

Monday, 9/5 West Indian Day Carnival Parade
Scheduled to begin at 11am; Eastern Pkwy. & Utica Ave.

Saturday, 9/10 Maple 2 Block Party
Noon - 7pm; all welcome

Saturday, 10/15 Lefferts Manor Assoc. Fall Meeting
10am - Noon; Church of the Evangel on Bedford Ave. between Hawthorne and Winthrop

Local Heroine Takes Down Property Manager Who Treated PLG as His Private Dump

by MILFORD PREWITT

If Prospect Lefferts Gardens had a Citizen of the Year Award, no one is more deserving in 2011 than Carmen Vastillo-Barrett.

For nearly six months—from last fall to this past spring—Carmen was the lone voice of outrage and the only muscle pushing back against a property manager from Crown Heights who, both under the cloak of darkness and also in the boldness of daylight, would dump construction debris throughout PLG. The debris came from an apartment building on Lincoln 3 where the property manager is overseeing renovations.

Carmen yelled at him frequently when she encountered the man pushing construction debris out of the side doors of a teal-colored minivan. But no shouting match would ignite her fury more than one afternoon when he dumped his trash directly in her path as she pushed one of her two toddlers in a baby carriage, forcing her to walk in the street of her Fenimore 2 block, where she lives with her husband, Kenneth.

That would prove to be the last straw.

Whether it was the corner of Midwood and Flatbush, Fenimore and Bedford, Maple and Flatbush, or any other intersection, the illegal dumper's move was to push drywall, empty paint cans, studs, even broken furniture out of the same minivan for months on end. Sanitation police and Carmen soon came to realize that her nemesis was not alone; others were coming into PLG to dump construction debris, though the man in the minivan seemed to be the most outrageous and blatant.

From a stunning first-time observation when she noticed a driver dressed in the traditional black suit and fedora of the Hasidic community push trash out of the passenger door on the corner of Midwood and Flatbush, to the insulting and disrespectful run-in while pushing her stroller, the dumping became nearly an obsession for Carmen, who is a science teacher at the Montessori School on Rogers Ave.

Desiring to see the man prosecuted for illegal dumping, she sought advice from friends and neighbors about how to proceed. She called 311 regularly. She says it was frustrating that only one of the neighborhood's elected officials offered to help her (and that was just more advice to keep calling 311). Nevertheless, she got her day in court after photographing the man's vehicle with a clear shot of the license plate and later, discovering where he lived in Crown Heights.

But her impending victory vanished when, after waiting more than two hours and needing to pick up her kids from day care, the man never showed up in court. Instead, he did an end-run around her by appearing the next day with a lawyer who was able to get the \$10,000 sanitation fine dropped. Carmen had no idea the proceeding had even taken place until weeks later.

But a sympathetic commander within the Sanitation Police listened to Carmen and committed to staging a stakeout operation.

After staking out the neighborhood for several days, Sanitation Police in marked and unmarked cars finally caught Carmen's nemesis in mid-April when they saw and filmed him dumping trash six or seven times in a single day throughout PLG. Police arrested and charged Isaac Pollak and seized the teal minivan.

In addition to a hefty five-figure fine, authorities say Pollak also has to reimburse the Sanitation Department for the man-hours, gasoline and equipment deployed to pick up his trash.

As for Carmen, she says she'd do it all again in a heartbeat.

"I just couldn't fathom that someone could be this disrespectful," she says. "It was just so outrageous and to see it time and time again.

"But I really salute the Sanitation Police. They were here for days and didn't see a thing and because they were so committed, their persistence paid off and they caught him."



Carmen Vastillo-Barrett: a citizen to be reckoned with.

Milford Prewitt

Class Tensions Unveiled at PLGNA Crime Meeting

by MILFORD PREWITT

The Prospect Lefferts Gardens Neighborhood Association (PLGNA) meeting had a single agenda topic, summed up in the event's not-too-original title, "Take A Bite Out Of Crime." Yet soon after the meeting on Thursday, July 14 began, it was clear that the 150 or so neighborhood residents who packed the standing-room-only hall at Church of the Evangel had far more on their minds than crime.

Whether they were talking about graffiti, poor policing, noise pollution, dimly lit streets, dog walkers who never heard of the "pooper scooper law," Flatbush's inadequate retail options, the use of the "n-word" among the neighborhood's young, unfriendly neighbors, unemployment, dilapidated vacant homes or housing costs, what appeared to be on everyone's mind was the socio-economic frictions of gentrification and rising housing costs.

Many of those in attendance did more than talk, however. They immediately formed sub-groups to tackle specific challenges, taking on assignments, seeking to join the 71st Precinct's civilian patrol unit and agreeing to meet for follow-up meetings.

Martin Ruiz, president of the PLGNA, said the organization sought to have a meeting with the neighborhood and gather ideas from residents on community improvements and making safe streets after a series of serious criminal activities had shaken some residents' faith in the ability of the police to protect residents here.

But ironically, much of the discussion had little to do with crime. It was as if everyone had signed an agreement to throw political correctness out the window in favor of honest engagement or, as the young folks put it, "get real."

A black retired school administrator who said he has lived on Midwood 3 since the early '80s said it infuriates him that he can walk all the way to Flatbush and get not a single hello from newer neighbors—black or white—who he passes on the street running errands or while doing yard work, sweeping their sidewalk or shoveling snow.

"Just say hello, sometimes," he said. "We're not strangers. We're neighbors. Act like it!"

A young white male professional who moved to the Manor recently took the floor saying that he refuses to feel bad about participating in PLG's gentrification.

"I love living here but I'm not going to feel guilty because I'm one of those gentrifying the neighborhood," he said. "It kills me that housing costs are what they are and that, through no fault of my own, I'm indirectly contributing to people leaving here."

Landmarks Reps Meet Manor Homeowners to Clarify Renovation Rules

by MARY MILLER

After a number of neighbors received violations from the city for disallowed exterior renovations and repair work, LMA President Ben Edwards has organized an ongoing series of meetings between Lefferts Manor homeowners and the Landmarks Preservation Commission. These meetings are to clarify renovation rules, to review homeowners' responsibilities of building maintenance, and to keep the door open for better communication between the neighborhood and the agency charged with enforcing codes governing the architectural and historical character of buildings in historic districts.

The meetings were more than a year in the making following a flurry of notices to homeowners throughout the Manor whose exterior repairs or renovations violated the codes for sustaining the unique architectural character of the historic district.

While the meetings gave Landmarks staff

the chance to clarify and reinforce various rules and answer questions, they also gave neighbors a chance to express their frustrations in receiving violations for repairs and improvements they thought were acceptable. The second block of Maple and the first block of Rutland were among the first to participate.

The Manor was granted landmark status by the City of New York in 1979 in recognition of the special quality of the homes in our area and the visual impact of the streetscape. But Tenzing Chadotsage and Jenny Fernandez, LPC staff members who met with homeowners, said with landmark status comes unique benefits and responsibilities for homeowners.

The prime directive at the top of the list is that work on a homeowner's property that can be seen from the street, including sidewalk replacement, must first be preceded with an application to the LPC. Even interior work that requires a Department of Buildings permit may require a Certificate of No Effect simply to confirm that the work will not affect the protected architectural features of a building.

Most applications will be for a Permit for Minor Work. This generally involves exterior

"Nothing would make me happier than for all of us to be happier about living in this neighborhood. But I'm not going to feel apologetic about moving here. I think we have far more bigger problems than blaming gentrification for our problems."

A spirited discussion ensued from the man's comments. While no one took issue with him, per se, one by one neighbors who spoke after him either praised or profaned the results of gentrification.



Residents both young and old spoke freely and openly about changes to the PLG neighborhood.

An older black woman who said she has lived on Rutland 2 for nearly 30 years said she thought gentrification would mean an improvement in the quality of life and better neighborhood shopping options. "But nothing is changed," she said. "In fact, I think it is as bad as ever."

Others even got to talking about young people using the "n-word" in public.

"We all skirt around the issue, but there is nothing more offensive than coming out of the subway and hearing young people use that word who have no idea how hateful and hurtful it is and I'm a Jew who finds it offensive," a male speaker said. "It's degrading and appalling and I'm sick of this political correctness that says it's okay to be apathetic about it. Somebody has to teach these kids the history of that word."

One white female resident said she is worried by the growing age gap in PLG and that older, retired neighbors seem not to be participating in community events or frequenting the neighborhood's new eating places. She argued that if the neighborhood is truly to be inclusive, older residents should be part of the community's pulse.

This same woman suggested that neighbors should greet the loiterers who hang out on the corner of Maple and Flatbush if, for no other reason than *(continued on page 2)*

painting, replacing doors or windows, installing storm windows, and masonry restoration, cleaning or repairs. A public hearing is required for a Certificate of Appropriateness when work affects significant architectural features.

Replacing windows is one of the most common requests, but the LPC prefers repairing and preserving as much of the original material as possible. This is often less costly than replacement, too. However, if replacements are required, they should be designed to match the original windows in their material, finish and details. If the existing windows are themselves replacements, the new windows may be modeled on historic windows of other houses of the same style and period.

Chadotsage and Fernandez cautioned homeowners about making renovations that copy features of a similar home on the same block. In a few cases, the house whose features are being copied may be out of code, but the feature was "grandfathered in" with the 1979 designation.

One Rutland Rd. family who had installed aluminum replacement windows over the old, drafty wooden windows that *(continued on page 2)*

IN MEMORIAM

Fenimore 1 Remembers Two Caring, Longtime Neighbors

Adeline Charne, a decades-long resident of Fenimore 1 who spent her working life as a secretary and computer operator but used her off-hours to campaign for the improvement of life for her native countrymen who had moved here from Haiti, died June 3rd.

Adeline, who was suffering from Alzheimer's disease, was 77.

Born in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, Adeline appreciated at a young age the value of education and applied herself strenuously to the proposition that academic achievement meant career fulfillment and success. She attended the Externat La Providence and later, Madame Boisson before matriculating from La Sagesse. She also took up hospitality at Ecole Hoteliere. In 1955, she attended Graham University in Jamaica and learned secretarial science, moving later to the U.S. where she worked for the Reynolds Company. She later became a computer operator for London Records.

Outside the workplace, she was active in Brooklyn's Haitian community and was tireless in her efforts to improve the quality of life for her fellow ex-pats. She was an active parishioner of St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church and a member of the group Haitian American Citizens in Action.

She married Fritz Charne in 1962. Their union lasted 31 years. He preceded her in death. Adeline is survived by four sisters, a brother, and many nephews and nieces.



Dr. Arnold Fitzgerald Welch, a dentist who lived on Fenimore 1 for decades and who practiced in the same Franklin Ave. office where his brother, Edward, was a physician and where they enjoyed a good reputation for caring in the community, died from natural causes at the age of 93. Born in Brooklyn, Welch had been confined to a nursing home for the past three years.

A genuine Renaissance man, Welch was considered a musical prodigy in his early years, and his love of science and music was intertwined in his practice and lifestyle. He co-founded the New York Symphonic Arts Ensemble and was a longtime member of the Brooklyn and New York Doctors Orchestras.

Dr. Welch was a graduate of Brooklyn's Boys High School, Brooklyn College, New York University and Howard University. At Howard, he received the Alpha Omega Scholarship in recognition of achieving the highest average during his four years of dental school. Later he served as a Second Lieutenant in the Army during WWII, working as an electrical engineer. After the war he was stationed in Japan.

Prior to opening his private practice, Dr. Welch worked for the New York City Health Department and the New York Department of Welfare.

Dr. Welch is survived by his wife, the former Carmen Maloney; a daughter, Dr. Jacqueline Johnson Maloney; a stepdaughter; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The family want to express a special thanks to Caton Park Nursing Home, which cared for Dr. Welch during the last years of his life.



Police Seek Two in Failed Subway Booth Arson-Robbery

Police want to talk to two "persons of interest" about the 5 a.m., June 30th robbery attempt at the Lincoln Rd. booth of the Prospect Park subway station. Police say two men approached the booth while a lone female clerk was working inside. They began banging on the door and windows demanding to be let inside. When she refused, the men poured gasoline on the front exterior and set it ablaze. They fled almost immediately. Police said the men were recorded on the station's video cameras. The clerk was not hurt.

Five People Shot and Wounded at Cookout

Five people were injured in a shooting on Father's Day at the intersection of Nostrand Ave. and Fenimore St. Police have no motive and no one in custody. In addition, some of the victims have been uncooperative.

LPC Reps Meet Manor Homeowners

(continued from page 1) came with the house they purchased, was surprised to learn — despite getting a letter of violation from the LPC — that their bank was not going to proceed with a refinancing until the city's violation was off the books.

But the family said they found LPC representatives helpful in navigating the violation and working with the bank. Chadotsage and Fernandez said it is always best to check with the LPC before getting started on exterior improvements or repairs.

The staff at LPC is interested in working with Manor residents to preserve the beauty and value of our homes. They have published a new book, *The Rowhouse Manual*, which details how to apply for permits, describes routine repairs and maintenance, and identifies work that requires permits. The LPC also has grant programs for income-eligible homeowners, and is a rich source of professional advice.

For more information, visit the LPC at their very comprehensive website, www.nyc.gov or call 212-669-7817.

And try to attend a LMA-sponsored meeting when it comes to your block.

Louise Daniel Shares \$100K Grant to Stop Spread of HIV and STI Among Haiti's Homeless

by Melba Winslow

Louise Daniel, Midwood 1 resident and Adelphi University social work professor, will share a \$100,000 grant to deploy software she helped develop to teach women living in Haiti's displacement camps how to teach other women best practices for preventing AIDS and other STIs.

Ms. Daniel, also a LMA board member, will share the grant with a Canadian colleague. They partnered-up to secure funding from the Grand Challenges Canadian, funded by the Canadian Foreign Aid Department, which dispenses as much as \$2 million annually to private researchers who use technology, science and innovation in projects to improve human health and fight disease.

"We were one of 19 proposals out of hundreds that got funded," Daniel says. She and her colleague were the only social scientists to receive funding. "We are very proud. This is a real honor."

The good news came in the same week Daniel was notified by Adelphi that she had earned tenure.

Daniel says the project has two goals. One is to address the psychosocial factors of HIV and STI risk among Haitian women by providing prevention education that is tailored to their private and personal activities. The second is to address gender-based inequity by empowering women to take charge of their own health.

"We are going to use a state-of-the-art computer technology to provide HIV and STI prevention intervention to women in displaced person's camps," she says. "We will train women from the camps on how to use the software to work with other women who also live in the camps. What makes it innovative is that the intervention does not require the women who deliver the services to have years of training and it has the

potential to minimize some of the biases associated with provider-delivered interventions...it will also create jobs.

"These camps have no health care providers and what is left of the health infrastructure after the earthquake has been completely undermined by lack of resources and health professionals. So health care and health education is a real problem in Haiti. The computer will help cut out this whole issue of not having enough trained workers to deliver care."

Daniel says while she is appreciative of the \$100,000, the real goal is to win a \$1 million scale-up grant. This will help to lay the groundwork for infrastructure focusing on economic empowerment for women while addressing their health care needs.

"That's the real way to save lives," she says. "Displaced women and girls have less access to resources and consequently are vulnerable to sexual violence and high-risk behaviors, the consequences of which include HIV and STI."

"Haiti has the highest HIV rate in the Western Hemisphere and since the earthquake, little to no medical services have been provided for prevention; there is just no preventative care going on right now. At the same time, gender-based violence against women and girls living in [displaced persons] camps is at an all-time high."

Some 1.5 million people continue to live in 1,100 squalid displacement camps throughout Haiti — 54 of them housing as many as 5,000 people each — since the devastating earthquake struck the impoverished island nation on Jan. 12, 2010. About 220,000 people were killed.

A three-year resident of Ocean Ave., Melba Winslow is pursuing a graduate degree in digital media at Columbia University's School of Journalism.



41st PLG House & Garden Tour Attracted Many from Far and Near

by Carole Schaffer

The 2011 Prospect Lefferts Gardens House & Garden Tour was held on Sunday, June 5th, and drew upwards of 600 tour-goers.

To quote the response of one attendee, received via e-mail: "Just wanted to send my thanks for a beautiful, well-run and highly hospitable tour. Great work by the whole team. :) We hope to come back next year."—Amy

The Tour Committee extends its whole-hearted appreciation to residents who opened their wonderful homes and gardens to make this event possible. There would be no house tour without their cooperation and support. Gratitude is also extended to everyone who worked on the commit-

tee, sold tickets or worked as a tour guide, and to the neighborhood businesses that extended Tour Day offers and supported the event through their generous contributions.

The tour has a goal of including several as yet unrepresented blocks in our neighborhood. To achieve this, we need residents willing to open their houses or apartments for this event and people willing to volunteer their time to work on making the tour a reality. The 42nd annual tour will be held on Sunday, June 3, 2012. If you are interested in participating, please contact Carole Schaffer at 718-462-0024.

Carole Schaffer, a LMA board member, has organized the house tour for more than 30 years.



Homeowner John Kolozak explains the process of transforming the formerly dreary interior of his two-story limestone into a light-filled space.

There is no better way to describe the tour than to view Bob Marvin's photographs of the entire event. You can find the pictures online at:
www.flickr.com/photos/25605294@N00/sets/72157627037451740

PLGNA Meeting

(continued from page 1)

"they are less likely to attack you or verbally assault you if you treat them like human beings and just say hello."

An older black female who has lived on Midwood 1 for years charged that she did not know the meeting was going to happen until 15 minutes before she entered the church, questioning if it was intentional given that a large majority of the attendees were white. [PLNGA had used its website, some flyers and leaflets at the Lincoln Rd. restaurants and word of mouth to get the word out.]

Ben Edwards, president of the Lefferts Manor Association, defended the police against unsubstantiated accusations from many in attendance that police relations are terrible in the neighborhood. He informed the audi-

ence that the 71st Precinct has an active civilian observation patrol program and is seeking more recruits. Meanwhile, Edwards stressed, a number of organizations, private and public, are working together to improve the lighting on PLG streets at night.

A retired doctor who recently moved from the suburbs with his wife to Rutland 1 put a fitting closing comment to the meeting when he noted that the neighborhood has no choice but to come together if things are to improve.

"This bickering about class and race and age is just ridiculous," he said. "The real issue is that this meeting is just the beginning and we have got to get it together if we are going to make this neighborhood work."



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

NON-RESIDENT FRIENDS:

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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

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