

AUTUMN

CALENDAR

Oct 30–Nov 13 "The Neighborhood Show"—Crafts, Dance, Live Music and Spoken Word. 552 Flatbush Ave. (The old Mike's International). Hours: Mon–Fri, 2–8pm; Sat, 10am–8pm; Sun 12–6 pm; Free

Nov 15 Last day to pay LMA membership dues if you wish to receive a Christmas wreath.

Dec 3 LMA members wreath distribution. Volunteers welcome. Please contact Mary Miller at mary.h.miller@gmail.com.

Politicos at LMA Meeting Assert Stingy Congress and Conniving Banks Perpetuate Bad Economy

by MILFORD PREWITT

Some of Prospect Lefferts Gardens elected representatives accused a "do-nothing" Congress and shyster banks for retarding the nation's economic recovery and crimping their ability to serve their constituents effectively.

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.

"It's almost as if these [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 Lefferts Manor Association's general meeting Oct. 15 at Church of the Evangel. "They've taken this presidency very personally."

"I swear, I don't see how the President can play golf with [Speaker of the House] John Boehner. I couldn't be that friendly with him or the Tea Party given some of the surreal stories they say about him."

Clarke said she was personally offended that the first African-American president had to produce a birth certificate to prove his citizenship and few voices in the mainstream media stepped up to condemn the insult.



At the LMA's fall general meeting Representative Yvette Clarke blasted her Republican colleagues for exacerbating the nation's economic condition. LMA President Ben Edwards looks on.

photo: Celestine Thompson

Joining her at the packed church meeting hall, where about 100 LMA members and neighbors gathered, were Borough President Marty Markowitz, State Sen. Eric Adams, and Councilman Mathieu Eugene—an impressive turnout by elected officials in a non-election season.

Clarke, who has lived in the our area her entire life, abandoned her prepared text to speak unscripted and angrily about the lack of cooperation in Congress to get the nation moving. She said she believes some of her colleagues on the Republican side are *(continued on page 2)*

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

by ROBERTA WOELFLING

Dozens of high-spirited and affectionate fans of the K-Dog & Dunebuggy café 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 deck of the Titanic as it sank: lovely but over.

Gabrielle "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 café.

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 mini art gallery displaying work by local artists on its walls. Free and alternative newsletters and other publications – including this one – saw K-Dog as the most vital retail conduit in the neighborhood for dropping off their publications 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 where yoga instructors, music teachers, math tutors, geek repairmen, apartment or roommate seekers, masseuses, contractors, website designers, dog walkers, landscapers, trash removers, personal trainers, karate instructors, musicians and singers advertised their services, needs or up-coming performances.

The menu consisted of home-cooked meals featuring handmade sandwiches, imaginative soups, salads and all manner of fresh pastries, breads, strong coffee and rich teas. Customers bussed their own tables.

Wi-fi friendly, K-Dog & Dunebuggy was the remote office for many customers who spent hours of the day there on their various digital devices entertaining themselves or conducting personal and professional business.

Gabby moved to Lefferts Manor in 2003 and fell in love with it. With her background in restaurant management, she decided to take a big leap and provide a kind of

food service amenity that hadn't existed here. In October of 2005, she signed a lease for the space at 43 Lincoln Rd. and formally launched K-Dog & Dunebuggy on March 6, 2006.

Little did she know that K-Dog would become a pioneer that would elevate Lincoln Rd.'s retail character to a fledgling Restaurant Row, all the more so after restaurant entrepreneur Jim Mamary, following 10 visits with Gabby for reassurance, later opened the hugely popular Café Enduro and later, Lincoln Park Tavern.

So why did a place so popular close up shop?



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

photo: Bob Marvin

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.

But what sealed K-Dog's end was the stress, strain and chronic exhaustion Gabby says she suffered for more than a year attempting to win a manageable lease with her landlord, who owns much of the commercial and residential property on K-Dog's side of the street. She believed she was being steered towards a bad business deal, and disagreed with the landlord's insistence to convert to a bakery and spend big dollars remodeling the facade.

Exasperated with the whole situation, Gabby felt compelled to reassess K-Dog's future. *(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 mundane, 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 marveling at a friend's new baby; a pit bull leaping up joyfully in his handler's leash to lick and greet a human friend projects a shadow like a beast from Hell on the sidewalk; and even Fernandes, who painted himself in a three-paneled self-portrait buying beer, builds a bridge of communication to a young child.

In fact, communication and neighborhood togetherness was the underlying 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 PLGArts and PLGNA — in their first-ever joint marshalling of resources — to make the gallery a go by getting the insurance and marketing the event. Also lending a hand were the

Brooklyn Arts Council and the Citizens Committee For New York City.

Both the opening night (Oct. 13) and the closing night (Oct. 23) drew the kind of crowd that Fernandes was hoping would show up: racially and economically diverse, young and old, renter and homeowner, browser and buyer.

Martin Ruiz, president of the PLGNA, said the show represented a bold cultural change in the neighborhood's character.

"Without overstating it, 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 as such, brings them together."

Artist Brian Fernandes in front of his three-paneled self-portrait depicting him buying beer.

photo: Milford Prewitt



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.

LMA Meeting (continued from page 1)

“delusional” when you look at the kind of pork barrel projects they get funding for in their home districts while Democrats discretionary budgets go unfunded.

In response to a question whose answer proved to be an example of what she was talking about, she said right now funding for various AIDS programs in the district hang in the balance because Congress has cut discretionary budgets—the money representatives normally funnel home for community improvements and social programs.

Clarke said she supports the Occupy Wall Street movement, but expressed regret that the protestors are challenging societal and economic problems she thought earlier generations had solved long ago.

“I salute Occupy Wall Street,” she said. “Their voices couldn’t come at a better time, but isn’t it ironic that here we are in 2011 fighting the same battles all over again? I mean, I thought some of these things were taken care of before I was born: the right to get a job with decent pay; the right to deal with honest banks; the right to decent, affordable housing.”

With 71st Precinct commanders and other officers in attendance and in rapt attention, Clarke said she is all for the decriminalization of marijuana. But she said she was very upset by a recent *New York Times* report that revealed that some narcotics detectives in the most elite undercover squads had taken confiscated drugs from the evidence rooms to plant on young black men during arrest when the alleged perp had nothing illicit on them.

State Sen. Adams, a police officer for 20 years and critical observer of his former employer, agreed with Clarke in expressing his concern that young black men’s reputations and ability to land a job are being ruined by frivolous stop-and-frisk arrests. Adams said he shares neighborhood concerns that crime is going up in PLG, but arresting and detaining the innocent is no way to get the job done. He argued that local businesses could help reduce street crime if more operations installed video cameras.

“I’m a big fan of security cameras,” he said. “One thing we know about predators who are caught after video surveillance is that they are repeaters and it helps the police tremendously.”

Adams indicated that there are government funds to help cover the costs of video camera installation and he urged merchants to get in touch with their local precincts to research what is available and what kind of businesses qualify.

Like Clarke, Adams said he too supports the Occupy Wall Street phenomenon. He noted that he has lost his discretionary budget in the current legislature and is unable to provide funding to certain projects he normally helped. But he lost his funding not from Republicans, but Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a fellow Democrat, who secured the power to consolidate the state senate’s discretionary budget allocations to one account that the governor administers.

On another matter, Adams urged people to write New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman in support of his refusal to sign an agreement with other state attorneys general that would bring no prosecutions against the big banks for their fraudulent lending and accounting practices that led to the 2008 financial collapse and subsequent mortgage crisis.

“It’s amazing, taxpayers gave a multi-billion dollar bailout to banks who today are foreclosing on homeowners who got no financial support in their time of need,” he said. “Yet many of these banks are criminally liable for what they did to the economy and now they are working on a deal with many of the state attorneys general to get a pass by paying a small fine...Eric Schneiderman is to be complimented in not signing this agreement and we should all write him and support him.”

Councilman Eugene told those in attendance that crime can only be reduced when local residents and police form better lines of communication, residents volunteer for community vigilance programs and parents are more mindful of their children’s comings and goings.

“Why is a 15-year-old out at night?” Eugene asked. “That’s not a question for the police to answer, that’s for us and the kid’s parents to answer.”

Despite the budgetary restrictions that are hampering Adams and Clarke, Eugene said he used his discretionary budget to spend about \$3 million in park improvements and after-school youth activities throughout the district.

Borough President Markowitz also ran down a list of accomplishments in the past year, though he stressed he is in no way in favor of the express bus lines and bike paths that are removing car lanes throughout the borough, including Rodgers Ave. in PLG.

“I think all of this stuff is an attempt to take cars out of New York City,” he said. “I respect your opinion if you disagree, but I believe you have a right to own and operate a car in this city and this express lanes and bike paths are ruining that.”

Markowitz said he is concerned that too many big-box storage facilities are opening in the neighborhood along Empire Ave. and he is working with City Council to see if there should be a new zoning restrictions to control the industry.

On a more upbeat note, Markowitz said the renovation of the long-abandoned Loew’s King Theater on Flatbush near Tilden Ave. is on schedule and is destined to become the “Beacon Theater” of Brooklyn when it opens three years from now.

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 members attending 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 Jamaican native who grew up along Flatbush Ave. 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 jerk chicken in the city, too.”

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

Although he didn’t join the 71st until earlier this year, he clearly knew the neighborhood’s frustration with the all-day loitering 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-and-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 11 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 10 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 up that contingent occasionally and during special events. “So imagine what happens when we make 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 if such illegalities 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 is it a systemwide problem throughout the department? No. It was one narcotics unit in Brooklyn South and it is being broken up and people are being prosecuted.”

But he did not deny that racial profiling has been a long, deep-rooted problem in the police department. In fact, he has been a victim of it himself.

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.



Photo: Catherine Thompson



Since March, neighborhood pets in need of special spa pampering can visit Bow Wow at 521 Rogers Avenue.

Bow Wow! (and meow, too)

by Mary Miller

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

Bow Wow Pet Boutique & Spa opened in March on Rogers Ave., between Rutland and Midwood Sts. The owners, Tay and Georgia, both live in the area and are dog lovers who worried about their pets when they went off to their respective workplaces — Tay in the world of legal marketing and Georgia in the world of global real estate.

Both women, friends since high school, were involved in the Baruch Executive MBA program when corporate life paled and they had a chance to reinvent themselves.

Little did they realize how soon they would put their business training to use as they turned to establish a neighborhood 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 for the busy Manor resident. They can visit your home to feed and or walk your furry friend during the day or if you are kept late at work. Day and overnight boarding are also available, as well as veterinary services (Sundays 11 to 3). Their pet taxi service can pick-up and drop off for grooming or trips to the airport. Grooming hours are 9 to 5, Tuesday through Saturday, but because they live in the area, Georgia and Tay are more than flexible.

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

Mary Miller is a long time resident of the Manor, organizer of the annual flower barrel planting and Christmas wreath projects, and a board member of the LMA.

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.



Art recalling a famous image from the Vietnam War is repurposed for a new cause.

A Rutland Rd. Resident Reflects on Occupy Wall Street

Text 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 a typically 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.

Fox Five sucks.

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 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 essayist, Kim Santoro is a longtime resident of Rutland I.



David Everitt-Carlson, 55, a former corporate executive who says he is homeless and sleeps at Bellevue Hospital most nights, paints signs urging his fellow protestors to "think outside the box." He writes a blog about his experiences on the street at ahomelessbloggerinnyc.blogspot.com.



Empty food trays pile up as protestors grab a meal.

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, fending off humans and raccoons, attacks from other cats and, of course, hunger are daily challenges. If a cat survives kittenhood and lives on its own, the animal is probably only going to live for two years. If it is lucky enough to live with a group of cats, s/he may live up to 10 years.

At Trixies' Pet Food and Supply, we have several customers who regularly buy inexpensive 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. I support 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 really the 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 Prewitt

Hollywood superstars Tim Robbins, Gwyneth Paltrow, Mark Ruffalo and a 50-member film crew roamed through the Midwood 2 manse 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 breakout film, "The Kids Are All Right," which won several international movie awards and five Academy Award nominations, including a Best Actor nomination for Ruffalo.

"I was surprised by the height of Tim Robbins," said one neighbor who saw 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 services 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 production crew returns to work after a rain shower. photo: Milford Prewitt

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 5 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.

Mayor's Proclamation Commends Rutland 2

On Rutland 2, several elected officials, community leaders and police brass gathered for the 71st Precinct's Annual Night Out block party. A highlight of the event was a special proclamation from Mayor Bloomberg saluting Rutland 2's hosting of the event. Edna Wells Handy, who has lived on the block for years and who is the commissioner of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, read the proclamation.

Later, Handy said from a street stage: "Not only do we live in the best borough in the city. Not only do we live in the best neighborhood in the borough. Not only do we live on the best street in the neighborhood, but we live on the best block in the neighborhood."



Police, elected officials and community leaders join Edna Wells Handy, a longtime Rutland 2 resident and a city commissioner, displaying a Mayoral Proclamation saluting the block's hosting of the Annual Night Out. From left to right are 71st Precinct Community Relations Officer Vincent Martinos, Handy, Captain Thomas Kamper, 71st Precinct Council President Karl Cohen, Captain Michael Tefler and City Councilman Mathieu Eugene.

photo: Ben Edwards

So Long K-Dog (continued from page 1)

From last year to this past September, Gabby says the negotiations to renew turned out to be an emotionally draining, one-sided descent into frustration and futility that was taking an emotional and mental toll on her well being.

Unable to win rent terms she thought the business needed to survive, eager to spend more time with her family, and exhausted beyond measure from the lease negotiations, Gabby decided not to renew the lease for the sake of her sanity and family.

[The *Echo* tried to contact the landlord for their side of the story, but our voicemails and emails were not returned by press time.]

But Gabby found the energy to stage the going-away party that somber Saturday. At the time, long-time K-Dog employee Billy Baily had expressed a desire to take over the business and began negotiations with the landlord. Knowing the rent was still too high and that Billy would face similar financial pressures, Gabby saw the party as a rally to initiate an email campaign among former patrons to help the new business by urging the landlord to establish a more reasonable rent. It was heartening to see the dozens of supportive e-mails printed out and taped to the walls across the length of the store.



In a scene reminiscent of a New Orleans funeral, a sidewalk jazz ensemble played a closing ode to K-Dog.

photo: Bob Marvin

In the end, however, Blue Roost's owner Linda Billings is going to lease the space at 43 Lincoln Rd. while Billy is looking to the abandoned flower shop space next to Sneaker Q for a food business.

Whatever happens, none of it would have been possible if not for Gabrielle Lowe. Gabby states with authority that a landlord can really affect a business for better or worse and that "there's something to be said for encouraging and supporting a keystone business in your community."

We hope that landlords out there take heed of Gabby's words.

Gabby really wanted to say thanks to the community for all of the support and encouragement over the years—especially at the end. She was so impressed that some of her customers came in and helped clean out the place. She will miss you all. We'll all miss K-Dog.

An architect who lives with her family on Rutland 1, Roberta Woelfling is the secretary of the LMA. Milford Prewitt contributed to this story.

In the days leading up to the closing, many of those who had frequented K-Dog posted their feelings about the place on the walls of the café. One note in particular caught our attention. It read:

You gave people going somewhere a place to stop and gave people with nowhere to go a place. We gave you our change and in return you changed us. We love you and won't forget. — Seth

IN MEMORIAM

Vilma Oliver, Midwood 2 Resident for a Half Century, Dies at 88

Vilma Oliver, a hardworking woman, devoted wife, proud mother and a great neighbor who lived on Midwood 2 for more than 50 years, has died at the age of 88. Her passing comes a little more than two years after the death of her husband, Theodore "Boysie" Oliver—who neighbors had dubbed the "Mayor of Midwood."

She was born in 1923 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 "Omie" to family, close friends and neighbors, came to the U.S. in 1949 and met "Boysie" at a Thanksgiving dinner that same year.

Boysie, who worked for the MTA for 35 years and fought in World War II with the famed 369th Infantry Regiment, an all-black combat squad dubbed "the Harlem Hellfighters," married Vilma in 1961. They moved to Lefferts Manor shortly after their union, 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 home right 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, had a strong work ethic, and loved to tell and hear good jokes. She also didn't take "teeth for fever" from anyone. Avid travelers, Vilma and Boysie 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 is survived by another son, Christopher Bennett; her sister, Inez Smith; two sisters-in-law; five grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren and a host of nieces and nephews.

Janet Lee Sang contributed to this article

A Neighbor Who'll Be Sorely Missed

by Paul Morin
A few days after my partner, Andre, 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, Boysie. 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 separat-

ed 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 eaten. Vilma was a good cook and baker, too, sending over some very tasty homemade cakes.

Gone now are the days when we would walk into our backyard to find Vilma basking in the sun, only to hear a wonderful and boisterous, warm greeting, "Hey, love!"

Although Vilma is gone, as is Boysie, 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.

Vera Eubanks, Church of the Evangel Archivist, Dies at 70

Vera Eubanks, who worshipped at Church of the Evangel for 27 years, served as its secretary, and most importantly, tapped a love of history, research and storytelling to help advance the institution's entry on the National Register of Historic Places, has died at 70 years old.

Eubanks never married, but was born into a large family, the seventh of 12 children, in Eads, Tenn.

She died in Brooklyn on Aug. 12, apparently of natural causes. Her life was celebrated at Church of the Evangel, and she was buried in Milwaukee, Wis. She had made life-long friends in Milwaukee after moving there as a young adult to attend Milwaukee Area Technical College and later, to work for Atlantic Mills, a prominent wool manufacturer and retailer at the time.

Eubanks left Wisconsin upon being offered a supervisory position with a company in New York City. In 1964, she accepted an opportunity to work for J.P. Stevens & Co.—a wool manufacturer that dominated the industry for nearly 200 years. She retired from the Stevens company after a long and distinguished tenure.

She joined Church of the Evangel in 1984 and served as church secretary for many years. The church is indebted to Eubanks for her prodigious research and writing talents as an amateur archivist and historian who helped dig up enough research about the 95-year-old institution to get it placed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2009.

The architecture of the church follows the Late Gothic Revival style of country parishes in England in the 18th century. During the 1960s in the midst of the neighborhood's rocky integration, racial steering and redlining, the church became an important community and youth center, welcoming all people regardless of race.

Eubanks remained a member right up to the day she died.

Family and friends recall a woman who was full of life, told great stories, and relished the opportunity to travel to be with family and friends in Memphis and Milwaukee for weddings, reunions and holiday get-togethers.

Preceded in death by her parents, two sisters and two brothers, Eubanks is survived by three brothers, four sisters, two sisters-in-law, one brother-in-law and a host of nieces, nephews and friends.



photo: Catherine Thompson



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Lefferts Manor Association

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