



In case you missed it, there are reports that we've had quite a lot of snow this winter. For further evidence, see page 3.

photo: Milford Prewitt

IN MEMORIAM

Delroy "Fatty Boo" Wilson, PLG's Jerk Chicken King and Fenimore Icon, Dies on New Year's Day

There are a number of iconic sidewalk people one can expect to see running errands or traveling through Prospect Lefferts Gardens, but few were more neighborhood characters than "Fatty Boo."

For at least 15 years, from Memorial Day until it got too cold, Fatty Boo was the unofficial sign that the barbecue and grilling season had begun. His rotund profile could be found sitting next to his tricked-out old oil barrel grilling jerk chicken and selling it to passersby and regulars as an additional revenue stream for the small confectionary store he ran at 65 Fenimore Street, the Unique Mini Mart.

All of that will be a memory come this summer.

Fatty Boo—who also answered to the nicknames "Mr. D" and "Boo"—came into the world as a native-born Jamaican named Delroy Lloyd Wilson. He died on New Year's Day at the age of 53, a victim of a number of health ailments, of which cancer was but one.

At one point in his life, Wilson wanted to be a translator and traveled to Cuba to study Spanish for a few years. It's not clear how he got derailed from his dream, but he leaves behind 11-year-old twin girls.

Mr. Wilson was popular, friendly with neighbors—be they newcomers or long-time residents—often lending a hand when they had mechanical problems with their cars. And he had wanted to take his cooking inside with a much broader menu. He aspired to become a chef and was contemplating replacing his store with a little eatery.

At one time Wilson used half of his store to run a video rental business before the digital age undermined that industry and killed his business. Today, that half of the space is the wine store 65 Fen, owned and operated by Fatty Boo's close friend, Michael Campbell.

To read an affectionate, neighbor's tribute describing the friendship between Fatty Boo and a young Fenimore resident, visit the blog at <http://carmen-talkingoutloud.blogspot.com>.

Leone Lacaille Jeffers, Long-Time Resident of Fenimore 2, Dies at 92

Leone Lacaille Jeffers, a retired nurse's aide who lived with her family on Fenimore 2 for 45 years in one of those distinguished, free-standing, wood-frame homes, died November 6 at the age of 92. Neighbors say Jeffers died from heartache after fire heavily damaged her home only two months earlier.

She grew up on her parents' cocoa plantation in Trinidad and came to the U.S. in 1953 with her husband, Cecil Jeffers, who preceded her in death. She worked as a nurse's aide at Menorah Home and Hospital for 40 years.

A daughter, Marlene Paul, survives Jeffers.

EARTHQUAKE COVERAGE BY HAITIAN TIMES DRAWS PRESTIGIOUS CJR ATTENTION

by MILFORD PREWITT

The editors of the *Haitian Times* are used to doing the interviewing, tape recording and taking photos in pursuit of their news coverage of the Haitian-American community and Haiti. But the script was flipped on them when the *Columbia Journalism Review* shadowed the *Haitian Times* editor as he led his staff's coverage of Haiti's devastating earthquake last year and mobilized to cover the recovery efforts there.

Despite operating out of the Phat Albert Building for the past three years and distributing the publication at bodegas and other stores up and down Flatbush in PLG and other Brooklyn and Queens neighborhoods, the *Haitian Times* doesn't spend a drop of ink on community news.

"There are other local papers that deal with these issues," says *Haitian Times* editor Garry Pierre-Pierre, who founded the publication 13 years ago. "We don't have much to invest there."

That singular focus is what attracted the *CJR* to cover how the weekly—with only 10 editorial staffers—covered the disaster and rebuilding.

In an article on its website in November titled "The Haitian Times Heads to Haiti," the *CJR* reported how the deluge of phone calls to Pierre-Pierre's office from worried Haitian-Americans in the days following the earthquake prompted the decision to cover the event himself, with help from another reporter already based in Haiti and a correspondent working from Miami.

The upshot is that Pierre-Pierre, a former reporter for the *New York Times*, borrowed from that paper's Pulitzer Prize-winning "Portraits of Grief" series—the mini-bios the *Times* ran every day for four months on every person who died in the 9/11 terrorist attacks—to fashion a similar approach, but largely focused on survivors.

"We are going to go neighborhood by neighborhood, just trying to tell as many human stories as possible," Pierre-Pierre told the *CJR*. "We don't have as much manpower or space, but on the Web we have space, and that is where the Internet is going to help us play the same role the big guys are playing."

In an interview with the *Echo*, Pierre-Pierre says the coverage by the *CJR* was flattering, but means little if the media and authorities are not exposing the corruption and

slow pace of rebuilding that's adding to the Haitian peoples' misery.

"The earthquake, frankly, has consumed our news coverage," Pierre-Pierre told the *Echo*. "Nothing comes close."

He says he is so disgusted by the conditions and corruption in Haiti linked to the recovery that the *Haitian Times*, at the moment, endorses no charitable organizations involved in the rebuilding.



Garry Pierre-Pierre, editor of the *Haitian Times*, reporting from Haiti.

"We think right now people should not donate to Haiti," he says. "There is too much money being squandered by NGOs. We need to hold them accountable and then decide if we should donate our hard earned money."

Pierre-Pierre said neither he nor any of his staffers lost family in the disaster, "but we all suffer because we all lost close friends."

Pierre-Pierre estimates that there are roughly 200,000 people of Haitian descent in New York City, with two-thirds of them living in Brooklyn and Queens.

It was surprising to learn that there is not a French-language version of the *Haitian Times*. But, like his answer to explain why he does not focus on community news in New York City, he had a similar answer.

"The paper targets Haitian-Americans and foreigners who are interested in learning what's happening in Haiti, so there is no need to be in French or Creole," he states. "There are other papers who fill that void. In fact, we started the *Haitian Times* because there was no one targeting second generation Haitian-Americans."

Blue Roost Soothes PLG with Down Home Comfort Foods

by MILFORD PREWITT

"That was so good, I feel as if someone just hugged me," the tall blonde woman exclaimed out loud with no shame or restraint upon finishing off alone her bowl of cheese grits, bacon and biscuits at PLG's newest restaurant, the down home Blue Roost.

Quick to the call, co-owner Linda Lee Billing, smiling ear-to-ear, embraced the infatuated guest like a genie out of a bottle.

Not a bad feat of free, grassroots marketing for a restaurant that at one time wanted to call itself The Homesick Café before the same kind of unsolicited consumer input forced Billing, her partner Billy Clark and her brother and co-cook Neil Billing to reconsider their first choice for a name.

Without any solicitation, passersby—be they friends or strangers—overwhelmingly warned the trio that any restaurant with the word "sick" in it was doomed for failure.

"We thought it was such a great name," Linda sighs. "Home-cooked comfort foods



Blue Roost partners Linda Lee Billing and Billy Clark are all smiles at the pace of business at their new restaurant.

photo: Milford Prewitt

from different cultures at the Homesick Café. But people just didn't get it. I mean, some were actually freaking out."

Maybe it is for the best because if the tall blonde's spontaneous eruption is any indication, the Blue Roost is doing quite fine.

It's easy for guests to fill up the 14-seat, 288-square-foot dining room for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The menu indeed consists of comfortable favorites, though it has a noticeable Southern and rural twang to it—reflecting Linda's Durham, N.C. roots and Billy's upbringing in rural Indiana.

One signature dish that has caught some New Yorkers by surprise being Northerners is the Brunswick Stew, a Southern favorite that resembles some kind of chili but which Linda—who does most of the cooking—makes with corn, okra, chicken and pork, tomatoes and tomato sauce. The other popular house favorite is the Piedmont Pulled Pork Sandwich with vinegar sauce.

"I thought for sure customers were going to go for the classic, red tomato barbecue sauce," Linda says. "But they are going for the vinegar."

Homemade grits, biscuits and gravy—and a flavorful coffee sourced through a South American farming co-operative—keeps the place busy during breakfast.

Linda, who worked in restaurants in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco before moving to New York City in 2002, and Neil cook all of Blue Roost's dishes off-premise in a commercial kitchen they rent. The dishes are reheated and apportioned for the plates when ordered on site.

She says she and Billy could have opened in larger places with kitchens on Church Avenue or Rogers. But it would have meant being outside the PLG's main commercial strip and losing (continued on page 3)

PLG REAL ESTATE BROKERS ROUNDTABLE

'Undiscovered' Can Be a Good Thing

BY AUDREY EDWARDS AND MILFORD PREWITT / PHOTOS BY FOSTER HENRY

Last April, *New York Magazine* ranked Prospect Lefferts Gardens No. 53 on its annual list of the top 50 "Most Livable Neighborhoods in New York." Park Slope was Number 1, Harlem was 50th and you had to visit the magazine's website to find PLG's and other "lackluster" neighborhoods' rankings.

The magazine assigned numerical values to aspects of community life such as food and restaurant outlets, ethnic diversity, schools, crime, public transportation, housing costs, chain retailers (particularly supermarkets), night life, access to parks and recreational facilities, art and cultural venues, and other hard-and-soft assets that make neighborhood life satisfying.

But real estate brokers who are active in the neighborhood and who participated in a roundtable discussion organized by the *Echo* regarding PLG's image, its challenges and its housing inventory, say being an undiscovered neighborhood is a sword that cuts both ways.

On one thing they all agreed: the neighborhood is quickly losing its anonymity. Once considered the shabby sister to neighboring, pricey Park Slope, this tiny landmark on the northern tip of sprawling Flatbush now constitutes some of the most sought-after real estate in booming Brooklyn.

Grand brownstones and limestones on lovely tree-lined blocks of PLG are virtually indistinguishable from houses on Park Slope's lovely tree-lined blocks. Charming Old English brick

townhouses, imposing Dutch Colonial, New Federal and Victorian freestanding frame houses and the occasional mansion or two add an architectural diversity few NYC neighborhoods can match.

But the *Echo* was curious to find out what's on the mind of real estate brokers who not only work this community, but who live here. The roundtable discussion took place in December in the Midwood 1 home of **Milford Prewitt**, the *Echo's* editor and a Lefferts Manor Association board member. Moderating the discussion with Prewitt for the *Echo* was veteran journalist-turned-real-estate-broker **Audrey Edwards**, an associate broker and vice president at Brown Harris Stevens (who admits she wasn't savvy enough to buy into the Manor 10 years ago, and has regretted it ever since).

Among the busy brokers who shared their time and insights were **Hakim Edwards**, associate broker at Prudential Douglas Elliman and a Lefferts Manor resident since 1996; **Keith Mack**, associate broker with the Corcoran Group and a homeowner in the Manor since 1999; **Barbara Rogers**, an associate broker at William B. May and resident of Prospect Lefferts Gardens since 2004; and **Bill Sheppard**, associate broker and senior vice president with Brown Harris Stevens, who has been a homeowner in Lefferts Manor since 1997. (PLG's most visible ambassador, broker and homeowner, BHS's Bette Cunningham, was unable to attend.) Collectively, the participants brought more than 50 years of experience selling in PLG, and an equal measure of love to living here.



Roundtable participants, left to right, Hakim Edwards, Prudential Douglas Elliman; Barbara Rogers, William B. May; Moderator Audrey Edwards, Brown Harris Stevens; Bill Sheppard, Brown Harris Stevens; and Keith Mack, The Corcoran Group.

THE ECHO: When did Prospect Lefferts Gardens and Lefferts Manor become a hot new destination neighborhood for people looking to buy and rent in Brooklyn?

HAKIM EDWARDS: I'd say beginning in the late '90s, going to 2001. But prices really started to rise about 2002 and continued through to 2005. That's when apartment sales picked up too.

KEITH MACK: I didn't know Prospect Lefferts Gardens even existed when I was renting in Park Slope. Someone mentioned it, and I circled the park and found it. But I didn't really check out the neighborhood until I went on a Prospect Lefferts house tour and was blown away by the amazing architecture of the houses, and by the way neighbors seemed to all know each other. One of the other things that made the neighborhood so great was the subway and bus transportation. Anywhere you go there is some kind of transportation. That's what sold me. After the house tour, I started feverishly looking to buy a house here and finally closed on one in 1999.

THE ECHO: How is business now with a recession and real estate being down in most markets? It's been said there is a dearth of inventory of homes for sale in the Manor.

BARBARA ROGERS: I wouldn't say there's a dearth. There are houses out there for sale. But houses in good shape may be hard to find. I don't live in the historic district of the Manor. I'm on Lefferts 3, and there are a number of houses for sale on my block and on Sterling Street that are being listed by small, independent brokers. But a lot of those houses are in pretty bad repair.

BILL SHEPPARD: To the best of my knowledge there are, what, about 600 houses in Lefferts Manor, an area that runs south from Lincoln to Fenimore, and west to east from Flatbush to Rogers. In a typical year maybe 1 to 2 percent of those 600 houses come on the market. What's that, 12 houses? Do we get many more than that in a year to sell? Maybe 18? That would be a lot. But there's lots of traffic for good houses that do come on the market. Things take longer to sell, but prices aren't down.

THE ECHO: Overall, what's happening residentially right now, given the recession and all? Is the recession impacting deals?

SHEPPARD: Everything is impacted by the economy. There's a lot of traffic still going on. I just left an open house an hour ago, my fourth. But there were maybe eight to 10 people there. That's pretty good. No one is in a hurry.

THE ECHO: Things are taking longer to move?

EDWARDS: Yes.

THE GROUP: About \$900,000.

ROGERS: And that's still a third of the price you'd pay in Park Slope for a comparable property.

EDWARDS: I think even in this softer economy there is still a strong appetite for townhouses. What I'm having trouble selling are co-ops. A lot of them are in rental buildings that have been converted to co-ops and have less than 50 percent of the occupants as owners. Most banks won't finance in co-ops with that small a number of owners. The key to getting more owner occupants in these buildings is having a strong co-op board in place that knows what it's doing. Take 125 Ocean Avenue. It was once 13 percent owner occupied, but you had folks in there who got on the board, got speaking with tenants about the value of owning their places and got them to buy. Today that building is 65 percent owner occupied.

THE ECHO: So what does all of this mean for the co-op and condo sales market in Prospect Lefferts? It's always been a lot easier for the average first-time buyer to purchase an apartment as opposed to a townhouse.

EDWARDS: I think co-op and condo prices in Lefferts are still under market relative to co-ops in Park Slope. I'm selling 1,500 square foot co-ops with two baths and amazing detail for under \$500,000 that would be going for over a million dollars if they were in Park Slope. Co-op prices here are going up, but they were once so low it was ridiculous. I mean, you had people buying into 50 Lefferts for one point for \$26,000 for a one bedroom.

ROGERS: Comparable units there are now selling for \$289,000. I sold one two years ago for \$285,000, then the market slipped a little bit. But the reality is, many of the people living in these converted co-op buildings are long-term renters who are also rent-stabilized tenants. It may not make economic sense for them to buy if they've been paying stabilized rents for many years.

SHEPPARD: I've been selling here for 20 years, and 20 years ago I'd get a listing for \$200,000, and there were those who'd say, "Who's going to pay \$200,000 for that?" My response was to say, "Find a better house somewhere else for \$200,000." And my response is still the same, only now it's "Find a better house for \$1 million."

MACK: You say a million, but 206 Maple Street just closed at \$1.3 million. It's a modern, two-story house, sold by an interior designer who did an amazing job renovating it, and wanted to sell it to someone with her taste level. You cannot find a comparable house on the other side of the

park at that price. It's just not going to happen. It's still about variety and quality.

THE ECHO: Okay, but isn't there some sort of disconnect to paying over a million dollars for a house in Lefferts Manor when the bordering commercial strip of Flatbush Avenue has no banks, no post office, no chain supermarkets?

SHEPPARD: That will change with the changing rental market. Our 600 or so historic homes are not going to change the commercial strip; so it's the changing rental market that will affect commercial development. We've certainly seen improvements in some amenities in the past five years. We are thrilled, for instance, to have a choice of coffee shops and more dining options.

THE ECHO: It's not necessarily a negative. In fact, it's impressive that you have people willing to spend a million dollars for a home, but have to travel out of their neighborhood for simple services.

MACK: Well, you have another choice: You can spend a million here or spend \$2.5 million to \$3 million in Park Slope to get essentially the same house. Yes, Prospect Lefferts does lack some amenities that other neighborhoods take for granted. But what has held this neighborhood back is that homeowners in the Manor are at a disadvantage because of the restrictive covenant. They can't rent out any part of their home, so they have no way to contribute to commercial revitalization with renters. It's renters—young singles or professionals or older people—who make commercial development possible. When we rented in Park Slope, my wife and I had no kids, we had more disposable income, so we used the restaurants and other commercial businesses. We never cooked. So the restaurants were our greatest friends. We went out every night. It was the renters that gave Park Slope its great vitality and made it the most livable in the city.

THE ECHO: Are you saying renters drive the commercial part of community development?

SHEPPARD: Well, you know K-Dog would be empty if it had to rely solely on the neighborhood homeowners.

THE ECHO: People who have been living here for 30 years say the commercial side has yet to catch up.

ROGERS: The big problem here is that three landlords own most of Flatbush Avenue and they have never devoted the attention to the properties that a

good commercial landlord would. They don't make capital improvements. They don't do the due diligence when working with new commercial tenants to make sure the businesses will be viable. So we often have a business that pays three months rent up front, opens after two months spent remodeling, and then is gone in the fourth month. That's why we don't have a business improvement district on Flatbush. If we did, you'd have a majority of landlords contributing to a fund for the upkeep of the commercial corridor, like they have on Church Avenue.

THE ECHO: What's your sense of the future of PLG's commercial development?

EDWARDS: I think you are going to see commercial growth in the neighborhood in five years or less, but you're probably going to see it first on Rogers.

THE ECHO: Do you think the restrictive covenant has outlived its usefulness? Shouldn't homeowners be allowed to use their prime asset—their own home—to generate rental income if they want to, especially when so many are on fixed incomes or are unemployed and underemployed in the current economy?

ROGERS: I think the one-family covenant is what's saved the esthetic value of this neighborhood. If the houses in Lefferts Manor were allowed to be reconfigured and cut up into all kinds of rentals, you'd lose all the gorgeous



"You may well see houses here break the \$2 million range."

—Keith Mack, The Corcoran Group

detailing that comes with them and makes them such attractive investments.

SHEPPARD: Often when buyers find their way here and are told about the restrictive covenant, they don't always understand it at first. But once they do, they become its big defenders.

THE ECHO: Every year *New York* magazine does this annual ranking of the top 50 most livable neighborhoods in New York. This neighborhood was 53 on the list last year. Didn't even get a write-up. Does *New York* know something we don't?

EDWARDS: We should have kicked ass over some of those neighborhoods! Honestly! Take Greenpoint: It was ranked 21 on the list and it's not even near a subway line. No trains in Greenpoint!

ROGERS: Personally, I'm thrilled that our neighborhood doesn't get on those lists. I don't want to see it turned into some kind of Park Slope East or Williamsburg South, which would mean houses going for more than \$3 million and rents going for a minimum of something like \$1,800 for a one bedroom.

MACK: Well, if the neighborhood is successful at developing a very good commercial corridor along Flatbush or Rogers, that could very well happen. Ten years ago no one thought their homes would ever sell for a million dollars, but they do. You may well see houses here break the \$2 million range. Just look at the one we're sitting in. It's definitely what I call a trophy house. If you moved this to the other side of the park, you're talking \$3 million, easy.



"We should have kicked ass over some of those [New York Magazine's most livable] neighborhoods!"

—Hakim Edwards
Prudential Douglas Elliman

THE ECHO: Prices are down?

SHEPPARD: No.

EDWARDS: I think we peaked about two years ago. But that's everywhere, not just Lefferts Manor.

MACK: I think there has been a reduction in sale prices in the Manor, but it is not significant.

EDWARDS: There is a stronger desire for the houses. There's less for co-ops.

SHEPPARD: I agree. I think the detailing, the century-plus ages of the properties still make houses more attractive here than co-ops.

THE ECHO: What are townhouses prices now averaging in the neighborhood?

"I think the one-family covenant is what's saved the aesthetic value of this neighborhood."

—Barbara Rogers, William B. May

PLG Shutterbugs Catch the Beauty and the Beast in the Blizzards



Whether it takes you back to your childhood, inspires your reverence of Nature, makes you groan from the inconvenience of school and business closings, or moan about a sore back from shoveling, the day after a deep snow makes for some compelling photography.

The two blizzards that buried the city brought out the shutterbug in Sheryl Foster, a 27-year resident of Rutland 2; Kim Santoro, an artist who lives on Rutland 1; and ECHO editor Milford Prewitt, who lives on Midwood 1.

Foster and Santoro took their pictures all around the neighborhood the day after the Dec. 26 storm. Prewitt took his around his house the day after the January blizzard.



Above: The wind sculptured pyramids out of the snowdrifts burying these cars on Rutland 1. Foster photo



Left: The backyard table and benches at the Prewitt's home are unrecognizable. Prewitt photo

Below: The garden level on Midwood Street after shoveling out from the second blizzard. Prewitt photo



Top left: A stranded and abandoned bus tied up traffic for days on Bedford Avenue at Rutland. Santoro photo

Left: Bedford Avenue was shut down for two days after December's storm. Several PLG residents came to the aid of stranded motorists. Foster photo



DNA MATCH NABS PLG'S SERIAL RAPIST

A 21-year-old local man who was arrested for criminal trespass and dealing marijuana has been charged in the rapes of two neighborhood women—and is being investigated for a third sexual assault—the 71st Precinct police report.

Community Affairs Officer Vincent Martinos said investigators believe the man is the PLG serial rapist who had been attacking young women as they entered their apartment buildings over the past 18 months. His pattern was to follow a lone woman into her building late at night or very early in the morning, catch the elevator with the victim to her floor, and force her inside her apartment where she was assaulted.

The suspect, who lived at 163 Ocean Avenue, was originally arrested for criminal trespass and dealing drugs inside the lobby of another apartment building. He was released after submitting a sample of his DNA. About a day later, police re-arrested the man in connection to the December 10 rape of a woman who lived in the apartment building at 11 Midwood Street and a rape in an apartment building at Flatbush and Bedford during the summer.

Blue Roost (continued from page 1)

touch with a fan base and friends she had built up while working the front of the house at Enduro.

"So it was a trade-off," Linda notes, "Either get a kitchen and leave the neighborhood or take this spot and stay. I think it was a good decision."

She met Billy when they worked together briefly at the Brooklyn Heights restaurant Harvest (now Lobo). There they first discussed their mutual dream of opening a restaurant. "But," she says, "we just didn't want to be the kind of people who talked about it and never made it happen."

Linda reports that her biggest surprise so far is how busy the Blue Roost can get at lunchtime.

"I had no idea how many people there are in this neighborhood who have the time for a leisurely lunch," she says. "And you can see it right now," as a visitor notes a standing-room-only crowd on a recent weekday.

The other surprise she and Billy encountered upon opening their first restaurant is the lack of communication and property improvements from the landlord.

Although their original landlord has sold the building to another company as part of a five-building transaction along that side of the street, the new owner has yet to fix an assortment of heating and plumbing issues left over from its predecessor. What makes matters worse, the new landlord does not return phone calls, they say.

But what truly confounds her is who frequents the restaurant.

"Before we opened, even my closest friends said they were going to come here every day," she says. "But they never come. Meanwhile, I've met these strangers who have become regulars and make it almost everyday."

"But what is really surprising is that the people who live in the apartment buildings on Ocean Avenue will not cross Flatbush to dine," she says. "It's so funny."

Here, Trixie! Here, Trixie! Come Here! PLG Welcomes First Pet Supply Store

by Mary Miller

The story behind the new pet food and accessory store from owners Robert Salmieri and Richard Esposito turns on two guys with dogs named Trixie: a shepherd/boxer mix for Robert and an Irish terrier for Richard. These entrepreneurs met when they were calling their identically-named dogs in Prospect Park.

Robert, a Brooklyn native but recent (two year) arrival to Lefferts Manor, is an artist who was interested in developing a business venture. Richard, currently living in Windsor Terrace, has a background in the bar and restaurant business and had been thinking about

opening a business on this side of Prospect Park. Jeffrey Welch, a Manor resident, real estate broker and owner of a French bulldog, suggested a pet supply store.

This propitious network of canines and humans has resulted in a lively new attraction on Flatbush Avenue between Midwood and Maple Streets.

Don't think that Trixie's is all about dogs, however.

Although many residents are dog lovers, the businessmen report half their sales are for cat foods and accessories and they have learned that we harbor exotic birds such as African gray parrots and cockatiels whose owners have special requests.

Trixie's is open 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m. daily, except Sundays when it closes at 6. You will notice a regular stream of shoppers going in and out, because not only does the store provide a range of products at different price points, Robert and Richard have established a very neighborly vibe and provide thoughtful advice to pet owners.

I benefited from their suggestions on how to perk up the appetite of a deaf, toothless, 22-year-old cat (try really smelly canned cat food) and Blackie, who was 24 hours from The Last Trip, came around and is again enjoying his feline life. (Whether it is the 8th or 9th, who knows?)

The bottom line is: Flatbush Avenue has a much-needed amenity. No need to go to Park Slope for quality pet products or settle for grocery store brands: Trixie's is here!



Richard Esposito (left) and Robert Salmieri (right), partners in PLG's new pet store, Trixie's, with their own Trixies.

Mary Miller has served on the LMA Board for 15 years over two periods. A genetic counselor, she runs the LMA's annual holiday wreath and flower-barrel planting programs. She has lived with her husband, Ed, on Rutland 2 for 30 years.

SAVE THESE DATES**April 2 LMA Spring General Meeting**

Enjoy the spring thaw, a cup of coffee, see neighbors you haven't seen since December on Saturday, 4/2, 10 a.m. – noon at the Church of the Evangel, Bedford Avenue between Hawthorne and Winthrop

April 30 Annual Flower Barrel Planting

The Lefferts Manor Association will be planting flowers in our iconic sidewalk whiskey barrels on Saturday, 4/30 starting at 10 a.m., rain or shine. Volunteer planters are welcome. Bring your gloves, trowels and a bag for trash. For more information, call Mary Miller at 718-693-5109.

PLG Arts and Inkwell Café Seek Stronger Community Support

“PLG Arts Jazz Night” at the Inkwell has all the ingredients a relaxing jazz supper club should have. It features innovative, often breakthrough musicians; the cover charge is just \$5; the kitchen serves up a tasty mix of Southern and soul food favorites; the 45-seat performance space and dining room is acoustically separated from the cocktail bar and lounge up front; and best of all, located at 408 Rogers Avenue between Sterling and Lefferts, it's right around the corner no matter where you live in Prospect Lefferts Gardens.

But for all those attractions, PLG Arts Jazz Night lacks a major ingredient: you and your neighbors as patrons to support and enjoy this undiscovered neighborhood gem.

What's wrong with this picture?

“I think we don't get the traffic we should get because people consider it far away,” says Rina Kleege, a board member of PLG Arts who founded and launched the jazz night series shortly after the Inkwell Jazz Comedy Café debuted in 2005.

“We started Jazz Night as a way to provide a venue for local musicians to play,” says Kleege, “to provide a place where PLG residents can go to hear great music; relax and meet their neighbors at a reasonable price; and to foster the arts in our wonderful neighborhood.”

But it's been daunting to drive neighborhood support, she sighs.

“I just think people don't want to go that far east.”

A musician herself, Kleege adds: “Then, too, despite our best efforts to publicize it, I think a lot of people don't even know it exists.”

“It's not on the beaten path like the spots on Lincoln Rd. that are right there when you get off the subway. It's in the middle of a block, a block away from the subway stop on Sterling—and, let's face it, if you live on this side [the Flatbush and Ocean Ave corridors] you wouldn't call it centrally located.”

Jazz Night is always on the second Thursday of each month in the winter and increases to the second and fourth Thursday of every month in the warmer seasons. Stay up to date by visiting plgarts.org.

Unaffiliated with PLG Arts, the Inkwell hosts a wide variety of entertainment nightly. In addition to jazz, there is standup comedy, karaoke, spoken word and poetry readings and amateur performances. Owned and operated by entrepreneur Byron McCrae, the Inkwell plans to launch a second location in the Barclays Center arena—the future home of the NBA New Jersey Nets—when the Atlantic Yards project is completed.



Young pianist Arthur Lewis played a rousing set at a recent Inkwell Jazz Night. photo: Chris Ouyoung



After years of waiting, Midwood and Maple are finally getting their long-awaited tree guards. Crews began the installation about two weeks after the first blizzard. photo: Ben Edwards

Robert Marvin Shows Landscape Photographs

Robert Marvin, board member of both the LMA and PLG Arts, debuted his second career as a landscape photographer with an exhibition at K-Dog and Dunebuggy cafe. Titled “Texture, Tone & Detail,” the exhibit featured a series of highly textural, haunting but engrossing black-and-white prints of decrepit and decaying abandoned buildings hidden in a forest near Marvin's summer home in Vermont. To see the portfolio or to purchase prints, contact him at marvbej@earthlink.net



The board of the Dorsey Art Club are, left to right, starting with front row, Duna Menos, Jennifer Stewart, and Diana Lamont. In the back row, Clifford Jackson, Otto Neals, Karl McIntosh and Donovan Nelson.

Dorsey Art Club Keeps Dorsey Gallery Alive and Well

by JENNIFER STEWART

Many people wondered what would happen to the Dorsey Art Gallery, a Brooklyn institution on Rogers Avenue, after the death of the founder Lawrence Peter Dorsey, a Grand Master of African-American art. Little did they know that he had selected a group of close friends, family and collectors to carry on his vision and passion as the Dorsey Art Club.

In the words of artist and DAC board member Karl McIntosh: “We must do all we can to keep the gallery that Ernest Chrichlow, Tom Feelings, Elizabeth Catlett, Joseph Delaney, James Brown visited, just to mention a few, open and functioning.”

Since Dorsey's death in 2007 at 88, the art club, with the complete support of his daughter Laurette Jackson, has continued to operate the gallery.

While the framing business has ceased to exist, the Gallery continues to thrive. In addition to the art shows and the annual Christmas Auction, there are programs to benefit artists, collectors, and the community at large.

Renowned painter and sculptor Otto Neals leads a printmaking workshop every second Saturday for artists interested in creating etchings and linocuts. On Wednesday nights, he holds a class for the people who want to learn drawing techniques. Otto has been affiliated with the Bob Blackburn printmaking workshop for many years, both as an artist and a teacher.

A highlight at the gallery is the annual Christmas Auction to benefit children. The auction is held the second Saturday in December and is in its 26th year. The funds raised at the auction have been used to purchase artwork that has been placed in public institutions in Brooklyn.

Prior to Christmas, Clifford Jackson heads the team to purchase toys for the children in the community and works with the 71st Precinct to ensure the toys are delivered to sick and underprivileged kids.

In honor of the gallery's founder, Duna Menos has worked diligently with the community council to designate the Rogers Avenue block between Fenimore and Hawthorne, Lawrence P. Dorsey Way. Other members of the club work tirelessly to continue the legacy of Dorsey and to stimulate the artistic culture in the community. These members include Joseph Bell-Bey, Denise Marriot Pierce and Donovan Nelson.

The Brooklyn African-American art community still knows that they can always find comfort, conversation, food, drinks, and art education at the Dorsey Gallery.

You can visit the gallery at 553 Rogers Ave., between Fenimore and Hawthorne. For additional information about the gallery and the activities of the club, contact Diana Lamont at the gallery 718-771-3803 or visit the website at Dorseyartgallery@gmail.com.

Jennifer Stewart, a member of the board of the Dorsey Art Club, was a longtime friend of Lawrence Dorsey.

“PRINTS OF THE MASTERS”

The Medgar Evers College Art Committee (MECAC), in collaboration with the Dorsey Art Club of Dorsey's Art Gallery in Brooklyn, proudly presents *Prints of the Masters*, an art exhibit in tribute to the late Lawrence Peter Dorsey.

The exhibit will run February 3–March 10, 2011 at Academic Building (AB1), 1638 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn.

The event is free and open to the public.

Gino's Owners Emerge Unscathed in Frightening Car Crash

Gino and Mary Sela, the voluble spirits of hospitality who own and operate Gino's Trattoria and Pizza on Flatbush near Lincoln Rd., escaped serious injury when their car skidded out on ice, bounced off the rear of a car in front of them, and then slammed into a concrete median wall on the Belt Parkway. Both husband and wife emerged from the accident uninjured and virtually unscratched though their 2003 Nissan Maxima was totaled, with the front damaged beyond all repair, crushed up to the firewall.

The accident happened on February 2, a few days after the second snow storm when thawing daytime temperatures plummeted to sub-freezing at night and turned roadways into sheets of ice. The Selas were on their way to their Babylon, Long Island home after closing the restaurant and saw on the horizon traffic jams, numerous accidents and emergency vehicles everywhere.

Gino, who was driving, applied the brakes when he came within several dozen yards of a car in front of him. But his car kept moving at 40 miles per hour on the ice slick road when he said to Mary, “We're not going to make it. God help us.”

Despite his best efforts to avoid hitting the car, Gino said he bumped off the rear of the other vehicle and slammed into a concrete median barrier. With Mary's door unable to open, Gino pulled his wife across the front seats through his door to escape the car. Gino said the car he hit didn't get a scratch.

Although Mary bled a bit from a small cut near one eye caused by the inflating airbag, she and Gino refused medical attention from nearby emergency services and medical workers who rushed to their aid from other accidents on the road. Both declined to go to the hospital.

“You know what bothered Mary the most?” says Gino, “the cold! We could have been killed and she's complaining about how cold it is.”

One of their sons picked them up at the crash site and took them home.

“And we came back to work the very next day,” Mary said. “We had an angel looking out for us that night.”

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