

Israel exhibit rescheduled after backlash

BY GINA MARTINEZ

After elected officials expressed outrage, the Queens Museum has decided not to cancel a re-enactment of the 1947 United Nations vote on Israel independence scheduled for November.

The main gallery of the Queens Museum was the site of the original U.N. General Assembly vote on Nov. 29, 1947, establishing Israel as an independent state. According to City Councilman Rory Lancman (D-Hillcrest), the re-enactment was being organized by the Israeli government, which reserved the space for November 2017.

On Monday, the Queens Jewish Link organized a rally addressing anti-Semitism and the Queens Museum's previous decision to cancel the re-enactment. State Assembly members Nily Rozic (D-Flushing) and David Weprin (D-Fresh Meadows) attended the rally. The issue was important to Rozic, who is the first and only state legislator born in Israel.

"I am pleased that the Queens Museum reversed their decision so
Continued on Page 12

Manhattan woman gives back

Philanthropist donates \$2,300 to Corona church to replace stolen instruments

BY BILL PARRY

A philanthropist from Manhattan's Upper East Side was watching the news Saturday morning and saw surveillance

video of a thief breaking into a Corona church. The suspect was stealing musical instruments valued at \$2,300 by the NYPD. It was then that Boo Grace, 64, began planning a

trip to Queens.

"I was so touched by the story and it hurt my heart that it happened," Grace said. "When I saw the story, I was devastated. A church is where young

people go when they want to stay out of trouble. I felt so bad I knew I had to do something."

In the early '80s, Grace and her husband hired three young men from Brooklyn, through the Youth Employment Service, to paint their apartment. During a conversation with one of them she learned he was always under pressure from kids in his neighborhood to do drugs or steal cars, and so he sought refuge at his church's after-school programs.

"I guess that's why the story touched my heart so much," she said. "If kids are looking to the church to stay out of trouble, they should be able to have music. I knew the church needed its stolen instruments replaced."

Grace and her husband started a positive role model program to reward kids for doing good things at a middle school in Yorktown Heights where she was teaching.

"The kids actually ran the thing for years, we gave the financial rewards," she said. "We ran the program for 10
Continued on Page 14

COOL CATS



LL Cool J's Ball and Jump summer camp – a month-long basketball program in Hollis now its 12th year – ends with the rapper and television star showing up for photos and an inspirational talk with the kids. Photo by Michael Shain

Lancman settles lawsuit over Flushing Meadows

BY BILL PARRY

The de Blasio administration and City Councilman Rory Lancman (D-Hillcrest) settled a lawsuit last week challenging the structure and funding of the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Alliance, an independent nonprofit organization that will decide
Continued on Page 12



Girls Who Code Founder and CEO Reshma Saujani released the first of 13 books dedicated to closing the gender gap in coding at the Central Library in Jamaica.

CEO helps girls learn coding

BY NAEISHA ROSE

Women are better coders, but are less likely than their male counterparts to get a job in a STEM field without connections, according to a peer-reviewed study conducted by PeerJ

in February 2016.

When women sent out coding suggestions to organizations they had no ties with and their gender was not revealed, their proposals were accepted more frequently than those by men. But as they made the same

inquiries to similar institutions and revealed their gender, they were hired less, according to the scientific research journal.

In 2016, women made up only 27 percent of computer science professionals, according to the U.S.
Continued on Page 14

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Sunnysiders rally against hate, tenant harassment

QUEENS WEEKLY, AUG. 27, 2017

BY BILL PARRY

Residents of a Sunnyside condominium have been terrorized in their own homes, subjected daily to Nazi and Confederate posters, racist images and tributes to President Donald Trump festooning the building's lobby, according the City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer (D-Sunnyside).

Dozens of community leaders and elected officials joined tenants of the building Wednesday for a rally at 47-55 39th Place, protesting against the property manager. Neal Milano, who Van Bramer said has been harassing residents for years.

"Today we rallied against a property manager who has created a house of horrors for the owners and renters in this Sunnyside condominium. These tenants are living in terror," Van Bramer said. "After seeing this lobby firsthand and spending several days with these tenants, I can say without a doubt that



City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer rallies with Sunnyside community leaders in front of a condominium displaying Nazi and Confederate posters. Courtesy Van Bramer's office

they are rightfully terrified of a property manager who posts images of hate and racism, boasts of guns in his apartment while hanging posters celebrating guns and the NRA, and who retaliates against anyone who speaks out."

Milano's attorney said he was out of the country on an extended vacation and was only displaying a spirit of

patriotism, according to Van Bramer, who "froze and became terrified" when he discovered the names of Nazis Josef Mengele and Rudolph Hess on the building's directory.

"There is nothing patriotic about having the names of infamous Nazis in the building directory or having a large swastika above an apartment door," he said.

"There are clear illegalities and violations inside this building that extend far beyond the offensive and hate-filled messages posted in the lobby and throughout the condominium common areas. I have asked the de Blasio administration, the NYPD, and the attorney general of New York to investigate this property manager and condominium board

member and deliver justice for the tenants of this condominium who are living in terror. Hate has no home in Sunnyside, in Queens, or in our city."

Throughout the rally, residents came and went from the building quickly and without comment fearing they would be caught on one of many surveillance cameras and retaliated against with threats of outrageous fines, eviction and even physical violence, Van Bramer said.

"There are more cameras in this building than in Fort Knox," he said. "And they are not necessarily to guard against someone breaking into the building. They are to watch and monitor the people who live in this building. That is chilling."

Attorney Lynn Calvacca owns two units in the building but doesn't live there. She filed a lawsuit against Milano and the condo board.

"He's a bully," Calvacca

said. "He's a terrorist in this country, in this Sunnyside area. Everybody is so afraid."

Michael Miller, the executive vice president and CEO of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, was disgusted by the flagrant public display of racist, anti-Semitic imagery in the lobby.

"The Jewish community, together with its diverse allies, will not tolerate the offensive and frightening glorification of Nazism and Nazi war criminals, especially as our nation faces threats from white supremacists."

State Sen. Michael Gianaris (D-Astoria) agreed.

"The news is littered with stories of racism and bigotry on the rise throughout our nation," Gianaris said. "We like to think we're in a safe haven here in New York. But, unfortunately, these things are happening right here in our very own community, as well."

'Women's Plaza in Queens' unveiled in Kew Gardens

BY GINA MARTINEZ

A new Public Plaza was unveiled Tuesday, replacing a controversial statue that depicted a man standing over two women in Kew Gardens.

Borough President Melinda Katz hosted the ribbon-cutting for the newly restored "Women's Plaza in Queens," a public space located at the northeast corner of Union Turnpike and Queens Boulevard, adjacent to Queens Borough Hall.

The plaza was formerly the site of the "Triumph of Civic Virtue" statue, a 17-foot-high marble statue that depicted a male standing on top of two female figures representing "Vice" and "Corruption." State Sen. Leroy Comrie (D-St. Albans), Assemblyman Barry Grodenchik (D-Oakland Gar-

dens) and former Queens Borough President Claire Shulman also attended the ceremony.

The statue, designed by Beaux-Arts sculptor Frederick MacMonnie, was installed and resided at City Hall until 1922 when it was relocated by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia in 1941 to the grounds of the then new Queens Borough Hall. Seventy years later in 2012, the statue was moved to Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, where MacMonnies' father, mother and brother are buried.

The unveiling comes at a time when the national conversation is centered around the removal of Confederate monuments. Following the deadly protest in Charlottesville, Va., last week, President Donald Trump tweeted "Sad to see the history

and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments." Many African Americans said the monuments are painful reminders of America's racist past. Katz said the statue was outdated and this new women's plaza is a progressive reminder of the amazing women who come out of Queens.

"The Women's Plaza in Queens - located in our borough's civic center - is a visible, meaningful tribute to all the women of Queens who have made a lasting positive impact in New York City and around the globe," she said. "This newly restored public space at Queens Borough Hall should be utilized by many, and will serve as a reminder of how far we've come and how much fur-

ther we must go."

Katz endorsed former Borough President Helen Marshall's idea to repair and restore the remaining structure and surrounding plaza, and to repurpose and dedicate it to the women of Queens.

The base that is the now a centerpiece of "Women's Plaza" remained in place after the statue was removed, but its condition had deteriorated due to years of neglect and exposure to the elements, Katz said. Beginning in May 2016, the base was repaired and cleaned as part of a restoration project funded by Mayor Bill de Blasio and Katz. The \$960,000 capital project, completed by city Department of Design and Construction and contractor Perspective Construction Company, restored the

damaged stonework, improved landscaping, and installed plantings, new lighting and benches for public use, DDC Acting Commissioner Ana Barrio said. The site also includes a ceremonial plaque indicating that the site has been rededicated in honor of the women of Queens.

"Queens Borough Hall, a building with a strong history of female leadership, now has its own Women's Plaza honoring the women of the borough," Barrio said. "DDC is very pleased to be able to build this beautiful new addition to the neighborhood."

Shulman said the statue has always been a sore point for her and during her tenure she tried to get rid of the sculpture, but the cost to move it was too expensive. She quoted

MacMonnies, who once said "What do I care if all the ignoramuses and all of the damn fool women get together and talk about my statue. Let them tackle, let them battle, you can't change the eternal verities that way."

Shulman joked MacMonnies "probably had a lot of trouble with women."

She went on to say she was very pleased with the Women's Plaza.

"It is a tribute to the women and all the people who have supported women in government," she said. "It is a beautiful plaza and I hope all the women in the borough that have an opportunity to enjoy it do enjoy it."

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



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Assembly members call for better bus service

BY MARK HALLUM

With so much attention from the state concerning the city's subways, a number of state Assembly members formed a coalition to call on MTA Chairman Joe Lhota to shift focus to improve bus service for residents in transit deserts such as northeast Queens.

Assemblywoman Nily Rozic (D-Fresh Meadows) delivered remarks at a Monday press conference in Manhattan, backing a letter asking Lhota to include bus improvements in his plans to address the subway crisis. Written by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (D-Bronx) and signed by 45 members of the Legislature, the letter asks for the acceleration of improvements to bus routes, equipment and technology.

"As a representative of a district in Queens that does not have a single subway or train station, I know how challenging it can be to get around the borough and connect to other parts of the city when bus service is infrequent and unreliable," she said. "Any proposal intended to improve the status of our transit system should not neglect the value of quality bus service and the difference it makes in neighborhoods that lack access to an expansive network of transit options."

The letter called for the implementation of transit signal priority to increase the overall speed at which buses can travel, while decreasing the amount of time buses idle at stops with all-door boarding technology to allow commuters to swipe MetroCards on the curb and board from multiple entrances as well as a re-examination of bus routes, special lanes and bus islands.

Dinowitz pointed out that 2.5 million New Yorkers use buses every day, particularly riders with accessibility needs and those who live in the outer boroughs far from public transit.

"I want to make sure that



Assemblywoman Nily Rozic spoke at a rally urging the MTA to give greater attention to improving bus service.

Photo courtesy of Assemblywoman Rozic's office

the concerns of all New Yorkers are heard, even if they don't get the same amount of media attention," he said. "Transit signal priority and all-door boarding are no brainer changes that could reduce bus travel times by 25 percent for minimal investment. Let's not delay any more and bring our bus system into the 21st century."

The city Department of Transportation said it would expand the use of transit signal priority, but not until 2020, a press release from Dinowitz' office said.

"The Summer of Hell has made the dire state of the subway obvious, but that's just one part of the public transit meltdown riders face. Buses have been in a state of slow-motion crisis for years," said Nick Sifuentes, deputy director of the Riders Alliance. "Fortunately, we know our state and city elected officials can fix bus service for millions of daily riders—and do it quickly and for a fraction of the cost to repair our subway system."

The city's Select Bus Service has seen an increase in ridership of 30

percent after implementing all-door boarding technology, which reduced travel time by up to 15 percent, the release said.

"Amidst New York City's current transit crisis, the need for better bus service cannot be ignored," said Jaqi Cohen, campaign coordinator for the Strap-hangers Campaign. "Slow buses, circuitous routes, and unreliable service have caused bus riders years of misery. The time is now for the MTA to expedite a plan to turn around bus service for the millions of riders who depend on it."

After riders experienced systemwide infrastructure meltdowns, Gov. Andrew Cuomo declared a state of emergency in late June for the city's subways to expedite upgrades to signals and trains while pouring an extra \$1 billion into the MTA's capital funds.

This coincided with what Cuomo dubbed the "summer of hell," a period of eight weeks in which Penn Station would undergo major upgrades to infrastructure and service in the nation's largest transit hub would be reduced by 20 percent.

Amtrak, which owns Penn Station, admitted that its agency had known about the decline of infrastructure for years and the displacement of people from reduced service on the LIRR was expected to impact the subways.

But the LIRR reported a relatively minor dip in ridership in the first two weeks of the "Summer of Hell," according to transit officials at a July 26 MTA board meeting. LIRR President Patrick Nowakowski presented figures, which showed a drop of about 11,000 riders through Penn Station, compared to the baseline of 86,000 during the morning peak hour on Week Two. Evening peak hour through the transit hub only saw a decline of about 4,000 commuters.

Inside look at NYPD's Mounted Unit in Queens

QUEENS WEEKLY, AUG. 27, 2017

BY ANGELICA ACEVEDO

Mounted Police Officer Derek Ghee of the NYPD was grooming Chief, a golden brown, 5-foot-9-inch gelding he rides each day.

"I wanted to become a cop since I was a kid because of these horses, and now it's been the best five years of my life," Ghee said. "I can't believe I get paid to do this."

Similar sentiments were shared by the other officers in the Troop F barn, located in Cunningham Park.

Throughout the summer, police officers on horses — also known as the mounted unit — make regular appearances on Bell Boulevard. The officers and their steeds attract civilians each day they are out on the busy streets.

Lt. James O'Neill was assigned to Troop F last year and was asked to review the places the unit already covers. He then added more locations to the rounds, such as Alley Pond Park, Flushing

Meadows Corona Park and, of course, Bell Boulevard.

"A lot goes into this. You want to make sure that it's an area that's conducive, that it's safe for the horses and not too far," O'Neill said. "Bell Boulevard used to be a post where mounted officers would go, and they haven't gone there in several years."

Perhaps one of the questions that quickly comes to mind is: Why does the mounted unit still exist?

O'Neill had many reasons as to why this, a tradition since 1858, is just as efficient as other units in the NYPD.

"A lot of people will notice a mounted officer before they'll notice a patrol car, and the mounted officer has a much better vantage point because he's up 10 feet," O'Neill said. "It's very good for crime prevention. A lot of times, just the presence of the horse will get people to calm down. The horse is very intimidating, but at the same time it's



Officer Beth Bradley and her horse, Lucky, ride into the barn.

Photo by Angelica Acevedo

also extremely inviting."

O'Neill added that they have gotten a lot of positive feedback across the community.

"The public enjoys seeing us," O'Neill said. "I think a lot of times it puts people at ease when they see a horse, especially at large gatherings. They gravitate

towards them."

Although some people express concern for the horses, O'Neill assures that the NYPD treats their horses "like gold."

To be considered for the unit, he describes the process as extensive, involving a sometimes years-long waiting list and interviews

that judge if an officer is suited for the position. Once an officer passes the first portion, they go through three months of intensive physical training.

"You get beat up pretty good and if you're afraid of getting dirty or afraid of getting banged up, it's just not gonna be the place for you," O'Neill said.

O'Neill expressed great pride to be in the unit, although it took him many years to do so.

A native Long Islander, O'Neill began his police work in the 115th and 111th precincts in Queens, then worked in the Bronx and Harlem before he got to his position as lieutenant.

"Took me 15 years to get here, but it's great," O'Neill smiled.

Even so, he does not sugar-coat the amount of responsibility that comes with the position.

"These are huge animals and it's a huge responsibility

to work with them, so it's not for everybody," O'Neill said. "On the outside it looks great, people love it, but you really have to have a love of animals or you're just not going to be happy."

There are 45 horses in the NYPD mounted unit, according to O'Neill. Most of them are geldings, as it was found that they possess the best temperament for the job.

Each gelding was specifically picked and trained, some starting at 4 years old. O'Neill said the horses tend to work in the unit for about 10 years, then they retire and live on a farm for their remaining days.

"The department pays for these horses to be cared for when they retire, so they have good lives once their service time is up," O'Neill said. "They go to these retirement farms and we check on them to make sure they are being treated well."

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Army gets updated facility

Reserve building at Bayside's Fort Totten expanded, revitalized

BY MARK HALLUM

The ribbon was cut last week for a \$12 million upgrade to a U.S. Army building at Fort Totten which will help the facility maintain military equipment for installations across the region.

U.S. Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-Little Neck), City Councilman Paul Vallone (D-Bayside) and Major Gen. Troy Kok led the Aug. 17 ceremony at Fort Totten's newly upgraded building, which resembles an airplane hangar filled with Humvees and armored troop carriers. The U.S. Army Reserves can now refurbish aging and damaged equipment and outfit small arms in a dark-room for calibrating sights.

Vallone spoke of the importance of having a strong military presence in the community he represents and how young people in northeast Queens need to be able to see the men and women who serve stateside to gain respect for the sacrifice the military makes.

"So many children in our district interact with you everyday and I think sometimes you don't even realize the impact you have here," Vallone said, adding that projects such as the upgraded facility bring positive attention to the military presence in Bayside. "The most important realization for the next generation is



Electeds join military officials to cut the ribbon on a new military facility in Fort Totten.

Photo by Mark Hallum

to see our men and women in uniform right in front of them choosing this path to keep us safe."

Therevitalizationincluded raising the roof of the old facility, part of the Army Reserve section of Fort Totten built in the 1950s, to expand the size of the main doors on the north and south side of the structure to allow larger vehicles to come in and out of building.

"These facilities were built predominately in the 1950s and they met the requirements of our Army and Army Reserve at that time with the types of equipment that we had during that period," Kok said. "But as we've become a better fighting force, a more profes-

sional force, our equipment has adjusted for the time ... so this revitalization project is extremely important for the Army Reserve to keep our Army Reserve relevant today."

Suozzi, elected for the first time in November, said the 77th Division stationed at Fort Totten represents an example of what the nation should strive for in the current polarizing political climate.

"This is a very tough time in world history and in our nation's history, we're facing a lot of dark forces throughout the world and even in our own country right now," said Suozzi, an outspoken opponent of the Trump administration.

"We've got to go back to some of the very simple basics of what this nation is founded on and what we've promoted around the world. Your hard work and the professionalism as exhibited at a facility like this is a sign of what we need to face the challenges in this very long battle ahead of us."

The U.S. Army Reserve station at Fort Totten is the largest Reserve installation in the country and, according to Lt. Col. Pete Lupo, the upgraded facility will offer support to 60 other Reserve units around the Northeast.

Reach reporter Mark Hallum by e-mail at mhallum@cnglocal.com or by phone at (718) 260-4564.

Flushing crosswalk OK'd for downtown

BY GINA MARTINEZ

A busy Flushing intersection will finally be getting a crosswalk after a push from elected officials.

U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) and state Assemblywoman Nily Rozic (D-Fresh Meadows) announced the city Department of Transportation will install a crosswalk across Blossom Avenue on the west side of Main Street.

The crosswalk, which is expected to be painted before the end of the year, is a result of ongoing efforts Schumer and Rozic have made with DOT for a traffic study at the intersection. In 2015 alone, one pedestrian died and five were injured at the busy intersection.

Schumer said that for too long, the intersection has been a problem-plagued location for nearby residents and businesses.

"I'm pleased that, with the help of Assemblywoman Rozic and local community leaders, the NYC Department of Transportation has heeded our call by moving forward with a plan to make this intersection safer," Schumer said. "A new crosswalk will help ensure the safety of pedestrians frequenting the bustling area by providing a visual cue to drivers."

In October 2015, Rozic wrote to DOT Queens Borough Commissioner Nicole Garcia requesting that traffic-calming measures be installed at the intersection.

Rozic's letter cited a crash that occurred that month in which a young couple were struck trying to cross the street, and the high volume of pedestrian and vehicle traffic in the neighborhood. The intersection is in the middle of a busy area that includes multiple public schools, residential buildings, the Public Health Solutions' Neighborhood WIC Center, Queens Botanical Garden, and SelfHelp Rosenthal Senior Center. The intersection currently has no traffic calming measures.

Rozic said she was proud of the efforts that went into securing the traffic study and thanked Schumer and community partners for their work in prioritizing the safety of everyone traveling through the area.

"The Flushing community has consistently advocated for traffic safety improvements in the neighborhood and I am glad to finally announce DOT's plan to install a crosswalk across Blossom Avenue," she said.

Schumer and Rozic said the announcement marked a significant step forward in providing the Flushing community with improvements that will ensure the safety of all who frequent the area. They also said the crosswalk is a reflection of the collaborative efforts between local electeds, including Councilman Peter Koo (D-Flushing), state Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Flushing) and U.S. Rep. Meng (D-Flushing).

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Far Rockaway rezoning project nearly approved

BY BILL PARRY

The \$126 million Downtown Far Rockaway rezoning project moved a step closer to approval Monday after the City Council's Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises voted unanimously in favor of the plan, 5-0.

City Councilman Donovan Richards (D-Laurelton), the chairman of the subcommittee and representative of the Far Rockaway community, said the project will address land use and zoning, economic development, housing, transportation, public space, community services and culture.

"Today, we begin the journey of building on the progress we have made over the past four years by infusing hundreds of millions of dollars into infrastructure, quality jobs, parks streetscape, transit improvements, and both community facility and open space," Richards said.

"These investments will ensure that Far Rockaway benefits from the amenities that so many other communities in the city enjoy."

If the plan is approved by the City Council Sept. 7, as expected, the project will be the neighborhood's first rezoning since 1961, which will activate long-underutilized properties and create more than 3,000 residential units, over half of which will be affordable. It will also lay the groundwork for 250,000 square feet of commercial space, 86,000 square feet of community facility space, and 30,000 square feet of open space. The project's momentum is the culmination of nearly two years of community meetings and planning and if passed it will be the first Housing New York rezoning to get the City Council's blessing since East New York.

"Through this plan, Downtown Far Rockaway is finally getting the investment



City Councilman Donovan Richards (c.) announces the Downtown Far Rockaway rezoning project has taken another step in the approval process. Courtesy of Richards' office

it deserves, with new jobs and mixed-income housing, open space and community facilities," city Economic Development Corporation President and CEO James Patchett said. "We are proud to have collaborated with Council

member Richards and community leaders to develop a vision for a more vibrant and equitable Downtown Far Rockaway, and to now make that vision a reality."

The neighborhood revitalization plan includes a \$77

million investment by the city for sewer infrastructure improvement, sidewalk expansion, public plazas and the DOT has committed to conducting follow-up traffic studies and making the necessary improvements to

the 23-block area so it can adequately handle new traffic that will be generated by incoming residents to the area.

Richards said the lack of city investment for nearly 40 years had created cynicism about government, and a life of hopelessness for young men and women, where limited options to educational programming and jobs created a conduit straight into the prison industrial complex.

"This is why today's agreement to rezone Downtown Far Rockaway is much bigger than just the words density, bulk and height. This rezoning gauges and rectifies the compounding issues that have plagued this community for decades," Richards said. "Today I'm happy to say it's a new day for Far Rockaway."

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

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Christ the King Announces New Principal

The Board of Trustees of Christ the King High School announced that Ms. Geri Martinez has been appointed Principal of Christ the King High School.

Serphin R. Maltese, Chairman of the Christ the King Board of Trustees said, "After a thorough review of highly qualified candidates, we at Christ the King are pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Gerri Martinez as Principal. Her experience and enthusiasm as an educator for over 30 years will be a wonderful fit with the hard work and efforts put in by the faculty and administration to make Christ the King a pillar of academic excellence."

Principal Martinez stated, "I have been blessed in my life to always be able to do what I love to do, working with faculty and students, meeting the challenges of each day and searching for the next step in the continuum of professional and personal growth for all. I now look forward to my new role as Principal of Christ the King High School."

Ms. Martinez has many years of experience in Catholic education. She began her career at Stella Maris High School as



a guidance counselor, and later served as Assistant Principal. Ms. Martinez then became Principal of Stella Maris, a role she enjoyed for 14 years. Upon the closing of Stella Maris, she served as Assistant Principal of Bishop Kearney High School and most currently, Interim Principal of Bishop Kearney.

Ms. Martinez holds a degree in school counseling and New York State certification in Administration and Supervision. She has also been teaching at St. Joseph's College for over 16 years and serves on a host of educational and Catholic affiliated organizations.

Israel

Continued from Page 1

that the Jewish community in Queens and across NYC could be given the opportunity to commemorate this historic occasion that is deeply woven into the celebration of our heritage," she said.

Lancman cited a Jerusalem Post article that said the museum decided against hosting the event after plans were made public, citing opposition from "Palestinian friends of the museum."

He and Assemblyman Michael Simanowitz (D-Flushing) blasted the "anti-Semitic" decision by the museum Aug. 22 and called for a NYC Human Rights Commission investigation to have the re-enactment reinstated.

A few hours later Queens Museum said the event was back on.

"After a productive conversation with Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, the Queens Museum will work with the Israeli mission on the proposed commemoration of the 1947 vote," the museum said in a statement. "We are deeply committed to all the communities we serve through our meaningful arts programming and we are looking forward to making this a successful event."

Despite the museum's reversal, Lancman and Si-

manowitz are still demanding the board of the Queens Museum immediately remove the institution's executive director from her position. They are also calling on the city's Human Rights Commission to investigate the decision as a violation of Title 8 of the city Administrative Code, also known as the city Human Rights Law.

According to Lancman, the decision by the museum, a public accommodation, represented a discriminatory refusal to provide full and equal enjoyment of its services based on religion and national origin, both protected classes under the law, as well as an unlawful boycott.

"We are deeply troubled that the museum's executive director and president, Laura Raicovich, let her own personal support for the The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement infect her decision making in this matter," Lancman and Simanowitz said in a joint statement. "The celebration of the vote establishing the state of Israel is a recognition of a historic turning point at the site of the Queens Museum, and is profoundly meaningful to New York's Jewish community. She has abused the trust placed in her by the people of the City of New York, who fund the museum as a cultural representation of Queens, the most diverse

county in the United States."

BDS is a Palestinian-led movement that believes that Israel is occupying and colonizing Palestinian land and discriminating against Palestinian citizens of Israel. The movement is inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, according to the group's website.

The museum statement did not address the accusations surrounding Raicovich.

Lancman also claimed that Raicovich previously edited a book of essays, "Assuming Boycott: Resistance, Agency and Cultural Production," which included an essay praising a movement to boycott Israel.

U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-Flushing) also chimed in, calling the decision by the museum bizarre and said that the project is a celebration of a key piece of Queens history.

"Personally I do not see how this project is 'political,' " Meng said. "How is commemorating a major world event that took place in Queens and the U.N.'s establishment of one of America's closest allies political? The museum and Israeli Mission already agreed to this re-enactment of the U.N. vote, and planning for it was well underway before the museum backtracked."

Park

Continued from Page 1

how to spend more than \$10 million that will be contributed by the United States Tennis Association.

The suit, filed in 2016, had primarily alleged that the alliance violated city law by denying Lancman, who represents the southern portion of the fourth largest park in the city, a seat on the board of directors. At issue was Lancman's contention that locking him out of the board breached the City Charter and the Administrative Code.

Originally, City Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras-Copeland (D-East Elmhurst), who brokered the 2013 deal with the USTA over its park expansion, was the only Council member who could choose a representative to the

Alliance. Lancman alleged the arrangement was political favoritism towardman ally of Mayor Bill de Blasio, but City Hall argued the arrangement was made because the majority of the park was in Ferreras-Copeland's district.

The mayor attempted to have the lawsuit dismissed earlier this year, but the State Supreme Court denied de Blasio's motion.

The resolution grants representation on the board to all Council members who represent neighborhoods surrounding the park, including Lancman, Ferreras-Copeland, City Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz (D-Forest Hills), City Councilman Peter Koo (D-Flushing) and City Councilman Paul Vallone (D-Bayide).

"I'm very pleased that the resolution of this lawsuit will mean fair representation for

myself and all the Council members whose districts overlap and abut Flushing Meadows Corona Park," Lancman said. "Our constituents all use and care deeply about the park, and I look forward to working together to bring resources to Flushing Meadows to make it the truly great park it was meant to be. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and Council member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland for their sincere efforts to bring about this resolution."

Ferreras-Copeland declined to comment. Representatives of the board of directors will propose changes to the bylaws at the Oct. 13 meeting to add appointees of each new council district and the mayor will appoint an additional two more board members, increasing the total from 15 to 21 people, officials said.



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Church

Continued from Page 1

years before moving to New York City.”

Grace lost her husband five years ago and endures significant health issues, but she was determined. She contacted TimesLedger Newspapers Sunday to learn more about the case and the name of the church.

Grace called a car service Monday afternoon and set off on her trip to Corona.

“I didn’t know how to get there by subway, so I figured I’d be better off letting a driver find it,” she said.

The car pulled up to Canaan Baptist Church, located at 35-24 108th St.. Grace met with Pastor Juan Carlos Suero, 52, and presented him with a check in the amount of \$2,300, enough to cover the expense for new instruments.

“It was great, man. She helped us so much,” Suero said. “God touched her heart and now we have the money to buy new equipment. She’s a lovely person. Just wonderful.”

Boo Grace was happy to help.

“It was really nice to meet the pastor and his wife,” she said. “It was time well spent.”



Boo Grace visits with Canaan Baptist Church pastor Juan Carlos Suero and presents him with a check to replace stolen instruments. Courtesy Pastor Suero

Police were still looking for the suspect, described as a black male between 30 and 40 years old. He was last seen wearing a yellow jacket and blue jeans. Anyone with information is asked to call the NYPD’s Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS.

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

Coding

Continued from Page 1

Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Hoping to close that gap is Reshma Saujani, the CEO of and Founder of Girls Who Code, an organization working to help usher young women into the field of coding.

In collaboration with AT&T, Girls Who Code donated 800 non-fiction computer science and coding books, published by Penguin, to Central Library located at 89-11 Merrick Blvd. in Jamaica.

“Girls Who Code: Learn to Code and Change the World” is the first of 13 books in a series of nonfiction and fiction books produced by the organization.

Saujani became inspired about introducing young girls to coding after visiting schools while running for Congress in 2010, and again later for the city public advocate’s seat in 2013. Although she did not win those elections, she did gain perspective when she saw almost no girls in STEM classes.

“I’m passionate about this issue because this is about opportunity,” Saujani told a

news conference at the Central Library, where the books were being given out.. “This is all about jobs.”

As the daughter of Ugandan refugees who came to the United States in the 1970s, going to the library and having a great education was something the Yale graduate’s parents instilled in her. Now, it’s what she wants to impart to young women who may have an interest in coding, but think they can’t achieve it because the field is portrayed as a boys’ only club.

“No matter how tired my father was, he always took me to the library to learn,” said Saujani, the first Indian-American woman to run for Congress. “Their resilience is why I am here today.”

During the press conference for the book that was released Tuesday, Amina Grant, 17, from Hollis picked up a copy.

“I heard what she said, and while I’m not typically a computer girl, I have friends who are into computer science,” Amina said. “I’m not familiar with the topic, but why not see what’s it about?”

Marissa Shoreinstein, the

AT&T East President, was glad to be at the book launch at the library.

“I thought this would be a great opportunity for AT&T to help young women specifically in STEM fields,” Shoreinstein said. “They might be eligible for jobs at a company like AT&T, and one of the things we struggle with is to ensure diversity in those areas of our business.”

Dennis Walcott, the president of Queens Library, believes the Central branch was the perfect place to launch the book.

“One of the key things about me is spreading the word,” Walcott said. “We have 11 million people who walk through our doors every year.”

“Far too many girls and young women are not getting a chance at technical skills and at building and creating things,” Saujani said. “I hope they pick up this book and say ‘this is cool, and I want to learn more.’”

Reach reporter Naeisha Rose by e-mail at nrose@cnglocal.com or by phone at (718) 260-4573.

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