



CALENDAR!

Saturday, April 27 LMA Spring Meeting

Meet your neighbors, hear from local politicians, and get a great cup of coffee at the Lefferts Manor Association's Spring Meeting, 10 a.m. to noon, Church of the Evangel, Bedford Ave. between Hawthorne and Winthrop Sts.

Saturday, May 4 Annual Barrel Planting

Volunteers needed 10 a.m. to noon for the annual planting of the flower barrels that line our blocks. LMA board members from each block will organize volunteers. If your barrel is deteriorated, you can replace it with a new wooden barrel at Kings County Nursery on New York Ave. and Fenimore St., which is offering a special price of \$50 if you tell them you are a Manor resident. To volunteer or for more information, call Mary Miller at 718-693-5109.

Sunday, June 2 PLG House & Garden Tour

From noon to 5 p.m., the doors and gates to several of Prospect Lefferts Gardens' most beautiful homes and verdant gardens will open for your enjoyment. There will also be receptions at art galleries, a group art show, a visit to an artist's studio, activities for kids and special discounts from neighborhood merchants and restaurants. Please check for more details in the next issue of the Echo or www.leffertsmanor.org in the coming weeks.

Landmark Reps Explain the Rules At Homeowners Meeting

by Mary Miller

Ah, spring, when homeowners' fancies turn to landscaping, gardening, sidewalk replacement, home renovations, and making sure those projects don't run afoul of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC).

The beautifully restored and preserved homes in the Prospect Lefferts Gardens (PLG) Historic District result not only from the love of proud homeowners, but also from a specialized set of city rules designed to keep the houses that way.

Those rules are enforced by the LPC. In late February, LPC representatives met with residents of Rutland 2 to clarify, review and discuss the responsibilities of homeowners who live in the city's various historic districts like ours. All 600 homes in Lefferts Manor are within the PLG Historic District.

The meeting between Rutland 2's neighbors and the LPC was one of a continuing series of informal exchanges that Ben Edwards, Lefferts Manor Association president, has been arranging with the Commission and homeowners on individual blocks in the Manor for the past couple of years. Maple 2 and Rutland 1 were previous hosts.

Here's some useful information detailing how the LPC's renovation rules affect you.

Ever since parts of PLG were designated an historic district in 1979, all homeowners have been required to not only keep their properties in good condition, they must demonstrate that the historic character of a home's exterior will not be adversely impacted by any work done to the property. Therefore, before starting any work that affects or alters the appearance of the building, these homeowners need to apply to the LPC for a permit. Even interior work that requires a Department of Buildings permit will pass through LPC to ensure that interior work has no impact on the exterior. If that is the case, a "Certificate of No Effect" is issued.

Even simple external home improvements like painting, replacing exterior doors, steam cleaning and masonry repair or repointing require a "Permit for Minor Work."

More elaborate projects that might impact the architectural features—such as removing a stoop, cornice or replacing windows—could require a "Certificate of Appropriateness" and even a public hearing.

Work on windows has been the sorest point of contention between Manor homeowners and the LPC over the years.

No permit is required for routine maintenance like weather stripping, caulking, puttying, or replacing broken glass. Painting window sash or frame the same color does not require a permit, either. However if owners want to change the color, they must apply for a permit to make sure the color is acceptable and the change is legal.

Unapproved changes can result in a Notice of Violation (NoV) from the LPC that travels with the title of your house and can affect refinancing and sales.

One question asked at the meeting was how to find a good contractor for a major job like repointing brick, re-brownstoning, or removing paint from a limestone façade.

As a government agency, the LPC is not permitted to recommend specific contractors or specific products, but they note that non-government entities, such as the New York Landmarks Conservancy, are very knowledgeable about these issues and are happy to make recommendations.

The LPC recommends homeowners educate themselves about ways to speed their permit applications. Also, be prepared for a site visit by LPC staff who may need to approve samples of mortar or brownstoning before the job is completed.

The meeting closed with information about the LPC Historic Preservation Grant Program. Funds come from the federal Community Development Block Grant program and owners who meet the federal CDBG household income limits can get significant help in repairing façade deterioration that threatens the architectural character of a historic district. If there are outstanding LPC violations on the property, the homeowner must correct these first with his/her own funds, but then the grant can cover further work that is needed.

In short, the LPC laws may cover more than you imagined, so start your projects by consulting with them. (online: www.nyc.gov/landmarks). You may find your plans require no permit, but you will not want to put yourself in jeopardy of a NoV by forging ahead with unapproved work.

Even if the work were done to the standards of the LPC, you would need to apply for a permit to legalize it. So start off on the right foot, and all should go well for the continued health of your house and the unique character of our neighborhood.

Mary Miller is a longtime Rutland 2 resident, LMA board member, and heads the Manor's annual flower barrel planting and holiday wreath projects.



Eric Adams is all smiles at the Borough Hall kickoff rally.

State Senator Kicks Off Candidacy for Brooklyn Borough President

Eric Adams Sets Agenda For "Greatest Place on Earth"

BY MILFORD PREWITT

From a Borough Hall rally to a cozy Rutland Road fundraising party, State Senator Eric Adams set down an ambitious agenda in his bid to become Brooklyn's next borough president.

On March 3, with dozens of supporters and Democratic Party colleagues on the steps of Borough Hall surrounding him—including outgoing Borough President Marty Markowitz, who enthusiastically endorsed him—Adams said that too many Brooklynites are not sharing in the borough's economic resurgence.

Joining Markowitz with lavish endorsements of their own was a gaggle of bigwigs from the leadership ranks of the local Democratic Party, including mayoral candidates City Comptroller John Liu and Public Advocate Bill de Blasio.

Adams vowed to use his authority as borough president to make Brooklyn more inclusive to all with quality jobs, improved schools, affordable housing, safer streets and an end to the racist stop-and-frisk sidewalk confrontations police practice on young men of color. Adams served 22 years as a NYPD police officer, retiring as a detective.

"Brooklyn is the greatest place on Earth," he declared. "Never before has it offered such opportunity and promise. But this is a pivotal time for us. We have to make our popularity and prosperity more inclusive, leave no one behind and make Brooklyn the best that it can be."

Adams said while he is proud of the media's steady spotlight on the borough's popularity and the evolution of working-poor/middle-class neighborhoods into hip hotbeds of gentrification, he does not want rising affluence to come at the expense of diversity or inclusion.

"If we can build a new home for the Nets at the Barclays Center, we can build affordable homes for our families," Adams said. "Brooklyn has built a brand. Now we have to make sure that all who want to work and live here can live enriching lives."

Gentrification without displacement was a key concern of Adams' at both the rally and later that week at a private fundraiser in the Rutland 2 home of PLG Arts board member and vice president Siobhan O'Neill and her family.

Adams represented Prospect Lefferts Gardens for seven years before the NY State Senate reconfigured the 20th District map, and booted him out of PLG

last fall—a "redistricting" move he described as punishment for being too progressive. So it felt like the homecoming of a native son when less than a week after the Borough Hall rally Adams put more meat on the bones of his agenda.

He said one way he intends to "community build" is by following the PLG model where so many neighbors lend their talents and expertise to the betterment of the neighborhood voluntarily.

Thus, he said, he intends to create a "Brooklyn Corps," patterned after the Peace Corps, in establishing an "incredible database" of professionals, artists and craftsmen to help improve the quality of community life throughout the borough, from home repair and gardening to family budgeting and legal advice to fitness and nutrition to development of public art spaces.

"Prospect Lefferts Gardens got it long before anyone else in this city," he said. "People in Prospect Lefferts Gardens understand that it is not about gentrification but diversity and their children's lives are enriched when they see what happens when people come together. Nowhere else in the city do you see that understanding to the extent that you see it in Prospect Lefferts Gardens."

Adams said it was also volunteer efforts of lay people in the wake of Hurricane Sandy that convinced him that there is a pent-up desire among Brooklynites to give back to their neighbors, and he intends to tap that energy with the Brooklyn Corps.

"Gentrification is not an ethnicity," he said. "It is a mindset. Imagine the upside of having professionals go into less-advantaged parts of town to teach community building, gardening, how to improve parent-teacher relations and the like."

While praising Markowitz's drive and force of personality that accounted for much of Brooklyn's resurgence and growing tourism, Adams said he wants to change the formula by which his success in office is measured.

"The borough president we need going forward is one who says we are not successful because of the Barclays Center," he said. "But we are successful when prosperity cascades throughout the entire borough. Everyone has to benefit and we all have to get involved."

"I want my legacy to be that I captured the greatness of the human spirit for giving back to the betterment of humankind. That is going to be the mission of Borough Hall when I get there."

Although Adams currently has one challenger—John Gangemi, a 73-year-old Republican lawyer from Bensonhurst who served five years on the City Council in the 1970s—he warned his supporters to expect a torrent of negative campaigning as the race heats up.

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Wearing one of his trademark sweaters, Eric Adams poses with Siobhan O'Neill and her son, Jasper, at a Rutland Road fundraiser.

STERLING 1'S PIONEERING BLACK FILM EDITOR

Civil Rights Documentarian Madeline Anderson

by SANDRA M. SKOBLAR

Madeline Anderson is an unsung heroine who may never get a postage stamp in her honor or a school or block named after her.

But those oversights do not diminish the honorable legacy of the longtime Sterling 1 resident as a breakthrough film editor who made some of the most important documentaries of the civil rights era of the late 1960s and 1970s.

"You had to have grit," says Anderson. The "grit" she speaks of was her determination to join the Motion Pictures Editors Guild in the 1960s, when

joined in common cause, establishing a template that would bind them in other industries for years to come.

The Local chose Anderson "because all but twelve of the strikers were women and they wanted a director who could relate to them"—as a woman, as a black person, and as someone who fought for entry into a union herself. It also helped that Anderson had a track record as a highly competent editor who could bring a project in on time and within budget.

"I Am Somebody"—the title comes from a declaration poignantly expressed by a striking worker—covers the strike from its contentious beginning to its happy ending several months later when the hospital granted the workers' demands. Civil rights icons Coretta Scott King, Ralph Abernathy, and Andrew Young all appear in the film.

Anderson began making films during the rise of the *cinéma vérité* genre of filmmaking, which focused on documenting events as they occurred.

"The kinship I felt toward the women compelled me to translate the essence of their experiences to film as genuinely as I could," Anderson notes. "I identified with them as a black working woman, as a wife and mother.

"Their grit and determination to succeed were evocative of my own efforts to become a member of the film editors' union. Our obstacles were the same, those of gender, racial discrimination, and politics."

In the years after her documentary days, Anderson continued her robust career. She served as an in-house film editor at NET (now WNET, Channel 13) and was a member of the original staff of the program *Black Journal*.

She also created films for both the Children's Television Workshop and Infinity TV. Anderson taught at Columbia University's Graduate School of the Arts and was one of the pioneers of WHMM, Howard University's public television station.

Awards and honors include the Indie Award from the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (a lifelong achievement award for contributions to the arts of film and television). She was inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame in 1992.

Madeline Anderson's films may be found at the Black Film Archive at Indiana University in Bloomington.

Sondra Skoblar is a technical writer and journalist who has lived for seven years with her husband on Sterling 1.

HAWTHORNE STREET ENTREPRENEURS

Monk's Trunk Partners Lure Thrifty Parents

by MARCIA LLOYD

"So many things we do are wasteful that the more we can reuse, the better." This is the philosophy of Carrie McLaren, co-owner of Monk's Trunk, a consignment shop for children's clothing, books, and toys at 35 Hawthorne Street, just off Flatbush Avenue.

Seven years ago, McLaren moved from Park Slope to PLG and purchased the limestone where she now lives with her husband, Charles Star, and their son, Sidney, 4. It also houses Monk's Trunk on its parlor floor.

As a new mother, McLaren searched in vain for a children's consignment store, which serves as a middleman for people selling used items in good condition. Both the seller and the proprietor receive a percentage of the profits, and it provides an alternative for those on a tight budget who want high quality, durable goods.

Visiting a friend in Portland, McLaren was amazed at the abundance of such stores. Having come from a nonprofit critical of consumerism and rampant materialism (and having co-authored a book entitled *Ad Nauseum: A Survivor's Guide to American Consumer Culture*), McLaren viewed the consignment business as tackling the same problem from a different angle, and in 2010, she opened Monk's Trunk.

Elyssa Pierre LeBris was McLaren's first employee, and in 2012 she became co-owner. With training in fashion design at FIT and a few years' experience at a women's wear company, LeBris provided fashion and retail knowledge.

Over the years, both owners have learned about children's wear brands and gear such as strollers and high chairs, the needs of children at different stages of development, and which items sell. They also have enjoyed seeing their small charges grow.

Both their consigners and their customer base are expanding, certainly due in part to their exacting standards. They filter their acquisitions very carefully and provide a variety of price points in order to cater to everyone in the neighborhood. All clothing must be delivered encased in plastic, and Monk's Trunk is one of the few consignment stores to heat treat all textiles.

The book selection, which they are working on expanding, focuses on classics and well-known children's authors and includes foreign language books. Most are remaindered, so they are new but sell at low prices, some for a dollar or two. Many of the toys are also new. People making the trip from Park Slope and Windsor Terrace have said that Monk's Trunk provides better quality at a better price than their neighborhood stores.

Monk's Trunk has, over the years, carried some unusual items, including an enormous robotic dinosaur which made the purchaser's young son cry. She subsequently donated it to the Maple Street School, where the children were old enough to appreciate it. Some outstanding—but not frightening—items currently in stock include a Stoke crib, a Bugaboo Frog red stroller, a Baby Bjorn Babysitter bouncer, a couple of Ergo baby carriers, and several Petit Bateau items of clothing.

Monk's Trunk is open five days a week (closed Tuesdays), 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and stays open Thursdays until 7. Their website is www.monkstrunk.com

Marcia Lloyd, a longtime Maple 2 resident, is a photographer and literature professor at the Art Institute of New York.



Carrie McLaren (left), co-owner and founder of Monk's Trunk, with partner Elyssa Pierre LeBris

Marcia Lloyd



Madeline Anderson and her granddaughter, Lilly Torre.

Pamela York

neither women nor blacks were especially welcome.

"Filmmaking is a collegial process, but if you weren't a member of the union, you could be exploited, abused, and treated badly," she recalls. "So my main objective was to become a member of that union."

And that she did in 1961, becoming the second black woman to do so and the first African-American unionized female filmmaker to direct and edit a documentary that played to a mainstream audience.

A resident of Sterling 1 since 1971, Anderson raised four children with her late husband, Ralph J. Anderson, to whom she was married for 53 years.

She directed several key documentaries of the civil rights era, including "Integration Report 1" (1961), "I Am Somebody" (1969), and "A Tribute to Malcolm X" (1969).

"I Am Somebody," her signature film, chronicled the 1969 struggle of more than 400 black hospital workers to join a union and receive fair wages at the Medical College Hospital of the University of South Carolina, in Charleston. Anderson was commissioned by the Hospital Workers Union Local 1199 to record the strike—which she says marked a historic moment when the labor and civil rights movements

Eric Adams Sets Agenda

(continued from page 1)

"Just as we are celebrating here, there are people saying we cannot allow this hippie to become the borough president," Adams said. "We are praying for peace, but we are getting ready for war."

"They are going to be as mean as possible."

O'Neill, recipient of Adams' Woman of Distinction Award in 2012 and a fundraiser for children's causes, said she could not have been happier with the event at her home.

"I'm thrilled this happened," she said. "I wanted to give my neighbors and friends a chance to hang out with Eric Adams. He is very accessible and personable and he really wants to hear other people's ideas."

"I think he has a vision that brings us together and what better place to do that than this incredible neighborhood I love so much."



Now We Know

Under renovation since last October, the old supermarket space of Papa & Sons at the corner of Flatbush and Lincoln will become WHOLESOME GOURMET MARKET, featuring locally-sourced foods. Workers said the place may open later in April.

It's your Park! Come and help Prospect Park prepare for spring and summer.

It's My Park! Day

Saturday, May 18 • 10AM – 1PM
Meet at the Prospect Park Bandshell (near PPW at 9th St.)

Take care of your park! Give back to this special part of Brooklyn! On **It's My Park! Day**, volunteers will gear up with brooms, shovels, rakes, and trash grabbers to tackle a major cleanup effort.

To learn more visit prospectpark.org or call 718-287-3400.
Groups must pre-register. Please visit the group volunteering page.

by Dave Miss

MangoSeed restaurant offers about the best Caribbean and West Indian cuisine and hospitality one can find under one roof this side of Negril or Miami.

Located on Flatbush Avenue between Lenox Road and Woodruff Avenue, MangoSeed is a diamond in the rough squeezed between dollar stores and shuttered weave-o-rama shops. It is decorated in soothing wood, soft grey and brown tones, with warm lighting. It also displays framed archival black-and-white photographs of nearby Church Avenue, apparently taken back when Brooklyn was a cow pasture.

The music is loud but not overwhelming. The flat-screen TV was a big hit with the basketball fans who gorged themselves on chicken wings while I was there.

But it's the food and the service staff—led by the cheerful bartender and hostess, Lala McCarden—makes MangoSeed enticing.

She gushes out an enthusiastic “hello” as I plop myself at the bar and instantly converts me into a regular. In fact, I'm surrounded by regulars. It seems like Lala's on a first name basis with everyone. Well, their long-held secret is out. People don't return to crummy restaurants and know the bartender's name.

Zagat's Guide gave MangoSeed 22 out of 30 points for its food rating.

Once I settle in, I notice the alluring aromas around me and check out what others have ordered. Some of the most popular menu items are Mango Pico de Gallo Jerk Salmon (\$19), and Mac & Cheese with oxtail gravy (\$7). (Yep! You heard me right: oxtail gravy.) Which means they also have Braised Oxtail, which is deeply spiced (\$17). The menu has a nice selection for a small restaurant and the portions are large.

I was ready for something filling but not so much that I would need a hammock to recover, so I ordered the Jerk Fish Tacos (\$11) and a Tropical House Salad of pineapple, mango, cucumber and tomato (\$7). The tacos are spicy but not enough to cry and have a cool dollop of guacamole on top. What Lala suggests in the future is the Coconut Fried Chicken with mashed potatoes (\$14).

Everything is very good and arrives pretty quickly, even the delivery to my home about two blocks away.



MangoSeed: A Delicious Escape to The Islands, Right Here on Flatbush



Mango Seed Executive Chef Paul Burrows surrounded by his lovely and attentive staff, left to right, Desirée Mullins, server; hostess and bartender Lala McCarden; and server Sabrina Salgado

Notable on the menu as well are some other Caribbean dishes like Jerk Chicken With Rice and peas and plantains (\$13)—which the Zagat Survey raved about as the signature dish—and Curried Soy Chunks served with rice and peas and market vegetables (\$10). Talking to the guy next to me who is killing a burger like he's going into the Navy the next day, I learn that the MangoSeed Island Burger with grilled pineapple and avocado is a house favorite (\$14).

I am told that chef-owner Paul Burrows is a proponent of using seasonal vegetables and it shows on the menu with market veggies accompanying many dishes. Lala, ever smiling while cranking out a Sugar Cane Lemonade, tells me about the spring menu changes and says, “Just you wait, honey!” Her bonhomie and the lures of their food remind me of New Orleans.

There is a specialty drink menu with such selections as a Blackberry Mojito (\$12), Blood Orange Ginger Drop (\$10) and

White Chocolate Martini (\$11). I pass on these because of the extensive rum selection. In particular, Barbancourt rum from Haiti is an old favorite of mine, so I have it with soda and ginger beer. The smoky vanilla with the bite of the ginger beer is life changing.

There are also rum flights that represent the Caribbean from such places as Guatemala, St. Lucia and Guyana, as well as the better known rum islands like Jamaica and Puerto Rico. They range from \$18 to \$23 depending on how obscure you want to get in your flavor trip.

Even though it looks like a small restaurant, it is quite spacious. There are 32 seats in the restaurant and 12 seats at the bar. Lo and behold there is also a very large enclosed back porch, decorated equally as nicely with wood tables and modern black chairs and unassuming lighting. Lala tips me that the rest of the large backyard will open up when the weather gets warmer.

All I can think about is brunch on the back 40 with a bunch of friends. And what a brunch menu! Chicken and Waffles (\$13), Steak and

Cheesy Eggs (\$18), Fish and Parmesan Grits (\$11) and Pan Seared Jerk Chicken Scramble (\$10) are all dishes I lined up in my mind for a future Sunday mow-down. Even the sides, like a warm croissant with fig butter and sweet plantains, are lined up on my imaginary mimosa-fueled brunch.

But it's the service that takes the flavors to another level. The warmth of the staff and the spirit of the menu tell you you're home here in the middle of PLG. Moments later a friend of a friend sits down right next to me. He knows the bartender. I know him. Boom! I am a part of the neighborhood. It's truly a neighborhood gem and Lala will see me as a hungry regular many more times.

MangoSeed 757 Flatbush Ave at Clarkson, 347-529-1080
Open 7 days: Tues & Wed: 4pm-10:45pm, Thurs & Fri: 4pm-11:45pm
Saturday: 2pm-11:45pm
Sunday: 11am-2:45pm (brunch); 3:30pm-9:45pm (regular menu)

Dave Miss is a cook and the Echo's food aficionado. He lives with his wife on Ocean Avenue.

A Smoothie and Soup Café Serves PLG Be Good, Be Neighborly, B'Fruitee

by Christopher Buonincontri

“Do you happen to know if there's a notary nearby?”

Sherma Charles turns to the elderly gentleman seated at a table in her tiny, unadorned smoothie shop, B'Fruitee, and smiles that smile. “Well let's see,” she begins, and continues to list off a handful down Flatbush Avenue with the careful consideration of a neighborhood maven. A few minutes later, she walks over to help the man with his coat as he makes his way out into the bitter cold, warning him to remember his gloves next time, and to stay warm.

It is perhaps this combination of intimate local knowledge, good will and willful talent that keeps Charles busy year round. B'Fruitee opened last May specializing in all-natural smoothies. Since then, Purple Berry, a rival smoothie shop on the opposite side of the street, has closed and reopened. But while Charles admitted selling fewer smoothies during the winter, the veteran line cook, who paid her dues in some of Manhattan's most admired restaurant kitchens, took advantage of her culinary talents to diversify the menu. She broadened the menu to include a variety of steaming hot cups of delicious soups.

“They call me the ‘Soup Nazi’ around here,” chuckles Charles, a testament to her shop's unadorned reputation, similar in fame (if not in demeanor) to the notorious storefront from “Seinfeld.”

She rotates fourteen different soups a week, including at least one vegetarian option daily, and adds a new recipe to her repertoire at the start of every cycle. “Last week, I tried a seafood soup, with fresh clams, scallops, shrimp, mussels and crabs; it went over real well,” she says, adding that a future addition would be a gumbo with okra and turkey sausage.

Having worked as a chef for more than 20 years in upscale restaurants such as Park Avalon and Blue Water Grill in Manhattan, there are few dishes Charles doesn't know how to make. Apart from soups and smoothies, she offers muffins, cupcakes, freshly baked breads and croissants, banana and strawberry pancakes, hot spiced oatmeal, grits, eggs, waffles, yogurt, pies (the sweet potato pie is a favorite), salads, and pretty much anything else a customer might order, all made naturally and most on premises. Come the spring, she plans to add fresh strawberry lemonade and homemade frozen yogurt as well.

“I look at Empire Boulevard, and the collection of fast food chains, and then I look at the kids on the street, obese, some as young as 12 with diabetes and high blood pressure,” says Charles, admonishingly. “If people think about what they eat sometimes... it's no good!”

“Fast food chains do nothing for our community,” she adds, noting that she partners with a range of other local businesses, from the Montessori school to a local yoga studio to dog walkers. Pointing out a bottle of agave and clove syrup on her counter, she explains how she met a local bartender who produces the syrup, and agreed to sell it for him at her store. “It's never a bad thing to try to help another entrepreneur get on their feet; one hand washes the other in a community.”

Chris Buonincontri is a graduate student at NYU who lives on Flatbush Avenue.



B'Fruitee owner Sherma Charles believes in fresh ingredients.

Damn the Curse, Full Speed Ahead for Tugboat Tea Co.

by Milford Prewitt

If there is a hex on coffee shops in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, don't tell Kola Olgundudu or Chad Casey.

They are the childhood friends from Park Slope who have teamed up to open the neighborhood's newest coffee shop incarnation, Tugboat Tea Company on Flatbush. They opened for business on January 3.

The two entrepreneurs had long desired to fuse their foodservice and entertainment backgrounds into a hospitality venture. It was Kola who proposed a coffee shop in his home neighborhood, despite the demise of Blue Roost and K-Dog & Dunebuggy, two popular coffee house predecessors that went under. Even before those two establishments, there was Morgie's Café, the pioneering coffee, tea and sandwich place that ran briefly on Lincoln Rd. in the late 1990s.

“Yeah, we heard about the curse, but we are not going out that way,” Kola declares. “Plus there are a lot of differences between us and them [K-Dog and Blue Roost]. We've got a different landlord who wants us to make it; the rent is much lower than on Lincoln Rd.; we have the greatest and smartest super in the world (Everton can fix and install anything); and we don't have as large a space.”

A waiter and bartender at Blue Ribbon restaurant in Park Slope for years, Kola says another difference between Tugboat and the closed cafés is that the menu is going to remain spare. “We are going to stick to what we know: coffee, tea and pastries—just keep it good and consistent.”

Casey, who lives in Windsor Terrace, adds: “I agree with Kola. We don't want to expand the menu too crazy, but I think a few sandwiches won't kill us.”

Tugboat is named in memory of a professor who Casey met while taking maritime courses at Kingsborough Community College. Casey is also co-owner of Public Assembly, a live music venue and bar in Williamsburg.

The entrepreneurs thank Gabby Lowe, former owner of the late K-Dog and Dunebuggy, for consulting with them and sharing her expertise. In fact, a small piece of K-Dog exists at Tugboat in the form of a commercial grade toaster used at the old place.

Casey says the coffee is a dark Sumatra blend that is roasted by D'Amico Coffee in Carroll Gardens, a nationally-recognized quality coffee roaster whose roots go back to the 1940s.

“We are really trying to keep everything we do local, that includes the coffee and the pastries,” Casey says.

Hurricane Sandy, which forced the place to open a month late, has been the only bump on what has been a smooth and successful start, the friends say. Kola says he was surprised by the cooperation of the neighborhood during those post-Sandy days.

“I never been through anything like that before and the neighborliness was real tight,” he says. “This neighborhood might be fragmented, but even in its fragmentation, it is still pretty close knit.”



The cozy Tugboat is perfect for the laptop set.

I N M E M O R I A M

Freddy Ramos, Beloved Special Ed Teacher, Lincoln Park Tavern Sports Regular, Dies at 41

by Milford Prewitt

Freddy Ramos spent the afternoon and evening of the last day of his life—Friday, January 19—enjoying some of his favorite things.

That afternoon he shot pool in the Lincoln Rd. home of his good friend, Justin Cheatham, and later, they dined at Brother Jimmy's BBQ before heading to Madison Square Garden to see the HBO Boxing After Dark fights. But Freddy never got to see the Main Event. Right around midnight, he told Cheatham that he was feeling sick and needed to go back to Cheatham's home.

But when Cheatham asked his friend if he wanted him to go with him, Ramos said no. Justin put Freddy into a cab—telling his friend to keep his cellphone on and to call once he was at the house.

Cheatham had no idea that it would be the last time he'd see Freddy alive.

Freddy died of an apparent heart attack in the emergency room of Beth Israel Hospital after the cab driver, realizing that his passenger had fainted, called the police, who in turn called EMS, to have Freddy transferred to the hospital.

An autopsy was conducted—the city's normal protocol when anyone dies in an emergency room or outside a hospital in apparent good health—only to discover that Freddy had an "abnormal heart" that never manifested itself in physical exams.

Blessed with lady-killer handsomeness, a sly smile and an athlete's physique, Freddy was a diligent gym rat who enjoyed staying fit and who knew a few styles of martial arts, including Tae Kwon Do, which older brother Raul introduced him to in his teenage years.

What's more, he was a veteran of that most exclusive association of tough guys—the U.S. Marine Corps.

His dedication to exercise, eating right, and staying fit and his military background are reasons his death, at the age of 41, shocked all who knew and loved him.

At LPT he was an engaging and admired member of an inner-circle of faithful patrons. He was an opinionated sports fanatic who relished watching the big games on the bar's flat screen television while buying his friends another round. He also had several active Words With Friends games going up to the end.

Few will miss him more than the love of his life, Hilah Hadaway. They lived together for several years in their apartment across the street from LPT. But he moved out about two years ago to care for his ailing mother in her apartment near Harlem.

Despite the distance, Freddy's heartstrings always pulled him back to LPT most weekends where he would catch up with old friends, set up new Words With Friends games, and sound off about sports. He was also an avid reader and fond of talking up books he was reading at the time.

Freddy Ramos was born in the Bronx, the youngest of five brothers, including Raul, Luis, Randy and Tony. His father, Felix, preceded him in death two years ago.

He was a para-professional who worked with special needs kids at PS 40 in Gramercy Park. At his wake at a Washington Heights funeral parlor, his colleagues were effusive in their praise of his popularity among the students and the staff, particularly his humor and smile. He was scheduled to get his Bachelor's Degree from City College this spring.

Hilah says Freddy was a caring companion and fun-loving travel mate. They traveled to the tropics in both Asia and Central America where they enjoyed hiking, water sports and exploring.

PLG's Bloody Winter: One Man Dies, Another Clings to Life in Separate Shooting Incidents

Police have made an arrest in the March 15 Lincoln Road shooting of a Prospect Lefferts Gardens man who was in the wrong place at the wrong time and remains on life support. But investigators have few leads in the Sterling 1 homicide of a man who was found in his family's car on February 7, shot in the head.

In the Lincoln Road incident, Aamir Price, 21, was arrested and charged with attempted murder and criminal possession of a weapon in the point-blank shooting of Samuel Waterman, 60, a longtime PLG resident and Kennedy Airport baggage handler. Friends of Price's told police he was intoxicated and had earlier attempted to rob the candy store and newsstand on Lincoln Road. Waterman was walking home from work about 2:30 a.m. when, for no apparent reason, a drunken, enraged man shot him. As recently as April 5, police said Waterman's recovery is unlikely even though he remains on life support at Kings County Hospital.

In the Sterling Street incident, 34-year-old Lucas Phillip Lee died about a week after his family took him off life support after suffering a gunshot wound to the forehead. Police said he was found about 9 p.m. in the driver's seat of his family's 2004 Lexus on Sterling 1, near Bedford Avenue—a quiet block with close ties to the 71st Precinct and no connection to the victim. While police suspect a drug link, they recovered no contraband, have no clear motive, no gun, no suspect and want the public's help. Anyone with information is asked to call the Detective Unit at the 71st Precinct at 718-735-0501.

They had also visited Paris on occasions.

"He had such a kind gentleness about him," she says. "He was my best friend. I was so proud of him for joining the Marine Corps. In boot camp, the younger guys called him 'grandpa'."

In addition to his brothers, his mother, Maria Ramos, several nephews and nieces, and countless friends survive him.

Freddy Ramos was buried at George Washington Memorial Park in Paramus, N.J. in a beautifully landscaped setting Cheatham described as "peaceful."

John Thompson—Midwood St.'s Favorite Contractor—Suffers Heart Attack at 64

John Thompson, a beloved contractor who over a 20-plus-year career specialized in restoring, renovating and repairing the state-ly old homes in Prospect Lefferts Gardens—mainly on Midwood St.—died of an apparent heart attack after a short illness.

Nicknamed "Moses" to some and "Red Ash" to others, Thompson had been feeling poorly at the beginning of the year and was eventually admitted into Interfaith Medical Center. While there, he suffered a fatal heart attack in bed on February 8.

Neighbors said Thompson was a wise, kind, thoughtful, humorous man who was as gifted telling stories as he was applying his craftsmanship to the Manor's century-old homes. He turned clients into close friends who virtually adopted him and included him in their families' social events and special occasions.

Although he lived on Lexington Ave. in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Thompson had enjoyed a reputable and rewarding career specializing in the repair, maintenance and restoration of homes in the Manor, particularly Midwood 1 and 2. No job was too big or small, from roof resurfacing, to plumbing replacement, electrical wiring, boiler or water tank installation, basement flooding, wood and molding restoring, window and door installation, and concrete repair and refinishing.

He or members of his five-man crew (which included his only son, John Jr. or "Bobby," who intends to continue the business) would even come by after heavy snowstorms and not only shovel the sidewalks of the block's older neighbors, but they would also remove the snow from their flat rooftops.

Longtime Midwood 1 resident Jennifer Palmer, who wrote a moving tribute to a man she considered a dear friend, said Thompson seemed to have an instinctive, inner sensitivity for repairing Manor manses. It was as if the homes conveyed their troubles to him and he knew exactly how to solve them, she suggested.

What's more, Thompson's work never ran afoul of the Landmark Preservation Commission's obtuse rules for historic district home repair.

"And no matter the size of the job," Palmer said, "he gave a lifetime guarantee."

"It was as if the dirt and dust recognized him and the bricks knew their place," she wrote.

Shortly after moving into her home, Palmer discovered that the foundation was collapsing under the front yard coal hatch. A neighbor referred Thompson to her and she recalls the craftsman saying: "Anything you want fixed—basement, roof, painting, woodwork, patio, give me a call; I give you a good rate. Trust me, I know these houses inside out."

Palmer said whenever Thompson offered his lifetime guarantee "it was not the work so much that John was guaranteeing, but himself; he was guaranteeing loyalty."

Born in Jamaica, Thompson worked for the Jamaica Public Service Administration until the age of 34 when he immigrated to the U.S. He met his wife, Iris, in 1970 and they married in 1983 and had four children.

No one is sure how or why Thompson came to become the contractor of choice on Midwood St.

"All I know is that the first family to hire him were the Roses [across the street] and after that, it was word of mouth for the next 20 years or more," said Doris Watterson, one of Midwood 1's longest-tenured residents with 51 years on the block. She said Thompson and his crew handled a number of jobs at her home over the years.

"It feels like a village in mourning," Palmer said. "The houses from foundation to rooftop are singing hymns of gratitude to him."

In addition to his wife and son, his mother, Lucy Barrette; three daughters, Nadine, Felecia and Crystal; and five grandchildren survive him.

Celestine Thompson, PLG's (un)Official Photographer, Neighborhood Defender, Dies at 72

by Jeanne Baron

Celestine Thompson, a 35-year resident of Midwood 2 who fused community engagement, neighborliness and photography to preserve and protect Prospect Lefferts Gardens' charms, died in January just months after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Even near to the end, the 72-year-old Thompson, who looked far younger than her years, was an independent, high-energy motion machine. She enjoyed photographing loved ones, neighbors, block parties, community meetings and PLG's passing scene.

Thompson was known to speak her mind and was by all accounts fiercely protective of her independence.

She also defended Lefferts Manor's residential zoning and one-family housing covenant and sought answers when projects or civic entities threatened to undermine the character and architectural appeal of the neighborhood.

She moved to PLG in the late '70s with her husband (they later divorced) and they raised their only daughter here.

Thompson was active in the block association and found an intimate connection with many of her neighbors through her love of photography, which she taught herself to master. She left a portfolio of thousands of captivating and thoughtful images, many of them featuring fellow PLGers.

There were images of neighbors on their porches and stoops, jogging alongside their pets, kids running to catch a ball, as well as random shots of strangers smiling, squarely framed, straight back into the eye of the photographer.

She'd take the pictures and then she'd give them away.

Her daughter, Naima Dennis of Vermont, says her earliest memories of her famously assertive mother include a camera.

Though she never sought professional recognition, Thompson's work was greatly admired by her neighbor, professional photographer Robert Marvin. "Her portraits have a kind of congeniality that I appreciate as a fellow photographer. I would even say her photographs were loving," he said.

Marvin featured her portraits in The Neighborhood Show, a visual arts exhibition put on by PLG Arts in 2010, which brought together photography, paintings, collages, and sculpture produced by local artists. Thompson also took photographs for the *Echo*.

Thompson was born in Washington D.C. in 1940. She received her MSW from Columbia University and spent her working life as a lecturer and administrator at Baruch College.

Beyond her daughter, she is survived by a brother, Michael Perry; son-in-law, Anthony Dennis; and two grandchildren, Atiya and Ahmad.

A memorial service was held in her home March 1.

Jeanne Baron, a Corcoran real estate agent, lives on Clarkson 2 with her partner, Betsy Andrews. Their home was on the PLG House Tour last year.



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Lefferts Manor Association

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The *Echo* is seeking help distributing copies on blocks that are in PLG but not in the Manor. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer, please contact the editor at milfordprewitt@aol.com.

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