



April showers bring May flowers!

April Committee Meetings @ QCB13 Board Office

- Land Use 4.2.18 @ 7:30 pm
- Transportation 4.3.18 @ 7:00 pm
- Public Safety 4.4.18 @ 7:00 pm
- Seniors (SSSSNC) 4.5.18 @ 7:00 pm
- Youth and Education 4.10.18 @ 7:30 pm
- Economic Development 4.11.18 @ 7:00 pm
- Parks and Environment 4.17.18 @ 7:30 pm
- Health 4.19.18 @ 7:00 pm

GENERAL BOARD MEETING

Monday, March 26, 2018 @ 7:30 PM

Bellerose Assembly of God — 240-15 Hillside Avenue, Bellerose, NY 11426

AGENDA

- ♦ Community Time
- ♦ Meeting Called to Order
- ♦ Pledge of Allegiance
- ♦ Public Speaking Time
- ♦ Elected Officials — Welcome
- ♦ Chairman's Report — Clive Williams
- ♦ District Manager's Remarks — Mark McMillan
- ♦ NYPD Report — Inspector Jeffery Schiff, Commanding Officer, 105 Precinct
- ♦ Roll Call
- ♦ Approve Minutes — February 2018
- ♦ Public Hearing and Voting Item
 - ULURP – 140187MMQ, de-mapping street (Shopping Mall)
219-01 to 219-25 North Conduit Avenue
- ♦ Committee Reports
- ♦ Adjournment

NEXT GENERAL BOARD MEETING, Monday, April 23, 2018



Queens Community Board 13

219-41 Jamaica Avenue
Queens Village, NY 11428
718.464.9700
Fax: 718.254.2739
qcb13.org



Melinda Katz
Borough President

Vicky Morales-Casella
Director of
Community Boards

Clive Williams
Chair

Mark McMillan
District Manager

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT – March 2018

Meetings Canceled:

Economic Development Committee
Public Safety Committee (2x)
Transportation Committee

Events/Meetings Attended:

February 22, 2018: Attend JFK Community Meeting at August Martin High School regarding ideas by some community members and elected officials on community benefits pursuant to the \$8B+ Project scheduled for the upcoming redesign of JFK Airport. **State Senators James Sanders Jr. and Leroy Comrie, Assembly Members Clyde Vanel, Alicia Hyndman, Michelle Titus, Vivian Cook** all led the presentation. **Board Chair Clive Williams and Board Member Richard Hellenbrecht** were also in attendance.

February 26, 2018: Queens Community Board 13 General Board Meeting.

February 27, 2018: Attend "Queens District Attorney Richard Brown's Black History Month Ceremony" honoring **Edna Handy, NYCHA Chief Compliance Officer. Council Member I. Daneek Miller** was in attendance.

Meeting with Queens Chamber of Commerce regarding membership and its programs. **Board Chair Clive Williams** facilitated this meeting. In attendance were Economic Development Committee **Chair Felice Hannah** and **Vice Chair Richard Hellenbrecht**.

February 28, 2018: Attend "TeamSite Responsive Templates Training" (to learn how to make changes to the QCB13 website) at DoITT Headquarters at MetroTech in Brooklyn along with Community Coordinator Maxine Brannon.

March 5, 2018: Attend and participate in Land Use Committee Meeting Chaired by **Richard Hellenbrecht** and Vice Chaired by **Bess DeBetham**. Details will be shared in their report.

March 13, 2018: Attend Queens Borough Cabinet Meeting. Topics:

- I. Presentation on **Tax Scams** by Special Agent Matthew McWhirr, United States Department of the Treasury.
- II. Presentation on **WE NYC & Commercial Lease Assistance Programs** by Alexandra Ruiz, Executive Director, Business Development & Strategy, NYC Department of Small Business Services.

Attend and participate in Youth & Education Committee Meeting Chaired by **Rhonda Kontner**. Details will be shared in her report.

March 20, 2018: Attend and participate in Parks & Environment Meeting Chaired by **Fay Hill** and Vice Chaired by **Peter Richards**. Details will be shared in their report.

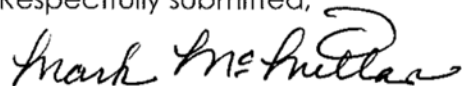
March 21, 2018: Host District Service Cabinet Meeting at QCB 13 office.

March 22, 2018: Tape MARLS Radio Show hosted by Annette Runcie and Anif Russell on 93.5 FM with **Board Chair Clive Williams** on Community Boards and services QCB13 provides for the communities it serves.

Attend Scoping Meeting of the **Belmont Redevelopment Project** at Elmont Memorial Library, Elmont, NY, to listen to community concerns and commentary. **Board Chair Clive Williams** and **Board Members Richard Hellenbrecht** and **Michael O'Keeffe** were in attendance.

March 23, 2018: Attend Press Conference: "New York City Elected Officials and School Officials Announce Martin Van Buren High School in Good Standing." Elected Officials in attendance include **City Council Member Barry Grodenchik**, **Assembly Members David Weprin** and **Clyde Vanel**.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark McMillan
District Manager

DOT News



No Parking Signage on Little Neck Parkway:

The No Parking regulations were removed on Little Neck Parkway, between 80th Avenue and 81st Avenue.

The No Parking regulations were upgraded to No Standing for the first 161 feet on Little Neck Parkway, from GCP Service Road to 252 Street. This is to allow clear visibility for vehicles turning southbound onto Little Neck Pkwy off of the GCP exit. The No Parking regulations were removed between 161 feet to 401 feet, restoring parking.



This work was completed on March 14, 2018.



DEP News

Complaints for February -472 /Top 5 are listed below:

Sewer back-ups -105

Leaks -79

Clogged catch basins- 22

Street Flooding 17

Noise from Construction After/Before Hours – 16

DEP Summer College Internships – 100 positions (majority paid) available for a 10- week summer internship in the fields of engineering, science, technology, planning, sustainability, law, community outreach and more. Deadline for applications is 5:00 pm on 4/6/2018. Please visit our website at www.nyc.gov/dep for information and required qualifications.

Lien Sale Outreach Events – Residents with outstanding water/sewer charges, property taxes or HPD Emergency Loans should attend one of these events to speak with a customer service representative one-on-one before 5/11/2018

4/10/2018 – Queens Business Finance Center, 144-06 94th Avenue, Jamaica, 5:00 pm.-7:00 pm

4/17/2018 – CM I. Daneek Miller - Majority Baptist Church – 115-21 Farmers Blvd, St. Albans, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

5/3/2018 – CM Donovan Richards – Challenge Prep Academy – 710 Hartmann Lane, Rockaway – 6:00 pm-8:00 pm

Rain Barrel Events – Please contact your elected official's offices to reserve barrels at their upcoming events:

DEP is Hiring – City Parks Workers to assist with maintenance of the City's Green Infrastructure (rain gardens)– salary range is \$15.48-24.04 p/h.

Visit DEP website at www.nyc.gov/dep/jobs for additional information.





Dear Board Members, Civic Leaders, Activists and Concerned Citizens,

Look around. Is there anyone in your organization, association or circle of volunteers in their twenties or thirties? Many of you are old enough to remember the 1960's when young people in these age groups changed the country, demonstrating and demanding of society civil rights, women's rights and an end to the Vietnam War. Where is the "you" of forty or fifty years ago today? Wouldn't it be nice to have a young person to train and mentor, and for you to learn about how to use technology to exponentially improve both communication and participation in your organization's goals, and most importantly, feel like all of the years of hard work sustaining your group will not just vanish when you can no longer put in the time or physically do the work?

Hence, the dilemma so many civic associations, and indeed, community boards face today. This begs the questions: What went wrong? Why are young people not joining established groups? What would it take to attract them?

Older people are living longer, healthier more vital lives. Your chronological age must be subtracted by 10-15 years for an accurate account of your vitality. You are not ready to give up control while you still have so much energy, institutional knowledge and unmet goals. And you certainly are not going to give it to someone who showed up yesterday and thinks they know more than you! How dare they! How disrespectful! You know how much they don't know. Why don't they join, work their way up the ranks learning the mission, processes and people before assuming they can take a leadership role?

What is happening is younger people are not joining. Instead, the organizing they do is through social media creating new groupings arguably larger in scope. While the best way to get things physically done is in-person, the younger generation does things differently – they text. You call. There is literally a generation gap in the way different age groups communicate. Young people are impatient – they are not going to wait to be in charge. They think they know a better way and they have the time and lack of responsibilities to do things their way.

Active older people are not dinosaurs; it is just the organizations they run do not appeal to succeeding generations. The American Legion and VFW are the best examples. Were it not for term limits, many City elected officials would be in their seventies with two generations behind them fighting to be "Next" (as can be seen in many districts of State Legislatures and Congress)!

It is time for you to find just one younger person and make them your friend. Do not be critical (remember you were them at one time) but help guide them on their road, not the one you think they should be on. Maybe they will help you by you helping them. This is the benefit: they will commemorate your history of service, and pass on the important traditions you received from those whose shoulders you stand upon.

-Mark McMillan

3.26.18

The Golden Trowel Award Goes To...

On Tuesday, March 13, 2018 Board Member Kangela Moore's organization, Friends of Brookville Park, received the Golden Trowel Award from Partnerships for Parks. The timing for this award was perfect because it celebrates their 10 Year Anniversary of volunteerism at Brookville Park. Ms. Moore would like to thank Board Member Lorraine Gittens-Bridges, Partnerships for Parks, the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, the Storm Rydaz Motorcycle Club, the Students Real Friends Network, NYPD School Safety Explorers, St. Mary's Hospital for Children, The New York Coalition for Transportation Safety, the NYC Fire Department, Friends of Brookville Park's Families, the Volunteers of Brookville Park, and DJ Todd for their unwavering support to consistently support Friends of Brookville Park revitalization projects and free family events. She also thanks Elected Officials New York State Senator James Sanders Jr. and New York City Councilman Donovan Richards for their support.



PARTNERSHIPS for PARKS

A joint program of City Parks Foundation and NYC Parks.

ABOUT PARTNERSHIPS FOR PARKS

Public parks are the settings for our shared experiences. They improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers by providing spaces for social and civic engagement. By developing occasional volunteers into community leaders, we build long-term investment in public space and strengthen the social fabric of our neighborhoods.

Partnerships for Parks is a unique public-private partnership between City Parks Foundation and NYC Parks that supports and champions neighborhood volunteers by giving them the tools they need to advocate and care for their neighborhood parks and green spaces. We equip people, organizations and government with the skills and tools they need to transform these spaces into dynamic community assets.

WHY WE DO IT

There are currently over 2,000 parks in New York City. These places are our backyards, where we connect, play, and celebrate life's moments. When people come together to care for these spaces, they thrive. And when parks thrive, neighborhoods thrive. Parks are spaces where community members and decision makers can work together to create their city.

GET INVOLVED

Trainings

Attend! Our innovative free workshops and trainings are a great way to meet, network, and learn the skills needed to build and sustain your park group.

Grants

Apply! Our small grants program offers funding for park projects including events, tools, websites, and marketing materials.

Beautification

Dig in! We offer year-round volunteer opportunities: from painting benches and planting bulbs, to weeding and cleaning, and much more.

Staff Support

Connect! Our on-the-ground Outreach team helps connect volunteers to resources that help them grow into sustainable park groups.

To learn more, visit their website: cityparksfoundation.org.

5 Qualities Every Leader Should Possess

What is the difference between a boss and a leader? Managers who are perceived as bosses dictate to their teams. Managers who are perceived as leaders have a vision that they share with their teams. In order to be a great leader, managers must possess the qualities below:

1. Leads by example

A leader will be the first person to demonstrate a new behavior, to support an exciting new technology, or to embrace a new concept. Leaders should strive to be innovators that help to spark ideas and challenge the status quo. Leaders are the people who will help drive change that will encourage growth in the organization.



2. Champion of Success

It is the leader's responsibility to help to remove obstacles from the paths of their team. A leader's goal should be to pave the way for team members to become effective and successful. When managers help to resolve issues that are getting in the way of team goals, they are demonstrating leadership qualities. When the team looks good, the leader looks great!

3. Collaborates Well

A leader understands that he or she may not have all the answers. A leader knows that the most effective teams embrace a collaborative envi-

ronment that relies on the combined intelligence of the team. Leaders also acknowledge the value of sharing information instead of hoarding it. When leaders share their experience and knowledge with others, everyone wins.

4. Provides Ongoing Feedback

Leaders know that it is important to provide their teams with real time feedback and recognition. Feedback is most effective when it is given through regular, periodic check-ins. Leaders give their team members consistent positive and constructive feedback to ensure that the team knows what goals are important to focus on and how to measure success.

5. Respects boundaries

A good leader recognizes that team

members have lives outside of work and respects those boundaries. This means that it is important to respect personal boundaries in terms of social networks, physical space and family commitments. Just because technology has made it possible to always be connected, doesn't mean that we must always be available.

Being a leader is something you earn, not something you are assigned to do. As Vince Lombardi said, "Leaders are made, they are not born".

Mindy Stern, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, ACC is a trusted HR advisor, career and leadership coach, author, speaker and president of AIM Resource Group Inc. Visit the website at www.aimresource-group.com or call 718-217-1074 if you would like to learn more about leadership development.

buzz

Queens leaders honored at Black History celebration

BY SUZANNE MONTEVERDI
smonteverdi@qns.com / @smont76

Dozens gathered at Queens Borough Hall in Kew Gardens to celebrate Black History Month and African-American Heritage.

Organized by Borough President Melinda Katz and the African-American Heritage Committee, the annual event recognizes outstanding community members who have made a lasting impact on the borough of Queens and the next generation of leaders.

Katz kicked off the Feb. 26 celebration, which took place within the building's Helen Marshall Cultural Center.

"I'm excited to be part of this celebration," Katz said. "We know that right here in this room with our honorees we have our future leaders like Martin Luther King, like Rosa Parks, like Frederick Douglass. But we also have our future educators, our future teachers, our future civic leaders, doctors, lawyers and nurses."

Reverend Doctor Leslie Mullings, founder and CEO of the Far Rockaway-based Challenge Preparatory Charter School, took to the podium as the event's guest speaker. He was also awarded the Borough President's Spirit Award.

"What we know is that this country — imperfect as it is — is a better place because of the resistance and resilience of its black Americans," he said.

A group of 12 exceptional Queens stu-



Photos by Suzanne Monteverdi/QNS

Borough President Katz congratulates the scholarship winners on Feb. 26

dents — chosen from a pool of 103 — who attend schools throughout the city were awarded \$1,000 college scholarships by Katz and the committee.

Recipients were Anu L. Akil of Brooklyn Technical High School, Alexander Atkins of Thomas Edison High School, Alanya Banner of Benjamin N. Cardozo High School, Tyler Borderon of Bard High School Early College, Wilson Delmas of Queens Preparatory Academy, Keziah Diego Scholars Academy, Meicha Hall of Francis Lewis High School, Tearah Harrigan of Hillcrest High School,

Jasmine Hitall of St. Francis Preparatory Academy, Alexis Martin of Townsend Harris High School, Shaquille Profit of William Cullen Bryant High School and Leah Solomon of Hillcrest High School.

Mullings also spoke about the importance of encouraging the next generation of leaders.

"Our kids are the future. They are our most precious commodity and we have to pave the way for them," he said. "Education is not a privilege, but a right. And so wherever our children are, they have the right to a quality education."

The following community members were each presented with a unique award by Katz and the committee: Dr. Ola Akinboboye, Science Award; Harold Dow, Business Award; Harriet Diaz, Education Award; Dwight Leland Johnson, Borough President's Award; Michelle Stoddart, Civic Award; Patricia Dorothy Chin, Lifetime Achievement Award; and Thomas Crater, Journalism Award.

The United African Dance Troupe, directed by Patricia Ghizamboule Robinson, also put on a performance at the event.

Navigating Medicare: 5 allies who can help

Enrolling in Medicare for the first time or starting coverage under a new plan? It might bring you back to that first day starting a new job. You knew some of the basics, but you also knew there was a lot more to learn. More than likely, you got help from colleagues who have been around for a while and helped show you the ropes.

Don't worry. With Medicare, you have the same kind of knowledgeable support. You've got a team on your side that can help make navigating the health care system easier. Goodbye hassles, hello helpers.

Here are five allies in your corner:

1. Your Primary Care Physician. This physician is the "go-to" doctor who provides guidance on your health care needs, taking the time to really get to know you, your medical history and your health goals. Think of your Primary Care Physician as the "quarterback" of your medical team - someone who can take charge of knowing the ins and outs of your health status and help drive decisions to get you on the right track and keep you there.

2. A caregiver. Perhaps the "unsung hero" of your health care team, caregivers are the ones you know you can count on -

the ones you know are there to offer support and care for you, whenever you need it. Whether a family member, neighbor, friend or professional assistant, these are the people in your life who help you along the way. Their assistance can span everything from bringing you to appointments or getting prescriptions filled to making meals or offering emotional support.

3. Your pharmacist. This team member keeps an eye on the medications you take - prescription and over-the-counter - to make sure they work safely together. Your pharmacist is a great person to talk with about how medications are making you feel and answer any questions you have on topics including what side effects to expect, what to do if you miss a dose, or how to store your meds.

4. An insurance agent. Original Medicare. Medicare Supplement. Part D. Medicare Advantage. There are many options and decisions to make when it comes to your Medicare coverage, and a licensed insurance agent can help you find the right plan, or plans, for you. Once you've selected a plan, you can also always call your agent to ask questions if your health or coverage needs change or if your plan changes from year to year.

5. Your insurance company. Within your insurance company, there are more



people than you likely realize who are working hard on your behalf to ensure you get the medical care and support you need. Insurers can offer tools, resources and support that can help you live a

healthier life.

For more information to help you navigate Medicare, visit MedicareMadeClear.com.

Courtesy BPT

Helping seniors tackle taxes and achieve financial wellness

New York City is one of the most expensive places to live in the U.S., so it is no surprise that rising housing, medical and other costs cause financial strain for many seniors living on limited incomes. That stress can become downright debilitating when tax season rolls around, but the city can help.

The Department of Consumer Affairs' NYC Free Tax Prep offers in-person help in each borough for people who earned \$54,000 or less in 2017, and additional information is available for tax filers with retirement- and pension-related questions. Keep in mind that the closer we get to the tax-filing deadline of Tuesday, April 17, 2018, these sites will be more crowded. Online help is also available for New Yorkers who earned \$66,000 or less in

2017. Visit nyc.gov/taxprep for more information.

Even with help, filing your taxes can be overwhelming, and many older New Yorkers are unaware of benefits that can reduce their taxable income and help them claim a larger refund. You might be eligible for the earned income tax credit if you were single, had no children, made up to \$15,010 and were between the ages of 25 and 64 as of the end of December; married couples without children may be eligible if they earned up to \$20,600. For families - including grandparents - with young children, the New York City Child Care Credit helps people who earned less than \$30,000.

If you are an older New Yorker who owns a home, the

Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption and Disabled Homeowners' Exemption offer tax breaks for homeowners with a combined annual income of \$58,399 or less. The School Tax Relief and Veterans Exemptions are other common exemptions.

Tax season is once a year, but financial wellness is important 365 days a year. The Department of Consumer Affairs offers free financial counseling from professionals to help New Yorkers learn skills to tackle debt, improve credit, and save and plan for the future.

For older New Yorkers who struggle to organize their finances, the Department for the Aging's Bill Payer Program can help them stay on top of their bills. Though this program doesn't offer financial help,

it does help with budgeting, check-writing and other tasks.

Call 311 to be connected to any of the services listed or for more information about tax exemptions and credits.



DONNA CORRADO,
Commissioner of the City's
Department for the Aging



IRS IMPERSONATION SCAM

WARNING:

WHAT?

Individuals impersonating Internal Revenue Service (IRS) employees are making unsolicited threatening telephone calls to taxpayers. They use the threat of arrest to obtain money from victims by falsely representing that the victims owe back taxes or other fees. The perpetrators demand that the victims send them money via iTunes cards, other prepaid debit cards, money orders, or wire transfers from their banks.

WHO?

The perpetrators are individuals who falsely claim to be IRS employees and tell intended victims they owe taxes and must pay using an iTunes card, other pre-paid debit card, money order, or wire transfer. Some of them are in the United States; however, there is a strong international component to this crime as well.

WHEN/WHERE?

Since October 2013, TIGTA has received reports of these fraudulent calls in every State in the country. The perpetrators are calling with multiple caller IDs from around the world. The top five States with the most losses are: (1) California – more than \$10 million; (2) New York – more than \$4 million; (3) Texas – more than \$4 million; (4) Illinois – more than \$3 million; and (5) Florida – more than \$2 million.¹

ABOUT US

The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) was established in 1999, as an independent agency that provides oversight of the IRS, and reports directly to the Treasury Secretary. We audit, investigate and inspect the IRS and the Federal tax system in order to ensure that the IRS is accountable for the trillions of dollars in revenue that it collects each year. We protect the integrity of the system and save taxpayers millions of dollars each year. For every dollar invested in TIGTA, taxpayers receive \$168² in savings.

WHAT TO DO?

...

First, hang up! Do not engage with these callers.

If you owe Federal taxes, or think you might owe taxes, hang up and call the IRS at 800-829-1040. IRS workers can help you with your payment questions.

If you do not owe taxes, fill out the “IRS Impersonation scam” form on TIGTA’s website, www.tigta.gov or call TIGTA at **800-366-4484**. You can also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at www.FTC.gov. Add “IRS Telephone Scam” to the comments in your complaint.

¹ Data are from Oct. 2013 to Nov. 1, 2016.

² TIGTA, *Overall Performance Report FY 2015* (September 15, 2015)

Connect With Your Civic

April 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>Easter April Fool's Day</i>	2 Spring-Jam Civic Association <i>Easter Monday</i>	3 Wayanda Civic Association	4 North Bellerose Civic Association	5 Bellerose Commonwealth Federated Blocks of Laurelton Spring-Gar	6	7
8	9 Creedmoor Civic Association	10 Rocky Hill Civic Association	11 Lost Community Civic Association	12 Cambria Heights Civic Association	13	14
15	16	17 Queens Village Civic Association	18	19	20	21
22	23 Queens Community Board 13 General Board Meeting	24 Rosedale Civic Association	25	26	27	28
29	30					

May 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Wayanda Civic Association	2 North Bellerose Civic Association	3 Bellerose Commonwealth Federated Blocks of Laurelton Spring-Gar	4	5 <i>Cinco de Mayo</i>
6	7 Spring-Jam Civic Association	8 Rocky Hill Civic Association	9 Lost Community Civic Association	10 Cambria Heights Civic Association	11	12
13 <i>Mother's Day</i>	14 Creedmoor Civic Association	15 Queens Village Civic Association	16	17	18	19 <i>Armed Forces Day</i>
20 <i>Pentecost</i>	21 Queens Community Board 13 General Board Meeting <i>Pentecost Monday</i>	22 Rosedale Civic Association	23	24	25	26
27	28 <i>Memorial Day</i>	29	30	31		



Thank you,
NYC Department of Parks & Recreation for the
"NEW" signage at Queens Village Veterans Plaza.



New York City AmeriCorps
2018-19 Applications **open now**.
Paid and volunteer positions available.
For more information, visit
www.nycservice.org or call 212.788.7550.
NO AGE REQUIREMENTS.

New York State of Opportunity — Empire State Development

Belmont Redevelopment Project

Comments on the draft scope of environmental analysis may be stated at the public scoping meeting or submitted in writing to:

Michael Avolio

Empire State Development

633 Third Avenue New York, NY 10017

or by email to: belmontoutreach@esd.ny.gov.

Written and email comments on the draft scope
of analysis will be accepted until 5:00 pm on April 12, 2018.



Volunteer At Your Neighborhood Park

*NYC Parks hold organized events throughout the year asking New Yorkers
to pitch in and paint, clean, rake, and generally take care of neighborhood parks.*

Attend the CB13 Parks & Environment Committee, Tuesday, April 17, 2018 meeting and find out how.

Springfield Park
Brookville Park
Queens Farm Park
Alley Pond Athletic Playground
Idlewild Park
Berringer Park
Laurelton Playground
Wyanda Park
Cambria Playground
Queens Village Veterans Plaza
Glen Oaks Oval

Bellerose Playground
Detective William T. Gunn Park
Bellaire Playground
Delphin H. Greene Playground
Pat Williams Playground
Father Reilly Square
Playground Eighty LXXX
Sunrise Playground
225 Street Malls
Nakks Malls
Lost Community Triangle



Queens sees soaring home sale prices, but plummeting rents: report

BY SUZANNE MONTEVERDI
smonteverdi@qns.com / @smont76

While home prices in Queens — and especially in the Rockaways — continue to soar, renters are catching a break due to falling prices, according to a new report.

According to StreetEasy, Queens sales prices climbed to record highs, rising 5 percent year-over-year for January to an all-time high of \$512,082. This is since the site started tracking approximately 13 years ago.

Prices in the Rockaways saw the most growth of any submarket, where the index rose 22.2 percent to \$525,425. The least expensive within the borough in October 2017, the area is now the third-most expensive in Queens behind the northeast and northwest Queens submarkets.

In January, College Point, Corona, south Jamaica and Woodside each saw substantial increases in home median asking price year over year. The neighborhoods of Whitestone and Beerchurst saw price decreases of about 20 percent, while Glen Oaks saw a 33 percent decrease.

Meanwhile, Queens rents fell 1.2



Photo via Wikimedia Commons/David Shankbone

Homes in Far Rockaway

percent year-over-year to an average \$2,071. Rent averages fell the most in the northwest Queens submarket,

where the average decreased by 2.4 percent to \$2,142, matching the price levels of spring 2015.

In Queens, Woodhaven saw the highest increase in median asking rent at 31 percent, while Jamaica Estates and Queensboro Hills saw the highest decreases. Prices remained stagnant in Elmhurst and east Flushing.

StreetEasy Senior Economist Grant Long noted that since home sale prices are “heating up” in the borough, buyers should expect “an increasingly tight and competitive sales market” in the coming months.

“New York City’s rental and sales markets have started off the year heading in two different directions,” he said. “Rents across Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens continue to cool, providing renters with more bargaining power than in recent years. But buyers — especially those focused on the affordable end of homes — won’t be catching the same break in 2018.”

Home sales calculations include data on condos, co-ops, townhouses and single-family homes and are sourced from the New York City Department of Finance and StreetEasy listings. Data included in the calculation of rent indices comes from listings submitted to StreetEasy by brokerages, property managers and individual landlords.

DEP to Queens: ‘Wait’ up before using water during rain storms

BY ROBERT POZARYCKI
rpozarycki@qns.com / @robpoz

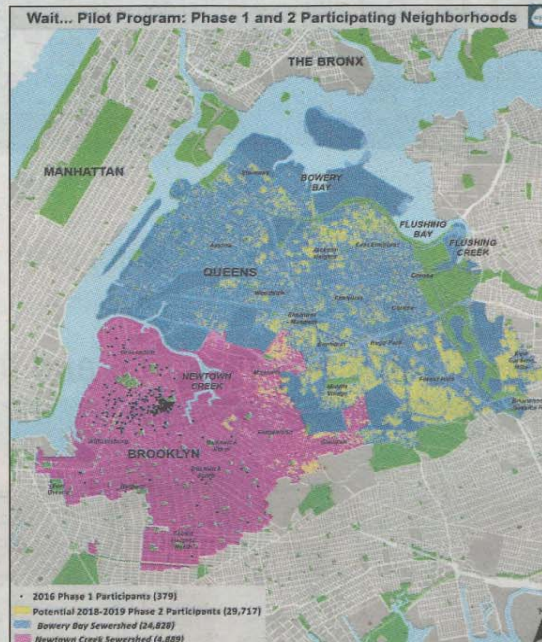
The next time it rains, the city’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) wants Queens residents to wait until it stops before doing the dishes, taking a shower or flushing a toilet.

The appropriately titled “Wait...” pilot program is expanding throughout western Queens, the DEP announced on March 5. Participating homeowners and tenants are sent text messages alerting them that the Newtown Creek and Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment plants are near capacity — and that they should minimize their water use in order to prevent sewer overflows from spilling into already polluted waterways such as the Newtown Creek and Flushing Creek.

The pilot program area of Queens covers all neighborhoods north of the Jackie Robinson Parkway and west of the Van Wyck Expressway, as well as portions of Kew Gardens Hills and Briarwood.

According to advocates, the Wait Program is geared at educating the public about where their dirty water winds up after going down the drain. Wastewater produced whenever someone washes clothes or dishes, or even flushes a toilet, travels into the city’s vast underground sewer system, destined for one of many sewage treatment plants for cleanup and processing.

But in a heavy rain event, not all of the storm runoff and wastewater winds up



Map courtesy of the NYC Department of Environmental Protection

in the sewage treatment plants. When the plants hit capacity, excess wastewater is expelled through combined sewer overflows into waterways across the city. About 90 percent of the overflow is com-

prised of storm runoff, and the rest is household wastewater containing detergents, chemicals and raw sewage.

Willis Elkins, program director of the Newtown Creek Alliance, noted that combined sewer overflows “are one of the major water quality issues” affecting the creek, which is also a designated Superfund site due to decades of industrial pollution.

“There is an immediate opportunity for residents to reduce pollution by being aware of when sewage treatment plants hit capacity during rain events and overflow into local waterways, and

then taking action to not create additional wastewater during these crucial periods,” Elkins said.

Flushing Creek and Flushing Bay are also combined sewer overflow points.

The Guardians of Flushing Bay hopes that the Wait Program will help more people understand the pollution problem while also appreciating “the natural beauty of the waterways.”

“The Flushing waterways have long been plagued by sewage and stormwater pollution from combined sewer overflows,” the Guardians of Flushing Bay said in a statement. “Many residents in the Flushing Bay and Flushing Creek watersheds are unaware that their sewage may be going into the waterways when it rains.”

Wait Program texts will be activated during heavy rain events as the Bowery Bay and Newtown Creek plants approach capacity. Once the plants are back to normal strength, participants will receive text alerts thanking them for their cooperation.

The DEP will monitor participants’ water consumption through automated water meters in each building. The program starts this April and runs through May 2019; participants may opt out of the program at any time.

“While we invest hundreds of millions of dollars every year to build infrastructure that protects the health of local waterways, the Wait Program engages citizens and allows them to directly contribute to the protection of our environment,” DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza said.

Visit www.nyc.gov/dep/wait for more information.

Northwell Health doctors perform the first robotic mastectomy at a New Hyde Park hospital

BY QUEENS COURIER STAFF
editorial@qns.com / @QNS

A one-of-a-kind surgery that helped a woman take preventative action against breast cancer while preserving her body was performed recently at a hospital in New Hyde Park.

After learning that her sister had breast cancer in 2015, Elodie Trouche, 45, a native of France who now resides in Nyack, NY, decided to be tested for the potentially life-threatening BRCA gene. After receiving a positive result, she decided to have a preventive double mastectomy – but on her terms.

With 230,000 new cases diagnosed each year, breast cancer is the most common non-skin form of cancer in the United States. Of this number, more than 100,000 women in the U.S. undergo mastectomies.

Witnessing the scars and emotional distress her sister lived through following surgery solidified Trouche's resolve. "[I] refused to be mutilated," she said. The ordeal encouraged her to find an alternative method for saving her life.

"So many women will be affected by breast cancer or the threat of it because of the BRCA gene," Trouche said. "Through education and empowerment, we can learn about new technology that will help us get through this together."

Trouche researched for two years to find surgeons who would perform a nipple-sparing mastectomy (NSM), a procedure that preserves a woman's entire breast while saving the existing, natural nipple and areola. The results of her search brought her to Northwell Health's Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde Park.

"I knew I had some time because I was having surgery as a preventive measure ... I wasn't sick," Trouche said. "I knew about robotic surgery and made up my mind that this was the best way for me. Once I found my team here at LIJ, I never looked back. I have found this entire experience to be very empowering. By educating myself and saying 'no' to what I didn't want, I had the exact type of surgery that I was hoping for."

Trouche underwent this country's first robotic NSM mastectomy and breast reconstruction surgery on March 4. Two days later, she joined her surgeons, Alan Kadison, MD, Division of Surgical Oncology; and Neil Tanna, MD, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, at a press conference to discuss the results of the procedure.

"We're seeing very real advantages to using Da Vinci technology for this type

of surgery – a decreased length of stay in the hospital, less pain, easier recuperation and most important of all, we're striving for increased patient satisfaction," Kadison said.

Traditionally, conventional NSM mastectomies involved some type of incision on the breast itself, meaning long incisions located directly on the breast. According to Dr. Tanna, the use of robotics spares the breasts.

"By doing the surgery robotically, incisions and scars are placed away from the breast, sitting instead on the chest wall near the armpit," said Tanna. "This surgery was performed as an investigational study following strict Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols. We hope to be continuing this study with other women who are interested in considering this alternative to traditional surgery."

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FOR BREAKING NEWS VISIT WWW.QNS.COM

health

Improve your heart health in 2018 with these tips

When it comes to maintaining and/or improving your heart health, it's the little things you do day after day that can have a big impact on your immediate and long-term health.

A healthy diet and plenty of exercise are naturally the first things you think of when looking at ways to support your body's most important muscle, but to really make your heart health initiatives as effective as possible, you need long-term solutions, not quick fixes.

The American Heart Association (AHA) has long been at the forefront of heart healthy initiatives, and this year's Life is Why We Give (TM) campaign is drawing support from people and companies – like Pilot Flying J – all across the nation. In order to help you live a healthier life in 2018, follow these seven heart-healthy tips today.

1. Be careful of what you snack on between meals. High-fat and high-sugar snacks are popular, but ultimately unhealthy. Opt for fresh instead of processed and choose fresh fruits and vegetables for your snacks between meals.

2. Don't just drink the drink. Your beverage choices could add unnecessary fats and sugar to your diet, so choose low-sugar and no-sugar alternatives as well as low-fat milk or cream for your coffee. This way you'll avoid drinking empty calories.

3. Avoid ordering before-the-meal extras. Cocktails, appetizers, even bread and butter are all sources of extra fat, sodium and calories. Cut them out and

your calorie intake will drop – and so will your bill.

4. On the side, please. Ask for butter, cream cheese, salad dressings, sauces and gravies to be served on the side when you dine out. This allows you to better control the quantity you consume.

5. Explore your options. When ordering fish or chicken, avoid fried whenever possible. Choose boiled, baked or grilled options instead for a healthier alternative.

6. Think small. Cutting back on portion

sizes is a great place to start eating healthier, so don't be afraid to ask for a smaller serving when you dine out. If smaller portions aren't available, ask for a to-go box when you order and place the rest of your entrée in the box to eat later.

7. Make a healthy substitution. Often a healthier choice is available for nearly any dish. For example, if you order an item that naturally comes with French fries or onion rings, ask whether you can get a side of fruit or vegetables instead. It

may cost you more, but the switch is certainly worth it.

To find even more helpful tips to enjoy a healthier diet, or to receive a free blood pressure check during the month of February, stop by one of the Urgent Care Travel (UCT) medical clinics available at select Pilot and Flying J Travel Centers. You can also support the AHA through in-store initiatives at your local Pilot and Flying J Travel Center.

Courtesy BPT



Doctors can stop dangerous drivers

The recent tragedy in Park Slope that left two children dead and two mothers injured when they were hit by an out-of-control car has pushed the subject of street safety again to the forefront.

There are several reports that the woman behind the wheel in the fatal wreck suffered from a medical condition that caused a seizure, which is why she ran the red light at intersection of Ninth Street and Fifth Avenue.

If that is indeed the case, the woman should have never been behind the wheel of a car.

Under current New York State law, a police officer, doctor or even concerned citizen can alert the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) that a person suffers from a medical condition that could make it

dangerous for themselves and others to drive a vehicle.

If the person who files the report is not a doctor, DMV will re-

ferred would make it mandatory for doctors to alert DMV if one of their patients has a condition that would affect them behind the wheel.

No one wants to have their medical ailments shared with the public, and certainly no one wants to have their driving privileges revoked, but if someone had spoken up about the driver in last week's crash, two young kids would still be alive.

No one wants to have their medical ailments shared with the public, and certainly no one wants to have their driving privileges revoked, but if someone had spoken up about the driver in last week's crash, two young kids would still be alive.

quest an examination. If it is a doctor who alerts DMV to the danger, the agency can suspend a driver's license until a physician clears them to drive again.

The problem is that reporting a potentially dangerous medical condition is not required by law. However, there is legislation in Albany to change that.

A bill currently being consid-

Of course, it will require enforcement; there are plenty of people with revoked and suspended licenses who still get behind the wheel and injure or kill pedestrians. It won't prevent every tragedy.

But if mandatory reporting requirements can keep dangerous drivers off the road, even if it saves just one life it will be worth it.

oped

School breakfast expansion can help fill the Queens hunger gap

BY JOEL BERG,
CEO, HUNGER FREE AMERICA

Queens has traditionally been thought of a solidly middle class area, so it's easy to forget the borough has a serious poverty and hunger problem. Yet, due to a combination of low wages and high housing costs, nearly a quarter of a million Queens residents live in households that can't always afford enough food, according to federal data analyzed by Hunger Free America.

Even worse, one in 10 Queens children struggle against hunger.

Statewide in New York, more than 2.5 million people, and more than 700,000 children, live in food insecure homes.

Child hunger not only is a moral blot on our society and devastates the physical and emotional well-being of children, it makes it nearly impossible for children to effectively learn. To be schooled, you must be fueled. To be well-read, you must be well-fed.

Yet, according to the Food Research and Action Center, even though many schools in the state provide the theoretical opportunity for low-income children to obtain federal-subsidized school breakfasts, only slightly more than half of the children in the state who receive subsidized school lunches actually eat school breakfasts.

Why do so few children who need school breakfasts in New York get them? Breakfast is often served in the cafeteria before the school day starts. Transportation schedules and social stigma, among other factors, prevent kids from participating – often leaving them starting the school day too hungry to learn.

Breakfast After the Bell – where breakfast is offered after the official start of the school day – is proven to be one of the best practices to overcome barriers to school breakfast participation. Schools across New York that have implemented a Breakfast After the Bell program have experienced significant increases in the number of students who eat school breakfast. Beyond improving school breakfast participation, Breakfast After the Bell has also been linked to stronger academic performance, improved student behavior, and reduced absenteeism among students.

On top of all that, the vast majority of the costs for these breakfasts are paid for by the federal government.

It is no wonder that, for all of those reasons, Mayor Bill de Blasio has mandated that all elementary schools in New York City provide Breakfast After the Bell. The mayor deserves great credit for this huge leap forward.

Those are also the reasons why we strongly support Governor Andrew Cuomo's proposal to require schools statewide with more than 70 percent free and reduced price (F/RP) meal eligible students to offer Breakfast After the Bell, while providing some limited state seed money to support schools as they implement the program.

The governor's proposal would be very beneficial to children across the state and we are grateful to him for his progressive leadership in advancing this solution. However, we recommend the Legislature improve upon the proposal in two ways: by requiring all schools at the 70 percent F/RP rate to offer breakfast free of charge to all students; and by lowering the threshold for requiring a Breakfast After the Bell model in schools from 70 percent to 60 percent. These simple changes would allow the proposal to reach a total of nearly 150,000 students statewide and would generate approximately \$53 million in federal reimbursements. Such efforts would ensure that many middle and high schools in Queens serve such breakfast.

These efforts alone won't solve the problem, because families will still need sufficient food during nights, weekends and vacation. That's why our society needs to create more jobs, raise wages and ensure that other federal nutrition programs, such as SNAP (food stamps), remain strong. Still, providing breakfasts to every child on every school day will take a huge bite out of child hunger.

New York state leads the nation on so many fronts, from growing the nation's most delicious apples to the producing the country's greatest theatrical performances. The time is long overdue for New York to also lead the nation in ending child hunger.



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Visit nyc.gov/parks/lifeguards or call 311 for more information and come to one of our training locations to be tested. All you need is a bathing suit, towel, lock, and photo ID. Goggles are optional.

Become a lifeguard this summer!

Technology can help people manage Type 2 diabetes in real time

There is no disputing that digital health technology and connected devices can produce massive amounts of data. But that data, on its own, is not always particularly useful.

The real value comes from translating that data into personalized and actionable information and putting it into the hands of people, in real time, whose health might depend on those facts and figures.

UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage members with Type 2 diabetes may be eligible to utilize new wearable technology to help monitor their glucose levels 24/7 via the convenience of a cell phone. They can also connect directly with a health coach to seek individual support, share information and make behavior changes to improve their health.

Announced in mid-January with DexCom, Inc., the leader in continuous glucose monitoring, at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, this innovative pairing - high-tech, real-time wearable monitors with direct access to diabetes coaches - will be available to eligible plan participants across multiple regions throughout this year.

Here's how the blend of high-tech and



high-touch care supports people managing Type 2 diabetes:

1. Dexcom's Mobile Continuous Glucose Monitoring System (CGM) technology consists of a sensor - usually worn on the abdomen - that continuously reads glucose levels just beneath the skin.

2. A transmitter sends the data to a

smartphone, which processes and displays updated data every five minutes and can reveal relationships between eating, exercise and blood sugar that are difficult to observe with only test strips and a glucose meter.

3. Diabetes coaches help participants interpret the transmitted data and give

guidance on how to change behavior pertaining to nutrition and exercise to help keep glucose levels in a safe range.

4. Participants also receive an activity tracker to help them understand and act upon data gathered by the wearable device.

5. Glucose data summaries can be shared with participants and their primary care providers to help foster better care coordination, which ideally may result in increased glucose control, reductions in medications and an empowered approach to managing diabetes.

"With more than 27 million people nationwide living with Type 2 diabetes, there is urgent need to address this epidemic in new ways," said Brian Thompson, CEO of UnitedHealthcare Medicare & Retirement. "Continuous glucose monitoring can be a game changer for people enrolled in our Medicare Advantage plans, as the data can be translated into personalized information that can be acted upon in real time."

To learn more about UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage plans, visit UHCMedicarePlans.com.

Courtesy BPT

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

MANUFACTURING AN IMPORTANT PART OF QUEENS

Fifteen percent of all private-sector jobs in New York City are in the manufacturing sector, according to the NYC Economic Development Corporation.

In early 2006, the Bloomberg administration created 16 Industrial Business Zones (IBZs) to help combat this problem. To bolster industrial sector growth, manufacturers were given tax credits for relocating to specific IBZs; in Queens, namely, Jamaica/JFK, Long Island City, Maspeth, Ridgewood, Sunnyside, and Woodside.



MAYRA DIRICO
CHAIRPERSON

Then, in November of 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced a ten-point plan to strengthen and preserve the industrial and manufacturing sectors that are important sources of jobs for New Yorkers of all backgrounds and skill levels.

The de Blasio plan represents an expansion of policy, and acts as a means to propel the sector into the next era of global innovation and commerce. Further, the plan includes more than \$200 million in investment to spur development of new industrial

space across the five boroughs and help industrial and manufacturing firms start, grow, and thrive in New York City.

Shifting the focus to our borough of Queens, according to the state Department of Labor there are now approximately 1,300 manufacturing businesses in Queens.

The Queens Chamber, through its Manufacturing Committee, is working to act as the hub and central resource for our local manufacturers. By connecting the dots for our manufacturers, these business-

es will be able to cross-pollinate and open new opportunities for one another.

By connecting the dots for our manufacturers, these businesses will be able to cross-pollinate and open new opportunities for one another.

The industrial sector remains a cornerstone of the New York City economy and continues to be a crucial source of decent-paying jobs. The city and state must do all

it can to retain these jobs, which are the lifeblood for many of our chamber members.

We will continue to advocate for the interests of our local manufacturers as well as finding them ways to grow their operations.

Lottery now open for 81 affordable units at 10 Halletts Point in Astoria

BY ANGELA MATUA
amatua@qns.com

The first of seven buildings at the 2.5-million-square-foot development project in Astoria will open this summer and the lottery for 81 affordable units in the tower is now open.

The building at 10 Halletts Point will include 405 units, two outdoor terraces, a fitness center with a yoga studio and a 25,000-square-foot supermarket.

Of the 81 affordable units available, six are studio apartments, 50 are one-bed-

room apartments, 24 are two-bedroom apartments and one is a three-bedroom apartment.

Other amenities include barbecue grills and dining tables, a resident lounge, a party room with a kitchen, "Tot Spot" children's playroom and a parking garage.

The deadline to apply for housing is May 7. To apply online, visit www.nyc.gov/housingconnect. To request an application by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to 26-01 1st Street c/o The Wavecrest Management Team, 87-14 116th St., Richmond Hill, NY 11418.



Photo courtesy of The Durst Organization

The lottery for 81 affordable housing units at 10 Halletts Point is officially open.

NEW YORK CITY ELECTED OFFICIALS AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE MARTIN VAN BUREN HIGH SCHOOL IN GOOD STANDING

State Senator Leroy G. Comrie, Assembly Member David I. Weprin, New York City Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik, Martin Van Buren High School Principal Sam Sochet, and local civic leaders announced on Friday, March 23rd, 2018, that as of December 1, 2017, as a result of extensive investment by the city, strong effort on the part of school leadership, and support from the local community, the school is no longer a priority school and will be officially off of receivership. The school is now in good standing and will continue to thrive with continued investment in programming, technology, and physical upgrades.



Photo by Mark McMillan



Summer in the City: Summer Academy

Summer Academy is for students who have not been recommended to attend Summer School.

Summer in the City's Summer Academy programs offer free, full-day summer programming with hands-on STEM activities, enriching reading and math curriculum, and visits to museums, parks, and other cultural sites. Students participating in Summer in the City programs will also receive free, healthy breakfast and lunch.

Free transportation is provided, depending on students' grade level and the distance between their residence and school. Learn more about student transportation services.

Want to receive the latest information about Summer in the City's programming?

Sign up for email updates. SITC@schools.nyc.gov. You can also call 718-935-2838 for help.

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Queens Mosque Target Of Graffiti

BY SAM RAPPAPORT

The city Police Department's Hate Crime Task Force is investigating a recent incident at a mosque construction site in Queens Village.

According to police, graffiti that included the words "Mosque," "911" and "Terr" were found on multiple locations at a construction site at 80-35 237th St. Police opened an investigation into the incident after being notified of the graffiti on Friday evening.

The construction site is owned by the Islamic Foundation of New York, which continues to raise money for the completion of a mosque at the location. The foundation is based in Bellerose Manor.

Albert Fox Cahn, the legal direc-

tor for New York's branch of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), said that the Queens Village incident fits in with a larger pattern of anti-Muslim actions across the nation.

"In the last two years, we've seen a tenfold increase in anti-Muslim actions, which include hate crimes, discrimination and harassment," Cahn said.

In particular, Cahn said, there has been a notable increase in anti-mosque vandalism as well as heightened opposition to the construction of new mosques.

Cahn pointed to President Donald Trump to explain the trend.

"We can't ignore the fact that we have a president who is normalizing

anti-Muslim rhetoric," Cahn said.

Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR's national communications director, also singled out Trump as emboldening a new generation of white supremacists.

"Previously, bigotry and hate were toward the fringe of society, but Trump and his rhetoric and his policies have mainstreamed white supremacy," Hooper said.

Cahn said that while these attacks often showcase the worst of humanity, the aftermath of such incidents illuminates the strength of cross-cultural solidarity.

"What we see is interfaith allies reaching out to support mosques," Cahn said. "I think we have most often seen solidarity in the face of this sort of hate."

What Holds America Together

By: David Brooks

nytimes.com, March 19, 2018

Last week I went to Houston to see the rodeo. That rodeo is not like other rodeos. It's gigantic. It goes for 20 days. There can be up to 185,000 people on the grounds in a single day and they are of all human types — rural ranchers, Latino families, African immigrants, drunken suburban housewives out for a night on the town.

When you are lost in that sea of varied humanity, you think: What on earth holds this nation together? The answer can be only this: Despite our differences, we devote our lives to the same experiment, the American experiment to draw people from around the world and to create the best society ever, to serve as a model for all humankind.

Unity can come only from a common dedication to this experiment. The American consciousness can be formed only by the lab reports we give one another about that experiment — the jeremiads, speeches, songs and conversations that describe what the experiment is for, where it has failed and how it should proceed now.

One of my favorites of these lab reports is Walt Whitman's essay "Democratic Vistas," published in 1871. The purpose of democracy, Whitman wrote, is not wealth, or even equality; it is the full flowering of individuals. By dispersing responsibility to all adults, democracy "supplies a training school for making first class men." It is "life's gymnasium." It forges "freedom's athletes" — strong and equal women, courageous men, deep-souled people capable of governing themselves.

Whitman had hoped that the end of the Civil War and Lincoln's sacrificial death would bring the nation together. But instead there was corruption, division, demoralization and inequality. For Whitman, America's great foe was feudalism, the caste structure of Europe that Americans had rebelled against, but that always threatened to grow back: "Of all dangers to a nation, as things exist in our day, there can be no greater one than having certain portions of the people set off from the rest by a line drawn — they not privileged as others, but degraded, humiliated, made of no account."

Whitman feared economic and social feudalism, but above all he detested cultural and moral feudalism. He believed that writers, artists, musicians, poets and preachers were the real legislators of mankind, and in America they were detached from the nitty-gritty American experience. They still looked back to Europe — to the parlor, the perfumed courtier and the spirit of gentility — for their models of character, manners and education. They looked down on America's democratic mass.

That left a spiritual vacuum, he believed. Americans had no way to see how their daily exertions contributed to a common spiritual cause. They saw no way to achieve individual salvation through community effort.

America has created a brilliant political constitution, Whitman wrote. It has amassed untold wealth. But it has not created a democratic culture that captures, celebrates and ennobles the way average Americans live day to day.

"The problem of humanity all over the civilized world is social and religious, and is to be finally met and treated by literature." When there is no common sense of mystical purpose, you end up with alienation, division, distrust, "universal ennui," a loss of faith in the American project. "Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States," he observed.

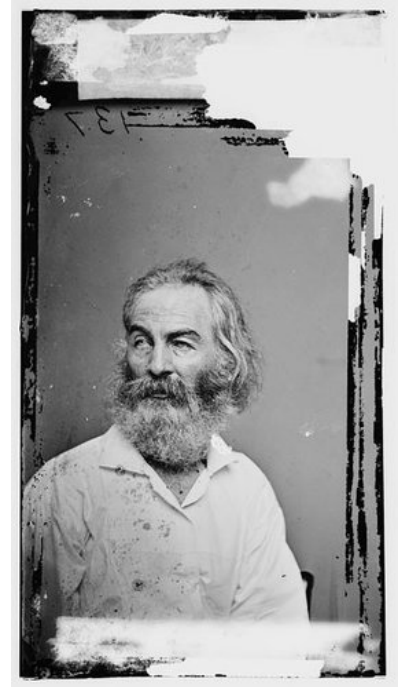
Whitman was not, however, pessimistic. He had worked as a nurse during the Civil War, watching men recover and die, and the experience had given him illimitable faith in the goodness of average citizens. Average American soldiers showed more fortitude, religious devotion and grandeur than all the storybook heroes, he wrote. They died not for glory, nor even to repel invasion, but out of gratitude to have been included in the American experiment. They died "for an emblem, a mere abstraction — for the life, the safety of the flag."

Whitman spent his life trying to spiritualize democratic life and reshape the American imagination, to help working people see the epic heroism all around them that unites the American spirit.

He didn't mind a little healthy rudeness, what we would call the politically incorrect. He thought that the cause of democracy is sometimes aided not by "the best men only, but sometimes more by those that provoke it — by the combats they arouse."

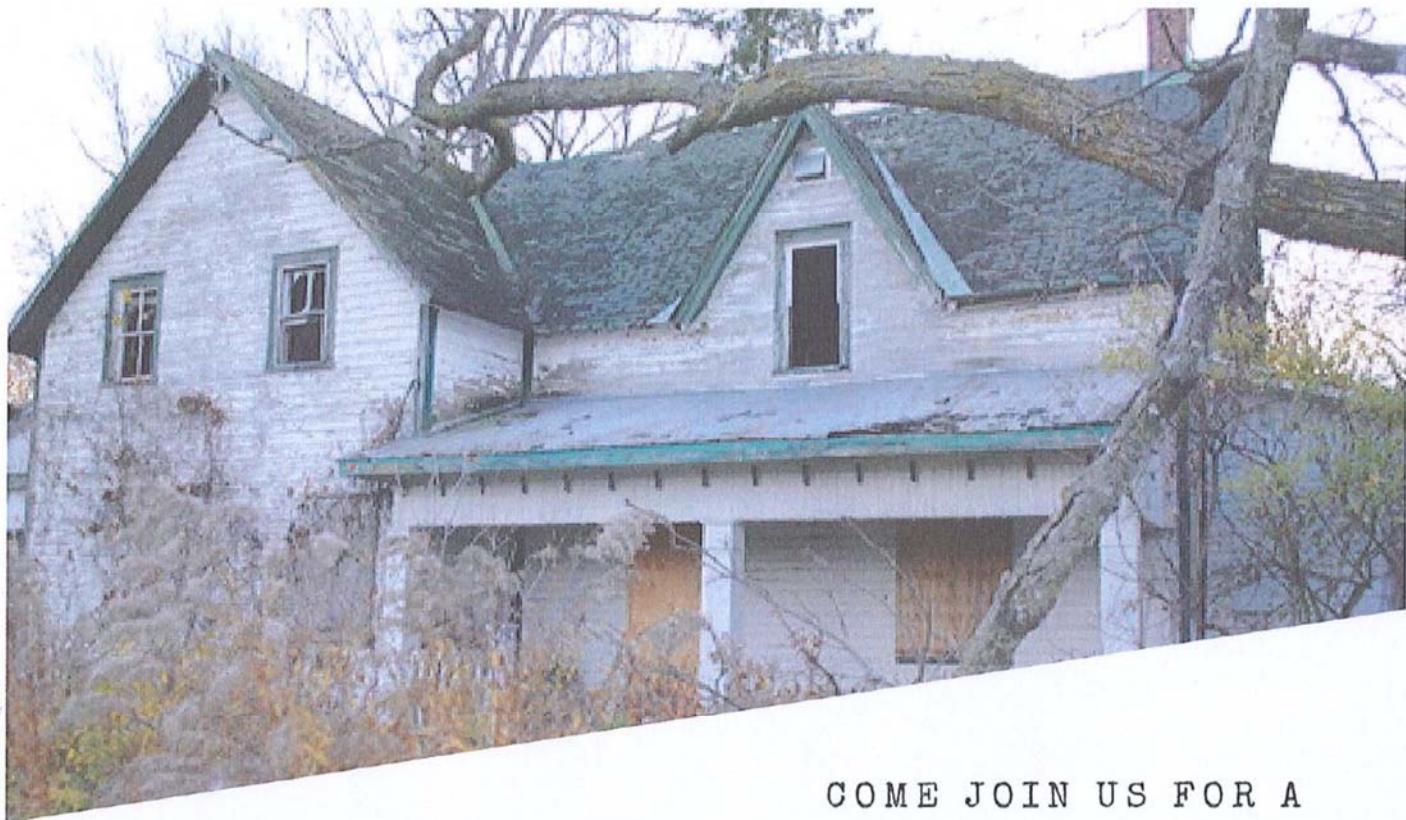
And above all, he pointed out that the American experiment is young. It is just getting started. "Thus we presume to write, as it were, upon things that exist not, and travel by maps yet unmade, and a blank. But the throes of birth are upon us." True democracy is still in the future.

So much of what he wrote rings true today: the need to see democratic life as an exhilarating adventure, the terrible damage done when you tell groups that they are of no account, the need for a unifying American mythos, the power of culture to provide that mythos and, above all, the reminder that this is still early days. We're still a young country. The times may be discouraging, but the full strength of American democracy is still waiting to be born.



Walt Whitman, circa 1860

Credit: Library of Congress



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- ✧ **Café Regal**, (Renewal)
225-07 Linden Blvd., Cambria Heights
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234-04 Merrick Blvd., Laurelton
- ✧ **Indian Taj Inc.**, (Renewal)
257-05 Union Turnpike, Glen Oaks

- ✧ **Starz Banquet Hall** (Renewal)
231-36 Merrick Boulevard, Laurelton
- ✧ **Burger Joint** (Alteration)
- ✧ **JFK International Airport**, Terminal 7
- ✧ **La Nueva Delicia Corp.** (Renewal)
217-19 Jamaica Avenue, Queens Village

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