

Van Bramer still opposes Phipps project

BY BILL PARRY

It took nearly three weeks, but Mayor Bill de Blasio finally had his “polite but firm conversation” with City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer (D-Sunnyside) Tuesday over his opposition to rezoning to allow the Phipps Houses to build 209-units of affordable housing just outside the Sunnyside Gardens historic district.

While neither side would discuss details of the talks, de Blasio spokeswoman Aja Worhy-Davis said, “The mayor and Council member Van Bramer had a respectful and substantive discussion regarding the project. We look forward to an outcome that benefits all.”

Sources say the talks were indeed “firm,” but Van Bramer continues to oppose the project, which is tentatively scheduled to go before the City Council for approval or rejection later this month. Van Bramer holds sway over the project as Council protocol typically follows the decision of the area’s representative.

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Maspeth shelter put on hold: Markey

Challenger Brian Barnwell calls delay political theater ahead of Democratic primary

BY BILL PARRY

The city has postponed the Oct. 1 opening for the homeless shelter in Maspeth, according to state Assemblywoman Margaret

Markey (D-Maspeth).

After phone conversations with Mayor Bill de Blasio Tuesday and with Human Resources Administration Commissioner Stephen Banks, who oversees the

Department of Homeless Services, Wednesday afternoon, Markey said the city will not move forward with the original date. She said City Hall will continue to evaluate the plan and the pro-

gram to convert the Holiday Inn Express on 55th Road.

“This postponement gives us the opportunity to continue to bring pressure on the city to change its plan for Maspeth,” Markey said. “With Community Board 5’s review still underway, we still have not seen answers to our continuing concerns about the location of the facility, the track record of the proposed provider and details about the financial arrangement between the city, Acacia Network and the hotel owner.”

Markey was booed during last week’s CB5 public hearing at the Knockdown Center even after it was announced that she had joined Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley (D-Middle Village) and state Sen. Joseph Addabbo (D-Howard Beach) in filing a lawsuit against the city to stop the opening of the shelter because it violates several city administrative codes.

Markey had reached out to City Comptroller Scott Stringer shortly after the shelter proposal surfaced last month to ask for his help in examining the proposal. The outreach resulted in a meet-

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SAYING NO TO HATE



State Assembly members David Weprin (l) and Alicia Hyndman (r) showed up at an anti-hate vigil in Jamaica Hills held in response to the murder of a Bangladeshi woman who lived in the neighborhood. **See story on Page 3.**

Photo by Michael Shain

Student homelessness varies through boro

BY PATRICK DONACHIE

School districts in Queens varied in terms of the numbers of students who experienced homelessness in the 2014-15 school year, according to a new report released by a nonprofit.

“On the Map: The Atlas of Student Home-

Continued on Page 8



Two of the 50,000 breeding oysters that are being seeded in Jamaica Bay as part of a plan to restore the bivalves to the New York waters. Courtesy of NYC DEP

Jamaica Bay welcomes oyster influx

BY PATRICK DONACHIE

Jamaica Bay will soon be populated with 50,000 new oysters, thanks to a plan announced by Mayor Bill de Blasio and the city Department of Environmental Protection.

The project, conducted in partnership with the

Billion Oyster Project, will be the single largest installation of breeding oysters into an environment in New York City, according to the mayor’s office.

“This oyster bed will serve multiple purposes - protecting our wetlands from erosion, naturally filtering our water and pro-

viding a home for our sea dwellers are just a few,” de Blasio said. “More broadly, this oyster bed is a small but necessary step in our broader OneNYC commitment to create a more sustainable and resilient city.”

Oysters help to extract pollutants from water, as-

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City Muslims unite in grief over killing

Man charged with murder after Bangladeshi woman stabbed in Jamaica Hills

BY PATRICK DONACHIE

A neighbor was arrested and charged this weekend in the Aug. 31 murder of a 60-year-old Muslim woman in Jamaica Hills, police said. The man, who admitted to fatally stabbing her, lived half a block from where the killing occurred, according to police.

The arrest came as religious and community leaders urged the authorities to consider the possibility that the attack was a hate crime, even though police were saying the suspect's motive was robbery.

"We welcome the fact that a person has been arrested so quickly and are waiting to see what develops through the court process," said Ibrahim Hooper, a spokesman for the Council on American Islamic Relations. "We're being told

this was a robbery and that will need to be determined based on the facts presented at the trial."

Yonatan Galvez-Marin, 22, was arrested Saturday and charged with murder in the second degree, attempted robbery and criminal possession of a weapon, according to the criminal complaint filed by the Queens district attorney.

Galvez-Marin allegedly approached Nazma Khanam, 60, as she was walking home outside 160-12 Normal Road at 9:15 p.m. Aug. 31, according to police. He allegedly demanded money from Khanam, who was in Islamic dress, and when she refused, he stabbed her once in the chest and fled, police said.

Khanam was found after the attack by her husband, Shamul Alam Khan,

67, who had been walking in the same direction a short distance behind his wife. She was taken to Jamaica Hospital but was pronounced dead.

Afterwards, police released surveillance video of a man walking down Normal Road around the time of the attack, calling him a person of interest. According to NYPD Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce, police continued to canvass the scene when they came across Galvez-Marin. Police said he lived on Normal Road about half a block from where the stabbing occurred.

Galvez-Marin accompanied officers to the 107th Precinct, and after questioning him Boyce said Galvez-Marin admitted to attempting to rob Khanam, and then stabbing her once in the chest. According



YONATAN GALVEZ MARIN

Twitter

to Boyce, Galvez-Marin worked as a "busboy or a messenger" at an unnamed Italian restaurant in Brooklyn, and police un-

covered no prior criminal or emotional incidents with the suspect. Boyce said he had traveled to the United States from Colombia about a year ago.

The stabbing followed the shooting death of the imam of a South Ozone Park mosque last month, along with his associate. Oscar Morel, 35, of East New York, Brooklyn, was arrested and was in court to plead not guilty last week, but police have not yet uncovered a motive and he has not been charged with a hate crime.

A funeral service and community gathering was held for Khanam Friday outside of the Jamaica Muslim Center. A blue tarp was laid in the street so hundreds of mourners could kneel and pray in the punishing sunlight. Councilman Rory Lancman (D-

Hillcrest), who represents the area, Public Advocate Letitia James and state Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman (D-Springfield Gardens), attended the event along with community and religious leaders and family members of the slain woman.

According to Jamaica Muslim Center President Mohammad Rahman, Khan and Khanam emigrated from Bangladesh seven years ago. She was an educator and a mother of three. He defended the local Muslim community, saying they had helped to improve the area during the prior decades.

"We came here to build houses and establish businesses," he said. "I would like to tell the evil people... we are here to stay. We are here to build this community."

Community seeks justice in death of Vincent Tse

BY GINA MARTINEZ

Flushing residents and lawmakers marched together last week seeking justice for Vincent Chun Man Tse, the 68-year-old who was brutally attacked and killed after a parking dispute in Flushing in July.

The marchers, holding signs with photos of Tse near death after his assault, demanded that the man charged in his death, Cleamon Anderson and his sister, face upgraded charges.

State Assemblyman Ron Kim (D-Flushing), State Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Flushing), City Councilman Peter Koo (D-Flushing), Assemblywoman Nily Rozic (D-Flushing) and city Comptroller Scott Stringer joined marchers holding a banner with the hashtag #Justice4Tse and #Stand-



Lawmakers rally with the community demanding a harsher punishment for the suspect charged in the deadly assault.

Courtesy of Ron Kim

up4elderly. The marchers met in front of Rosenthal Self Help Senior Center, where Tse volunteered for six years, serving fellow seniors food in his free time. Participants marched along Geranium Avenue to Colden Street. Their final

destination was the intersection on Colden Street where Anderson, 44, allegedly punched Tse into a coma he never recovered from, according to prosecutors.

"Vincent Tse was a beloved father, caring hus-

band, proud grandfather, and devoted member of our community," Kim said. "He lived a life of faith and service caring for others, and a part of him will always remain in the many lives he has touched. In memory of one who gave so much of his time and energy to helping those in need, we are compelled to stand up and speak - for him and for all vulnerable seniors. His sudden death has brought indescribable shock, grief, and anger to so many of us, and we ask for no less than the full weight of justice."

According to a criminal complaint filed by the Queens district attorney, video surveillance shows Anderson approaching Tse July 22 and striking him in the head, causing him to fall on the ground. When police arrived on the scene, they found Tse on the ground bleeding from the

mouth, unable to communicate and with a swollen eye, according to prosecutors. Tse sustained a fractured skull, frontal and temporal contusions as well as swelling and bleeding from the brain, prosecutors said.

Anderson admitted to prosecutors that he was involved in a collision with Tse's car, the complaints said. He claimed Tse grabbed his sister's arm and when she pulled away and Anderson approached Tse, he "made a fake maneuver" and fell to the ground on his own, according to the complaint. To date Anderson has only been charged with felony assault.

Anderson's sister, who was at the scene of the attack, is an NYPD school safety agent. Since she corroborated Anderson's story, protesters want prosecutors to hold her accountable for trying to cover up the

attack and lying to investigators.

Vincent's son, Steven, attended the rally.

"This crime left a sorrow in my heart. Everytime I see his garden, his empty seat at the dinner table and family lunch hour on the weekend," he said. "We will miss him dearly. My family has been put into the most difficult situation by the killer and his sister. They tag teamed to rob us of a loved one. Furthermore, they both lied to the very end. We only seek the truth and justice, so we can have closure to my father's untimely death."

Nearly 3,500 signatures have been collected fighting for upgraded charges, 300 paper copies and 3,000 online. The petition, on change.org, needs 5,000 signatures before it can be sent to Queens District Attorney Richard Brown.

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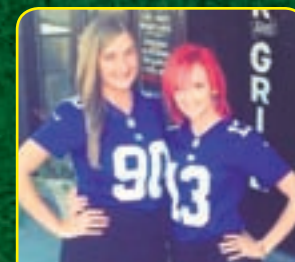
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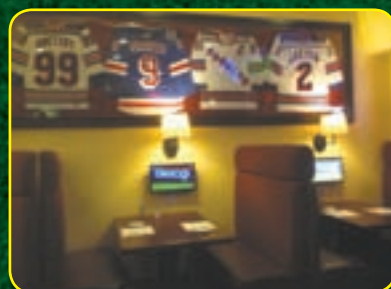
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Kew Gardens man slams Keillor's Queens slur

QUEENS WEEKLY, SEPT. 11, 2016

BY BILL PARRY

A lifelong resident of Kew Gardens and Richmond Hill is calling out author and radio personality Garrison Keillor on behalf of over 2.3 million of his fellow Queens residents not named Donald Trump.

JT Woods, 50, a freelance artist, actor and musician, wrote Keillor demanding an apology last week after reading his "Open Letter to Donald Trump" op-ed that went viral on the Internet.

"I read his snotty little thing and it annoyed me greatly," Woods said. "I've always been a huge fan of his Prairie Home Companion on the radio, but now I want to know, why is he picking on Queens? We've done nothing wrong to this person."

When Keillor did not respond, Woods put his letter on social media creating

quite a stir of his own. It began with Keillor's strong rebuke of the Queens-born Trump in a Washington Post guest column Aug. 31.

"The New York Times treats you like a village idiot. This is painful for a Queens boy trying to win respect in Manhattan where the Times is the Supreme Liberal Jewish Anglican Arbiter of Who Has The Smarts and What Goes Where," Keillor wrote in an open-letter format to Trump. "You are Queens. The casinos were totally Queens, the gold faucets in your triplex, the bragging, the insults, but you wanted to be liked by Those People."

Woods fired back that if the five borough were separate cities, Queens would be America's fourth most populated behind Los Angeles, Chicago and Brooklyn. That his beloved borough was declared the

World's Most Ethnically Diverse Urban Area by the Guinness Book of World's Records.

Woods listed Rockaway Beach, MoMA PS1, the Socrates Sculpture Garden and the Museum of the Moving Image among its top attractions along with the big name celebrities who have lived here, from Tony Bennett and Louis Armstrong to Jack Kerouac and LL Cool J.

"You have made a fortune spinning tales of a mythically non-diverse town named Lake Wobegone, and some of the people who heard these stories believed them to be real," Woods wrote to Keillor. "These are the same people who now want to 'Make America Great Again' by creating a land which never was."

Woods accuses Keillor of projecting his own insecurities about living in

New York City in the 1980s onto Trump.

"You did this without knowing Queens, the Queens you mentioned was something you saw watching 'All in the Family' on television," Woods wrote. "The people of Queens have faced heartbreak, but they don't quit, they don't leave, they believe hard work results in miracles. The people of Queens are tenacious, persistent and they don't run home to Mommy. You don't know anything about Queens because New York broke you and you cried all the way home."

Woods said he has made a habit of speaking up in defense of his borough, and he will gladly do it again. He has not heard a response from Garrison Keillor, not does he expect one.

A request for comment from TimesLedger Newspapers has not been responded to by Keillor or his



Author Garrison Keillor draws the ire of Kew Gardens resident JT Woods for slamming Queens in an op-ed piece last week.

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Jung rebuked on gays

Activists question marriage equality statements

BY MARK HALLUM

City Councilman Daniel Dromm (D-Jackson Heights) stepped out of his district last week to openly oppose anti-LGBT statements made by Democrat S.J. Jung, a candidate for state Senate.

At a Tuesday news conference in front of the former MinKwon Center president's campaign headquarters in Flushing at 32-26 Union St., Dromm expressed concern for the civil rights of the LGBT community and a feeling of betrayal from Jung, who once worked with the councilman in local activist groups. Dromm was joined by Michael Mallon, president of the Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club; Michael Sero of the LGBT Network; and activist Larry Menzie.

At a church event in March, Jung told a Korean youth group he believed gay marriage should not be depicted in textbooks.

"As state senator, I will protect them from hate crimes and uphold their human and legal rights. I, however, believe the Bible's teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman and do not support same sex marriage. I believe this is a matter of distinction, not a matter of discrimination. At the event on March 28, I talked about the challenges faced by groups who are not in agreement with



Mark Mallon of the Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club of Queens, Larry Menzie, Councilman Daniel Dromm and LGBT Network's Michael Sero responded to S.J. Jung's comments against marriage equality in textbooks.

Photo by Mark Hallum

the Supreme Court's ruling on the same sex marriage. I was referring to a general trend in the nation, not a specific legislation pending in the New York State Senate," Jung said Aug. 30.

But this statement confused and failed to resonate with Dromm and the LGBTQ leaders who stood with him at the conference. According to Dromm, Jung seems to fail to understand the nature of discrimination.

"I don't think a young person understands the difference [between distinction and discrimination] either. They get a message that they are less than, they are not valued, and that's a very dangerous message," Menzie, a Generation Q founder, said. "It's unimaginable that we are fighting this fight right now."

Dromm said Jung stating his opinion on gay marriage in front of a group of

youths was a reckless move, considering the statistic that between 3 percent and 10 percent of the population is LGBT.

"You have to wonder the impact it has on kids like that," Dromm said. "You know, we hear about suicides, we hear about youth being bullied in schools. This is a different form of bullying."

Mallon joined the discussion.

"He said he wants to keep LGBT couples out of school textbooks, he wants to keep us invisible and in the closet," Mallon said, adding how erasing gay people from curriculum validates a dangerous self-loathing in youth who need role models.

Dromm said he and Jung had worked together in the past to achieve a equality for both LGBT and immigrant groups, but his latest statements came as a stab in back.

Queens Library is liable for Galante's legal fees

BY GINA MARTINEZ

A Brooklyn federal judge ordered that Queens Public Library must pay for the defense of the former president and CEO, Thomas Galante.

Galante, who worked with the library for 27 years, was fired in December 2014 amid an FBI investigation of his outside consulting business and audit by City Comptroller Scott Stringer that determined Galante was using the Library to pay for personal expenses. Galante went on to sue the library for \$2 million in November 2015 for breach of contract, claiming he was fired without cause.

Federal Judge Allyne Ross ruled that under the New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law the library is required to provide Galante with reasonable litigations expenses for his defense against their counter claims. Ross ruled that the law "allows the director or officer of a not-for-profit corporation to seek advancement of legal fees when a lawsuit is filed against him for which he may ultimately be entitled to indemnification"

The library is seeking \$200,000 from Galante for the questionable expenses. It is also seeking an addi-

tional \$260,000 the library had to spend on legal fees that began accruing when the FBI started investigating Galante in 2014, which has not yet led to an indictment. The library also asked for Galante to return tablets, an iPhone, and desktop computer.

The countersuit charged Galante with charging over \$200,000 in personal expenses on his library corporate credit card in the span of two years. Galante allegedly spent money on meals, alcoholic beverages, parking tickets, concert tickets, furniture for his office, office roof deck or home, and books he bought on Amazon for his Kindle.

"After giving 27 years of my life to the Queens Library and raising millions of dollars to make it better, the political winds



Queens Public Library was ordered to pay Thomas Galante's legal fees.

changed overnight and my name was dragged through the mud," Galante said. "I'm filing this lawsuit to set the record straight."

In response to the lawsuit, the library countersued Galante seeking recovery of its money.

The library also claims Galante was working full time for another employer in violation of his obligations to the library. It claims he conducted personal business on library time and utilized the legal services of the library's outside counsel for his own personal benefit. Additionally, the suit claims he has refused to return property that belongs to the library.

Galante has denied all the allegations, claiming the expenditure were for the benefit of the library and that the library was aware and approved his outside consulting work and he has not kept any property belonging to the library.

The judge also ruled that if Galante is ultimately found guilty of misusing library funds, the fees advanced to him will have to be repaid.

Reach Gina Martinez by e-mail at gmartinez@cnglocal.com or by phone at (718) 260-4566.

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Dosamantes campaign faces corruption charges ⁷

BY GINA MARTINEZ

A young, aspiring Queens politician has been charged with falsifying documents during her failed City Council campaign for the seat now held by City Councilman Barry Grodenchik (D-Oakland Gardens).

Bellerose resident, Celia Dosamantes, 25, was a candidate in the 2015 special election to represent the 23rd Council District, which covers Little Neck, Douglaston, Bayside, Fresh Meadows and Bellerose, as well as several other neighborhoods.

The Manhattan district attorney's office indicted Dosamantes for allegedly forging 32 contribution cards that totaled \$3,222 in a bid to obtain matching funds. The city's matching funds program allows candidates to match donations from city residents at a rate of \$6 for every \$1 raised.

Dosamantes' fictitious donations would have added up to \$19,530 in taxpayer dollars if her attempt had gone through, the indictment said.

If convicted, she faces two to seven years on charges of filing a false instrument and grand larceny.

The city Campaign Finance Board requires that campaigns report all of their financial activity along with supporting documentation, which includes checks and contribution cards. On Aug. 6, 2015 and Aug. 10, 2015 Dosamantes submitted contributions to be matched by the CBF, and in doing so verified that the submissions were true and correct, according to the indictment. The filings contained dozens of forged contribution cards that were digitally altered, making it appear that certain donors donated to her campaign twice, the DA said. All of the donors

were able to confirm they did not make the donations reflected on the falsified documents, according to the indictment.

Dosamantes was caught during a visit to her home by the CFB toward the end of August 2015. According to the indictment, Dosamantes attempted to conceal the contribution cards in a folder on her lap during the visit.

Dosamantes stated several times to the Campaign Finance Board that she was responsible for handling cash contributions, according to the indictment. The campaign's financial records were mostly kept in her Queens home, where she maintained control over them.

When a search warrant was issued, several computers were seized that revealed copies of dozens of forged contribution cards and browser history that shows multiple visits to the



Celia Dosamantes has been charged with filing false documents.

Photo by Michael Shain

CFB website, where disclosure statements were filed, the indictment said.

Dosamantes previously worked as an aide to

state Assemblyman David Weprin (D-Fresh Meadows) and U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-Flushing). She attended Francis Lewis

High School and received her bachelor's degree from SUNY Albany. She was attempting to finish law school at St. John's University. During her campaign for City Council she ran on a platform that emphasized reducing overcrowding in high schools and expanding transportation services for seniors.

"I came from the neighborhood, I grew up here and I want the leadership to reflect the diversity of the community and my platform is for everybody," she told the TimesLedger in an interview during the run-up to the six-way Democratic primary.

Bob Friedrich, Rebecca Lynch, Ali Najmi and Satnam Singh Parhar were also candidates in the primary won by Grodenchik.

Reach Gina Martinez by e-mail at gmartinez@cnglobal.com or by phone at (718) 260-4566.

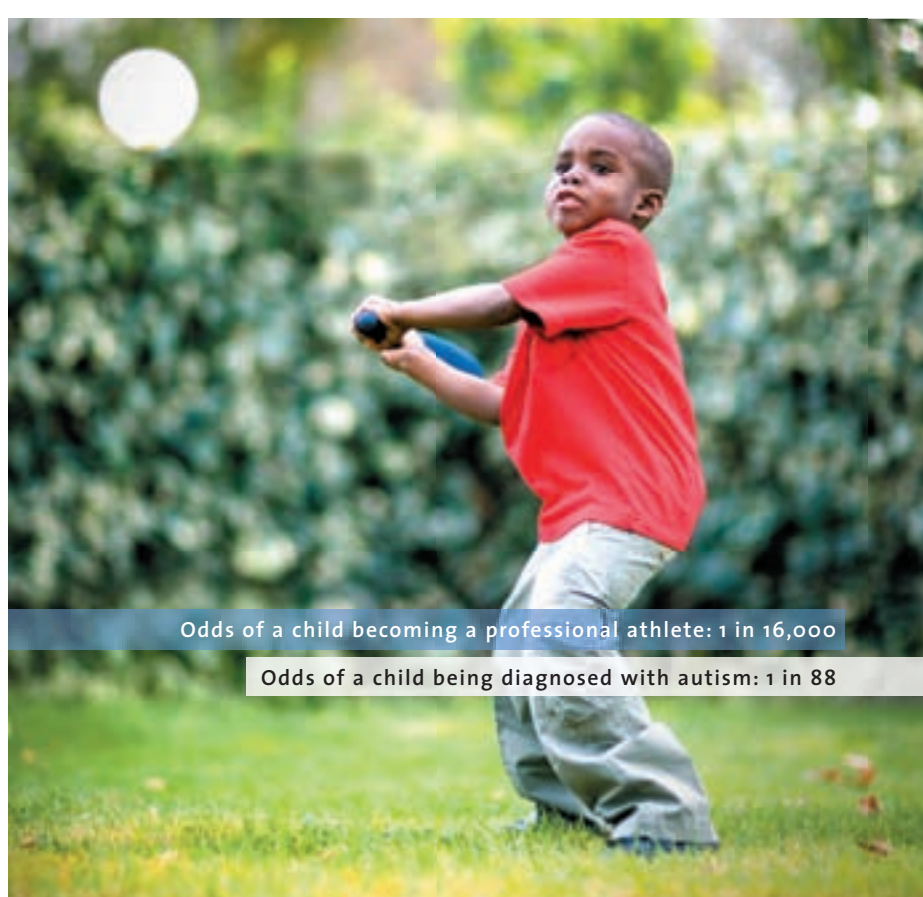
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Phipps

Continued from Page 1

Van Bramer also met recently with Phipps Houses President Adam Weinstein and remains opposed to the controversial plan.

Phipps Houses declined comment.

Meanwhile, a coalition of nearly a dozen community and arts organizations will hold a summit on Sunday, Sept. 18, to discuss the Phipps Houses plan and the overdevelopment of western Queens, among a host of other issues.

"The area's real estate boom and increase in population had already exposed a marked inadequacy of infrastructure, with crowded transit, a decrepit sewer system, a lack of parks, not enough schools, and no hospital," summit organizer Patricia Dorfman, executive director of the Sunnyside Chamber of Commerce, said. "Residents saw no attendant planning by the city to remedy the lack, so that granting permission to bring in even more people and activity would further strain the system and leave the taxpayers the burden

to pay for the support system."

The panel discussion will be held at the Queen of Angels Parish Hall at 44th Street and Skillman Avenue from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Kirsten Theodos, the founder of TakeBackNYC, will give a talk on displacement and gentrification.

"An average of 542 commercial tenants are evicted every month across the five boroughs," Theodos said. The Sunnyside community has been on edge since the spring of 2014, when its only movie theater and a popular Irish pub was part of a lot sold to a developer for \$7 million and is now on the market for over \$19 million, according to Dorfman.

"We lost three valued businesses for four empty storefronts, including a bank, and one person's business opportunity has left us with less of a neighborhood, fewer popular small businesses, and fewer jobs," Dorfman said. "If the Small Business Jobs Survival Act had been in place, it would have given the renters time to move, to plan, to negotiate staying, and we would have had our

businesses."

Steve Null, the author of the Small Business Jobs Survival Act, will also speak at the summit. The commercial rent protection legislation has languished in the City Council since 2014 while 27 of 51 members support it, including Van Bramer.

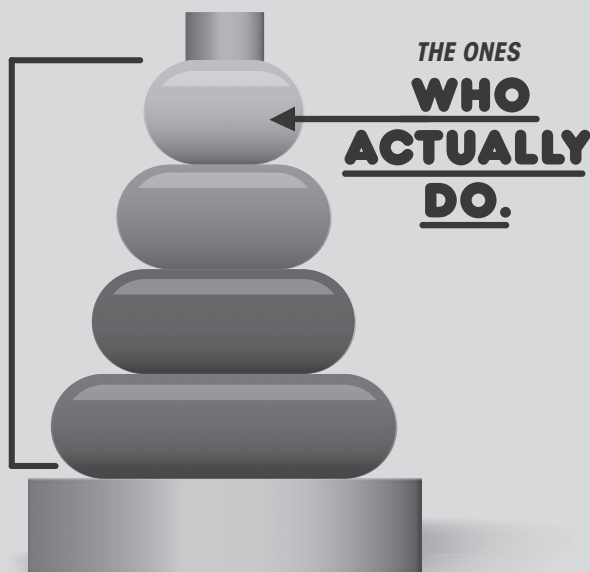
Jenny Dubnau, a visual artist who rents studio space in Long Island City and lives in Jackson Heights, is helping Dorfman organize the event because she is directly affected.

"The overdevelopment of the LIC manufacturing area has caused an enormous escalation in my rent, as well as that of all my neighbors," she said. "The condos and hotels that are cropping up like mushrooms are an incursion into a thriving manufacturing zone filled with jobs-producing manufacturers and artists. Right now, all small businesses, from artists to factories to mom-and-pop stores can be hit by rent increases of any size, and have no right to even renew their lease. We need action."



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WHO
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THEY HAVE
THEIR CHILD
IN THE RIGHT
SEAT.**



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Homeless

Continued from Page 1

lessness," released by the Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness, measured a wide array of markers for New York students who were homeless, including the number of students who had received Individual Education Plans late, the number of English language learners and the suspension rates for homeless students.

"With more and more children experiencing homelessness, it is vitally important to understand the unique challenges that homeless students face and the interventions and opportunities available to meet their needs," the executive summary of the report read.

District 25, which includes Flushing and Whitestone and District 26, which includes Bayside, Little Neck, Fresh Meadows and Floral Park, had the lowest student home-

less rates of any school districts in the city. District 29, which includes Hollis and Queens Village, had the highest homeless student population of any district in Queens, although it was only the 19th highest percentage per district in the city out of 32 districts.

According to the report, District 29 includes 462 shelter units and four family shelters, while Districts 25 and 26 do not include any. However, students living in a certain shelter may not necessarily attend school in that same district.

Other Queens district fared somewhat better than District 29. District 30, which includes Astoria and Long Island City, ranked 23 out of 32 districts measuring percentage of students who were homeless, while District 24, which includes Sunnyside, Ridgewood, Elmhurst and Corona, was listed as the district with the 24th highest rate. District 28, which includes Rego Park, Forest Hills and Briarwood, and District 27,

which includes Woodhaven, Ozone Park and Howard Beach, were ranked 27 and 28, respectively.

Citywide, the analysis found that one out of every eight students enrolled in a city public school in the 2014-15 year had experienced homelessness in the past five school years. It found that if all the students who experienced homelessness were included in their own district, it would be of a comparable size to the unified district of San Diego, Calif., and greater than unified districts in Seattle and Boston.

The study also concluded that sections of the Bronx suffer most acutely from student homelessness. Nearly 20 percent of homeless city public school students were enrolled in schools in Districts 9 and 10, which included the Highbridge and Fordham areas in the Bronx.

The full report is available online at www.icphusa.org/Publications/Reports.



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Oysters

Continued from Page 1
sist in protecting wetlands and shorelines from erosion and storm surges and also help create adequate and healthy habitats for fish and other wildlife. The project will be funded with a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, with the DEP contributing an additional \$375,000.

The city said the installation would include a central donor bed composed of adult and spat-on-shell oysters and four smaller receiving beds composed of clam and oyster shells, made in part of broken porcelain attained from nearly 5,000 inefficient and recycled toilets. The oysters will be placed on the beds, and after the adult oysters spawn, fertilized eggs will float until young oysters attach themselves to the shells of the older oysters. Over time, the oyster population should begin to spawn seasonally.

Oysters were reintroduced to Jamaica with two

pilot studies that began in 2010, including the design and construction of an oyster bed off of Dubos Point as well as the placement of oyster reef balls in Gerritsen Creek, Brooklyn. After four years, analyses indicated that the oysters were alive and healthy. The hope is that a more robust and widespread oyster population could reproduce more substantively to help stem the erosion of marshes and shorelines in Jamaica Bay.

Dan Mundy, a Broad Channel resident and a member of the Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers, praised the DEP for its role in getting the oysters into Jamaica Bay.

"The restoration of oysters back into the waters of Jamaica Bay is one of the key remaining goals to fully restore this great and unique ecosystem. This vital species naturally filters the waters of the bay while providing unique habitat for fish," Mundy said. "This project will see the first major initiative to bring back this keystone species to Jamaica Bay where they once flourished!"

Shelter

Continued from Page 1
ing with Stringer and elected and civic leaders. At the time he explained his role in reviewing a contract for the facility once it was submitted. As of Wednesday Stringer has yet to receive a contract for the proposed facility.

"This is just political theater," said Brian Barnwell, Markey's opponent in Tuesday's Democratic primary. "Look, the comptroller hasn't received the paperwork, so there's no way they can move people in on Oct. 1. This is just Markey taking a victory lap."

The Department of Homeless Services confirmed the delay.

"As we announced at two community forums, we are continuing to review the proposal, and the start date will be determined as a result of the review," DHS spokeswoman Lauren Gray said.

Meanwhile, state Sen. Tony Avella (D-Bayside),



Maspeth residents who protest nightly have something to cheer as the city postpones the opening date for a homeless shelter on 55th Road.
Photo by Michael Shain

who marched with protestors in Maspeth Aug. 27, is calling for a federal probe into the owner of the Holiday Inn Express, Mayor Bill de Blasio and DHS to make sure there is "no illegal activity taking place." In a letter, he asked Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara to investigate the deal because motel

owner Harshad Patel was involved in a 2011 bribery scandal.

"I recently learned that five years ago, Mr. Patel openly admitted to paying a former state elected official more than \$20,000 to get that official to effect a zoning change in his favor," Avella wrote in his letter to Bharara. "I ask

that you investigate this situation to ensure there is no illegal activity taking place with respect to the Holiday Inn Express, or any other hotels owned by Mr. Patel."

Reach reporter Bill Parry by e-mail at bparry@cnglocal.com or by phone at (718) 260-4538.



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