Monday, 9/5
West Indian Day Carnival Parade
Schooled in depth at 11am, Eastern Pkwy. & Utica Ave.

Saturday, 9/10
Lefferts Manor Assoc. Fall Meeting
9am – Noon, Church of the Evangel on Bedford Ave.
Potluck Mahonrane and Winering

Saturday, 9/15
Lefferts Manor Assoc. Fall Meeting
10am – Noon, Church of the Evangel on Bedford Ave.
potluck Mahonrane and Winering

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 low voice of courage 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 y where the property manager is overselling renovations.

Carmen yelled at him frequently when she encountered how the man pushed construction debris out of the side doors of a teak-colored minivan. But no shouting match would ignite her fury more than after one afternoon when he dumped his trash directly in her path as she pushed one of her two toddlers in a baby carriage.

From a stunning first-time observation when she noticed a dresser 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 nothing less than 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, later discovering where he lived in Crown Heights.

But her impeding 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 letter who was able to get the six,000 sanita-

Landmarks Reap Meet Manor Homeowners to Clarify Renovation Rules
by Mary Miller

After a number of neighbors received violations from the city for disabled interior renovations and repair work, LAM 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 keeping a better maintenance, and to keep the door open for better communication between the neighbor-

hood and the agency charged with enforcing codes governing the architectural and histori-

cal character of buildings in historic districts.

The meetings were more than a year in the making following a flurry of notices to home-

owners who moved to the neighborhood or who house repairs or renovations violated the codes for

One Rutland Rd. family who had installed

Landmarks staff and other representatives explained various rules and answer questions, they also gave

neighbors a chance to express their frustra-
tions 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 property’s homeowner association (PHS) governing documents, including solicitation and approval of proposals, must be done in accordance with the PHA. This may mean seeking permission from the PHA to make

“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 big problems than blaming gentrification for our problems.”

A spirited discussion ensued from the man’s comments about neighborhood gentrification.

“I love living here but I’m not going to feel guilty

because I’m one of those gentrifying the neighborhood,”

One white female resident said she is worried by the

But ironic that 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 had lived on Midwood 3 since the early 80’s 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 passing on the street mowing 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!”

Yet another white resident said she is worried by the

and Ф.О.С. will not be published.

Copyright © 2011 Lefferts Manor Association
Louise Daniels, McCall's resident and Adelphi University social work professor, will share a $1,000 grant to display software she helped develop to teach women living in Haiti's displacement camps how to teach other women skills to improve the quality of their health.

Daniels says the project has two goals. One is to address the psychosocial factors of HIV and STI 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 control of their 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 teach them how to use this 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 to deliver the services to 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 care 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 this whole issue of not having enough trained workers to deliver care."

Daniels says while she is appreciative of the $1,000, 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 of women and 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 or no health care services have been made available for prevention; there is just no preventive care going on right now. At the same time, gender-based violence against women and girls living in [displaced persons] camps is an area of concern."

Some 1.5 million people continue to live in LIDP (displaced persons) camps throughout Haiti — 54 of them housing as many as 5,000 people each — since the devastating earthquake struck the impoverished island nation on January 12, 2010. About 220,000 people were killed.

A three-year research project of DonateAid, Ms. Daniels is pursuing a graduate degree in Digital media at Columbia University’s School of Journalism.

PLNGA 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 in Middlebrod for 14 years, said that she and public and private doctors were 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 network of volunteers to purchase the tickets in advance to avoid the now closed 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 audience that the 751 Precinct has an active civic observation patrol program and is seeking more recruits. Meanwhile, Edwards stressed a number of organizations, including the SLINCA, 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 put a fitting closing comment to the meeting when he noted that the neighborhood has no choice but to come together if things 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 together if we are going to make this neighborhood work."