Prosp ect Lefferts Gardens House & Garden Tour

Sunday, June 5, 2011 • Noon–5pm
SPONSORED BY THE LEFFERTS MANOR ASSOCIATION

Tickets: $20 in advance/$25 on tour day at K-Dog & DuneBuggy, 43 Lincoln Rd.
(Note: No children under 12; except infants in front packs only)
Eighty-turn-of-the-20th-Century homes and nine private gardens
Complimentary refreshments and wine tasting
• Discounts from neighborhood merchants
FOR MORE INFORMATION—CALL 718-284-6210 or 718-462-0024
E-MAIL plghousetour@earthlink.net VISIT leffertsmansion.org
WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION

Tour Guides Volunteers are needed to work 2½ hour shifts and receive free tour tickets in return for participating. To volunteer, contact Carol Schaffer at 718-462-0024 or asc@chafferguino.com

Food Donations Cookies, brownies, cakes, cupcakes, muffins, beverages, etc. are needed. These should be brought in on Saturday, 6-1; 4-1pm; 142 Rulland Road; on Sunday 6/5 (Tour Day): 9-11am—456 Maple Street (enter at rear via driveway)

See page 3 for a preview of the 2011 PLG House & Garden Tour

FIRST IN A 3-PART SERIES ON OUR NEIGHBORHOOD’S 2010 CENSUS PROFILE

Latest Census Finds PLG’s Black Population Fell 25% in the Past 20 Years

by Milford Prewitt

Centralization is usually defined as middle-to-upper incomes leaving to move underdeveloped neighborhood long occupied and dominated by working-class people of color. Centrization is widely given a thumbs up by politicians, community leaders, landlords and other business interests who say it promotes diversity and helps to satisfy the neighborhood’s pent-up demand for mainstream retail and restaurants, improved infrastructure, more affluent police and sometimes, better schools.

But centrization has a downside in that over time local domestic minority groups begin contracting as housing costs, property values and taxes become unavailable to working-class incomes.

According to the 2010 Census, Prospect Lefferts Gardens has joined a growing list of previously black dominated communities and cities nationwide where centrization shows up as a sword that cuts both ways. In PLG’s case, the Census describes the black community has plummeted in number in the past 20 years while the white population is soaring.

To be clear, blacks (African-Americans and those of African descent from the West Indies, the Caribbean and Africa itself) remain by far the predominant racial group in PLG, accounting for 78 percent of the neighborhood’s total population. It should also be made clear that the impressive rate of growth of the white population came from a relatively tiny base, meaning that any increase is bound to accelerate the growth rate.

Still, the Census numbers tell an interesting story:

■ PLG’s total population declined from 43,131 residents in 2000 to 31,782 in 2010, a 27.1 percent drop. In 1990, the Census counted 44,467 people living in PLG.

■ PLG’s black residential population fell at a faster rate, losing 6,317 individuals—a 17 percent decline—from 35,557 in 2000 to 29,360 in 2010. In 1990, the Census counted 35,611 black people here, which means the black community has nosedived 24.5 percent from its peak 20 years ago.

■ The 3,390 people who identified themselves as white in the 2000 Census were the roots of the neighborhood’s diversify. Their numbers grew by 3,040—a 17 percent increase—from 9,519 in 1990, whites numbers 12,549, according to the Census.

■ PLG’s Latino population dropped 10 percent from 3,818 in 2000 to 3,209 in 2010.

■ The neighborhood’s Asians sustained the steepest rate of decline of any racial group. Numbering 870 in 2000, the Asian population nosedived 28 percent in 2010, to 621.

The departure of blacks from the neighborhood and the accelerating increase in new white neighbors make PLG a textbook example of a national trend that has been under way since Bill Clinton was in the White House. In essence, a number of historically and predominantly black inner-city neighborhoods nationwide—indeed, whole cities in some cases—are changing complexion as blacks move out when gentrification ignites a rise in housing costs.

Urban sociologists and demographic researchers say now with the faint signs of an economic recovery under way, PLG follows such traditionally black-dominated places as Harlem and Brownsville, San Francisco, Harlem, Bed-Stuy, Fort Greene, even Washington, D.C., New Orleans and other such communities where white residential growth is surging in towns or communities that had been overwhelmingly black and were once thought to be unappealing to a middle class lifestyle.

Information specialists at the Census Bureau say the results on PLG’s population was based on Census forms and follow-up correspondence mailed or hand delivered during the spring of 2009 to every domicile they could find and confirm—even vacant homes—in an eight census tract grid that closely—but not exactly—corresponds to the traditional boundaries of PLG (see map).

While some community activists and elected officials in Harlem, Bed-Stuy, D.C. and elsewhere have expressed mixed feelings about gentrification when it descends on working-class neighborhoods, our Congresswoman Rep. Yvette Clarke—a lifelong resident of PLG and previously our City Councilwoman—says she worries that housing cost inflation is behind the black exodus.

In Rep. Clarke’s reading of the trends, she sees a neighborhood that has always been integrated and where there has been an alternating ebh-and-flow in its racial composition over the decades.

“I see this as cyclical,” Clarke says. “Thirty-to-35 years ago, the same thing happened when whites out-numbered blacks, what happened was as whites kids graduated high school and moved on to college, their parents sold their homes to black people and thanks to the [one-family] covenant in Lefferts Manor, it has been one of the most stable communities in all of New York City.

“I don’t think it’s a problem of gentrification. It’s a problem of affordability as I see it. Wages and salaries have not kept up and so many black families 30 years later are having a hard time staying here and moving out. But this has always been an integrated community, going back even 40 years ago.”

New York State Senator Eric Adams says he welcomes PLG becoming more multicultural.

“We’re all about diversity,” Adams says, pointing out that few elected officials in the state have as diverse a constituency as his District 17, which, in addition to PLG, includes Park Slope, Prospect Heights, Crown Heights, Sunset Park, Prospect Park, Central Flatbush and others.

But like Mayor Bloomberg and Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, who both criticized the 2010 Census for undercounting New York City and Brooklyn, Adams distrusts the local Census numbers. He argues that huge swaths of Latinos, Caribbean-Americans, African-Americans and other immigrant and ethnic groups were suspicious about how their information would be used and therefore did not fill out the forms, making the process statistically flawed. Despite this, Census officials say they have no intention of doing a recount in New York State.

Adams is nonetheless bullish about the direction PLG is heading.

“My job is to make sure that rents (continued on page 3)
Executive Roxanne Jones Authors Book On the Struggles of Black Athletes

Say It Loud; An Illustrated History of the Black Athlete is an engrossing and well-researched book that compiles both action photos and personal images of black athletes who fought as hard for respect and equality in society as they did for excellence and victory on the field. Written by Lefferts Manor resident Roxanne Jones, the book brings to life the stories of well-known and obscure black athletes since the late 1800s who used their natural gifts and celebrity in the struggle for racial, sexual and economic equality.

Jones is well-equipped to produce such a work. A career sports journalist who formerly was the assistant sports editor of the New York Daily News, Jones is the founding editor of ESPN The Magazine and senior vice president of ESPN, the all-sports cable channel. An alumna of Penn State University, Jones earned an MBA at UCLA's Anderson School of Business. She is widely considered one of the smartest women in the business of sports and is a frequent guest speaker and pundit who can be seen on MSNBC, MTV, BET and other networks.

INTERVIEW BY EDDIE MILLER BURKE

The Echo: How long have you lived in the Manor?
Roxanne: I've lived in The Manor since 2004; seven years now. My first home was 49 Rufusland—a beautiful limestone house on the corner of Nostrand and Flatbush avenues on Fenmore that year. It's a charming A-frame with a wraparound porch. It's like country living right in Brooklyn. I just love this neighborhood.

How did you come to discover the neighborhood and what compelled you to buy a house here?
I knew nothing about this neighborhood until I went on the house tour. In fact, I'd never really even ventured this far down Flatbush Avenue when I lived in Prospect Heights. After all, I was a new kid! And it wasn't the beautiful homes, it was the beautiful people and families who live here. Describe your household.
I grew up in a two-story brownstone. The husband didn't like it when we moved it with me to the new house.

What do you do exactly at ESPN?
I've been at ESPN for nearly 13 years. In my role as executive vice president of publishing, I develop content initiatives for the magazine and the rest of the company that will expand our audiences and grow revenue. Oh yeah, and also I go to a lot of professional sporting events. That's the best part!

What is the title of your book, "Say It Loud, An Illustrated History of the Black Athlete"?
I'm a huge sports fan – Knicks, Yankees, Eagles. But football comes first. I love boxing, too. But it's a dying sport nowadays. I started my journalism career in news – I'm a political junkie – but got a promotion at the Philadelphia Inquirer and the job was in New Jersey. I couldn't turn it down, even though I never wanted to be a sports journalist. But it all worked out well.

What do you do of your own accord?
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INTERVIEW BY ASHRA FII

The Echo: How long have you lived in Prospect Lefferts?
Hastick: Since I immigrated to this country in '72 I've been living in the area — first on Clarkson Avenue and then on Maple. Finally I decided to make this area my home.

What's the attraction of naming your business Lefferts?
I was the vice chairman of Community Board 9 for many years so I had a lot to do with the renaissance that's taking place in this area. The neighborhood has moved in a really positive direction. It's a diverse neighborhood and people from all over the world want to live here.

Was there something unique about this PLG that gave you the idea to start CACCI?
When I was on Clarkson Avenue, I worked with the residents in the block association. I actually saw that there was a need to help small businesses on all the commercial strips. Getting involved on the community board opened my eyes even more in terms of the entrepreneurial spirit in the neighborhood. That's what gave you the idea to start CACCI?

What do you do
To help small, emerging and start-up businesses navigate their way in the community and with the city. We've had a number of workshops, and if you'd like to take your business to the next level, you can get an appointment to see one of the counselors.

What has been the most important lesson you learned in your career?
You've had an economic downturn. What effects have you seen from the recession on the members of CACCI?
The real estate and retail businesses are going through some very challenging times. I think the City of New York has some excellent programs, and people who are having difficulty can reach out to the Caribbean American Chamber. There are a lot of agencies out there, to help small business owners who are actually going through some tough times. I think they're there to help them survive.

What is the mission of CACCI?
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The PLG Housing Market: Who owns? Who rents? What do they pay?

Brooklyn at Brooklyn College, says if blacks are leaving PLG in large numbers, many may be returning to the Southern communities from which their parents and grandparents fled carved fireplacemantels and a wainscoting, seven handsomely original woodwork including unusual photographs and intricate fretwork, beaded in bygone days.

A 1909 freestanding Colonial Revival, with a charming wraparound porch, showcases a wealth of fabulous original Arts and Crafts details and exquisite stained-glass windows. Oriental rugs and period furnishings reinforce the nostalgia for bygone days.

A late Romanesque Revival four-story townhouse, designed in 1898, still retains much of its original woodwork including intricate fretwork, beaded wainscoting, seven hand-carved fireplace mantels and a grand built-in china cabinet with beveled-glass doors. Modern amenities include a home office and a luxurious bathroom.

A dramatic South African masks and sculptures appoint an impeccably restored traditional townhouse with a contemporary custom-designed English basement. The deck, with teak furnishings, leads to a travertine patio outfitted with cushioned seating and a marble-topped fire pit table, perfect for entertaining and landscaped garden.

A circa-1900 three-story brick house, with columned porch, features an amazing garage for outdoor dining. The juxtaposition of classic with contemporary detail intact, reveals a sleek custom designed totally integrated kitchen with space-saving European appliances and maintenance-free Caesar stone countertops. The do-it-yourself owner renovated the English basement into a relaxing family room with projection TV and a bar for enjoying home-made beer and soda.

In a 101-year-old home, a dramatic zinc-topped peninsula set in a grand period-style oak framework, effectively links the new state-of-the-art kitchen to the traditional dining room, creating an open dialogue between the two. Old World accents include a stately 1904 burled-walnut secretary, a quarter-sawn oak sideboard and a William Morris wallpaper dado.

New life has been breathed into a one-time rooming house, transforming its dark and dreary interior into a light-filled contemporary living space, adding a spacious family room, gourmet kitchen and three up-to-date bathrooms.

A 1910 brownstone, with much of its original detail intact, reveals a sleek custom designed totally integrated kitchen with space-saving European appliances and maintenance-free Caesar stone countertops. The do-it-yourself owner renovated the English basement into a relaxing family room with projection TV and a bar for enjoying home-made beer and soda.

The extensive grounds, porch and private back patio of a 1917 neo-Georgian home, commissioned by William H. Todd, head of the New York-based Todd Shipyards Corporation, are yours to view as you enjoy complimentary refreshments.

Blue Roost Petite Café, 530 Flatbush Ave.
A 10% discount on all menu items until 9 p.m.
Café Entorno, 51 Lincoln Rd.
A 25% discount on a minimum purchase of $10. Offer good until 9 p.m.
65 Fen Wines, 65 Fenimore St.
An invitation for a special wine tasting from 4 to 6 p.m.
Art Nouveau, 1005 Nostrand Ave.
A 10% discount on all purchases.
Lincoln Park Tavern, 49 Lincoln Rd.
A 20% discount on a minimum purchase of $10. Offer good until 9 p.m.
Trixie’s Pet Food and Supplies, 575 Flatbush Ave.
A 15% discount on all products. Offer good noon to 9 p.m.
Gino’s Trattoria & Brick Oven Pizza, 548 Flatbush Ave.
A 25% discount on a minimum purchase of $10. Offer good until 9 p.m.
K. D. & Duneburr, 43 Lincoln Rd.
A complimentary small coffee or tea until closing.
King of Tandoor, 600 Flatbush Ave.
A 10% discount on in-store service, take-out or delivery. Offer good until 10:30 p.m.
Kings County Nurseries, 625 New York Ave.
Download a 10% discount coupon at kingscounty nursery.com. Use on in-store purchase of $20 or more (excludes landscaping services). Good anytime.
Lincoln Park Tavern, 49 Lincoln Rd.
A 25% discount on a minimum purchase of $10. Offer good until 9 p.m.
Smile, For Every Sighth in You. 501 Flatbush Ave.
All-croissants customer is offering a 25% discount on all purchases.
Offer good noon to 5:30 p.m.
Talbott Tribe Global Trade, 593 Flatbush Ave.
A 15% discount on all purchases. Offer good noon to 9 p.m.

State Senator Eric Adams to Move Office
An uncooperative landlord who won't negotiate a more reasonable rent increase or make needed property improvements will lead to State Senator Eric Adams moving his local staff office from Flatbush and Midwood St. to new space at Bedford Ave. and Montgomery St., directly across the street from Medgar Evers College.

"We'll still be in the neighborhood, just not on Flatbush anymore," Adams said. "We've already started the move." Adams said he expects the move to be complete by early summer.

Latest Census

• A speedier passport application process is underway;
• A quicker response to consumer complaints has been instituted; and
• The installation of an advanced, high-tech tracking system that allows postal employees to insure that all mail is delivered to customers' homes more accurately and before 5 p.m. is off and running.

Wardner urged residents with problems to take advantage of the CAC by reaching Ben Edwards at bnedwards@aol.com.

As asked by several residents why postal rates keep rising, Warner said the wider use of e-mail, competition from parcel delivery services and soaring gas prices are behind it. He said for every penny gasoline prices go up, it costs the Postal Service $0.040,000 a year.

In other news from the spring meeting:

Tree guards: The first phase of the neighborhood's tree guard installation is finished with a second phase possible by the fall. Although there are some residents who claim to have filled out their forms on time but still have no tree guards, Edwards encouraged them to be patient. The program is for all of Brooklyn not just the Manor, and "we were lucky to be granted more tree guards per area than any other neighborhood," he said. He reminded the audience that not all tree pits qualify for guards. Tree guards won't be installed if the sidewalk is cracked and in disrepair; if there are overgrown roots; if there is no tree to begin with; and if the tree pit or sidewalk is too narrow to allow the pits to be enlarged, which is part of the project. For those who received tree guards, Edwards urged residents to care for them and keep them clean.

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Police Seizures of Street Drugs Brings Down PLG’s Crime Rate, But Theft of Digital Devices Continues

Throughout the first quarter of 2011, PLG’s streets are a lot safer, thanks to a big drop in serious crime and a big increase in illegal drug seizures, said Police Commissioner Inspector Peter Simoniets, said “snatch-and-grab” device theft remains a big problem, as unarmed users of cellphones, digital music players, cameras and handheld computers are losing their gadgets to hoodlum criminals. Simoniets said that police have yet to make an arrest in the break-ins of burglaries of two of the neighborhood’s most popular restaurants, Entourage on Lincoln Rd and Blue Roost on Flatbush Ave., which hit twice.

Overall, there were 17 major crimes in the three months ending in March, Community Affairs Officer Vincent Martino reported. There were a family assault case, seven were burglaries (including the three against the restaurants) and seven were grand larcenies —three car thefts and four cellphones. All of the cellphones were grab-and-run cases in the subway or on the platform at Prospect Park.

Not one home in Lefferts Manor was burglarized in the quarter. Martinos reported. Delivering the precinct’s crime update at the LMA spring general meeting, Simoniets said since the police department’s best efforts to warn of unarmed cellphones to be more conscious of their surroundings, digital-theft crime is growing not only in PLG, but throughout the city as well.

He said cellphone theft has replaced purse snatching as the top criminal activity as criminals have acquired interchangeable SIM cards — so-called “subscriber identity modules,” the miniaturized hard disk inside of some cellphones that holds personal information, directories and text history — that allow them to defeat security codes.

Inspector Peter Simoniets, who heads the 73rd Precinct. Photo: Bob Marvin

The bad guys know what these devices are worth,” Simoniets said, referring to all the handheld digital devices, “Don’t tell when walking and tell friends and family not to test and talk.”

Many victims are coming to or from the sub way, he added. But a number of victims were using their devices while sitting next to the train’s doors, losing the gadget to a robber who snatched it and swooped when the door opened.

He urged owners of handheld electronics to have their gadgets fitted with a secret number at the precinct so that if the device is stolen and recovered, police can more quickly return it to the owners.

He also urged members to use the new program called “call the PC,” that the precinct started in January.

Overall serious crime is going down.

Simoniets said major crimes in his precinct’s neighborhood are down by 50 percent in 2011. Not one home in Lefferts Manor was burglarized in the quarter. Martinos reported.

To preserve its collection and help the artists, the gallery is having its annual fundraising gala on Thursday, June 23, 6-9 p.m. Admission is $75. A public sale of some of their works will be held June 24-26. Admission is free.

The gallery began in 1991 as a way to help support CAMBA’s many services, while simultaneously supporting artists living and working in Brooklyn. With the aid of an art dealer raised in Zimbabwe and living in Brooklyn, CAMBA’s Shona Gallery is able to have a direct relationship with the artists, whose work is purchased outright.

Like Spanish, Shona is both the name of a language and the diverse mix of people who speak that language, with different dialects, cultures and traditions under the same umbrella. This diversity is reflected in the broad range of styles and techniques exhibited in the art, essentially stone carvings. Shona artists have mastered over generations.

The stone used for the carvings is among the rarest on the earth, and is even scarce in Zimbabwe despite having quarries where the stones were formed tens of millions of years ago.

One of the more popular stones used is called springstone, or black serpentinite, known to be one of the hardest and least available stones in Zimbabwe, but is much coveted by the Shona artists for its under layers of brown, which adds a rich dimension to an otherwise hard black surface.

Currently on display is an example of a springstone sculpture called “The Prophet,” created by the renowned Shona artist Nicholas Mukomberanwa (1922–2002). Using opalstone, Gregory Mustafa’s beautiful, almost ivory-looking work, “Bathing Beauty,” is also on view. Other Shona sculptures represented include Lawrence Mukomberanwa, (son of Nicholas), Richard Mteki, Lameck Bonjisi, Adam Gatsu, and Fanizani Akola.

Examples of Shona carvings can be found in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Musée Rodin in Paris, Queen Elizabeth II, the Rockefellers, the Rothschilds and the actor Danny Glover among others.

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CAMBA’s Shona Gallery is open by appointment Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Tuesday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. For an appointment or more information, call 718-826-2741 and ask for Lorelie, or e-mail the gallery at info@shonasculptures.com. More can be learned at shonasculptures.com.

Since 1977, CAMBA has provided employment, education, health-related, housing, legal help, social counseling, business development and youth services to approximately 25,000 individuals each year. For more information on CAMBA and its services, visit www.camba.org.

Mary-Ruth Brown is the events coordinator for CAMBA.

For a stronger community, join the Lefferts Manor Association

$1 (we) subscribe to LMA’s efforts to improve our neighborhood as a community of historic, landmarked, single-family homes

$2 to support the work of the LMA and would like to contribute to their efforts.

Name

Address

Telephone

E-mail

Enclosed is my check for $ 

Dues: $20.00 per household or $30.00 per senior citizen household

Dues from January through December 2011. Checks payable to Lefferts Manor Association. Send payment and form to P.O. Box 250-440 / Brooklyn, NY 11225 or drop in the mail slot at 214 Rutland Road, 163 Rutland Road or 35 Maple Street.

LEFFERTS MANOR ECHO
Morf Williams, Editor
Ken Shemwell, Designer

Letter from the President

May 26 NY Choro (Brazilian jazz)
June 5 Wataru Uchida Group (Brazilian/straight-ahead jazz)
June 23 Princess Pat (singer)
July 8 Rajaduri Barnes (singer)
July 28 Jocelyn Medina (singer)

8 – 10:30PM $5 COVER INKWELL 400 RUGGLES AVE

500 SHELTERS, 1500 ECHOES

Board Members

Beth Edwards
Vice President

Mary Miller
Treasurer

Ken Shemwell, Designer

Joanne Oplustil, the executive director of the Shona Gallery.

photo: Bob Marvin

In a short time, Reid’s Meat Market, in Brooklyn.

Rajdulari Barnes
(1940–2002). Using opalstone, Gregory Mustafa’s beautiful, almost ivory-looking work, “Bathing Beauty,” is also on view. Other Shona sculptures represented include Lawrence Mukomberanwa, (son of Nicholas), Richard Mteki, Lameck Bonjisi, Adam Gatsu, and Fanizani Akola.

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