

SPRING  CALENDAR

April 17 LMA Spring Meeting

Come meet your neighbors, 71st Precinct officers, elected officials, board members of the LMA. Find out what's going on in the nabe. Saturday, April 17th at the Church of the Evangel at 1950 Bedford Ave. between Hawthorne & Winthrop, 10am-noon. Get a great cup of coffee, the sweetest donuts and the chewiest bagels at the same time.

April 29 Landmarks Commission to Visit Manor

Senior officials of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission have agreed to take your questions, complaints and observations in a no-holds barred question-and-answer session, Thursday, April 29th, at 7pm at the Church of the Evangel. A flyer will be distributed as we get closer to the date.

May 1 (Flower) Barrel of Fun

The LMA continues its 20-plus-year annual tradition of re-planting the flowers in the iconic barrels that line the Manor's streets. Volunteers are welcomed. Please clean out your barrels before the planting date and top off the soil if it is more than three inches below the top of the barrel. For more information, please attend the spring meeting.

June 12 33rd Annual Maple Street School Gala

The high point of the Prospect Lefferts Garden community's social calendar—the Maple Street School Gala and fundraiser—is set for June 12th, in the Ballroom of the Prospect Park Picnic House. Admission is \$75.



SAVE THE DATE
SUNDAY • MAY 23

40TH ANNUAL

Prospect Lefferts Gardens House & Garden Tour

\$20 IN ADVANCE/\$25 ON TOUR DAY
TICKETS ON SALE APRIL 1
AT K*DOG & DUNEBUGGY, 43 LINCOLN RD.

Experience nine turn-of-the-20th-century residences
blending contemporary and period architecture,
most with lush private gardens

See savvy examples of budget chic and eco-friendly décor

Meet and gather ideas and resources from homeowners,
designers, local restoration specialists and resident artists

WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION

Tour Guides are needed to work 2½ hour shifts and will receive free tour tickets in return. To volunteer, contact Carole Schaffer at 718-462-0024 or acschaffer@juno.com

Lincoln Road Plays Starring Role in Lefferts Manor Quality of Life

by MILFORD PREWITT

One of the shortest blocks in the neighborhood, if not in all of Brooklyn, Lincoln Road between Flatbush and Ocean Avenues might as well be a Grand Concourse for all of the roles it plays in the quality of life in Lefferts Manor.

Having overcome a long stretch of virtual blight with boarded up buildings and an interminable carousel of nail and beauty salon comings-and-goings before Gabrielle Lowe opened the coffee shop and bakery K*Dog & DuneBuggy Cafe four years ago, Lincoln Rd. continues to evolve as a focal point of the neighborhood's economic, social, residential and retail vitality.

Now big plans are in the works to make the corridor even more anchored in the community's well being.

Plans to change the traffic patterns leading into Prospect Park, a forthcoming bar and music lounge, the formation of a first-ever Lincoln Rd. association made of business owners and tenants and even the possible construction of an enclosed bus shed with a bench are in various stages of development.

"You know what Lincoln Road is?" asks James Mamary, the owner of Enduro as well as the forthcoming Lincoln Park Tavern in the same spot that had been his recently departed Fly Fish, "It's the Grand Central Station of Prospect Lefferts Garden." Not a bad metaphor when you think about the volume of pedestrian traffic that Lincoln Rd. pulls and the array of services it offers.

The current snap shot is this:

- At a little more than 2,000 feet, Lincoln Rd. between Flatbush and Ocean Avenues is not only the neighborhood's main subway stop at Prospect Park—through which some 6,500 people a day on average enter, the MTA reports—it's also the turn-around terminus for three bus lines.

- Although it refuses to change its name to reflect its new home address, the respected Maple Street School is the must-attend pre-school for neighborhood parents eager to give their kids an excellent educational jump-start.

- Lincoln Rd. is the neighborhood's gateway into Prospect Park, favored by walkers, joggers, bicyclists and nature lovers—not to mention tourists and visitors.

- A popular bodega on Ocean Ave. and Papa & Sons grocery store on Flatbush are virtual bookends on the block as owners of both say they are steadily improving the quality of their inventory and operating longer to accommodate the nabe's growing affluence and population increase.

- K*Dog & DuneBuggy has evolved into a community center disguised as a coffee shop. Beyond being a popular daytime hang-out for the area's home-office types, writers, retirees and students, the spot features a number of cultural events including poetry readings, film screenings, community meetings and rotating art displays from the neighborhood's gifted. Lowe says she couldn't be happier with the steady growth in patronage the operation enjoys.

- Lowe's neighbor, Enduro, is also much prized by local restaurant-goers, playing most nights to standing-room crowds as its modestly-priced but high-quality Tex-Mex menu draw fans from around the borough.

But change is on the way.

First up is Lincoln Park Tavern, expected to debut as early as St. Patrick's Day as a throw-back to the old-school lounges of the 1940s with tin ceilings, subway-style wall tiles, glass shelves, wainscoting, period light fixtures, and a bar and other wood furnishings reminiscent of the kind of film noir atmosphere where Sam Spade might have met someone with a secret to tell.

Mamary says his fifth restaurant in Brooklyn will be equipped with a great sound system to feature live music—perhaps even karaoke—most nights.

"This neighborhood is filled with musicians in every genre," Mamary says. "So we think we can do jazz, blues, rock, you name it. We'll probably charge a nominal cover. I think there is pent-up demand for a place like Lincoln Park Tavern. It's going to be a totally different concept from Fly Fish."



A recent Saturday afternoon on Lincoln Road (photo: Milford Prewitt)

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(continued on page 2)

Teddy Vann, Longtime Midwood St. Resident Who Won a Grammy Award, Dies

BY MILFORD PREWITT

Teddy Vann, a whirlwind of life whose creativity, courage and caring knew no bounds in a life blazed by numerous passions and careers, has died after a yearlong fight with cancer.

Born in Bensonhurst, Vann passed away Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009 after living much of his life on Midwood One with his wife, Wanling, and their three children.

Despite winning a Grammy Award and earning the highest kudos for helping at-risk young men and teens who he voluntarily mentored from troubled paths to responsible, fulfilling lives, Vann kept a low profile in the neighborhood.

That is, until, the soft-spoken, but raspy-voiced Vann attended a Lefferts Manor Association membership meeting where and when he emerged as a genuine character, drawing attention to himself with tough questions and uncomfortable observations when he spoke his truth about what he saw as the neighborhood's advances and setbacks.

Possessed of a keen intellect, voracious curiosity and exceptionally well read, Vann left high school before graduating and embarked on a lifelong passion for music and math.



Largely self-educated, Vann was considered a mathematical and musical genius by those who knew him best.

Fanatical about basketball and chess, he used the games to mentor young people about strategy, problem solving, teamwork, pride, leadership and relied on his prodigious readings and innate wisdom to help them and other friends through rough spots in their lives.

He engaged in civil rights activities, detested the stupidity of racism and classism, and championed those who confronted the misuse of power, privilege and race.

He was anything but a follower of conventional thought. What's more, Vann would not bite his tongue when challenging LMA board members, elected officials, police commanders or representatives of city agencies who had the misfortune to state policies or views at community meetings that he believed would hurt his beloved neighborhood.

When the city required more than one occupant in vehicles to cross the bridges into Manhattan in the dark weeks following Sept. 11, 2001, Vann, who had an office in Midtown at the time, was a stimulating and provocative conversationalist to neighbors (including this writer), who he'd picked up on their way to work. With the smoke and dust still wafting from the ruins of the World Trade Center site as he drove over the bridges, Vann advanced what were then the most unpopular theories about the causes behind the attacks, theories that mainstream media and pundits would gravitate to months later.

In 1991, he won the Grammy Award for "The Power of Love / Love Power," a song he wrote and produced and was best performed by Luther Vandross, who had been a protégé of Vann's.

The song was also performed at his funeral at the Church of God Victory in Prospect Heights Dec. 11th, which drew several hundred people to a standing-room only celebration of his life that lasted for hours and included several A-list celebrities who reminisced about Vann as a colleague and friend.

Vann was also a performer and singer in his own right. In 1963, he hit the big time performing before (continued on page 2)

Lincoln Road (continued from page 1)

Asked why Fly Fish died after starting off with such promise, Mamary says his former management partner took the neighborhood for granted and mistakenly believed that just because it was the only barbecue place in the hood, the restaurant had a captive market. "But it was just a total abandonment of quality," he says. "If you don't have the right product and a quality product, people will not support, even if you are the only game in town."

As for food, the menu at Lincoln Park Tavern will essentially be Enduro's appetizer and finger food offerings, utilizing the wall pass-thru and doorway between the two places to deliver orders.

"This neighborhood has been very cooperative and supportive of what we've tried to do here," Mamary says. "There has never been any friction between us and the LMA. They've been very cooperative neighbors and helped me get the licenses I need to do business."

Meanwhile, while the developers of that high-rise, mixed-used condo tower that was intended to be built next door to the subway might see Lincoln Rd. as a street of broken dreams, the area's commercial real estate brokers speculate that the project may still come to fruition with the strengthening of the economy, though not as grandiose as the 23-stories originally planned. A scaled-down version of the condo project would be just fine with K*Dog and DuneBuggy proprietor Lowe.



Gabrielle Lowe, owner of K*Dog and Dune Buggy, chilling at the end of a long day. (photo: Milford Prewitt)

"You know, I would have loved to have had the customer base that condo would have brought to the neighborhood," she admits. "But do we really need a 23-story condo in this neighborhood? Would it really fit in this kind of neighborhood? I just don't think it's appropriate."

Recalling that she opened K*Dog the same year the city closed Lincoln Rd. to car traffic for a yearlong bridge repair and repaving project, Lowe, who has a long background in the restaurant industry, says the cafe is the fulfillment of a dream. She says it remains hard work and required a lot of market research to justify the investment, but Lowe says had she not been able to open a restaurant in a neighborhood where she lives and where her children go to school, she would not be in business.

"I would not have done this in another neighborhood," she says. "It had to happen here. And we're just so grateful that the neighborhood has responded to us they way it has."

"I mean, here it is 3 o'clock [on a weekday afternoon] and we're packed. The big chain restaurants say you can't do lunch in this neighborhood; that it's too residential. I think the answer is you have to do the right kind of lunch."

If there were a Lincoln Rd. wish list, Lowe says what she'd like to see on the block is the return of the bike racks that the MTA removed mysteriously one night and more trash receptacles.

Teddy Vann, Grammy Winner, Dies (continued from page 1)

screaming teenagers on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*. He wrote the best selling hit record, "Loop De Loop," performed by Johnny Thunder, which hit the charts at No. 2 that year in 1963. He also wrote "Santa Claus is a Black Man" and he wrote the screenplay for "The Adventures of a Colored Man," which starred James Earl Jones.

But preferring to be out of the limelight as a songwriter-producer, Vann would go on to write 140 songs that are licensed by BMI. He would end up working with such luminaries as Sam Cooke, Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Lou Donaldson, John Fogerty, Donna Summer, Estelle Bennett of the Ronettes and many more.

He wrote a book, *Basketball, a Mathematical Learning Adventure*, that he used to teach and inspire black youths to strive for excellence.

Besides his wife, Vann is survived by their three children, Akim Vann Ossé, Kayode Teddy Vann and Chinyere Vann, and eight grandchildren.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The family requested that Vann's age not appear in this obituary. "He didn't want to be defined by his age or his time," Wanling told *The Echo*.

City Council Approves New "Ocean on the Park" Historic District

The long saga to create a second historic district in our neighborhood came to a successful conclusion in February when the City Council voted to approve landmark status for limestones on Ocean Avenue. Specifically, the Council's approval certifies the Landmark Preservation Commission's October 27th establishment of the **Ocean on the Park Historic District**. Residents had been seeking landmark status since June, 2007.

Homeowners had been racing the clock to secure the historical status when they learned that number 185 Ocean had been sold to a developer who intended to demolish the one-family house and replace it with a multi-story condo building. Although they were unsuccessful saving the building and faced further challenges when the owners of 189 Ocean objected to their inclusion in the new historic district, the proponents teamed up with the Lefferts Manor Association and won the support of Councilman Mathieu Eugene to present a full-court press to advance the Ocean Avenue Historic District's creation.

On February 8th a City Council subcommittee voted to approve the Historic District after an earlier but contentious hearing. Before the vote, Chairperson Brad Lander, recommended approval based largely on Councilman Eugene's endorsement. On February 11th the Council Committee on Land Use approved the district and voted to do so. This was followed by the full council's approval later that day.—*Bob Marvin*

65 Fen Wine Lover's Dream, Debuts in Lefferts Manor

By Milford Prewitt and Foster Henry

Somebody should have told Michael Campbell that his cozy, little wine store, 65 Fen, breaks all of the neighborhood's prevailing rules about how to decorate a retail liquor establishment.

There's no bullet-proof Plexiglas separating customers from the inventory; there's no lottery machine; the floor isn't littered with useless scratch-off game cards and dashed dreams; and in the worst *faux pas* of all, there're no seedy-looking characters in various states of consciousness hunched over in the corners swearing at one another.

Instead, 65 Fen, named after its address, the former African Tailor Shop at 65 Fenimore St., is a warm, open and inviting 400-sq.-foot celebration of wine and original art Campbell opened with his wife, Anikka, in January.

By daytime, Campbell is a records manager for a law firm and at night, longtime friend and barbecue extraordinaire Michael Brooks, a self-taught wine scholar, joins Campbell as 65 Fen's manager. Campbell is also looking to open his barbecue place in the neighborhood in the future.



Michael Campbell, owner of the 65 Fen wine store (photo: Foster Henry)

Boasting wines from the world's major founts of viticulture, 65 Fen is the most welcomed retail establishment to hit Lefferts Manor in years.

65 Fen stocks wines from California, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Chile, Germany, Australia, Argentina, South Africa and even upstate New York (the Finger Lakes region), almost all from small-production, independent growers with no corporate brand connections.

"We taste everything we bring in, first," Campbell says. Outside of a few bottles of premium-priced Champagne, the bulk of the inventory is between \$10 and \$15, but at least 15 brands are under \$10. To whet neighborhood appetites and broaden taste horizons, 65 Fen hosts free wine tastings every Saturday from 4:30 to 7p.m.

"We also want this place to be an exchange of ideas," Brooks said. "We don't know everything about wine, but we welcome the neighborhood's ideas on what we should carry and how we can improve."

"We're a work in progress."

The store also features original and purchasable works of art to take your spirits even higher. The idea evolved during renovations when Brooks and Campbell realized they had a lot of wall space left over after the wine shelves were stocked. Being community-minded, they invited some local artists to display family-oriented works of art. The art will be rotated monthly.

While perusing the wines and art, be sure to pay attention to the music being played, an eclectic trip of mostly deep-house, European-sourced, jazzy alternative and silky lounge plays Campbell finds on the Internet and plays through his iPod.

Brooks says he could not be happier with the community's reception to 65 Fen and looks forward to a long and successful tenure in the nabe.

Hours: Monday-Friday, 2:30 – 9pm, Saturday, 12 – 9pm; Sunday, 12 – 6pm
Phone: 347-715-6001

Theodore Oliver, the "Unofficial Mayor" of Midwood Two, Dies

Theodore Oliver, a retired MTA mechanic dubbed the "Unofficial Mayor" of Midwood Two, died last fall at age 83. He lived with his wife and their children on Midwood Two for 50 years. Well-traveled and an avid outdoorsman, Oliver embodied the image of "active senior citizen" right up to the end.

Born in Georgetown, St. Vincent, Oliver came to Brooklyn when his family emigrated here when he was an infant. He attended Chelsea High School and was nicknamed "Boysie," which his family, neighbors and close friends would call him his entire life.

During World War II, Oliver served in the legendary 369th Infantry Regiment, an all-black combat squad dubbed the "Harlem Hellfighters," and which to this day is still bivouacked at the Armory on 142nd Street in Harlem. He met the love of his life, Vilma Bennett, in November 1949 at a Thanksgiving dinner hosted by his parents. Twelve years later, he married Vilma at St. Teresa R.C. Church in Brooklyn. They were united by a common love for people and they shared a great sense of humor, which allowed them to stay together for 48 years.

Boysie worked for the MTA as a mechanic for 35 years. After his retirement, he became a world traveler and outdoorsman. He had time-shares in Aruba, St. Martin and the Dominican Republic. But he had a special fondness for Lake Taghkanic State Park where, for 28 years, he and Vilma rented a cabin for two weeks every year. Before the NY State Thruway was built, one of Boysie's great loves was to drive upstate with close friends, even visiting Canada along old Route 22, stopping to camp and fish along the way in undisturbed and pristine forests.

Next to his love for camping and fishing, few hobbies brought him more pride than his beloved garden.

He was preceded in death by a son, Teddy Jr.

Boysie will be missed by everyone who knew him. His wife Vilma, his sister Daisy, his stepdaughter Janet and a host of nieces and nephews, survive him. —*Written by Vilma Oliver, Janet Leesang & Paul M. Morin*



Theodore "Boysie" Oliver in his Army uniform during WWII

THE LEFFERTS MANOR ASSOCIATION

was founded in 1919 to maintain and improve our historic neighborhood, enforce the restrictive one-family dwelling covenant, and bring together residents for their better acquaintance and mutual benefit.

If you're not a member, please join now.

Dues, Jan.–Dec. 2010: \$15 per household / \$10 per senior citizen household

Please send application and check to:

The Lefferts Manor Association / P.O. Box 250-640, Brooklyn, NY 11225

I (we) subscribe to LMA's efforts to improve our neighborhood and continue it as a community of single-family homes.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ + \$ _____ = \$ _____

DUES ADD'L CONTRIBUTION TOTAL

Dues, Jan. through Dec. 2010: \$15.00 per household / \$10.00 per senior citizen household

Please send application and check to: The Lefferts Manor Assoc.

P.O. Box 250-640 / Brooklyn, NY 11225

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