

41ST ANNUAL

Prospect 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 }

Eight 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 leffertsmanor.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 Carole Schaffer at 718-462-0024 or acschaffer@juno.com

Food Donations Cookies, brownies, cakes, cupcakes, muffins, crudites with dips, etc. are needed. These should be brought to:
on Saturday, 6/4, 1-4pm: 142 Rutland Road;
on Sunday 6/5 (Tour Day), 9:30am-noon: 95 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

Gentrification is usually defined as middle-to-upper income whites moving into underserved neighborhoods long occupied and dominated by working-class people of color. Gentrification is widely given a thumbs up by politicians, community leaders, landlords and other business interests who say it promotes diversity and begins to satisfy the neighborhood's pent-up demand for mainstream retailing and restaurants, improved infrastructure, more attentive police and sometimes, better schools.

But gentrification has a downside in that over time the local dominant minority group begins contracting as housing costs, property values and taxes become unaffordable on 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 gentrification shows up as a sword that cuts both ways. In PLG's case, the Census reports that 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 41,323 residents in 2000, to 37,262 in 2010, a 10.3 percent drop. In 1990, the Census counted 44,267 people living in PLG.
- PLG's black residential population fell at a faster rate, losing 6,217 individuals—a 17 percent decline—from 35,577 in 2000 to 29,360 in 2010. In 1990, the Census counted 39,461 black people here, which means the black community has nosedived 25.5 percent from its peak 20 years ago.
- The 2,390 persons who identified themselves as white in the 2000 Census were the roots of the neighborhood's diversity. Their numbers grew by 3,040—a 127 percent increase or 2.5 times—to 5,430. In 1990, whites numbered 2,540, according to the Census.
- PLG's Latino population dropped 10 percent from 3,881 in 2000 to 3,509 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.

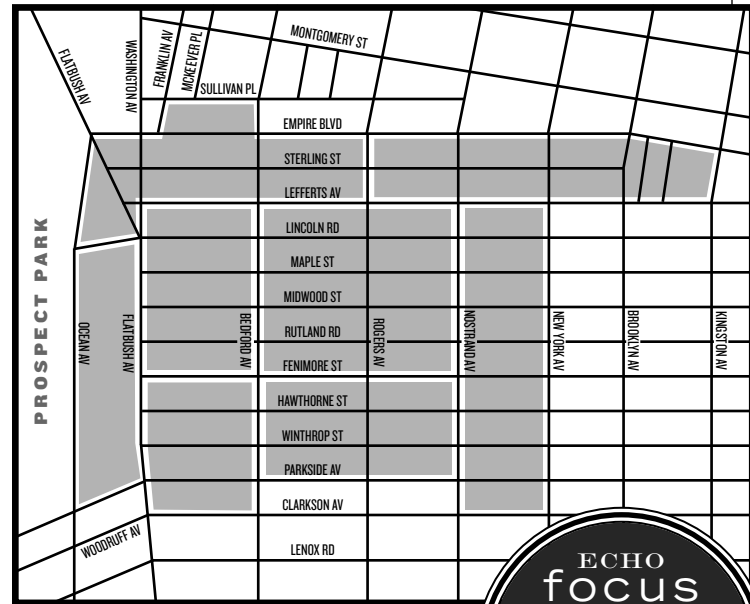
The departure of blacks from the neighborhood and the accelerating increase in new white neighbors make PLG a textbook example of a national trend that has been underway since Bill Clinton was in the White House. In essence, a number of historically and predominantly black inner-city neighborhoods nationwide—indeed, 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 underway, PLG follows such traditionally black-dominated places as Hunter's Point in 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 unresponsive of sustaining a middle class lifestyle.

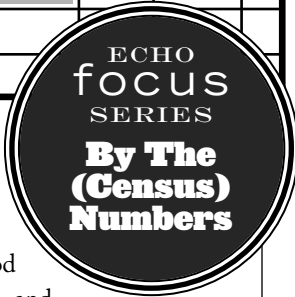
Information specialists at the Census Bureau say the results on PLG's population was based on Census forms and follow-up correspondence mailed or hand delivered

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—conforms 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.



The eight census tracts shown on this map were used in the 2010 Census to measure PLG's population.



In Rep. Clarke's reading of the trends, she sees a neighborhood that has always been integrated and where there has been an alternating ebb-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 outnumbered blacks, what happened was as white 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 here. 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 20, 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)

LMA SPRING GENERAL MEETING REPORT

Local Postal Director Promises Improved Service

by Roberta Woelfling

Improved home delivery, friendlier customer service and shortened waiting times from the Empire Boulevard post office were among the many service improvements the top official of the facility promised at the Lefferts Manor Association's spring general meeting.

Speaking at the April 2 meeting held at Church of the Evangel, Archie Warner—at the request of LMA President Ben Edwards—gave a brief overview of the service changes coming to the branch and fielded a number of tough questions and complaints members had about postal workers' attitudes, inaccurate mail drops, delivery snafus, price increases and cleanliness of the facility.

Warner started his comments by thanking Edwards for the rare opportunity to address the community and stressed that he was as frustrated as LMA members with the past level of service and was keenly aware of the neighborhood's frustrations with the branch.

That's why a few years ago, the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) of the Postal Service began a nationwide liaison effort to meet and communicate with neighborhoods about problems with the post office and ways to eliminate them. Warner's presence at the meeting was an outgrowth of the CAC's outreach, which included Edwards as our representative from the community.

Already, Warner clicked off this list of improvements:

- Webcams have been installed inside the building for greater security;
- A more hospitable customer service ethic has been instilled among staffers who interact with the public



Archie Warner, director of the James E. Davis Post Office, addressed the concerns of LMA members. Photo by Foster Henry

(continued on page 3)

ESPN 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 ECHO EDITOR MILFORD PREWITT

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 Rutland—a beautiful limestone brownstone. I sold that in 2007 and bought a new house on Fenimore 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 home 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 I saw it, I fell in love instantly. And it wasn't the beautiful homes, it was the beautiful people and families who live here.

Describe your household.

I'm happily single with a teenage son. The husband didn't make it with me to the new house.

What do you like about living here?

What's not to like? The people are wonderful, the homes and the architecture are amazing and there's great food all around. We are close to the park, museum, library and botanical garden. I also really love the cultural and economic diversity of this neighborhood. Unlike many other Brooklyn neighborhoods, we've all figured out how to live together and respect and celebrate one another's differences.

Were you an athlete in school? If so, what sports did you play?

Yes, I ran track and was a cheerleader. Don't laugh! Cheerleading is now a scholarship sport!

Where'd your interests in sports journalism come from?

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 the sports department. 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 exactly at ESPN?

I've been at ESPN for nearly 13 years. In my role as 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 I also go to a lot of professional sporting events. That's the best part!

What is the title of your book, "Say It Loud," meant to convey in the context of black athletes?

Of course, the title comes from Mr. James Brown. The understood meaning is "I'm black and I'm proud."

What was the motivation behind the book?

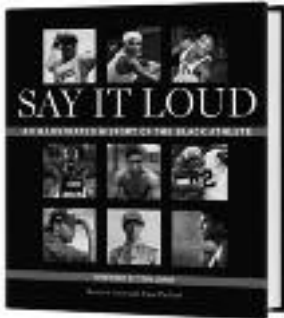
The main reason that I wanted to be a journalist is so that I could tell the stories of black people in the world. Sports have allowed me to tell so many important and inspiring stories. It always seemed to me growing up that we were too often overlooked in mainstream media. And it's critical that we tell our own stories and record our own history.

Some of the photos in your book are truly amazing, historical rare finds. How did you do it?

The photo research did take years—three to be exact. Selecting the photos and tracking down the rights to publish were the most intensive parts of the project. I hired a top-notch photo editor, a young woman who lives in Chinatown. We researched photo material, talked to families and many historical archival institutions. And we even did some begging so families would allow us to borrow their private family photos for the book. ESPN was very supportive of the book project and gave me a substantial photo and design budget.

Did you have a personal favorite or favorites in your book? Who were they and why were you fonder of them?

I loved the boxer Sam Langford, who was before Jack Johnson and reportedly even more powerful in the ring. Langford was a former slave, blind in one eye, and even Johnson refused to fight him one-on-one. I also loved Lucy Slowe, the grand dame of women's tennis. She was not only the first black female tennis champion, but she was the first president of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and a founder of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) with Mary McLeod Bethune.



Roy Hastick Charts a Course for Small Business Development in PLG

Optimistic in these tough economic times, Roy Hastick charts a steady course in support of entrepreneurs with a dream. A native of Grenada, West Indies, Hastick is the recipient of numerous local, national and international awards for his work as founder and president of the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACCI). He has shepherded CACCI from a 10-member organization in 1985 to a statewide entity with 1700 members. Through an extensive service menu and active events calendar CACCI supports small businesses and two-way trade with the Caribbean. It has also managed the Flatbush Caton Market at its eponymous location for almost nine years. At this microenterprise incubator of small business that houses 40 vendors, CACCI provides workshops on small business development, Minority and Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) certification and more.

Hastick moved to Rutland 2 around the same time that he founded CACCI. Living there with his wife Dr. Eda Harris-Hastick for 26 years, they raised three children who, now married, have graced the Hasticks with eight grandchildren.

INTERVIEW BY SUSAN FOX

The Echo: How long have you lived in Prospect Lefferts?

Hastick: Since I migrated 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 our home.

What changes, positive or negative, have you seen in the neighborhood?

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 really a positive direction. It's a diverse neighborhood and people look out for each other. That's the spirit of this area.

Was there something unique about 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?

That, and being involved in the Caribbean-American community. There was no economic development vehicle for Caribbean-American entrepreneurs in the neighborhood, so I thought of putting an organization together to bring badly needed resources to the business owners.

What is the mission of CACCI?

To help small, emerging and start-up businesses navigate their way in the community where they live and operate. For instance, to access financing, credit issues, marketing, advertising, issues that come up with city government, getting permits, licenses, etc., and also to bring them together with existing minority entrepreneurs to partner and to find mentors for business growth and development.

How often do you do business workshops?

The workshops are twice a month. At the Flatbush Caton Market we also have SCORE, the Service Corps of Retired Executives, which is an arm of the Small Business Administration. The counselors offer free business advice every Wednesday right here in this neighborhood. So if you'd like to start a business, or if you'd like to take your business to the next level, you can get an appointment to see one of the counselors.

We've had an economic downturn. What effects have you seen from the recession on the members of CACCI?

The retail and real estate 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 difficult times, to really help them to survive.

I know CACCI focuses on the business community much farther south on Flatbush, but what is your take on the state of retailing in our neighborhood, Flatbush between Empire and Clarkson?

I have seen a major change. When I came here over two decades ago we had different types of businesses. Now it's very diverse. It's getting better.

What were the kinds of businesses that were here in the past?

I would say more grocery stores. Now I see clothing stores, barbershops, nail shops, a couple of pharmacies and some quality restaurants. There're Japanese, there's West Indian, [and] there's a shoe repair shop. It's a critical one-stop shopping area. You can get your groceries. So that's what I mean in terms of better. There's always room for improvement.

I am sure nearly everyone hopes small businesses thrive here, but what prevents our neighborhood from attracting more mainstream retailers and restaurants?

Promotion. The [Lefferts Manor] Association could take a more proactive approach and collaborate with the Community Board. We are in a unique place. We have the Brooklyn Museum not far from us. We have the park. We have the Botanical Gardens. We have Medgar Evers College with 7,000 to 8,000 students and there are quite a few churches. We could do an assessment to find out what our needs are and promote our area, which is one of the most beautiful places in Brooklyn.



Photo by Susan Fox

'ThoughtFull Chef' Nora Birney Launches Customized Catering Business for Special Occasions

by Jackie Meyers

Nora McCaffrey Birney catered a wine tasting at 65 Fen a couple of months ago and I must admit, I got a whole new education and appreciation for the phrase "simple elegance." The tasting was a menu preview party to introduce the Hawthorne 2 resident's private catering business to the rest of the neighborhood. But for me, it was a sublime gastronomic experience, heightened all the more by her charming hospitality.

Being enthralled with food, ingredients and cooking techniques, I'm hardly a stranger to the culinary arts. But this young chef seemed possessed of a culinary skill, simple grace and ethic of hos-

pitality far greater than her years.

The menu was simple, memorable and organic. There were chicken and lamb meatballs with a spicy tomato sauce; caramelized onion and goat cheese in philo dough; and fabulous salted caramel, coffee and dark chocolate truffles.

Nora was genetically predisposed to enjoy a career in the culinary arts. She grew up on Tompkins Place in Cobble Hill and says her parents were great cooks and all family events centered on food. Generally, her father made the main dishes and her mother did the sides and desserts. She remembers catching fireflies in the backyard while her father barbecued.

Her family traveled extensively and she learned to eat and enjoy exotic foods. Nora says she'd try anything if only to gross out her sister.

Such an appetite led to Nora weighing 220 pounds by the time she graduated from Ithaca College with degrees in psychology and women's studies. But what made her do something about her weight was when she overheard her grandmother complain about her size. So she began to exercise, eat healthy and learn more about nutrition. This self-improvement campaign turned out to be the seeds for the catering company.

In 2006 she became an event planner for the television show, "In the Life," where she met her wife,



Photo by Stan Meyers

Helen, who today works at the Berkeley Carroll School. They were married last August and moved to Hawthorne Street shortly thereafter. Because Helen has a number of food allergies, Nora has incorporated into her recipes alter-

native, non-allergenic ingredients and cooking techniques.

Nora received a degree in the culinary arts and business management from New York's Institute of Culinary Education and is presently studying nutrition at Brooklyn College.

It is great to know we have such a wonderful resource in PLG. I am sure you will be seeing a lot more of Nora McCaffrey Birney.

To contract Nora for your next party or special event, contact her at ThoughtFullChef@gmail.com (also the name of her .com website) or call 917-617-0641. You can also follow her on Twitter.

Jackie Meyers has lived on Rutland 1 with her husband, Stan, for the past four years.

41st Annual PLG House & Garden Tour Showcases Our Architectural Transition

by tour organizer
Carole Schaffer

If you've ever wanted to enter into stately, century-plus-year-old private homes and pick up a few design and decorating tips, the eight impressive homes in the 2011 PLG House Tour on June 5th is an opportunity you should not miss. This year's outing is even more of a must-attend event because seven of the eight homes on the tour are first-time participants whose owners have never let the public peruse their private spaces. Lots of surprises await!

Tour-goers will have the chance to view and contrast several homes that began with virtually the same basic floor plan, and see the changes that were made over the decades. "Before" pictures will help in the visualization process. As always, some designers and contractors will be available to discuss their work and homeowners will also gladly share their resources.

Here is a sampling of some of the stops on this year's tour:

□ Custom floor-to-ceiling glass doors and windows illuminate a 1910 neo-Renaissance limestone where a contemporary open floor plan is graced by artwork from the owner's gallery in Chelsea. This top-to-bottom makeover sports a new kitchen with highly organized cabinetry and savvy appliances; a stylish bath; and a steel terrace leading to a tranquil rear garden.

□ A 1909 freestanding Colonial Revival, with a charming wraparound porch, showcases a wealth of fabulous original Arts and Crafts details and ornate 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 handsomely carved fireplace mantels and a grand built-in china closet with beveled-glass doors. Modern amenities include a home office and a luxurious marble bathroom with skylight.

□ 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 cush-



ioned seating and a marble-topped fire pit table – perfect for entertaining and enjoying the beautiful landscaped garden.

□ A circa-1901 three-story brick home, with columned porch and carved oak double doors, features an amazing gazebo for outdoor dining. The juxtaposition of classic with contemporary

is punctuated with inviting comfortable furnishings, unusual photographs and hand-painted street signs from India.

□ In a 101-year-old home, a dramatic zinc-topped peninsula, set in a grand period-style oak framework, effectively links



Photos from three of this year's tour homes by Martin Friedman

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 1840 burlled-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.



A board member of the Lefferts Manor Association, Carole Schaffer has orchestrated the Prospect Lefferts Gardens House Tour for 21 of the 35 years she has lived on Midwood 1 with her husband, Arthur.

Neighborhood restaurants and merchants – newcomers to our community and old favorites – are extending special Tour Day-only offers to tour-goers who show their PLG House & Garden Tour Ticket/Guidebook:

Blue Roost Petite Café, 539 Flatbush Ave.
A 10% discount on all menu items until 9 p.m.

Café Enduro, 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. and a 5-to-10% discount on any purchase.

Art Nouveau, 1105 Nostrand Ave.
A 10% discount on all purchases. Offer good 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 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-Dog & Dunebuggy, 43 Lincoln Rd.
A complimentary small coffee or tea until closing.

King of Tandoor, 600 Flatbush Ave.
A 10% discount on table 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 kingscountynurseries.com. Use on an 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 Sistah In You, 581 Flatbush Ave.
Afro-centric clothier is offering a 25% discount on all purchases. Offer good noon to 5:30 p.m.

Trixie's Pet Food and Supplies, 575 Flatbush Ave.
A 10% discount on all products. Offer good 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tafari Tribe Globe Trade, 593 Flatbush Ave.
A 15% discount on all purchases. Offer good noon to 9 p.m.

Latest Census (continued from page 1)

stay affordable and that people who own their homes and want to stay here can stay here," he says. "But if a longtime resident wants to move back home to the Caribbean or retire to the South, we have no problems with that as long as the neighbor who is buying their home move in as neighbors who respect the traditions of Prospect Lefferts Gardens and not as individuals who want to be hostile to those traditions...And we expect longtime neighbors to welcome their new neighbors."

Borough President Markowitz, who likes admitting in public that he could kick himself for not buying in Lefferts Manor when he had the chance as a state senator years ago, didn't return *The Echo's* calls.

While the national media has been reporting that there seems to be a migration of northern blacks back to the Southern communities from which their parents and grandparents fled during the Jim Crow days, Lorna L. Mason, a senior researcher at the Center for the Study of Brooklyn at Brooklyn College, says if blacks are leaving PLG in large numbers, many may be moving no farther than other Brooklyn neighborhoods.

Analyzing her own data, Mason says some communities in Brooklyn's South East, most notably Canarsie with its approachable housing costs, have seen their black populations increase by double-digit percentages.

*Part 2 of The Echo Focus Series on the 2010 Census:
The PLG Housing Market: Who owns? Who rents? What do they pay?*

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 renovation."

Adams said he expects the move to be complete by early summer.

Improved Postal Service Promised (continued from page 1)

- 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.

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

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 \$540,000 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 claimed 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.

Fighting Foreclosure? Need Mortgage Help? Pam Glasser of Rutland 2, who works for the Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD), gave a brief presentation at the meeting outlining the services the agency offers to homeowners who could be facing foreclosure. In addition, HPD helps homeowners with HIP loans, deed fraud and lead paint abatement. If you or someone you know can use the agency's services, visit nyc.gov/hpd.

Roberta Woelfling, a Rutland 2 resident, serves on the LMA board as recording secretary.

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

Through 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, police told Lefferts Manor Association members attending the spring general meeting in April.

But 71st Precinct Commander, Inspector Peter Simonetti, said "snatch-and-dash" device theft remains a big problem, as unwary users of cellphones, digital music players, cameras and handheld computers are losing their gadgets to fleet-footed criminals.

Simonetti said he regretted that police have yet to make an arrest in the break-in burglaries of two of the neighborhood's most popular restaurants; Enduro on Lincoln Rd. and Blue Roost on Flatbush Ave., which was hit twice.

Overall, there were 17 major crimes in the three months ending in March, Community Affairs Officer Vincent Martinos reported. Three were family assault cases, 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's spring general meeting, Simonetti said despite the police department's best efforts to warn users of handheld electronics 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 in frequency as criminals have acquired interchangeable SIM cards—so called "subscriber identity modules," the miniature hard disc inside of some cellphones that holds owners personal information, directories and text history—that allow them to defeat security codes.

"The bad guys know what these devices are worth," Simonetti said, referring to all the handheld digital devices, "Don't text when walking and tell friends and family not to text and walk."

Many victims are coming to or from the subway, 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 etched with a secret number at the precinct so that if the device is stolen and recovered, police can more speedily return it to the owner. To take advantage of this free service, call the precinct at 718-735-3527 or -3528.

Overall, serious crime is going down, Simonetti said, largely thanks to the precinct's undercover street narcotics enforcement unit having made 75 arrests this year and seizing 25 pounds of drugs, mainly marijuana. Moreover, Simonetti said the precinct has developed a new program with the DA's office to keep career criminals behind bars and to improve the ability to track the comings-and-goings of those with extensive records once they are released back in the community.

Simonetti urged residents to be more proactive reporting suspected crime activities or suspicious characters. While the city continues to encourage citizens to call if they suspect something that smacks of terrorism, the calls should also be made for suspicious characters and strangers loitering in apartment lobbies and elsewhere. He said the number one reason why police have not solved more burglaries in neighborhood apartment buildings during this past holiday season is that residents are reluctant or fearful about reporting suspicious characters in their buildings.

"No one needs to know who called," he said.



Inspector Peter Simonetti, who leads the 71st Precinct

photo: Bob Marvin

Edgar George Reid, Sr., Longtime Maple 1 Resident, Entrepreneur and MTA Masonry Engineer, Dies at 84

Edgar George Reid, Sr., a 30-plus-year resident of Lefferts Manor, who, with his wife Isoline, raised five children in a stately home on the corner of Maple St. and Bedford Ave., has died from back-to-back strokes.

Edgar Reid, Jr. said his father suffered a stroke in early April and while being treated in the hospital, suffered another stroke, which led to his death on April 11, just three days after he turned 84 years old. Edgar Jr. said his father had been a fit and robust man right up until his illness.

Known as "Slim" to his close friends, Reid was largely a self-taught masonry and concrete applicator who went as far as the 6th grade in his native Jamaica. But his limited formal education did not blunt his drive to become a self-made entrepreneur who educated himself in the construction trades. He showed a natural aptitude even as a young child. He loved to tinker with the innards of machinery and he sold tin cups he made of scrap metal from his father's bakery and tinsmith business.

Reid was 16 when his father died and he began working full-time to support his family. After graduating from a trade school and working odd jobs in the construction industry, Reid went to England in 1953, joined a construction trade union, and capitalized on a union program to learn masonry and concrete building techniques.

Reid met and married Isoline—who preceded him in death—after becoming a craftsman in masonry application in 1961 and moved to the U.S. that same year.

He founded Four Friends Construction Co., which, in addition to participating in the building boom of New York City at that time, also became a real estate holding company; buying, selling, renting and rehabilitating commercial and residential properties. He even opened a butcher shop at one point, Reid's Meat Market, in Brooklyn.

In 1982, he went to work for the MTA as a structural mason maintainer and retired 11 years later.

A handsome and strong-willed man who didn't flinch from confronting authority when necessary, Reid was fond of the race track in his retirement years and socializing with his longtime neighbors.

In addition to Edgar, Jr., four other children, six grandchildren, four great grandchildren, two sisters and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends survive Reid.

Sterling St. Block-Wide Stoop Sale
SATURDAY, JUNE 11 (RAIN DATE 6/25)
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INKWELL 408 ROGERS AVE



Joanne Oplustil, the executive director of the Shona Gallery.

photo: Foster Henry

CAMBA's Shona Gallery, A Hidden Treasure, To Celebrate Annual Benefit

by Mary-Beth Shine

Many residents of Brooklyn and our neighboring boroughs know about the Church Avenue Merchants and Business Association's many civic, social and business development programs, but few know that it has a distinguished art gallery that specializes in the stone sculpture of the Shona people of Africa.

Occupying 1,500 square feet in CAMBA's health services building at 19 Winthrop Street between Flatbush and Bedford Avenues, Shona Gallery houses one of the largest collections of Shona art—creations of the Bantu people of Zimbabwe and southern Mozambique—in the United States.

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 Zimbabwe. 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 planet, 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 serpentine, known to be one of the hardest and least available stones in Zimbabwe, but is much coveted by the Shona artists for its under layer 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 (1940-2002). Using opalstone, Gregory Mustasa's beautiful, almost ivory-looking work, "Bathing Beauty," is also on view. Other Shona sculptors represented include Lawrence Mukomberanwa, (son of Nicholas), Richard Mteki, Lameck Bonjisi, Adam Gatsi, and Fanizani Akuda.

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 actor Danny Glover among others.

CAMBA's Executive Director Joanne Oplustil stressed the importance of supporting Shona art now, since many of the artists support not only their immediate families, but their extended families with the sale of their art work.

CAMBA's Shona Gallery is open by appointment Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. For an appointment or more information, call 718-287-2600 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 30,000 individuals each year. For more information on CAMBA and its services, visit www.camba.org. Mary-Beth Shine is the events coordinator for CAMBA.



For a stronger community, join the

Lefferts Manor Association

MANOR RESIDENTS:

I (we) subscribe to LMA's efforts to improve our neighborhood as a community of historic, landmarked, single-family homes.

Dues: \$20.00 per household or \$10.00 per senior citizen household

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I (we) support the work of the LMA and would like to contribute to their efforts.

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ADDRESS _____

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Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ + \$ _____ = \$ _____

DUES ADD'L CONTRIBUTION TOTAL

Dues from January through December 2011. Checks payable to Lefferts Manor Association. Send payment and form to: P.O. Box 250-640 / Brooklyn, NY 11225 or drop in the mail slot at 214 Rutland Road, 163 Rutland Road or 25 Maple Street.

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