

Nov. 4, 2012

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Avella claims boro recovery on slow track

BY PHIL CORSO

As New York City tries to rebuild and move forward in the aftermath of the devastating effects of Hurricane Sandy, one northeast Queens lawmaker said the borough deserves better.

In a statement issued Thursday, state Sen. Tony Avella (D-Bayside) said he has asked Gov. Andrew Cuomo for help in addressing what he called a lack of resources being provided to Queens.

"It is absolutely disgraceful that there are still trees blocking city streets," Avella said, referring to the more than 5,000 downed, split or uprooted trees Mayor Michael Bloomberg reported in the borough. "There are many trees on people's homes who have not been contacted by the city and there are thousands upon thousands of people in Queens without power."

Avella said he planned on asking the state Public Service Commission to investigate Consolidated Edison's response after

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Superstorm ravages Breezy Point



Tom Duffy, (r.) who has lived in Breezy Point for the past 23 years, searches the rubble of his home for salvageable items. Duffy lost his primary residence in the blaze. **See more photos on Page 13.**

Photo by Christina Santucci

Residents return to find 100 homes destroyed by six-alarm fire, tidal flooding

BY KAREN FRANTZ

Many people returned to Breezy Point for the first time after Hurricane Sandy to see if their houses were still standing Wednesday, two days after a six-alarm fire leveled more than 100 houses and catastrophic flooding

destroyed many more.

"Thank God we're all safe," said Mary Welsome, whose house was destroyed in the fire and said she was at the site hoping to find her wedding ring.

"I'm thinking material things, they can always be replaced," she said. "But so many memories. It's so sad, dear God."

The ravaged western end of the Rockaway Peninsula, where the beachfront community is located, reminded some of the stark images of bombed-out Europe during World War II.

At the scene of the fire little remained of the houses that once stood except charred wood and stone foundations. The rubble was

still smoldering in places and the air smelled strongly of smoke. A few severed pipes spouted water.

Some people walked stunned through the wreckage. Others stood just beyond, gathering with neighbors to share comfort.

Firefighters were still on the scene, searching houses for peo-

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Congressman loses homestead to Sandy

BY JOE ANUTA

Two elected officials from Queens rode out the surging tides and flames that assailed parts of the Rockaways, and after a congressman fled for his life, he now has no home to return to.

U.S. Rep. Bob Turner (R-Middle Village)

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Police tape hangs off an electrical pole near where a 23-year-old woman was electrocuted by a downed power line.

Photo by Joe Anuta

Rich Hill woman electrocuted

BY JOE ANUTA

Friends and colleagues of a makeup artist were in mourning after the 23-year-old was electrocuted by a downed electrical line in Richmond Hill Monday.

At about 8:30 p.m., just as Superstorm Sandy made landfall in New Jersey,

Lauren Abraham was electrocuted when she stepped into a puddle outside her home on 105th Avenue near 134th Street and came into contact with live wires that shocked her, according to the city Police Department.

"Lauren was an individual you would easily gravitate to from her posi-

tive energy, which floated throughout the room," friend Misa McGregor posted on Facebook. "I may have just met her this summer, but when I spoke to her it made me want to push higher for my goals in life. Now how many young people do you know can

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Broken tree threatens family in Auburndale



A large tree in Auburndale crushes the car parked in its path, though residents fear it could fall even farther into a nearby home.
Photo by Joe Anuta

BY JOE ANUTA

Superstorm Sandy turned the streets of northeast Queens into a life-sized maze, downing trees to block off roads and tearing down power lines in a destructive series of events that created outages for nearly 20,000 customers around Flushing and Fresh Meadows, but for one Auburndale family, the ordeal went on for days.

On Thursday afternoon, a partially downed tree was still looming over the 194th Street house of Bill Daley, propped just above the live power lines in front by a sturdier tree that caught the falling behemoth.

“That’s the second time that tree has saved my house,” he said.

But time is running out.

The supporting tree has a large fissure near the base of the trunk that is growing by the minute. On Tuesday afternoon, Daley said the crack had grown one-sixteenth of an inch in one hour.

On Wednesday afternoon, a city Sanitation De-

partment police officer who showed up was so shocked that he offered his own house for the Daleys to stay in. When the city Parks Department came to assess how to get the tree down, an official said Consolidated Edison would have to shut down the power before anything could be done.

“Everything is still the same,” said Daley’s daughter, Alison.

State Sen. Tony Avella (D-Bayside) called Con Ed’s response “disgraceful.”

“There are many trees on people’s homes who have not been contacted by the city and there are thousands upon thousands of people in Queens without power,” he said.

Avella said he planned on asking the state Public Service Commission to investigate Con Ed’s response to the storm.

At about 4 p.m. Monday, the enormous tree began to lift up the sidewalk across from the Daley’s home as it teetered in the wind. As it came crashing down, the Giannopoulos family ran to the back of their house.

“We heard it start to

crack and saw the cement lift up,” said George Giannopoulos.

When it fell, the trunk completely crushed the family’s white 2010 Subaru.

In Fresh Meadows, fallen trees blocked traffic at seemingly every turn as neighbors raked up smaller branches and landscape crews fed limbs into wood chippers. The large number of downed trees corresponded to the large number of people without power.

According to Consolidated Edison, 18,500 customers in the area were without power as of Tuesday evening, while boroughwide the numbers reached more than 100,000.

Downtown Flushing was mostly spared by Sandy’s destructive forces, with streetlights and power operating normally Tuesday.

According to Con Ed, there were only sporadic outages in the downtown area.

Reach reporter Joe Anuta by e-mail at januta@cnglocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4566.

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Felled tree kills Flushing man

Tony Laino, 29, crushed when winds pushed trunk into his room



Tony Laino's brother Nicholas kicks a stump, which is all that remains of a tree that fell on a house and killed Tony.

Photo by Christina Santucci

BY JOE ANUTA

The family of a 29-year-old St. John's University graduate received an outpouring of support after the Flushing resident was killed by a falling tree during Superstorm Sandy Monday night.

Tony Laino, who friends said worked as a driver at Ace Party & Tent Rental, was killed at about 7 p.m. Monday when a tree blown over by high winds fell onto his 166th Street home. Laino was in his second-floor room and was crushed by the trunk, according to police and neighbors.

Days afterward, a friend started an online fund-raiser to help the family with the damage and funeral, and by Thursday afternoon had raised nearly \$8,500 for the Lainos.

"I wish I could give more," wrote one contributor, who donated \$150.

The family had been asking the city to take down the tree for years, according to a neighbor.

On Tuesday afternoon, friends and family gathered for an emotional reunion in front of the crushed residence between Lithonia Avenue and Pidgeon Meadow Road.

"He was a wonderful, wonderful young man. There's no explanation for something like this," said Heather Valente, whose daughter Danielle was Laino's longtime girlfriend.

The tree flattened nearly one-third of the top floor of the two-story home, and the gigantic trunk fell directly onto Laino's room.

According to neighbors,

off-duty first responders rushed into the house to try and save him, but Laino was later pronounced dead at the scene by emergency workers, according to the NYPD.

The family had been asking the city to take down the tree for years, according to neighbor Joann Evangelista.

Just two or three months ago city workers came to prune the branches off the large tree, and Laino's father had begged for them to cut it down, but arborists had told him the tree was healthy and could

not be dug up, Evangelista said.

"It was tragic," she said. "You just can't get it around your head."

Evangelista said neighbors repeatedly dialed 911 after the tree came crashing down, but could not raise someone on the other line.

"The phone just rang, rang, rang," she said.

Friends slowly arrived at the house and stared at the damage in disbelief before embracing the family.

The family was set to hold a wake Thursday and Friday, with a service Saturday.

Donations to the family can be made in Laino's name at Frederick's Funeral home or by going to gofundme.com/tonylaino.

Reach reporter Joe Anuta by e-mail at januta@cnglocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4566.

Blackouts plague northeast Queens

BY PHIL CORSO AND COLIN DEVRIES

Hundreds lost power in College Point and Whitestone after trees toppled throughout both neighborhoods, while northeast Queens marinas faced the harsh reality unleashed by Hurricane Sandy, according to Consolidated Edison.

Greg Varitimidis, a Greek immigrant who lives on 130th Street in College Point, said he lost power at 9 p.m. Monday and had not had power restored as of Thursday. He witnessed power lines flashing near his home and shooting sparks toward nearby houses during the early morning hours Tuesday.

A large tree rested on a home at 13-28 141st St. in Whitestone and a neighbor worked Tuesday to clear some of the debris on the street.

"It's been five years since I put a complaint in about these trees," said next-door neighbor Steven Nathaniel, "and nothing's been done."

Nathaniel attempted to have the large trees with weak roots removed independently, but tree pruners could not follow through with his plan without a city permit.

"You can't get (the city) to do it and you can't do it," he said. "Then you have thousands of insurance dollars wasted."

Susan Seinfeld, the Community Board 11 district manager, said her Bayside office lost power for only one day in the aftermath of the storm and was back working by Wednesday. Aside from reports of downed trees in areas from Little Neck and Douglaston to Bayside, Seinfeld said residents have fared well since the storm moved on.

"Everyone here has to really deep down feel very grateful that they weren't as unfortunate as those in Lower Manhattan, Staten Island, or the Rockaways,"

Seinfeld said.

Areas closer to Whitestone and College Point were hit much harder, according to City Councilman Dan Halloran (R-Whitestone). In a news briefing Thursday, Halloran said thousands of residents throughout his council district were without power, and the city should have been better prepared.

"Con Ed crews have been hauling, but we need new solutions from management," Halloran said while acknowledging that areas such as Breezy Point still experienced much more detrimental effects of the storm than the northern part of the borough.

As of Thursday evening, Con Ed reported just under 90,000 customers in Queens without power - hundreds of whom came from the Whitestone and College Point region. But far more were out in southeast Queens.

The College Point Yacht Club, a private members-only club that stores more than 230 vessels, was largely intact with the majority of boats unharmed.

"There's been worse," said Rich Shubert, a longtime member who lives in Whitestone. "Thenor'easter in the early '90s — in that one, the water came so fast you couldn't do anything."

Club member Rich Swanson's boat had been totaled after a nearby sailboat broke loose and smashed against the side of his fishing boat. He hoped his insurance would cover the repairs.

Bayside Marina, however, did not get through the storm as easily, according to co-owner Martin Munch. He said the overall damage has not been completely assessed, but repairs needed for the Bayside Marina dock alone could cost at least \$250,000.

"Our docks took a really bad beating," he said. "We're not sure if they are going to be salvageable."

Storm brings flooding, gas shortages to western Queens

Peralta wants relief for long pump lines, while Van Bramer says LIC must be made safe from surges

BY REBECCA HENELY

While northwestern Queens was not hit as hard as other parts of the borough during Superstorm Sandy, residents were still feeling its effects after the waters receded and the skies cleared.

State Sen. Jose Peralta (D-East Elmhurst) said Wednesday that with the No. 7 train down and stations running out of gas, many residents in his district struggled to get into work. He tried to arrange local liveries to take residents to their jobs for a flat rate, but they had shortages of gas as well. One of the few stations with gas in his district, on 97th Street in Corona, had a line going back to Citi Field.

"We need a solution and we need a solution fast," Peralta said.

City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer (D-Sunnyside) said while no residents of the neighborhood had died, floodwaters rose over Gantry State Park, flooding basements and shorting out power supplies in the neighborhood Monday evening.

He said in the wake of the flooding long-term thought needed to be given to make sure the Hunters Point section of Long Island City was fully safe and prepared.

"We've had two hurricanes now in two years," he said, referring to Sandy and August 2011's Hurricane Irene, both of which caused flooding in Long Island City.

The Foundry Condominium, at 2-40 51st St. in Long Island City, was swamped by the storm. Resident Debbie Demarse said



Long Island City resident Sal Vito points out where the storm surge rose on 47th Road near Center Boulevard during Hurricane Sandy.
Photo by Rebecca Henely

the basement and the first floor flooded as did the garage. The building lost power by 11 p.m. and at 12:30 a.m. Tuesday morning, a car in the garage caught on fire. The Foundry still did not have power by Thursday afternoon.

Residents were not the only ones hit. Day workers at PS 78, at 48-09 Center

Blvd. in Long Island City said the school took on a foot and a half of water.

"Every carpet is soaked. Every carpet is damaged," one worker said.

Long Island City residents said many cars were also flooded during the storm. Heath Tucker, resident of 48th Avenue and

Vernon Boulevard, said he saw one motorist scramble to get his car before the floodwaters rose.

"The water was just getting in his car and he got down in time to move it," Tucker said.

To add insult to nature's injury, many residents said their flooded cars had been burglarized.

Irwin Applebaum, a Long Island resident who had been told to evacuate and came to see his son in Long Island City, woke up to find his Acura full of leaves and mud, one of his car doors unlocked, his car windows down and his carjack on the ground near his tire. Since his trunk wouldn't open, he guessed the burglars had tried to take his tire with his own tools.

"Somebody scared them," Applebaum said.

"I don't know what happened."

Long Island City's neighbors were also not spared Sandy's wrath. LaGuardia International Airport in East Elmhurst was still closed for business Wednesday due to flooding, but opened Thursday morning.

In Astoria, the US Powergen plant sustained flooding, but ended up ultimately going offline until Wednesday due to being hit by pieces of the closed Charles Polletti Power Plant, said City Councilman Peter Vallone Jr. (D-Astoria). He wrote a letter to the New York Power Authority Wednesday demanding answers.

"It happened because the state has yet to get rid of the old Polletti Plant and has yet to say why," Vallone said.

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Dolan legacy preserved on Flushing street sign

BY JOE ANUTA

Even in death, Queens civic activist Pat Dolan seemed to exercise her influence over the group of elected officials gathered at her street renaming ceremony in Kew Gardens Hills Friday.

Nearly a year ago, Dolan was killed by a car while crossing Union Turnpike, ironically while she was on her way to a transportation meeting. Her name now adorns a street sign outside the Kew Gardens Hills branch of the Queens Public Library.

Dolan was president of the Queens Civic Congress, a coalition of more than 100 borough civic organizations; founder of the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Conservancy; and a member of Community Board 8, although she held many more titles.

But she is remembered most for her tenacity and renowned for squeezing results from lawmakers.

"I remain as afraid of her now as I ever was before, and that is a credit to her as the great, dynamic community organizer she was and is," said City Council Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan), speaking with a large group of other politicians at the ceremony.

Dolan was a longtime borough firebrand hailing from Kew Gardens Hills who fought for better zoning, parks and libraries and did so with her characteristic blunt speech and caustic wit.

Many lawmakers at the ceremony attributed Dolan's efficacy to her forceful negotiating skills, but the true root of Dolan's influence on Queens went much deeper.

The civic leader preferred to work outside the bounds of politics, never having run for public office, but that arguably made her



Norma Stegmaier, (c.) longtime friend of Patricia Dolan, holds the commemorative street sign. Photo by Joe Anuta

more powerful.

State Assemblyman Rory Lancman (D-Fresh Meadows), whose district is near to Dolan's home turf, first met her in the late 1980s at a hearing on the revision of the City Charter, a document which basically serves as a blueprint for how the city runs.

Lancman, then just a college student interested in city government, was approached by Dolan and taken under her wing. The late civic leader helped forge his views on public service, along with many others now active in the community.

Dolan quite literally dedicated her life to Queens politics — she founded the park conservancy and the precursor to the Queens Civic Congress decades ago — and was active in civic affairs for far longer. In doing so she influenced a wave of legislators and activists who would later shape the discourse and policies that ended up governing the borough and city.

"Probably nothing compares to the effect she has had by mentoring a generation of community leaders, civic leaders, elected

officials and others, so that her thoughts, her views and her commitment have now multiplied exponentially beyond which any normal individual person could do on their own," Lancman said at the ceremony.

The notion of 15 politicians speaking in succession for more than 45 minutes would have amused Dolan, as her closest and longtime friend Norma Stegmaier said, since the civic leader preferred action to words. But the elected officials and heads of community boards from Queens, Manhattan and Brooklyn — and the bills, resolutions and statements they have put into ink — are likely more of a testament to her legacy than the sign now posted on Vleish Place.

But in an unforeseen twist of events, Dolan also left a lasting legacy for the library at Kew Gardens Hills, aside from the bust of her located inside. According to the head of the Queens Public Library, the facility's address will now have to change to reflect the street on which it is located: Pat Dolan Way.

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Broad Channel under siege

Heavy flooding spreads wreckage throughout island's streets

BY CHRISTINA SANTUCCI

Although many residents of Broad Channel and Hamilton Beach lost all of their belongings during Hurricane Sandy, some were just thankful they survived the superstorm.

Francis Seim braved the tempest in a neighbor's home in Broad Channel while his family spent the night in Rockaway Beach. He headed to his house on 10th Road on the island between Howard Beach and the Rockaway Peninsula at about 3 a.m. Tuesday and found a neighbor's deck in the street in front of his home and everything inside ruined.

Then he checked to make sure his wife, 8-year-old son and other relatives in Rockaway were all right.

"I pray to God for that. All of this hopefully can be replaced," he said as he picked through water-soaked belongings Tuesday afternoon before he planned to bring supplies to his relatives in Rockaway.

"I have really nowhere to live. My wife, my son, I don't know where we are going after this," Seim said.

Several blocks away, Ginger and Tom Brauner marveled at the debris, which included most of a wooden bridge that connected the island with sev-



Francis Seim picks through items in his Broad Channel home, which was destroyed by flooding.

Photo by Christina Santucci

eral bungalows on stilts, one of which they own. The Brauners' home was still standing, albeit with damage to the deck and exterior.

During Tropical Storm Irene, two of the bungalows fell off into Jamaica Bay, and this year Sandy took half of another house. The other half hung precariously above the water.

"This is like a bomb went off here. It's unbelievable," said Ginger Brauner, who spent the storm on Long Island.

Her house, which was originally built in 1904, is only accessible by the wooden bridge on East 12th Road. Most of it was strewn across several backyards.

"It will be a while before we can even go out and assess what is there," said Ginger's husband, Tom.

Debris and remnants of flooding were visible on nearly every block in Broad Channel, and a powerful stench of gasoline and home heating oil permeated the air. On Channel Road, the North Channel

Yacht Club's shed collapsed into the street, which was impassable by car because of the debris. Among items on the ground were a bottle of whiskey and a dead cat.

Large boats, including one from the North Channel Yacht Club, had floated into Cross Bay Boulevard, the fronts of homes and backyards.

The club's deck was partly smashed against the building, while the interior was filled with ruined furniture and water.

DA charges dozen with storm looting

BY JOE ANUTA

While Queens residents were dealing with record devastation to homes and businesses, the Queens district attorney said more than a dozen people took advantage of the superstorm and were arrested on charges of looting stores in Far Rockaway.

"The Queens district attorney's office, the NYPD and Mayor Michael Bloomberg have zero tolerance for looters who would exploit a natural disaster like Hurricane Sandy for their own personal gain," District Attorney Richard Brown said.

The suspected looters hit a liquor store, clothing stores, a Radio Shack and gas stations in the neighborhood, which was inundated by the record storm surge and power outages.

City Councilman James Sanders Jr. (D-Laurelton) witnessed some of the looting and said the NYPD did not have enough officers in the area.

Sanders had asked the National Guard to come watch over the area, but said the city had told him the NYPD could handle the crime.

"The mayor assures me he has enough police power to do the job," he said. "I have not seen many police out there touring. I have simply not seen them."

Officers did arrest several people as the storm subsided Tuesday and the suspects were then arraigned by the DA.

Four were charged with stealing from a Radio Shack, at 87-09 Rockaway Beach Blvd., between 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, according to the DA.

A pair of Queens residents were charged with burglary and possession of stolen property for allegedly knocking over Rock Jetty Wine and Spirits, at 97-08 Rockaway Beach Blvd. at about 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, the DA said.

Several Rockaway residents were charged with trying to pick up free duds.

At about 11:40 a.m. Tuesday two men allegedly broke into a clothing store and were charged with burglary, the DA said.

The other alleged shoplifter was charged with burglary, theft and possession of stolen property after he stole a pair of boots from a clothing store near the corner of Beach 86th Street and Rockaway Beach Boulevard, at about 1 p.m. Tuesday, the DA said.

Another Rockaway duo allegedly robbed 57 Food Market at 57-25 Shorefront Pkwy. at about 10 a.m. Tuesday, according to the DA.

Four Queens residents were charged with breaking into gas stations, Brown said.

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Lawmaker seeks perps in Sunnyside gay slay

BY REBECCA HENELY

A 62-year-old gay Sunnyside man who was hit in the head by two assailants while out walking at night nearly two weeks ago succumbed to his injuries Friday, City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer's (D-Sunnyside) office said.

Van Bramer, a friend of victim Lou Rispoli, has been urging the public to help catch the three men associated with the ultimately fatal assault.

The councilman had alerted the community to the crime in a news conference at his district office last Thursday and showed a picture of Rispoli in hopes any witnesses who may have seen him walking in the area had more information. Van Bramer said he was a friend of Rispoli, who worked on Van Bramer's campaign in 2009. Van Bramer's eyes were red as he spoke of him.

"He was a very, very strong man," Van Bramer said. "He was funny, and he brought laughter and joy to us all."

Rispoli was married to a man who he had been with for 32 years. Rispoli's husband and family have

asked to remain anonymous, although friend Mark Horn read a statement on behalf of them urging residents with information to come forward. The statement described Rispoli as a great conversationalist and a funny man known for his dinner parties.

"We find ourselves speechless with grief and disbelief," Horn read.

It was unclear whether or not the crime was based on Rispoli's sexual orientation.

Details were scarce on the fatal assault, but Van Bramer said a witness saw Rispoli walking and talking with two men around 2 a.m. Oct. 20 on 43rd Avenue between 41st and 42nd streets while another man waited in a vehicle nearby.

The two men then hit Rispoli on the head hard enough that he had to be placed in hospice care where he eventually died, Van Bramer said.

"All of us are devastated by what has happened," Van Bramer said. "We have got to find the people who did this."

His office said authorities were offering a \$22,000 reward for information leading to the men's arrest and

capture: \$10,000 from the NYPD, \$10,000 from Mayor Michael Bloomberg's office and \$2,000 from Crime Stoppers.

Horn said Rispoli was an insomniac and was known to walk late at night, but the family did not know why Rispoli might have been talking to the men.

No description of the attackers was currently available. Van Bramer said the men may have been in their 20s and that one of them was tall. There is no known surveillance footage of the attack, Van Bramer said.

"Some people may share our frustration that there isn't more," Van Bramer said. "We don't know enough."

Those with information are asked to contact the NYPD's Crime Stoppers hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS. Information can also be sent via the Crime Stoppers website at nypdcrimestoppers.com or by texting 274637 (CRIMES) and then entering TIP577.

"It is difficult enough to know that we've lost Lou," Van Bramer said. "It is impossible to believe the people who did this would



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Six Queens firefighters lost in deadly '62 blaze honored

BY STEVE MOSCO

Family, friends and firefighters spilled out of the garage at VIP Auto Body Shop in Maspeth Friday as they honored fallen heroes from half a century ago.

More than 100 city firefighters stood in solemn remembrance as city Fire Commissioner Salvatore Cassano unveiled a plaque commemorating the supreme sacrifice made by six firefighters on Oct. 26, 1962.

On that date, a fire broke out and a wall collapsed at the former site of the Sefu Soap and Fat Co., at 44-15 56th Road, which is now VIP Auto Body. The blaze killed Capt. William Russell and Firefighters Richard Andrews and James Marino from Engine 325; Firefighters Richard

Gifford and George Zahn from Engine 238; and Firefighter Francis Egan from Ladder 115.

"Not only will the names on the wall remind us of the dangers of this job, but they will drive us to work hard because we owe it to those who came before us," Cassano said. "These young men were taken from the department far too soon, bravely battling a fire to protect the city."

Cassano said the tragedy was mostly lost to the public when it occurred because the Cuban Missile Crisis dominated that weekend's headlines. After a memorial at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan, the six men were lost to time.

But close to five decades later, the auto shop's owner, Peter Keane, and manager Marc Eberle, were

beginning renovations when they found charred wood. They did some research and uncovered news of the disaster.

Keane said the thought of children growing up without a father inspired him to set up a memorial.

"This is six families that lost a father, a brother, a son," said Keane, a Bayside resident, adding that once the FDNY heard about his plans, the department took the reins in organizing and planning the memorial. "Six families had to try to put the pieces back together. I can't even imagine that."

Joyce Egan, whose husband Francis lost his life in the blaze, said the families left behind always memorialized their fallen loved ones, but a public memorial bringing them together was long overdue.

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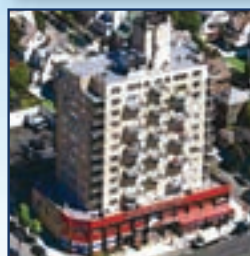
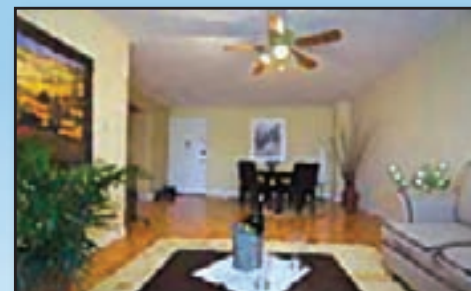
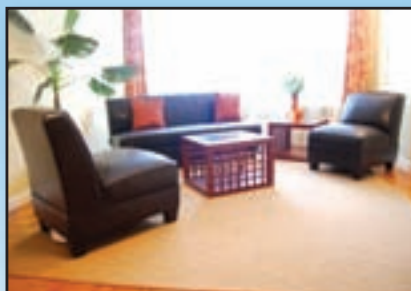
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Forest Hills gives homage to Ferraro

BY RICH BOCKMANN

For 37 years Geraldine Ferraro passed through the intersection of Ascan Avenue and Austin Street on her way to and from her Forest Hills Gardens home and the community gathered there Sunday to ensure that her legacy lived on for another 37 years and beyond.

"Forest Hills was the happiest time of her life and this is the hub of Forest Hills," Ferraro's daughter, Donna Zaccaro Ullman, said at a ceremony co-naming Ascan Avenue after the trailblazer.

Ferraro's son, John Zaccaro Jr., said his grandmother finished school after the seventh-grade and had the foresight to realize that a strong education would be a leveling factor for her daughter.

After graduating from Marymount College, Ferraro became a Queens school teacher.

When she graduated from Fordham Law, she was one of only three women in her graduating class. Today, women make up about 50 percent of the na-

tion's law school graduates.

From there she went on to become an assistant district attorney in the Queens DA's office, where she created a special victims bureau.

In 1978, she was elected to Congress, where she sponsored the Women's Economic Equality Act and created a flex-time program for public employees.

In 1993, she was appointed as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations by then-President Bill Clinton.

Her most prominent achievement came in 1984, when she became the first female U.S. vice presidential candidate on a major party ticket when Democratic candidate Walter Mondale selected her as his running mate.

"I remember when she was nominated for the vice presidency, when she came home to her home in Forest Hills Gardens ... how proud we all were of Geraldine Ferraro," said City Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz (D-Forest Hills), who requested the street renaming.

Slain officer mourned on LI

Arthur Lopez, 29, was gunned down after traffic stop in Bellerose



Arthur Lopez's, parents Alfonso and Mirella, watch as their son's coffin is carried into the church.

Photo by Christina Santucci

BY RICH BOCKMANN

A phalanx of white-gloved police officers dressed in their ceremonial uniforms lined a somber Long Island street Saturday as they paid their respects to the Nassau County officer who was gunned down in the line of duty days earlier.

As a member of Nassau County's Emergency Service Unit, Officer Arthur Lopez, shield No. 2232, was what his fellow officers reverently referred to as one of the "E-Men."

"You should know that Emergency Service is the hardest and most sought-after assignment in the department," Nassau County Police Commissioner Thomas Dale told mourners at St. Christopher's Church in Baldwin, L.I. "In order to enter the ranks of Emergency Service, or what we call 'E-Men,' you must be well above standards."

Lopez's ESU truck, No. 2424, had been painted with his name and preceded the

hearse carrying his coffin to the church.

"Mr. and Mrs. Lopez, when a citizen needs help on the street, he calls for a police officer. When a police officer needs help on the street, he calls for an Emergency Service officer," he told the parents of the 29-year-old fallen officer. "This is the way it works. It will always be this way. In our police world these are our heroes."

Lopez, a highly decorated veteran of the department who grew up in Flushing, was shot and killed Oct. 23 when he and his partner pulled over a motorist in the Nassau portion of Bellerose who they suspected had been in an auto accident.

During his time on the force Lopez was awarded eight medals for heroic acts performed in the line of duty. At the funeral, his parents were given his police shield, his posthumously awarded detective shield and medal of valor and a pair of handcuffs that

Artie, by everyone's account, was truly a best friend.

Lt. Adam Scheiner
Arthur Lopez's boss

were placed on his accused killer.

Lopez's boss, Lt. Adam Scheiner, recalled his friend, Artie, as a very young officer who badly wanted to be a member of ESU and loved to make those around him laugh.

"His enthusiasm and his energy was the first thing that caught my attention," he said. "It was like a sparking electric wire, totally out of control and just enthusiastic."

"Artie, by everyone's account, was truly a best friend," Scheiner said, and then fought back tears as he concluded his eulogy

"Artie, I'll see you when I get there."

Just days before Lopez was killed, Nassau County Police Officer Joseph Olivieri died in the line of duty when he was struck on the roadside by a passing motorist. Nassau officials had ordered flags to be flown at half staff until Nov. 18 in honor of Olivieri, after which point they will remain lowered until Dec. 19 in honor of Lopez.

Daniel Miller, a member of the Nassau County Pipes and Drums, said playing at an officer's funeral is something one never gets used to.

"It's a sign of solidarity and support. It's definitely comforting to the family," he said. "It helps them cope with the loss and it helps us be with the family."

Reach reporter Rich Bockmann by e-mail at rbockmann@cnglocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4574.



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Sandy's wrath

Superstorm Sandy brought flooding and destruction to Queens, despite preparations to lessen the damage. (Clockwise from top l.) Maria Martinez said she found several of her ducks six blocks away in Hamilton Beach; debris litters Channel Road in Broad Channel; a downed tree lies across a car on 28th Street in Astoria; Long Island City resident Daniel Farcas ventures through flood waters in Gantry Plaza to take a photo as Sandy approached; sandbags block the entrance to Vetro in Howard Beach; Tom and Ginger Brauner use binoculars to see their summer bungalow off of East 12th Road; and two trees block 225th Street in Laurelton.

Photo by Christina Santucci





Cataclysm in Breezy Point

The storm left a trail of destruction behind in the beachfront community of Breezy Point. (Clockwise from top l.) Rescue workers check homes for missing or injured people; the interior of a house on Rockaway Point Boulevard is visible from the road; Mary Welsome searches the rubble for her jewelry; debris surrounds a damaged structure along the promenade; John Martin stands in his doorway and looks out at his fractured deck; and a large pole lies across an SUV.

Photos by Christina Santucci



Finding Help to Rebuild a Home After Sandy

HRA program offers helping hand to homeowners in storm recovery.

Elena Maria Duran, of Ozone Park, lost a great amount of what made her home special, having watched the wind and debris from Hurricane Sandy damage the home she has lived in for the last 10 years. Like many who have recently contacted their insurance company and expected a timely resolution, Mrs. Duran was shocked when she learned that it can take as long as 6-8 months to complete necessary repairs. Duran decided to be proactive and contact Housing Rehabilitation Assistance (HRA), a program designed to help homeowners expeditiously complete remodeling projects during periods of hardship.

"When you live through a natural disaster and see a lot of what you put your hard-earned money and time into get damaged, it really affects you" Duran said. "Thankfully, I am working on getting the assistance I needed to help reconstitute what I lost quickly."

As Sandy raged, a large tree on the right side of Mrs. Duran's home was blown over, hitting the rear of Mrs. Duran's garage, doing extensive damage to the structure. The wind also claimed her roof, which was partially blown off and suffered a great deal of serious damage.

But the homeowner kept her cool as she took in the damage and was careful not to just call up the first contractor she could find in the phone book.

"I've seen firsthand how contractors will prey on people after a disaster like this happens and there's no one to really count on" she said. "For them, it's payday and because homeowners are naturally desperate to get there home in order, the contractor has the upper hand."

Duran had just started doing some contracting research when she came across a notice she had received a week beforehand, informing her of HRA's programs and services. Knowing that contractors often deal in unscrupulous practices, she was duly skeptical. The notice claimed to offer help with locating highly qualified contractors, obtaining financial assistance, and facilitating communication between homeowners and their respective insurance companies.

"It seemed too good to be true, but I called," Duran said. "I have been through home improvement jobs where you find out that the contractor has no insurance or no license, so I didn't know what to expect, really."

As Mrs. Duran said later, she got more than she could have ever hoped for. On the same day she called, an HRA representative came over and made a thorough assessment of the damages. Duran now has nothing but praise for the people who are helping her bring her home back to life.

The structure of the garage was left mangled and



"When you live through a natural disaster and see a lot of what you put your hard-earned money and time into get damaged, it really affects you.

Thankfully, I got the assistance I needed to help reconstitute what I lost quickly."

**- Elena Maria Duran
homeowner**

the interior of the garage saw a severe amount of battering from the wind and rain. The roof on the home also saw significant damage and will likely need a full replacement. The HRA representative assigned to Mrs. Duran is already working with her insurance company to expedite the claims process. Immediately thereafter, Duran will meet with her HRA approved contractor so that the work can get underway.

"It's so comforting knowing that I won't need those plastic sheets covering up holes in the ceiling anymore," Duran said. "I won't have to surround my bed with electric heaters anymore."

Only 30 to 40 percent of homeowners within any given ZIP code are eligible for the HRA program and prospective applicants are almost always notified by mail. Although most applicants are homeowners that fall between the low-and-middle-income brackets, there is no income limit to qualify.

Those interested in participating with the HRA are guided through a phone application to better determine what programs and services they can receive.

As it was for Mrs. Duran, an HRA representative will visit the homeowner in person to assess the work needed, discuss the details of the program as it pertains to her or her specific case, review what type of tax credits, rebates, or other assistance has been approved and to discuss the various financing options available to pay the remainder of the balance for the construction.

"The services offered by the HRA go far beyond financial assistance for home improvement projects. We have developed numerous processes to ensure that projects completed by HRA-approved contractors are to the homeowner's satisfaction," said Jesse Friedman, a representative for the HRA. "Yes, there is financial assistance offered, but the focus is on the quality of the work."

Once the application is approved by a representative, the homeowner meets with an HRA-approved contractor, which means the company has gone through a thorough pre-screening process, and is licensed, bonded and insured. They also hold all funds for chosen projects in escrow until the project is completed to the client's satisfaction.

Not every type of project is undertaken by the HRA. Their workload consists of the following projects: roof replacement, energy efficient windows and doors, basements renovations, replacement and installation of siding and trim, water-proofing, water damage repair, mold removal, gutters and leaders, bathroom renovations, kitchen renovations, electrical repair, and plumbing repair.

For those like Duran, who does not have all the money needed to make repairs and replacements up front, the HRA representative does almost all the leg work to ensure that everything with loans or financial assistance, and the insurance company involved, is in order. They even have a pay-in-installment plan for many clients.

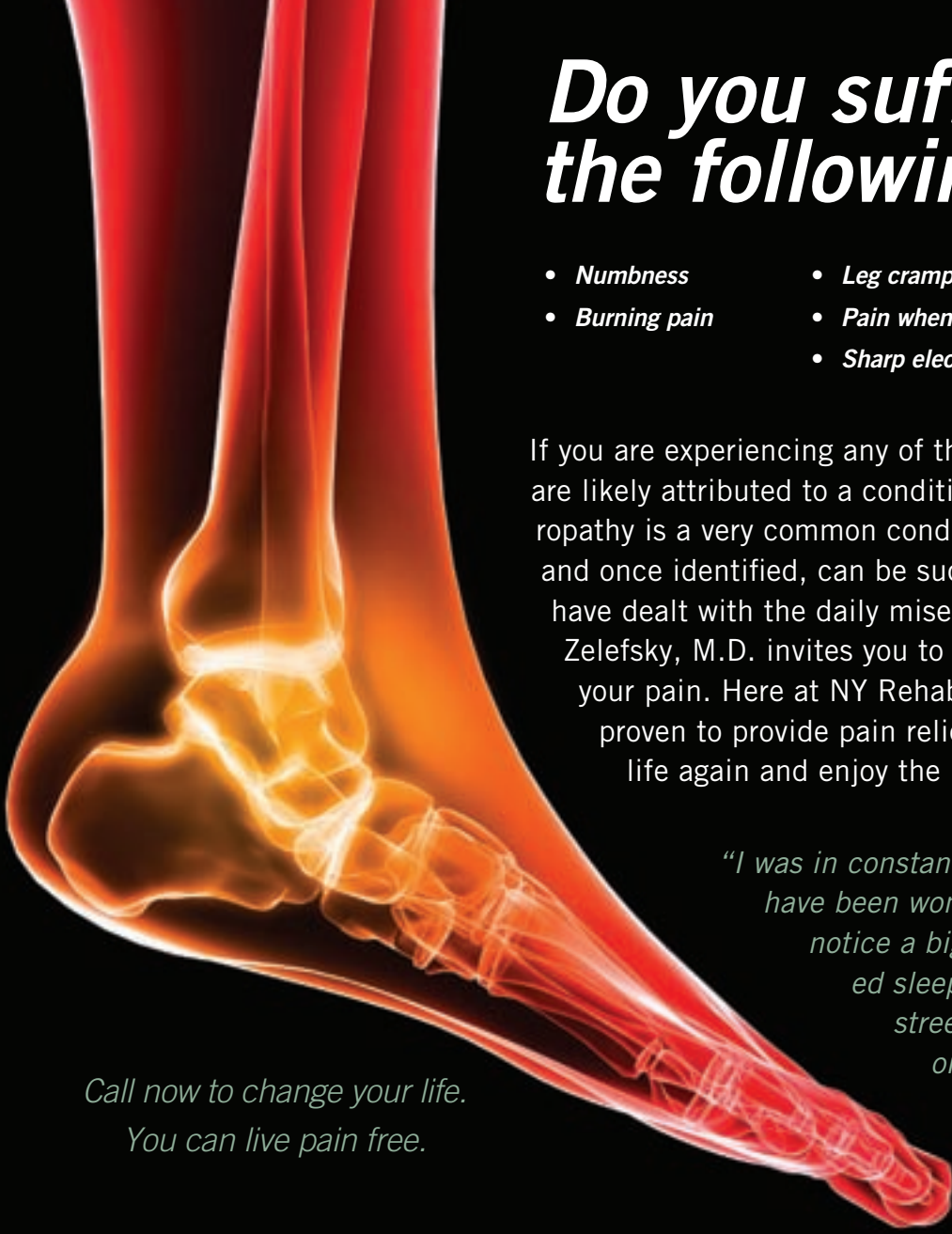
"I couldn't be happier" Mrs. Duran said. "You go through a lot of situations where you are made the fool of by some greedy, lazy workers and your home takes the biggest hit. Having people who care about your home repairs as much as you do, it really makes you feel better about spending the money and getting the work done."

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For more information or if you are interested in qualifying for the programs and services offered, please contact Housing Rehabilitation Assistance toll-free at 866-791-6302.

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Breezy

Continued from Page 1

ple and securing hazardous areas, including a partially burned house in danger of collapse.

About 170 National Guardsmen and 30 vehicles were deployed across Breezy Point, Howard Beach and Far Rockaway, augmenting the Fire Department’s work, said Eric Durr, a spokesman for New York’s Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

He said typically the National Guard helps fire and police officers get to places they otherwise would not be able to reach and set up traffic control points.

FDNY Assistant Chief Joseph Pfeifer said high water levels were still making the efforts challenging.

He said the Fire Department was working with the city Department of Environmental Protection and the Breezy Point Cooperative, which runs the private community, to restore the water supply to the area and enable residents to return to the homes that remained standing.

“This is a devastated community,” he said, pointing out that the FDNY and other city agencies were committed to helping the area rebuild.

In the meantime, one woman whose home was partially burned in the fire and sustained severe flood damage said she did not know what her family would do.

“I don’t know where we’re going to live, where

we’re going to stay,” said Christina Kirk.

She said family members had been staying in separate locations since the storm, with some in Brooklyn and others in Long Island.

“We had to split up. There was nothing else we could do,” she said. “I haven’t seen my daughter in four days.”

So far, no casualties had been reported in the fire, which broke out Monday night and raged until Tuesday morning. It is unclear yet what caused the raging blaze, but Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the winds had been a devastating factor in its spread, blowing the flame from one building to the next in an area where houses stood close together.

Through the night neighbors who had not evacuated knocked on doors to find others who had also stayed behind and bring them to safety, said Meg McLoughlin, whose house is in the neighborhood.

She said she brought about 50 people to her home, many whom crowded on her deck.

“Whoever we could take in we took in,” she said. “Animals, people, everyone. We were doing what we could to save the neighbors.”

Meanwhile, efforts by the Fire Department to put out the blaze were hampered by floodwaters.

Tom O’Day, who worked for 35 years as a firefighter in Brooklyn and whose girlfriend lives in Breezy Point, said the water rose chest-high on the

roads Monday night and fire engines were having extreme difficulty getting through.

He said he has never seen a fire like the one that razed through the neighborhood.

“That was the worst fire I’ve ever seen,” he said.

Elsewhere in Breezy Point Wednesday, people braved long lines of traffic and parked far away on Rockaway Point Boulevard to hike in through streets still flooded in areas. Debris littered the ground and blocked pathways and residents warned of hidden cesspools. One man carried away what possessions he could salvage from his home in a child’s wagon.

Many houses not destroyed by the fire were devastated by floodwaters. Some homes were knocked off their foundations, tilting precariously to one side. Others were missing entire walls.

One man returned to his Breezy Point house with his family to find it rocked from its foundation, ripped apart from the chimney that still remained standing.

John Martin said he had just bought the house in March and it was intended as a summer home, but now “it’s obviously a total loss.”

But he said he was determined to rebuild.

“We have to,” he said. “I think everyone will. This is the type of place where everyone will pull together and in a year or two years you’ll have most of this rebuilt, I’m positive.”

body could be reached.

“I just saw a big fire, I didn’t know that a person was getting burned,” said neighbor Shaun Harrilall.

Con Ed could not comment on the specific incident.

As of Thursday afternoon, power had still not been restored to the block, and the only evidence that the grisly death had taken place was a black char mark along 105th Avenue.

Slow recovery

Continued from Page 1

the effects of Hurricane Sandy are addressed.

As of Thursday afternoon, Queens posted the second-highest number of customers without power in New York City with 103,000, according to Con Ed’s latest news update. Manhattan had the most customers without power at 227,000.

“You have not been forgotten,” Con Ed said Thursday to one of its Queens customers via Twitter. “Over 100,000 Con Ed customers in Queens and Brooklyn have been restored.”

The utility said Thursday that crews have restored electricity to more than 225,000 customers since the storm’s departure.

“The outage numbers that Con Ed is reporting are completely understated,” Avella said. “The ac-

tual numbers are probably three to four times as many customers without power. Con Ed is clearly ignoring the dire situation that exists for many residents without power, including seniors who have health care needs and equipment that depends upon electrical power.”

Con Ed announced that crews restored two underground electrical networks overcome by the storm servicing 2,000 customers in Manhattan and about 28,200 in Brooklyn.

According to Avella, the utility has been telling its customers that priority was being given to Manhattan and Brooklyn. The senator sent a letter to Bloomberg Tuesday, one day after Hurricane Sandy battered the Northeast, saying Con Ed had failed to adequately respond in Queens.

Cuomo announced the National Guard would join with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to deliver 1 million meals and bottled water to parts of Lower Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens, including the battered Rockaways region. The governor said he would visit one distribution site in Manhattan Thursday afternoon.

“The first plane into [John F. Kennedy International Airport] this morning was from FEMA, carrying supplies and personnel we requested,” Cuomo said. “New York state will continue to deploy all our resources in response to Hurricane Sandy and adjust to the needs and concerns of New Yorkers so that we can ensure a safe and speedy recovery.”

Reach reporter Phil Corso by e-mail at pcorso@cnglocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4573.

Congressman

Continued from Page 1

lived in the Breezy Point section of the Rockaways and gave his first-hand account of the inferno that eventually razed more than 80 homes in the area.

“I, along with many other Breezy Point residents, lost our homes last night and I am grateful that my family and I are safe after this destructive storm. I hope you will join me in lending a hand to those who were less fortunate and keep everyone impacted by this storm in your thoughts and prayers,” Turner said in a statement Tuesday after Superstorm Sandy crippled the entire city.

Turner and his wife had lived in their home for 32 years, but Monday night it was burned to the ground after an initial fire was whipped into a blaze by Sandy’s high winds. It burned for hours, Turner said in an interview with Fox News.

“At the very height of the storm, which was about 7:30 p.m., the water surge was such that emergency

equipment couldn’t even get on the peninsula. So the fire — there was nothing anyone could do, it went unchecked for about 2 1/2 hours,” he said.

About 200 of the city’s Bravest battled the inferno and rescued residents by boat, but not before a section of the coastal enclave was left a smoldering pile of cinders.

City Councilman James Sanders Jr. (D-Laurelton) also rode out the storm in his Far Rockaway home. Though he strongly urged his constituents to evacuate, Sanders believes that government officials should not flee the scene of natural disasters.

At about 6:30 p.m. Monday, the councilman walked outside to see high winds and flooding in the streets.

“So that tree did fall down,” he said, staring into his driveway at his wife’s car crushed underneath.

Hours later, as the storm surge pushed sea waters to record levels, at least 4 feet of water was rushing

through the streets, according to Sanders.

“Things have taken a turn for the worse,” he told TimesLedger Newspapers during the storm.

The basement and first floor of his house completely flooded and the power had gone out.

“I’m in a world of trouble,” he said, adding that the lack of electricity meant that pumps would not work to keep houses dry as the water rushed in and the wind howled in the darkness.

Indeed, elsewhere in the Rockaways at least four Queens residents drowned when they did not make it to higher ground or the second story of their homes.

At a news conference Wednesday, Sanders said he prepared by stockpiling meals similar to what he had consumed as a U.S. Marine, and kept a large ax with him in case he had to hack though the attic of his home.

Reach reporter Joe Anuta by e-mail at januta@cnglocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4566.

Woman

Continued from Page 1

have such an impact?”

McGregor also posted a short video with pictures of Abraham at work on fashion shoots.

“She was a nice girl,” said neighbor Mohan Mangal, who along with other nearby residents had been told that Abraham was taking pictures with her cellphone when she came

in contact with the downed wires.

After the initial electrocution, Abraham’s body continued to be scorched, according to neighbors as emergency and police responders could only watch helplessly until the power could be shut down by Consolidated Edison.

“She was burned all over,” said neighbor Marie Costa.

It took about two hours for utility crews to turn off power before Abraham’s

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■ **I was skeptical.** I bought a box and it worked as advertised. Within a week I had relief. Howard Toy, 69, Henderson, NV ■ **It's heaven to sleep through the night.** For many years I had 6-7 sleep interruptions every night. Had urgent trips to the bathroom day and night with discomforts. I enjoy my new life. Angus Pike, Oshawa, ON ■ **I am truly amazed and relieved.** After 2 weeks I no longer have to get up during the night. I'm enjoying a normal sex life again. I hope a lot of men with a pride issue give this tea a shot. It's difficult to express how delighted I am. Clarence A. Rehrig, 58, Allentown, PA ■ **Know the truth.** This is my third year of drinking the Ezee Flow Tea. I highly recommend it. A real life saver. Thomas M. Thurston, Forsyth, GA. ■ **Women** suffering with incontinence, UTIs ask for Bladder Control Tea for Women #4b. Guaranteed relief within days. **No need to make claims. Bell relays 100% truthful user's free speech. No money is paid for it. No questions asked guarantee.**



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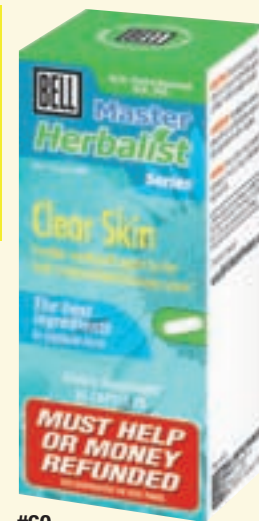
■ **Bell Blood Pressure Formulation helped me feel great.** Thank you for this wonderful product. William Oliver, Portsmouth, VA ■ **I have been taking Bell #26 now for one year.** My mom and brother started taking it as well. Even my pastor is on it now. Thanks! Mary Earl, Longview, TX ■ **I started to take Bell Blood Pressure Formulation Formulation #26.** After about 30 days my blood pressure was normal. My doctor was very happy with me. Irene Surridge, 67, Owen Sound, ON ■ **A friend recommended Bell BP Formulation!** When a friend had good results I decided to try it. After taking Bell Blood Pressure Formulation #26. It made a difference in my life. Milton Perdomo, 68, Rego Park, NY. **No need to make claims. Bell relays 100% truthful user's free speech. No money is paid for it. No questions asked guarantee.**

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

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Last couple of years I tried everything. Results with Bell Skin Disorders #60 were unbelievable. I have beautiful skin again. Thanks for giving back my selfesteem. Nelisa Royer, 28, Doral, FL ■ **My mom bought Bell #60.** I was skeptical. It did work quickly and better than anything else. Christopher Seraphin, 14, Brooklyn, NY. ■ **It worked.** I no longer have to hide at home, because I was ashamed to be seen. Agnes Casillas, 60, New York, NY ■ **Can wear again dresses** that are backless. My skin looks fantastic. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Yvette Maclean, 40, Lodi, CA ■ **I was trying everything for years** and nothing worked. I felt physical and emotional pain having to hide. Finally I found your Bell #60. I'm so grateful and impressed about how fast it worked with amazing results. Eulalia Isabel Sanchez Martin, 30, Brampton, ON **Skeptics can call everybody. All are real people like you or your friends.**

#60

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As recommended by Dr. Gifford-Jones M.D.



#23

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