect within society," Bishop Robert Brennan said.

Father Cox is also the Pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a parish comprised of three churches, including St. Peter Claver, which was founded in 1921 as the first African-American Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Brooklyn.

The student choir from Midwood Catholic Academy performed at the Mass, which is organized by the Vicariate Office of Black Catholic Concerns for the Diocese of Brooklyn.

Photos courtesy of John Quaglione/DeSales Media

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Saturday January 25, 12 pm **Lunar New Year**

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Saturday February 1, 11 am **Black History Month: Textile Arts Workshop**

Stitching workshop on African Adinkra symbols. Register at reachus@marineparkalliance.org

Saturday February 22, 11 am **Just for Kids: Wuffy & the Magic Lintball**

Children's author Helen Rogosin teaches the importance of friendship and imagination through the lovable Wuffy.

Saturday March 15, 9:30 am **MPA Volunteer Day**

Join our first volunteer day of the season as we tackle a little spring cleaning at the Carro Center.

Sat. March 29, 1 pm **Women's History Month**

Recognize women who have dedicated their lives to education, mentorship, and leadership. Nominate an honoree at reachus@marineparkalliance.org

Sat. April 6, 12 pm **Cherry Tree Heaven**

An in-depth discussion of Marine Park's cherry trees. Meet at E. 36th St. & Ave. U.

MORE INFO AND EVENTS AT:
MARINEPARKALLIANCE.ORG/EVENTS

First 63rd Precinct Community Council Meeting of the Year Honors Cop of the Month, Revisits Unresolved Issues

By Loretta Chin

Despite below freezing temperatures, about two dozen attendees braved the cold weather to ask for help with recurring problems affecting their neighborhoods at the 63rd Precinct Community Council Meeting on Wednesday, January 22nd, at the John Malone Center, 2335 Bergen Avenue.

Captain Abdullraha Hussein filled in for Commanding Officer Captain Ronald Perez, who has been absent from meetings due to training, vacation and medical leave.

Hussein awarded the December Cop of the Month award to Officer Matthew Villalobos, who also received a City Council citation from the office of Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse. While on patrol during his evening shift, Villalobos responded to a domestic violence call by a woman who reported her boyfriend for assault. She directed police to a nearby location to find the boyfriend and reported that she had seen him with a firearm, so Villalobos contacted his field intelligence team, which specializes in firearms and assists patrol officers with such cases. With their help, the officer was able to access the location, recover the firearm and apprehend the boyfriend.

"This individual has more than one firearm arrest and is on probation for firearms, so it's not just for a firearm,"

Hussein said of the man's prior record. He praised Villalobos for being consistent, following procedure by contacting their special operations team and making a good arrest.

Following the award, Hussein gave a brief crime report. Tire and rim thefts, mainly in Sector B (Marine Park area), have been up with about 10 incidents since November, especially targeting a certain car.

"There's something special about these Honda CRVs — there are no serial numbers and it's easy to sell," he said. Currently, there are two marked cars and an unmarked car assigned to the area to deter criminals, but Hussein strongly recommended the purchase of wheel locks to prevent theft.

One of the thefts was in the Kings Plaza mall parking lot where officers were able to obtain video and a plate number, which led to the apprehension of three individuals the week before.

"Another thing we're tackling in Sector A is our grand larceny auto, and the issue we're having, believe it or not, is people leaving their cars unlocked and the fob in the car," Hussein said. He wants people to lock their cars, take their keys out of the ignition and make sure they are in their pockets when they leave their cars.

He said that most car break-ins are not the result of smashing a window, but of

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people seeking opportunities by trying door handles in search of unlocked cars. Once inside, they can access valuables and credit cards.

He further reported that the 63rd Precinct had new officers deployed at Kings Plaza mall for the holidays. There were over a dozen officers at the time, but currently there are two dedicated officers there to deter shoplifting.

After the captain's report, several community members from the Mill Basin and Flatlands area brought up a recurring problem that has been reported numerous times before without resolution, concerning illegal parking by congregation members of the Salvation Church of God at 5601 Avenue N, who have been double and triple parking, parking at hydrants, bus stops, driveways, bike lanes and even in another church's parking lot without permission.

Despite efforts at enforcement by police and TLC, residents also complained about recurring problems involving illegally parked dollar vans and buses on Flatbush Avenue, near Avenues K and T, the East 50s and Marine Park that were not being ticketed; vehicular problems in other areas involving speeding and parking were also reported.

The residents asked Hussein to bring these complaints, which have been ongoing, to Perez's attention and request that he make them his top priority upon his expected return next month.

Among community updates, Council President Greg Borruso announced that longtime past 63rd Precinct Community Council and Bergen Beach Civic Association President Flo Hirsch passed away a few days before the meeting. He also said that Community Affairs Officer, Detective Tricia Navarro-Caraballo, was recruiting volunteers for a Citizens Police Academy 11-week course.

Other speakers included Community Board 18 District

Manager Sue Ann Partnow; Alex Cuevas, representing State Senator Roxanne Persaud; Donald Cranston, community liaison for Assemblywoman Jaime Williams; Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse and her director of constituent services, Irina Khlevner; and Miriam Khan, office manager for Rep. Yvette D. Clarke.

The next meeting of the 63rd Precinct Community Council will take place on Wednesday, February 26th, at the John Malone Center at 7 p.m.



Crime Prevention Officer Ainsley Carter, Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse and Community Affairs Detective Tricia Navarro-Caraballo.



Donald Cranston, Greg Borruso, Irina Khlevner, Officer Matthew Villalobos and Captain Abdullraha Hussein.



Officer Matthew Villalobos and Captain Abdullraha Hussein with Council President Greg Borruso in the background.



Miriam Khan, Office Manager representing Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke.

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New State Tax Credit for Small Businesses Introduced

The Lift Our Communities, Advertise Locally (LOCAL) Act would provide small businesses with up to \$4,000 for marketing in community media

Small businesses in Canarsie and all of southeast Brooklyn might soon be receiving some much-needed financial relief.

Earlier this month, State Senator Monica R. Martinez and Assemblywoman Jen Lunsford introduced the Lift Our Communities, Advertise Locally (LOCAL) Act, which would establish a new \$10 million tax credit for small businesses advertising in local media outlets. The LOCAL Act aims to support the marketing needs of small businesses – especially those that are minority-, woman- or veteran-owned, or that have 10 employees or fewer – while keeping investment in

the media outlets that New Yorkers rely on every day for critical information.

“This legislation fosters a cycle of growth, allowing small businesses to expand their reach while simultaneously supporting the media outlets that keep New Yorkers informed and engaged,” Martinez said.

The legislation has already garnered staunch support from the media and business communities. Led by The Empire State Local News Coalition, which is composed of over 200 local newspapers across New York – including the *Canarsie Courier* – the bill has received praise from business trade groups throughout the state, which view the proposal as a solution to increase investment in small businesses and sustain local news organizations.

“The LOCAL Act is a win-win-win for local businesses, local news and local communities,” Zachary Richner, founding member of the Empire State Local News Coalition, said. “These institutions are intricately connected and work together to create the vibrant communities that New Yorkers love.”

The bill comes as the 2025 Legislative Session kicks off and negotiations begin on the State’s next fiscal year budget, which must be passed by both the Senate and Assembly and signed by Governor Kathy Hochul by April 1st. The tax credit would need to be included in the State’s final spending plan.

“The LOCAL Act is about more than just advertising – it’s about investing in the economic health of our local communities and investing in the kind of local journalism that we need now more than ever,” Martinez’ fellow bill sponsor, Lunsford, said.

Under the LOCAL Act, a minority-, woman- or veteran-owned business, as well as any business with 10 employees or fewer, would be eligible to receive a refundable tax credit of 80% of its first \$5,000 of local advertising for a maximum credit of \$4,000 per year. The program would be capped at \$10 million annually.

“The proposed legislation represents an out-of-the-box approach aimed at improving the plight of small local businesses and struggling local news organizations,” *Canarsie Courier* Publisher Donna Marra said. “It is the kind of thinking needed to propel economic prosperity in the upcoming, new Golden Age, which all starts at the local level.”



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The LOCAL Act: A Win-Win for Main Streets and Local Newsrooms

Small businesses are the heartbeat of our communities. They are the corner stores, family-owned restaurants and local service providers that fuel our neighborhoods, create jobs and drive economic growth. Yet, these vital businesses often face significant challenges in reaching new customers and growing their operations in an increasingly competitive economy.

With the official introduction in the state legislature of the Lift Our Communities, Advertise Locally (LOCAL) Act, small businesses across New York might gain a powerful new tool next year to help sustain their success and maximize the reach of their marketing dollars. Sponsored by State Senator Monica Martinez and Assemblywoman Jen Lunsford, this state legislation would establish a tax credit for small businesses that advertise in local media outlets – from print and digital to television and radio. By making advertising more affordable, the LOCAL Act will empower small businesses to reach their target audiences while also supporting the essential work of the very same local media outlets that provide our communities with local journalism.

The LOCAL Act focuses on supporting minority-, woman- and veteran-owned businesses, as well as any business with 10 or fewer employees. For many of these entrepreneurs, the ability to advertise affordably in trusted, community-driven platforms like local newspapers will be a game-changer. Local media outlets are well positioned to connect businesses with their neighbors – customers who are eager to shop locally and uplift their communities.

This legislation couldn't come at a better time. Small businesses are still navigating the economic aftershocks of the pandemic, inflationary pressures and competition from large corporations with massive marketing budgets. The LOCAL Act helps level the playing field, giving your favorite mom-and-pop store a way to increase visibility without sacrificing their scarce financial resources.

When our small businesses thrive, so do our communities. Small businesses employ your neighbors, sponsor your kid's little league team and provide a convenient destination for a night out with your spouse. Small businesses are not only economic drivers, but also cornerstones of community identity.

The benefits of the LOCAL Act extend beyond businesses. Local media outlets, too, are vital to communities, because they produce the journalism that keeps people informed about school board meetings and neighborhood crime to church bake sales and the most recent newlyweds – and everything in between. Unfortunately, declining advertising revenues have jeopardized the financial sustainability of many of these local media outlets, and small newsrooms have been shuttering across the state. By encouraging small businesses to advertise in local media outlets, the LOCAL Act helps these outlets continue their essential work of championing their communities.

This dual benefit – supporting both small businesses and local journalism – has already garnered strong support from business groups, community leaders and the 200+ local newspapers comprising the Empire State Local

News Coalition – including the *Canarsie Courier*. It's a win-win solution that strengthens the backbone of our local economy while fostering a unified, informed citizenry.

The LOCAL Act marks a bold step forward in tackling the interconnected challenges our communities are facing today. By working together to implement and embrace this program, we can build stronger businesses, sustain vital journalism and ensure the prosperity of communities across New York for years to come.

We support this smart legislation. Tell your elected leaders in Albany to include the LOCAL Act in the final FY26 state budget.



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Marine Park

A Magical Start to 2025 with P.S. 207's Production of Mary Poppins JR



The cast of Mary Poppins JR

By Brian Moreno

Faculty, family members and classmates gathered in the auditorium of P.S. 207, at 4011 Fillmore Avenue, as the Fillmore Academy Drama Club performed its theatrical production of the classic Disney movie, *Mary Poppins*.

Performing on two nights (January 22nd and January 23rd), the drama club sang their hearts out and recited their lines while never reverting to their native accents, as the show followed the story of Jane and Michael (Chloe Cruz and Paul Ligresti), English children of the strict but wealthy Banks family, who are now under the care of the magical, firm but never harsh, nanny Mary Poppins (Zoey Ramos).

Under the care of Poppins and a dance sequence with her Cockney chimney-cleaner friend, Bert (Charlie Gwinn), the siblings attempt to pass some of their nanny's positive outlook to their busy parents.

"I always look at the talent that I have in front of me, and I think about the strengths of the kids in the drama club," Director Kimberly Simek said. "*Mary Poppins* is a fabulous and classic story, and I thought it was something that they could handle and they absolutely are handling it. Their talent, especially their British accents, has been near perfect since the start of the rehearsals."

Each of the actors and actresses brought their unique presence to the stage, such as Cruz and Ligresti; the two showed their character needed guidance, while their father (Ethan McGinnis), though still so very young, managed to display burden of a family man trying to support his family.

Special mention goes to Ramos, who played the titular character, never lost her accent and always looked classy while never appearing to be distant.

"It actually feels so surreal because this is the first time I've ever gotten a main role in one of these shows," Ramos said. "I've loved being on the stage my whole life ever since I was little. And this is really a big moment for me."

Mary Poppins JR is just the beginning as more productions are set for the school year.

"It has been very exciting to see so many fresh faces and personalities up on stage," Simek said. "This new group has been incredibly dedicated as far as picking up choreography, knowing their entrances and exits, knowing all of their lines and being prepared even without 20 something upperclassmen to show them what to do. They've really taken the onus on themselves to step up to the plate and put together a great show."



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Georgetown Man Dies After Being Robbed in Uber

By Linda Steinmuller

Police are looking for two men who are wanted in connection to a robbery that could have led to the death of Georgetown resident Michael Shelonchik, 53.

On Tuesday, January 21st, around 6 p.m., police responded to a robbery in progress outside of 532 Neptune Avenue in Coney Island. Shelonchik was a passenger, sitting in the rear of an Uber vehicle, when two men opened the car door and punched the victim in his face and head. They stole the victim's chain from his neck and ran away, police said.

Shelonchik, who appeared to have suffered a medical episode, was taken to Maimonides Hospital via private means where he was subsequently pronounced dead, according to police. The case has not been deemed a homicide, and the Medical Examiner is investigating the cause of death.

The suspects are described as black men in their 20's. The first suspect was wearing a black hooded coat, blue sweatpants with a white design on the side, and white sneakers. The other suspect was wearing a black hooded coat, black pants and black sneakers. Both were wearing balaclavas, so their faces were not visible.

There are no arrests, and an investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers Website at crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/, or on X @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.





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Spring Creek

Detectives Still Looking for Patrick Alford on the 15th Anniversary of His Disappearance



By Lloyd Mitchell and Linda Steinmuller

NYPD detectives have not given up hope in locating Patrick Alford, who was only 7 years old when he mysteriously disappeared from a Starrett City building 15 years ago.

Throughout the neighborhood, posters hang with a picture of what Alford looked like when he was 7, beside an age progression photo of what he would look like today, at 22 years old.

Alford was last seen around 9 p.m. on Friday, January 22, 2010, in the vicinity of 130 Vandalia Avenue. The young boy, who was placed in foster care with his sister after Christmas in 2009, was taking out the trash with his foster mother when he vanished, never to be seen again. Librada Moran, his foster mother, told investigators that after she briefly turned her head, Alford disappeared. She also said that the boy had tried to run away before.

The case shocked the city, and detectives tirelessly interviewed over 14,000 people, searched over 9,000 apartments and responded to countless tips.

The NYPD is offering up to \$13,000 for information that could lead to finding Patrick Alford.

Anyone with information regarding this missing person is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the Crime Stoppers Website at crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/, or on X @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.

Photo by Lloyd Mitchell

Marine Park

Residents Call for Stop Sign at Busy Intersection

By Amanda Salazar

Local mother Brittany Nunez was walking her young daughter to school on Friday, January 10th, at the corner of East 34th Street and Avenue S in Marine Park when a Jeep sped across the intersection and came close to hitting the student.

Nunez visited the “Southeast Brooklyn Parents” Facebook group to vent about the scary incident — during which she estimated the Jeep to be speeding at around 40 miles per hour — and to call on Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse and Assemblywoman Jaime Williams to do something about the corner, which has no stop sign, stoplight or school crossing guard.

“Every day parents are running for their lives with small children and strollers to avoid being killed,” she wrote in her post. “I beg both of you to do something before something really tragic happens on that corner.”

However, Nunez was not the only resident to complain of the dangerous nature of the intersection, at which Infinity Educational Programs preschool and the Marine Park Jewish Center are located.

Several took to the comments section of the post to share their experiences with the corner and to say that they reached out to elected officials and Community Board 18.

“There are always people speeding around,” Yvette Bognar responded. “Running the light, running stop signs. Double parked cars make it even worse when you can’t get through. It is a nightmare in that area during the day into the evening hours.”

Community member Irene Gilder echoed this sentiment.

“We have experienced the same walking to dance, and what’s worse [is] I’ve seen people who live on the block turn UP 34th to get to their driveway versus going to T and down toward S,” Gilder commented. “Stop signs or lights all along S plus enforcement of the double parking on both sides of the avenue would make for a safer street.”

Community Board 18 District Manager Sue Ann Partnow responded to the post saying she reached out to the Department of Transportation (DOT) to do a traffic study on the intersection. Madison-Marine-Homecrest Civic Association President Elizabeth Morrissey commented, encouraging concerned residents to show up to civic meetings to report these incidents and make requests of politicians.

Narcisse’s office had previously requested a stop sign at East 35th Street and Avenue S but had been denied in December.

“I am aware of the concerns about traffic control measures along Avenue S, particularly as many children use these streets to travel to and from school,” Narcisse said in a written statement. “We have subsequently asked that DOT reconsider. Following recent outreach from residents, we have submitted a new request for a stop sign at East 34th Street and Avenue S. During [the January 21st] New York City Council Transportation hearing, I raised the need to speed up and streamline the DOT’s process for addressing these critical safety concerns, especially for intersections near parks, playgrounds, schools or in general high-risk areas.”



The corner of East 34th Street and Avenue S gets busy during school drop-off and pickup.



A minivan crosses Avenue S along East 34th Street.

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Trump Sworn in as 47th President Inside Capitol Rotunda Amid Sub-Freezing D.C. Temps



By Robert Pearl

On a historic and frigid January morning, Donald J. Trump was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States during an indoor ceremony in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C. Sub-freezing temperatures forced the event indoors, marking the first indoor inauguration since Ronald Reagan's second term in 1985. Despite the weather, Trump set an optimistic tone, vowing a "common-sense revolution" and a "golden age of America" in his inaugural address.

The January 20th ceremony featured former U.S. Senator J.D. Vance being sworn in as the 50th Vice President by Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. Vance, the first vice president from Ohio in nearly a century, stood alongside

his family, Trump and dignitaries as he took the oath of office. Known for his memoir, *Hillbilly Elogy*, Vance represents a key figure in Trump's administration.

A New Chapter in U.S. Politics

Trump took the oath of office inside the Rotunda, a setting prepared for inclement weather. The decision to move indoors was driven by concerns for the attendees and staff amid sub-zero conditions. Trump dismissed any potential threat or safety motives behind the decision, emphasizing the welfare of the American people.

In a gesture of accessibility, a public viewing of the ceremony was held at Capital One Arena, where Trump had hosted a victory rally the previous day. After the swearing-in, the president made a surprise appearance at the arena, signing his first executive orders on stage. He declared his administration would champion transparency, saying, "The golden age of America begins right now."

Trump's inaugural address highlighted his priorities: securing U.S. borders, restoring American sovereignty and rejuvenating the nation's economy. Declaring "America First," he promised to reclaim the country's global respect and address pressing domestic issues.

Day One Executive Actions

Trump wasted no time in implementing his agenda. His first actions included:

- **Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border:** Trump vowed to halt illegal entry and expedite the deportation of "criminal aliens."
- **Reinstating the Remain in Mexico Policy:** Asylum seekers must await court decisions in Mexico, ending the "catch and release" practice.
- **Targeting Drug Cartels and Criminal Networks:** Trump designated cartels as foreign terrorist organizations and invoked the Alien Enemies Act to combat gangs.
- **Deploying Troops to the Border:** Military personnel will be stationed to strengthen border security.

Trump also signed executive orders aimed at protecting American workers by limiting immigration policies impacting the labor market.

A Historic Comeback

Trump's second term marks a political resurgence unprecedented in U.S. history. Overcoming two impeachments, numerous legal battles and even assassination attempts, he joins Grover Cleveland as the only president to serve non-consecutive terms.

The ceremony brought together key figures, including outgoing President Joe Biden, bipartisan lawmakers and notable guests like Elon Musk, Rupert Murdoch and Joe Rogan. Former and current foreign leaders, including British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Argentinian President Javier Milei, were also in attendance.

Looking Forward

Though the swearing-in ceremony was limited to select officials, the atmosphere inside the Capitol was convivial. Guests mingled across party lines, with lawmakers taking selfies before the proceedings began.

With a bold agenda in hand and a renewed mandate, Trump concluded his speech with a message of hope and determination: "Today is Liberation Day. Together, we will make America stronger, safer and more prosperous than ever before."



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Bergen Beach

New Trash Bins Delivered After Long Delays, Threat of DSNY Drone Inspections Loom

By Angela G. Nannetti

Despite their strong opposition to the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) mandate, requiring them to purchase official NYC trash bins at their own expense (before the June 1, 2026 deadline), many Brooklyn residents who opted to order the new bins online as far back as October have taken to social media, saying they are yet to receive them several months later.

“I ordered bins October 28th ... didn’t receive them yet,” reported Flatlands resident, Maureen, bested by Maria, who said she ordered them on October 9th. “When I go to check order status, they don’t accept my order number. When I called the number provided, they have recorded messages, and 311 said they have no info,” she explained, clearly frustrated.

“I placed my order on the bins.nyc website on November 16th and received confirmation of my order December 24th! The delay is beyond ridiculous as it is January and I have yet to receive my order,” said Ess of Flatlands. “It does take a while, but you will get it as long as you got the confirmation code,” Sheilah of East Flatbush assured. “Mine took about eight to nine weeks, but they delivered them to my street all at once.”

Jackie of Mill Basin instead suggested purchasing the new bins at one of the big hardware store chains. “They sell the exact same ones. A few dollars more than the City website, but you leave with them as opposed to waiting weeks for them,” she said.

It was good news when a large unmarked truck, loaded to capacity with the new bins, was observed delivering on East 70th Street, between Avenues X and Y, early Thursday morning, January 16th. Workers unloaded black trash bins, green paper recycling bins and blue metal/glass/plastic recycling bins, which they wheeled over to a number of homes along the block. While these residents are likely very relieved to have received what they paid for, they may not necessarily be thrilled with the product they got for the price.

Many who have already received their new bins have expressed their dissatisfaction with the quality of their construction. The most common complaint is how light the bins are and how they blow over and away on windy days. “Garbagemen in Canarsie throw the bin on the sidewalk. If no one is home to retrieve

it, it is blown in the winds,” complained Debora of Canarsie. Others have said the covers are flimsy and do not latch properly. One woman said the lids break right off if they are handled roughly by Sanitation workers. “The City trash bin has nothing more than a rubber band type lock, which the raccoons find very easy to open,” explained John of Canarsie.

Elderly residents say they are too big and too heavy, when full, to drag to the curb, while others say they are too small and that they would need two or three to fit all their trash and still be able to close the lids. “I can’t afford to buy more than one bin! I fill it up and close it and then I put the rest of the overflow

in black bags on the street. I have been fined twice already, and I think it’s my neighbor who is calling 311 on me,” said Steve of Bergen Beach.

In fact, DSNY says they have issued more than 10,000 citations since the warning period ended January 2nd, and, just days ago, confirmed rumors that they are considering flying a fleet of drones block by block to identify residences that are not in compliance and issue fines.

Only time will tell how far DSNY will go to enforce its new regulations and how compliant residents will continue to be in the face of such stringent policies.



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Marine Park

Lunar New Year Slithers In, Celebrating the Year of the Snake



Marine Park Alliance volunteers and Chinese Freemasons Athletic Club dancers

By Brian Moreno

Residents gathered at the Carmine Carro Community Center in Marine Park on Saturday, January 25th, to observe Lunar New Year and partake in festivities, cultural activities and learning – and enjoy a special lion dance performance.

Organized by the Marine Park Alliance, this celebration of the Lunar New Year brings forth tolerance, diversity and cultural awareness while locals enjoy East Asian customs and celebrations.

Throughout East Asia, countries such as China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia and South Korea, among others, observe the Lunar New Year. Celebrations last for 15 days and begin with the new moon on Wednesday, January 29th, and end on Wednesday, February 12th, with a Lantern Festival. This Lunar New Year falls under the Year of the Snake, specifically the wood snake, which was last observed 60 years ago. In Chinese culture, snakes represent harvest, procreation, spirituality, good fortune, cunning, evil, threat and terror.

The ceremony was curated by Kristy Di Cario, who explained the traditions, customs and legends surrounding the Lunar New Year. She talked about the origins of the Chinese zodiacs: the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and pig and how they go by that order due to a race.

Di Cario shared the legend about the origin of the holiday, in which an ocean-based monster known as Nian attacked a village and was repelled when an old traveler drove it away with loud noises, the color red and fireworks, thus setting the activities in the Lunar New Year.

She continued with lantern riddles, and when audience members correctly answered, they received a gift. Lastly, she explained other customs such as giving red envelopes, wearing red, not to sweep as you might sweep the good luck away, and what foods are eaten during the holiday, such as dumplings, noodles and rice cakes.

"I think it's inspirational for the future generation," said Amy Lau, an attendee. "It will be really important that the children learn about their heritage. I'm looking forward to more of these wonderful events from the community center."

Afterward, the New York Chinese Freemasons Athletic Club (CFMAC), Hung Ching, performed their signature Chinese lion dance. Throughout the performance, dancers showed off their moves and interacted with the audience by giving them mandarins, which symbolize good luck, as well as kicking a lettuce, which symbolizes wealth and fortunes to those who attend.

"We came here to spread our cultural traditions to the youth, to everyone else seeing it. Our lion dancers had a lot of fun and our instrument players as well; we do a lot of practice all year round," Justin Wang of CFMAC said. "We came here to educate the youth about our culture and tradition to spread out our practices."

Lunar New Year is just one of many events that MPA engages in to share many different cultures with locals.

"Lunar New Year is an event celebrated in a number of Asian cultures, and we're happy to use that as an opportunity to engage with our neighbors who observe Lunar New Year," MPA Executive Director Scott Middleton said. "We're so pleased with the turnout and look forward to it every year as one of our best attended and most exciting events. It's especially fun for the kids to take photos with the lion dancers and to enjoy a snack, enjoy a craft and enjoy the experience and the thrill of seeing a lion dance. As well, learn a little bit about a new culture for many."

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