So Long K-Dog & Dunebuggy—
We’ll Never Forget You

by Roberta Wolff

O wns of high-profile and ardent fans of the K-Dog & Dunebuggy cafe packed the beloved neighborhood spot and spilled out onto the street on the gloomy, humid Saturday afternoon of September 24. A cheerfulness in the patrons’ faces masked the sad and depressing reality that had brought them together: K-Dog, one of the most popular gathering spots in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, was closing forever in a few hours.

Drinks, live music and lots of chatter alluded to a festive affair but it was much like the band that kept playing on the night of the Titanic as it sank. Lonely but often entertaining.

Gabriele “Gabby” Lowe was Commander-In-Chief of the beloved establishment, turning a forlorn retail-footprint into a virtual community center that masqueraded as a coffee shop and cafe.

The staff accepted packages for regulars and swept and shoveled the sidewalk for the residential tenants upstairs. The Maple Street School used it for deliveries and people left keys there for friends. K-Dog was the main ticket sales location for the annual PLG House Tour. It hosted movie nights, game nights, knitting groups and it was a public space in the closed restaurant and a meeting point for residents to read. There was rarely any space left to post flyers or business cards on the large community bulletin board just outside the entrance where4PLG Arts and PLG NA— in their first-ever joint marshalling of resources—to make the gallery a go by getting the insurance and marshaling of resources — to make the gallery a go by getting the insurance and

Part of the answer is the financial disillusionment, lack of family time and chronic exhaustion that comes with being the sole owner of a food service establishment that demanded hands-on attention 24/7.

While it was the clout and ability of Gabby and her colleagues for exacerbating the nation’s economic condition. LMA President Ben Markowitz, State Sen. Eric Adams, and Councilman Mathieu Eugene—those with access to the mainstream media stepped up to advocate for their constituent’s effective. As if the threat of a double-dip recession and 14 million unemployed were not bad enough for the nation, PLG’s elected officials charged that Republicans’ seemingly personal disdain for President Barack Obama and his job-creation plans—in step with tight-fisted lending policies by banks—are hurting consumers, job seekers, small business, homeowners and the middle and working classes.

“Times are tough but we can keep things going,” declared Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

As of this week’s Congressional Republicans are deliberately doing all they can to keep people unemployed rather than see the President’s jobs plans succeed,” charged our U.S. Rep. Yvette Clarke at the House
together in Congress to get the nation moving. She said she believes

Gabby Lowe, founder of K-Dog & Dunebuggy, fought back tears on the last day of business.

“(continued on page 4)

Empty Restaurant Space Begins a New Life as Culture Hub

Pop-Up Art Exhibit Brings PLG Neighbors Together

by Milford Prewitt

Many of the bold and colorful, impressionistic paintings of mundanes, everyday life scenes in Prospect Lefferts Gardens by painter Brian Fernandes were not what they seemed.

If you looked close enough, things were not what they appeared to be at first blush: a bunch of teens who huddled up in one painting appear to be up to no good until you realize they are actually marvelling at a friend’s new baby; a pit bull barking up joyfully in his hander’s leather and a human friend projects a shadow like a beast from Hell on the sidewalk; and even Fernandes, who painted himself in a three-panel self-portrait buying beer, builds a bridge of communication to a young boy.

In fact, communication and neighbor- hood togetherness was the under- lying theme of “Between Neighbors,” an exhibition held in a pop-up art gallery located in the long mothballed retail space that used to house Mike’s International Restaurant.

Fernandes moved into this neighborhood nearly a year-and-a-half ago. He became transfixed with the idea of opening a gallery space in the closed restaurant and approached the landlord and State Sen. Eric Adams, who immediately lent his support. But it would be the clout and ability of PLG Arts and PLGNA—in their first- ever joint marshalling of resources—to make a gallery by getting the insurance and marketing the event. Also involved was a hander whose love of it.

“Without looking back, I think this is the rebirth of PLG,” Martin says. “Art is one of those things that I’d like to think is uniquely human and so much, brings them together.”

The next pop-up event in the space will be “The Neighborhood Show,” a diverse mix of crafts, dance, art and music. It will open Oct. 30 and run until Nov. 13.
Captain Michael Telfer, 71st Precinct’s New Executive Officer, Recounts PLG’s Crime Prevention Gains and Setbacks

Captain Michael Telfer, the new executive officer of the 71st Precinct, introduced himself to attendees of the Lefferts Manor Association’s fall meeting in October, revealing himself to be a quick-witted, amusing speaker who genuinely loves being a cop and especially being a cop in Brooklyn.

Telfer joined the 71st after a long stint in the Bronx. He was offered promotions to administrative, desk-bound duties at other precincts. But the 18-year veteran of the force—and Jamaica native who grew up in Flatbush—said he loves Brooklyn and being a “street cop” too much to spend the remaining years of his career in front of computer screens.

“I can’t think of anything I ever wanted to do more than be a cop, a street cop,” he said. “Besides, I know that Flatbush has the best jock sticks in New York.”

A tall man, Telfer is akin to an operations officer at the precinct and a second-in-command behind Insp. Peter Simonte, precinct commander.

Although he didn’t join the 71st until earlier this year, he clearly knew the neighborhood’s frustration with the all-day littering and suspected drug dealing that goes on at the corner of Flatbush and Maple and centered around Ray’s, the bodega.

He said undercover officers have attempted to make buy-busts in the store several times, but surprisingly they rarely see anything out of line or the perps are too suspicious to do business with strangers. He said officers have had more luck making arrests inside the liquor store across the street from Ray’s where drug dealing can also be flagrant at times.

He said one of the major problems in law enforcement in PLG is that witnesses to crimes, for whatever reasons, do not step forward to say something when they see something or suspect something.

The notorious shooting on an August Saturday night at the Sneaker Q sports apparel and sneaker store on Flatbush is a case in point, Telfer noted. Despite streets crowded with pedestrians and customers inside the store that yielded leads to its persons who witnessed details of the event when a man in a black Maserati shot into the store, hitting another man who ran away before authorities could arrive, not one witness gave police anything more to work on. To this day, there have been no arrests and the wounded man has never been identified.

Another problem that he confronts is that only officers patrol the entire neighborhood from Flatbush to Utica Avenue each shift and they are usually in patrol cars or on scooters. He said uniformed foot patrol officers make that contingent occasionally and during special events.

“So imagine what we make for an arrest for something and have to escort the suspect to the lock-up,” he noted. “That’s two less officers on your streets.”

But with the coming graduating academy class, he is optimistic that that he will gain the personnel to put more officers on foot patrol along Flatbush.

Asked to comment on U.S. Rep. Yvette Clarke’s comments earlier in the meeting, wherein she cited a New York Times report that corrupt narcotics officers are contributing to the disproportionate arrests of young black men by planting confiscated drugs on suspects and in answering a related question such that illegitimates could be going on in the 71st Precinct, Telfer said: “Normally when I get questions like that I tell the person to get in touch with public affairs,” he said. “There are bad apples in every organization and the NYPD is no different.

“Do these things happen? Yes. But it is a systemic problem throughout the department? No. It was one narcotics unit in Brooklyn."

Recounting his early days on the job when he had to report the theft of his own car, a fancy sports car, the investigating officers didn’t believe him and turned what should have been a routine Q-and-A into an interrogation. Telfer brought the house down in laughter when he noted: “Those guys were so good, by the time they were finished with me, they had me convinced that I had stolen my own car,” he said. “That’s right. I was about to confess that I stole my own car.”

He urged residents to get involved with the community patrol programs and to get children, especially teens, involved in the precinct’s Explorer Program.

Since March, neighborhood pets in need of special spa pampering can visit Bow Wow at S&T Rogers Avenue.

Bow Wow! (and meow, too)

Lefferts Manor is known as a very pet-friendly neighborhood. Fortunately for those of us with families, more services are becoming available right where we need them.

Bow Wow Pet Spa & Grooming opened in March on Rogers Ave., between Rutland and Midwood Sts. The owner, Tay and Georgia, both live in the area and are dog lovers who worry about their pets when they went off to their respective schools. She said they refer dog walkers who are dog lovers who worry about their pets when they went off to their respective schools. They called her to say how soon they would put their business training to use as they turned to establish a neighbor- hood service that they wished they had use of themselves: a pet boutique and spa servicing both cats and dogs. The boutique employs Andrea, a professional dog groomer, Lance, a senior professional cat groomer who provides services in the cat owner’s home, and Dr. Alex, a veterinarian with more than 20 years of experience.

Tay and Georgia are eager to offer the kinds of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing, the kind of help that can be a real blessing.

So let your next dog-walking jaunt take you by Bow Wow Pet Boutique & Spa to see what they can do for the four-legged creatures in your life, or visit bowwowpetboutique.com. You can also follow them on Twitter or Face- book. In the coming weeks followers will be eligible to win prizes and discounts.

Mary Miller is a long time resident of the Manor, member of the annual flower basket planting and Christmas wreath projects, and a board member of the LMA.
A Rutland Rd. Resident Reflects on Occupy Wall Street

Test and photos by Kim Santoro

I needed to see for myself.
I can’t believe that a protest has lasted beyond a day and is now growing across the nation, and as of this week, the world.

Finally!
I had lost all faith.
Finally people are waking up.

Finally the ripple effect has reached its limit and stirred the dead and the mute.
I was overwhelmed by the energy at Zuccotti Park
(or Liberty Plaza Park to some).

To reach the street and dart for a place on the sidewalk among the tourists, construction workers, office workers, deliverymen and traffic makes it typically a live New York moment.

I walk only a half a block to hear music and see billboards and loads of picture takers and I was going to join in.

The police saying “keep it moving! Go inside! But don’t block the street!”

I went inside.
Music, art, media, food, a library, a drum circle, hair cuts, chess games, on-site live interviews immediately reflecting on a huge TV monitor.

I was not ready.
In such a small space, a well organized community. Someone could stand up high and say a cry and in unison, all would respond.

For five weeks.
The media very present but must respect.
We are watching and waiting for the spinout. There was none.
Saw three familiar faces.

My time at Liberty Plaza was very educational on so many levels.
Those who are used to the tight pocket that it is their life and are too tired to fight stronger as the cost dig deeper and those who fight for the right to have their pockets untouched.
Twenty years overdue.

A photographer and more recently free verse occupant, Kim Santoro is a longtime resident of Rutland I.

* * *

Editor’s Note: The neighbor who authored this piece spent a couple of days at the Occupy Wall Street encampment in Manhattan’s Financial District. Given that even the mainstream media has had trouble conveying what is happening there, we thought Santoro’s untraditional prose style and observations covered it as well as most. Her observations are hers and not the Echo’s.

The Pros and Cons of Feeding PLG’s Feral Cats by Robert Salmieri

The ASPCA estimates that there are tens of millions of feral cats in the U.S. and it’s no surprise to even the most casual observer that Prospect Lefferts Gardens’ wild feline population is well represented in that number.

You hear many people talk about feral cats being a problem: they make a mess in yards, create a lot of noise, leave their urine smell and kill songbirds. For the most part, people are at a loss as to how to make it stop. On the other hand, feral cats do a service by keeping down the rodent population, such as mice and rats.

We have many neighbors in PLG who over the years have caught, neutered and domesticated wild cats, only to have them become beloved family members. Wild cats that become domesticated pets are truly fortunate animals as feral cats have a very difficult life on the streets fending for themselves: diseases, harsh weather exposure, finding off humans and raccoons, attacks from other cats and, of course, hunger are daily challenges. If a cat survives kittenhood and lives on streets fending for themselves, it is likely to be healthy enough to live with a group of cats, whose lives may live up to 10 years.

At Trixies’ Pet Food and Supply, we have several customers who regularly buy expensive cat food to feed the feral colony that lives near their homes. One says he has been feeding cats for nearly 20 years. Today, he feeds two colonies every day and knows the cats individually. He supports his humanitarianism. It’s a good thing he does.

Another customer, Neeve, who jokingly refers to herself as “the cat lady,” has been taking care of feral cats her whole life. Neeve traps, neuters, and returns – better known as TNR when caught, “fixed” and returned to their environment. One quarter of the left ear is clipped to signify that the cat has been neutered (ear-tipping).

Neeve has a TNR license that allows her to get the neutering done for free. Some people pay for it themselves, but it can be costly, so some only do it occasionally. You can find low-cost neutering online.

Neutered cats can’t multiply, which keeps the population down.

Research shows that TNR is the really way to go when it comes to dealing with feral cats. There have been many studies done showing that if you relocate or kill the cats, other feral cats quickly replace them. There are some low-cost, non-toxic products on the market and home remedies such as orange and lemon peel, cayenne pepper, or coffee grounds, that you can use to keep them away from your residence.

I think it is a good thing that there are feral caretakers in our neighborhood. Managing the population by using non-toxic products and TNR is humane and allows us to coexist with our neighborhood cats.

Robert Salmieri is a co-owner of Trixies’ Pet Food, Supplies and Accessories on Flatbush Ave. at Midwood St.

Hooray for PLG: Hollywood Comes to Midwood 2

by Milford Pressett

Hollywood superstars Tim Robbins, Gwenyth Paltrow, Mark Ruffalo and a 50-member film crew roamed through the Midwood 2 movie of Deborah Mutnick and her family for three days in early October to film a new romantic comedy.

Titled “Thanks For Sharing,” the movie deals with sexual addiction and is being directed by Stuart Blumberg, co-author of the 2010 independent break-out film, “The Kids Are All Right,” which won several international movie awards and the Academy Award nominations, including a Best Actor nomination for Ruffalo.

“I was surprised by the height of Tim Robbins,” said one neighbor who said he was close to the actor up close. “You don’t get that impression of his height on the screen. That guy’s got NBA kind of height!”

Pop singer Pink makes her debut as an actress in the film, playing a sex addict. Her scenes were shot in the East Village.

Mutnick has lived with her husband, John, a writer, and their 14-year-old son, Jacob, in PLG for about 14 years. They occupy a 106-year-old, two-story brownstone with a beautiful flower garden and pond. The house contains period wood detailing and other original fixtures.

Mutnick admits she has no idea how her home came to be picked for the shoot. She says she never joined one of those location database service set locators use; her home was turned down by a location scout for a TV shoot some time ago; a good friend who works as a set locator had nothing to do with the selection; and she has never put her house on the PLG House Tour.

“Frankly, I never found out how we came to be selected,” she says. “I just picked up the phone one day and they asked me if I was interested, though I suspect the TV location scout told the “Thanks for Sharing” crew about us.”

A Long Island University English professor, documentarian and writer, Mutnick says the family was “well compensated” for the use of their home. The production company put the family up in a hotel and boarded the family cat in a kennel, as the crew did not want any felines in the house.

“They are eager to make the homeowner happy,” she says.

The movie is expected to be released next summer.

The production crew returns to work after a rain shower.

Be that as it may, Mutnick says it was stressful seeing so much equipment, cables and people in the house at one time. She says the filming began around 3 a.m. and often didn’t end till 10 p.m., with shooting taking place on every floor.

“It is a very complex process and really stressful,” she says. “But they didn’t break anything or damage the house in any way.”

On the other hand, Jacob, an aspiring filmmaker himself, was entertained by the chaos. Mutnick says her son spent hours watching the filming and learned a lot about his future craft.

The movie is expected to be released next summer.

* * *

Robert Salmieri is a co-owner of Trixies’ Pet Food, Supplies and Accessories on Flatbush Ave. at Midwood St.
Vilma Oliver, Midwood 2 Resident for a Half Century, Dies at 86

Vilma Oliver, a hardworking woman, devoted wife, proud mother and a great neighbor who lived on Midwood 2 for more than 50 years, had died at the age of 86. Her passing comes a little more than two years after the death of her husband, Theodore “K-Dog” Oliver—who neighbors had dubbed the “MAYor of Midwood.”

She was born in 1933 in St. Vincent, West Indies, the daughter of Cecil and Octavia Bennett. She received her primary and elementary education at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Trinidad. She later worked as a waitress in Trinidad.

Vilma, known as “Omni” to family, close friends and neighbors, came to the U.S. in 1954 and met “Boyise” at a Thanksgiving dinner that same year.

Boyise, who worked for the MTA for 35 years and fought in World War II with the famed 396th Infantry Regiment, an all-black combat squad dubbed “the Harlem Hellfighters,” married Vilma in 1961. They moved to Lefferts Manor shortly after their unions, becoming one of the first black families to integrate the historic district.

They raised two sons and a daughter. Janet Lee Sang, who as an adult would buy the house next door to her parents and raise her family.

Vilma worked for 30 years in the garment industry and when she retired, she went back to school to become a nurse’s aide.

She worked another six years caring for the elderly.

She was described as a woman who was most proud of her children and grandchildren, and loved to tell and hear good jokes. She also didn’t take “teeth for free” from anyone. Avid travelers, Vilma and Boyise visited England, Holland, Spain, Aruba and Santo Domingo. But her favorite place, which they visited often, was St. Maarten. A son, Teddy Jr., preceded her in death.

Besides Janet Lee Sang, she was survived by her sister, Christmas Bennett; her sons, Intex Smith; two sister-in-law; five grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren and a host of nieces and nephews.

Janet Lee Sang contributed to this article

A Neighbor Who Be Sorely Missed by Paul Morin

A few days after my partner, Andie, and I moved into our new home on Rutland 2, I went into the backyard and found a distinguished, attractive couple sitting in their adjoining backyard on Midwood 2. It was a pretty sunny day and they were obviously enjoying each other’s company at a round patio table while a new green awning kept the sun at bay with lots of cool shade.

We looked at each other, and without hesitation, Vilma introduced herself, as did her husband, Boyise. It was the warmest greeting that any new resident to the Manor could receive and we immediately knew we were in good company and bound to share some great times in the years to come with our new friends.

Our prediction was right on the mark. Years of friendly banter would ensue with many conversations moving through the chain link fence that separated our backyards. They were talented gardeners and many vegetables were exchanged over that fence, including home-grown zucchinis, large red tomatoes and some of the best cucumbers we had ever tasted. Vilma was a good cook and baker, too, sending over some very tasty homemade cakes.

Vilma was gone now. Gone are the days when we would walk into our backyard to find Vilma basking in the sun, only to hear a warm and boisterous, warm greeting, “Boyise!”

Vilma was gone, as is Boyise, we will always have wonderful memories of their generous friendship and warm personalities.

They will always be loved and missed.

Paul Morin is a board member of the Lefferts Manor Association.