

LMA Board Member Brings Relief to Haiti; Seeks Contributions

LEFFERTS MANOR ASSOCIATION BOARD member Louise Daniel is heading to Léogâne, Haiti at the end of the month to work in a homeless camp, helping survivors of the January 12th earthquake with disaster relief by delivering tents, school supplies, food and vital sanitation and cleaning products.

A resident of Midwood I, Louise will be traveling with NEGES, a non-profit foundation founded in 1998, dedicated to fostering community development, educational improvement and environmental preservation for the people of Haiti.



“Prior to the earthquake, the organization had a number of projects in Léogâne, including a school for 218 children,” Louise says. “Léogâne is 25 miles west of Port-au-Prince and 95 percent of it was destroyed and over 30,000 people lost their lives.”

“Hundreds of families are homeless and the foundation is caring for 560 orphans.”

NEGES secured two acres of land next to what was once a school to accomplish these projects: build a communal kitchen that can provide safe meals to the people, foreign aid workers and volunteers; provide shelter for over 560 people; house a children’s program and a community outreach center with Internet access; and build a community garden.

The group is seeking several thousand dollars to do their work. Those wishing to make a tax-deductible check to the NEGES Foundation can send their contribution to 365 11th St., Brooklyn, NY 11215 or visit www.negesfoundation.org. Contributions can also be left with Louise at 69 Midwood St. She leaves for a week beginning March 28th.



Gavriel Allayev, owner of Express Shoe and Watch Repair, doing what he's done for 25 years.

As a shoe cobbler, Gavriel Allayev shares with newspaper reporters, lighthouse operators, blacksmiths and the guy who used to swing the lantern from the train the misfortune of earning a living in a dying industry.

Neighborhood’s Last Shoe Cobbler Remodels for Another 25 Years in Business By Milford Prewitt

But unlike those endangered occupations, Allayev has re-invested in himself by remodeling his long running shoe and watch repair business, Express Shoe and Watch Repair on Flatbush between Midwood and Maple Sts. The cluttered, helter-skelter merchandising format Allayev’s store used to project has been cleaned-up to include new white wall paneling, less inventory to create more showroom space and a dedicated spot for jewelry repair.

Allayev, who has operated the spot since emigrating here 25 years ago from Uzbekistan when it was part of the old USSR, says he wanted to remodel in order to do a better job serving his customers.

“Shoe cobbler had been a dying business, but we had too much respect for our customers and the neighborhood and wanted to do a better job serving them,” he says. “We just like the people here. They have been good to us and we want to stay a long time.”

Allayev says he will bring in more contemporary “Manhattan-style” shoe styles in the months to come and will broaden his business to include special-occasion flower arrangements, umbrellas, purses and wallets.

“Tell the people we are sorry we were closed for three weeks.”

When he re-opened, the Daily News featured him with a photo about his business.

According to the Labor Dept., shoe cobbling is a dying industry. From 120,000 shoe repair businesses in the U.S. in the years after World War II, there are only 7,000 today. The biggest reason for the hemorrhage, the government says, is that younger generations are not learning the trade and find it too blue collar. Moreover, during the past boom years of the economy, the affluent were more likely to buy a new pair of shoes rather than repair an old one. The recession has changed that and in some respects, as evidenced by Allayev’s store remodeling, the shoe repair business is on the upswing.



The staff at the remodeled Express Shoe and Watch Repair, from left to right, are Michael Folks; Gavriel Allayev, owner; and Roma Allayev, Gavriel’s nephew (photos: Milford Prewitt)

Lincoln Road Residents and Merchants Form Block Association

A new block association for residents and business owners on Lincoln Rd. between Ocean and Flatbush Avenues took root in February with an inaugural meeting at K*Dog & DuneBuggy. About a dozen people who live or own businesses along Lincoln Rd. and Ocean Ave. constituted the first meeting of the Lincoln Road Between Flatbush & Ocean Residents and Merchants Association (LinRoFORMA).

The meeting was preceded weeks earlier with a flyer of wishes for Lincoln Rd.'s improvement that had been distributed to the merchants and the hundreds of tenants who live at 40 Lincoln Rd. and 99 and 115 Ocean Avenue as a baseline to establish common ambitions the group could pursue.

The feedback showed that tougher enforcement of pooper-scooper laws, less graffiti, speed bumps, more lighting and improved police patrols to diminish loitering, petty crime and enhance building security were common wishes.

Dynishal Gross, a self-described "lawyer type" who works for a labor union and who has lived at 40 Lincoln Rd. since 2001 and who organized the meeting and prepared the flyers, says she was happy with the turn-out for the first meeting and expects to begin a regular series of monthly meetings.

"It's such a great block in a great neighborhood," Gross said, "But it's a busy block: it's the entrance to the park, it's the subway stop, it's several bus stops and it needs a little help and we hope this organization can be part of the change."

For more information, contact Gross at dynishal@gmail.com.



Dynishal Gross, left, and 8-year-old Madison Stephenson, a neighbor and second grader who helped Gross organize the event at K-Dog, catch their breath at the end of the meeting

Fill Out Those Census Forms— Neighborhood Services Depend On It

If we understand the scheduling right, residents of Prospect Lefferts Gardens, indeed, most of Brooklyn, should be receiving 2010 Census forms the weeks of March 15 and March 22.

The form this time will only consist of ten questions and there will be a box for those who'd like to participate in a more detailed questionnaire later in the spring.

Either way, fill out the form. What's at stake for the neighborhood? Nothing but improved services, possibly more representation and improvements to the community's infrastructure. So do it and please do it promptly.

Police Arrest 18-Year-Old in Snow Storm Rape Case

An 18-year-old career criminal has been charged with the rape of a 17-year-old girl who was attacked outdoors on a dead-block (no residents) at Schenectady and Maple Streets during the season's first big snow storm.

The 71st Precinct's Community Relations Officer Vinny Martinos reports that the 10:30p.m. Wednesday assault, February 10th, led to an arrest a few days later when police recovered the attacker's cell phone, iPod and other personal I.D. he left upon fleeing.

One reason he fled is that the woman's screams alerted a nearby apartment dweller who rushed to her aid.

Police suspect that the suspect sought to use the blinding weather conditions and a brick wall that borders a soccer field to cover his attack.

Cutting Attack Shuts Prospect Park Subway Station

An argument over loud music between two men on a southbound Q train Monday, February 22, turned violently physical when the man playing the music cut his antagonist when they exited at Prospect Park, police said.

The assailant fled the station and remains at large while the victim — cut a few times in the arms and legs with an unknown object — was treated and released.

Criminal Occurrences, Here & Near

The attack ended up closing the busy subway station at the height of the evening rush hour, about 6p.m.—with B and Q trains by-passing the station—while police searched for evidence and took witness statements.

Car Break-Ins on the Rise in Lefferts Manor

Since the beginning of the year, at least 10 cars in the neighborhood have been broken into by opportunistic thieves who see something of value—often a digital device—the owners left behind in plain view.

Officer Martinos says residents have filed complaints reporting that laptops, palm pilots, navigation systems and even loose change have been taken after thieves smashed in car windows.

In a few cases, Martinos says the perps are leaving empty-handed, but broke the windows anyway after seeing the suction-cup mantle for a navigation system attached to the windshield, even though the device is absent.

The Digitally Distracted – A Perp's Favorite Target

People too focused on their cell phone conversations, Blackberries, iPods and other hand-held digital devices while leaving subway stations or walking along neighborhoods streets alone are the favorite prey of grab-and-run thefts by quick-footed youths, police report.

At least eight times since the beginning of the year, local residents have filed police complaints reporting this type of theft.

"People just aren't paying attention to their surroundings," Officer Martinos says. "The perps are young and you are not going to catch them."

He said women in general, but older women in particular, account for most of the victims.

71st Precinct Offers Invisible Ink Markings for Cell Phones and iPods

With a rash of grab-and-run thefts of cell phones and other hand-held computer devices keeping police busy, the 71st precinct has kicked off a free invisible marking program that allows quicker returns to owners when and if their stolen devices are ever recovered.

Officer Ryan of the 71st's crime prevention unit is operating the program at the precinct and from time to time, at announced locations in the neighborhood.

For more information, call the 71st Precinct at 718-735-0528.