

downtown express

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THE NEWSPAPER OF LOWER MANHATTAN

DECEMBER 22 - 28, 2010



Downtown Express photo by Terese Loeb Kreuzer

Lower Manhattan resident and Community Board 1 member Marc Ameruso speaking at a press conference in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday.

Gillibrand, Schumer still hoping for 'Christmas miracle' vote on Zadroga

BY JOHN BAYLES AND ALINE REYNOLDS

Another busload of Lower Manhattan community members and 9/11 first responders traveled to Washington D.C. on Tuesday with high hopes pertaining to the Zadroga 9/11 Health bill. Their plan was to instigate a final push in support of the bill and see it return to the Senate floor for a vote.

U. S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, one of the bill's main sponsors, sent out press releases on Sunday and Monday calling for a "Christmas miracle," stating that she and fellow Senator Charles Schumer believed they had enough bi-

partisan support for the bill to finally pass. Then on Tuesday, Republican Senator Tom Coburn from Oklahoma assumed the role of the "Grinch" in the aforementioned "Christmas miracle" scenario.

Early Tuesday morning, Coburn said he would keep the Senate in session through the holiday in order to drag out the debate and block the bill. Coburn argued on Fox News that Zadroga is a bill "that's been drawn up and forced through Congress at the end of the year on a basis to solve a problem that we didn't have time to solve and we didn't get done."

At a press conference on Tuesday,

John Feal, founder of the Fealgood Foundation and one of the bill's major advocates, questioned Coburn's intentions.

"Where's his heart?" asked Feal. "These men and women behind me have gone eight Christmases suffering without any help from the federal government, so I question his heart."

But regardless of Coburn's intentions, the bill's supporters remain optimistic. Late Tuesday, Gillibrand said she was hopeful that the vote to reconsider the legislation could happen as soon as that night or, more likely, on

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Bathroom ban, security provoke angst at Murry Bergtraum

BY ALINE REYNOLDS

Students and faculty at Murry Bergtraum High School may not be leaving in great spirits for the holiday season.

The school was in a state of chaos on Thursday, December 9 when hundreds of students rioted on the fourth floor, shortly after first-year principal Andrea Lewis denied students access to the facilities, according to students and various news reports.

The bathroom ban was enforced after an altercation broke out that morning between two male students, landing one of them in the hospital. In an attempt to prevent loitering that could lead to another fight, Lewis enforced a day-long rule that

students could only use the bathrooms with a special pass granted to them by the school's dean, according to students.

A group of teens planned the outbreak through a series of text messages earlier that day, according to Gotham Schools, which first reported the riot.

"The students were aggravated, so they started to run around and scream," said junior Randy Zabala, who witnessed it from the sidelines.

The incidents that day resulted in several suspensions of students, according to Margie Feinberg, a spokesperson for the D.O.E.

A tenth grader at the school who requested ano-

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Tai Chi on the terrace

Mark Song is leading a Tai Chi class this winter at the Terrace Club. Read about it on pg 16.

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L.M.C.C.C. will live for three more years

The Lower Manhattan community breathed a sigh of relief on Thursday upon hearing that the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center was given new life.

The executive order of the state-city agency responsible for overseeing construction projects below Canal Street was due to expire at the end of the year.

It required renewal by Governor David Paterson and Mayor Michael Bloomberg on or before December 31, prompting Downtown elected officials and community board members to make phone calls and pass a resolution stressing the need for the agency's continued existence.

They prevailed on late Wednesday, when the Governor and Mayor signed into law a new executive order effective until December 31, 2013. In a written statement on Friday, Paterson said the L.M.C.C.C. must continue to play a pivotal role in coordinating construction, ensuring safe work conditions and attending to the concerns of Downtown residents and businesses as the activity level reaches its peak in the next eighteen months.

"This is a huge victory for the community and the city," said State Senator Daniel Squadron, who had sent a letter to Paterson and Bloomberg this week, urging them to keep the agency on.

"We are very pleased that the Governor and Mayor have extended the executive orders for the L.M.C.C.C., allowing us to continue our important mission for Lower Manhattan," said Bob Harvey, L.M.C.C.C.'s executive director, in a statement.

Catherine McVay Hughes, chair of C.B.1's World Trade Center Redevelopment Committee had gone so far as to contemplate moving if the agency were to shut down.

"It's wonderful that the L.M.C.C.C. will be here for the next three years of construction," said Hughes. "I'm going to stay Downtown," she said, chuckling.



Downtown Express photo by Terese Loeb Kreuzer

State Senator Daniel Squadron attended last Thursday's Community Board 1 meeting to deliver the good news that the L.M.C.C.C. was granted new life.



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DOWNTOWN DIGEST

ONE W.T.C. AT 52 FLOORS AND CLIMBING

One World Trade Center reached its halfway mark this week, as anticipated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the developer of the soon-to-be tallest building in the nation.

Last Thursday, workers installed the steel on the 52nd floor of Tower One, which now reaches 613 feet into the sky. All 104 stories are slated for completion in 2013.

The Port Authority plans on sticking to the building's current construction rate of one floor per week.

"We're keeping the project right on schedule, and that's what we've committed to do," said Port Authority Spokesperson Steve Coleman. "We're hopeful of keeping the project on schedule throughout 2011," he said, noting that high winds could cause unforeseen delays to the project.

Installation of the building's glass curtain wall, meanwhile, is moving along as planned, also at a rate of one floor per week. "They're now on the 23rd floor," Coleman said, having made "tremendous progress" in the past week.

In attempt to make the building festive for passers-by, the building's electricians hung multi-colored holiday lights on the outside of floors 20 through 50 earlier this month. The workers didn't need clearance from the Port Authority to put up the decorations, Coleman said, since it doesn't interfere with construction or electricity work.

Coleman said the Port Authority has received phone calls from community members and remarks from pedestrians

walking by the site, commenting on the lights. "The feedback so far has been generally positive," he said. They'll be taken down in early January, after the holidays.

SOUTHWEST N.Y. BACK ON THE A-LIST

Southwest N.Y. passed its December 15 re-inspection, conducted by the N.Y.C. Department of Health, with flying colors, fulfilling the restaurant's co-owner, Abraham Merchant's promise to his customers.

The D.O.H. officials counted only 13 violations when it reexamined the restaurant last week. Southwest N.Y. and other eateries that receive 70 violation points the first time around have a chance to redeem themselves within weeks of the initial inspection. In the meantime, Merchant and Cohn hope to quell the fears of patrons who heard about the previous "C" grade, assuring them of the eateries' commitment to sanitary and safe conditions in a letter.

"We're pleased to be back in the 'A' grade," said Merchant, who eagerly posted the grade at the restaurant's entrance on Thursday.

Though the re-inspection results proved positive, Southwest's initial score stays in the D.O.H. record and on its website unless it is dismissed in an administrative tribunal setting.

"We find it a bit disconcerting these reports are

Continued on page 15

Rally held in support of Student Safety Act

Dozens of students gathered at City Hall last Thursday to rally in support of the Student Safety Act, a citywide law that would mandate written reports from the city Department of Education and the New York Police Department on school discipline and police security. City Council proceeded to vote unanimously in favor of the bill on Monday. The bill must now be signed into law by Mayor Bloomberg, which he is expected to do in January, according to his spokesperson, Andrew Brent.

"Students under attack! What do we do, say no, fight back!" the citywide students chanted amid cold temperatures on the City Hall steps. Many of them are part of the Urban Youth Collaborative, an initiative that began campaigning for the passage of the bill nearly four years ago.

"Today, our hard work has paid off," said Nazifa Mahbub, youth leader for Desis Rising Up and Moving, a core organization of the U.Y.C. "All too often, students are left in the dark and have no way of speaking out or taking action when our rights are violated." Students have been exposed to mistrust and fear, she said, rather than to constructive learning and guidance.

Jarita Geigel, the youth leader for Make the Road New York, said that students often end up on the jail rather than the college track, due in part to the



City Council Speaker Christine Quinn at a rally in support of the Student Safety Act last week on the steps of City Hall.

punitive tactics of school safety agents. Passing this law, she said, will "bring transparency to how discipline and safety are really working in our schools."

Jorel Moore, a youth leader for Future of Tomorrow, said the safety officers will no longer be able to mistreat students and get away with it. "As a student, I

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M.C.B. 1 MEETINGS

Community Board 1 will not be holding any meetings for the next two weeks. The schedule for the first meetings of 2011 is below. Unless otherwise noted, all committee meetings are held at the board office, located at 49-51 Chambers Street, room 709 at 6 p.m.

ON TUES., JAN 4: C.B. 1's Battery Park City Committee will meet.

ON WED., JAN 5: C.B. 1's Financial District Committee will meet.

ON THURS., JAN 6: C.B. 1's Plannity and Community Infrastructure Committee will meet.

feel proud... that any adult who bullies [students], who are supposed to keep them safe, will no longer have anywhere to hide."

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn said the bill strikes a good balance between enforcing safety and creating environments in which students feel safe. "This effort is so important, because students trust that when they're in the care and supervision of their school that they'll be safe," she said. "In some ways, it's the foundation of being able to get a good education."

"[The law] is an important step towards establishing safety and discipline policies that treat all children fairly, with respect and dignity," said Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, who also spoke at the rally. "It'll shine much-needed light on the impact of heavy-handed policing and excessive reliance on suspensions of our children."

She and the student speakers said the bill would serve as a stepping stone for improved school discipline policies and additional behavioral support for students. "The School Safety Act itself won't change policies that have put so much school discipline into the hands of the police... we will continue to work on these reforms," said Lieberman.

— **Aline Reynolds**



POLICE BLOTTER

CHINATOWN FIRE

Fire raged through four floors of a five-story residential building at 29 E. Broadway between Catherine and Market Sts during the early hours of Tues., Dec. 21, forcing at least 20 residents to flee from their homes and find temporary shelter elsewhere. The fire started a short time before 3 a.m. in an apartment on the second floor and raced up a shaft or stairway to the third, fourth and fifth floors, a fire official said. By 3:30 a.m. a second alarm brought the number of firefighters at the scene to 106. The fire was declared under control at 4:47 a.m. Cause of the blaze was under investigation. Four residents were treated for minor injuries at New York Downtown Hospital, and the Red Cross referred burned-out tenants to temporary shelter. No firefighters were injured. Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver issued a statement later saying, "Even as we provide for temporary shelter, our priority is to make sure the residents are able to move back into their homes as quickly as possible and that the businesses that have been impacted are able to reopen. I understand preliminary repair work on the building is already underway and I have offered my assistance in helping residents return as soon as it is safe to do so."

Hate charge dismissed

A grand jury last week declined to indict Eddie Crespo, 28, a Metropolitan Transportation Authority employee who was arrested with another defendant and charged in a hate crime for attacking an imam from Woodside, Queens, Rob

Peterson, in the subway station at Canal St. on Dec. 8. The grand jury returned a "no true bill" on the Crespo indictment on Dec. 13 and charges against him were dropped, said a spokesperson for the Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.

Albert Melendez, 30, is still facing robbery and assault charges as a hate crime and is being held in lieu of bail pending a Jan. 11 court appearance. However, the grand jury that heard the Crespo case called for charges against Melendez to be reduced to misdemeanor assault. Melendez was charged along with Crespo with punching and kicking the victim, 49, making anti-Islamic remarks, mocking the victim's kufi, (a Moslem head covering) and throwing it onto the subway tracks. Crespo's lawyer said his client was arrested after he intervened to break up a fight between Melendez and Peterson. Melendez's lawyer, Angel Soto, said the fight started when Melendez accidentally brushed into Peterson who refused to accept an apology and a handshake.

Robs four Pace students

A man wielding a gun held up four Pace University students outside 33 Gold St. between John and Fulton Sts. during the early hours of Mon. Dec. 13 and took \$600 from them and an unspecified amount of marijuana, according to reports. A New York Post item identified one of the victims who had the marijuana as being the person who supplied pot to Max Moreno, the Pace student who was murdered in his apartment at 2 Gold St., three blocks down from where the hold-up took place.

Cleared in teen slay

A Manhattan jury on Tues., Dec. 14 cleared Victor Fong, 18, of the November 2009 stabbing death of Nelson Pena, 18, during a melee in front of 100 Hester St. where the Chinatown YMCA shares the building with I.S. 131 and Pace High School. Fong had admitted stabbing someone else, Vincent Rivera, 17, in self-defense, who survived. But Fong insisted he was not near Pena during the melee. A videotape showed Pena was across the street from the school when Pena was stabbed. The videotape also showed Rivera beating Fong with a pole just before the stabbing during the melee.

Fake cops

Two men with fake police shields around their necks burst into a store at 67 Eldridge St., at Hester St. at 3:45 p.m. Mon., Dec. 6, ran behind the counter, grabbed about \$1,000 from the cash box and fled, police said. David Oquendo, 30, was arrested a short time later and charged with grand larceny and criminal impersonation of a police officer. His accomplice was not apprehended. Oquendo was being held in lieu of \$15,000 bail pending a Jan. 5 court appearance.

She offers bribe

A woman arrested at 11:30 a.m. Tues., Dec. 7 for stealing a wallet from a victim at the corner of Grand St. and Bowery and for picking the pocket of another victim a few minutes later at Hester and Elizabeth Sts., was also charged with offering a \$1,000 bribe to the officer who arrested her, according to the office of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. The suspect, Ha Vasko, 67, told the cop she would give him all the money in her wallet, about \$1,000, "or I could write you a check if you let me go." Vasko was being held in lieu of \$5,000 bail pending a March 9 court appearance.

Greenhouse weeds

A woman patron of Greenhouse, the club at 150 Varick St., put her bag next to her at her table by the dance floor around 3 a.m. Mon., Dec. 20, turned to talk to a friend and discovered a minute or two later that the bag had been stolen, along with \$300 in cash, her iPhone, credit cards and her Florida driver's license.

A New Jersey woman told police she put her bag on top of the bar at Greenhouse around 1 a.m. Sat., Dec. 18 and discovered a short time later it had been stolen along with \$150 in cash, a Louis Vuitton key chain valued at \$400 and credit cards. She learned later that an unauthorized charge of \$51 had been made on one of the cards at a White Castle.

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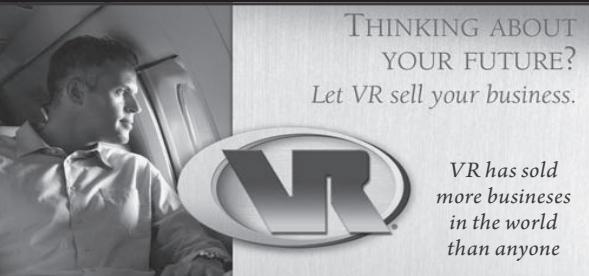
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Negotiations positive for possible new Peck Slip school

BY ALINE REYNOLDS

Downtown kindergartners might have a better shot at attending a public school in their district, if current negotiations between the U.S. Postal Service and the New York City Department of Education prove fruitful.

The U.S. Postal Service has reached an exclusive agreement with the D.O.E.'s School Construction Authority to open an elementary school at the Peck Slip Post Office in the South Street Seaport, according to the D.O.E. and Congressman Jerrold Nadler's office. The time frame and logistics of the school's opening have not yet been ironed out, since the agreement hasn't yet been finalized.

But the Downtown community is already rejoicing as it impatiently awaits more Downtown elementary school seats to relieve overcrowding, avoiding the need to bus their five-year-olds out of the district.

"This is excellent news for everybody involved," Nadler said in a statement, emphasizing the need for the school. "I hope that we can see both the school and retail post office realized as the negotiations continue."

According to Eric Greenleaf, a P.S. 234 parent and New York University business professor, the neighborhood requires an additional 1000-to-1400 more elementary school seats by 2017 in order to prevent severe overcrowding in the neighborhood schools. School enrollments are growing so rapidly, he said, that the Peck Slip school would be completely filled on its opening day.

"I'd be thrilled if [the negotiations] moved forward as soon as possible," said P.S. 234 parent Tricia Joyce, also a member of Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver's Overcrowding Task Force. "We're already over-capacity, so it really can't come soon enough."

Kimberly Busi, another member of the task force and the Parent Teacher Association president of P.S. 234, has begun a



Downtown Express photo by Aline Reynolds

The Peck Slip Post Office could be converted to house a new elementary school.

letter-writing campaign requesting that the Peck Slip elementary school incubate at the Tweed Courthouse. The D.O.E.'s current plan is to designate the space to Innovate Manhattan Charter School, a move which Busi, Greenleaf and scores of other Downtown parents vehemently oppose.

"Everyone is pretty unified in the belief that we absolutely can't give up Tweed Courthouse," Busi said, having hand-delivered nearly 200 complaint letters to the D.O.E. on Monday. "We just want those seats kept for zoned kindergarten children."

Busi was pleased to hear about the D.O.E.'s negotiations with the post office. The Peck Slip school alone, however, won't resolve the overcrowding dilemma Lower Manhattan currently faces. "If we're lucky and we get the school sited, I think we have to start immediately on [finding and securing] site number

two," she said.

Speaker Silver was instrumental in backing the S.C.A.'s acquisition of the Peck Slip site. He wrote John Potter, the U.S.P.S. postmaster general and chief operating officer in September, about the need for a 400-seat public school at the site in September. "It is very challenging for the [D.O.E.] to find a suitable site, and the Peck Slip Post Office meets its criteria," Silver said in the letter. The D.O.E. has the capital funding lined up for the acquisition, he added, and is ready to sign off on the deal.

Silver said he is working with Nadler, State Senator Daniel Squadron, City Councilmember Margaret Chin and other elected officials to open up more schools Downtown.

Squadron echoed the need to combat school overcrowding Downtown, stating that the siting of a school at Peck Slip is "one important step to keeping our schools and our community growing and strong."

The post office's retail services, located on the first floor of the four-story building at One Peck Slip, will be retained on the site, according to Nadler's office, who is in direct contact with the U.S.P.S. Storage space and other U.S.P.S. operations, however, will be relocated to another location in the neighborhood.

"Currently the U.S.P.S. needs only two of those floors, hence this is why we are consolidating and offering the extra space for sale," explained U.S.P.S. Spokesperson Darleen Reid.

Reid said postal services would remain in the community, regardless of the outcome of the bid process for the space it intends to sell to the D.O.E. "We are not taking away service to the community at this time," she said. "We are simply looking into the option of streamlining operations into a smaller space."

She said that the U.S.P.S. would be finalizing negotiations for the Peck Slip space sometime in January.

Lifting more than just spirits on Wall St.

BY HELAINA N. HOVITZ

Wall Street workers have been taking more than just a load off during their lunch hour; they're taking ten years off of their faces and returning straight to work.

Doctors across the country have spent the past year performing "knifeless facelifts" on patients in their 40's and 50's using the Ulthera System, a new, non-surgical device that uses ultra-sound technology. Now, Ulthera has finally found its way Downtown and into the hands of the man behind the machine.

Cosmetic surgeon Dr. William Matthew White, 42, who fathered the concept and began receiving nation media attention in November, has officially begun using the device at his NYU Medical Center Trinity Center practice. He authored the first paper on the machine that targets the layer of skin that lies directly underneath the outer surface, the SMAS layer. Up until three months ago, he only performed face and neck surgery the traditional way. He officially added "Ultherapy" to his practice in September.

The treatment is a less expensive alternative to surgery, and a convenient one at that; the entire procedure takes between thirty and forty minutes, and because there is no anesthesia or cutting involved, the patient

can return to work within the hour. The device is the first of its kind to receive FDA approval and uses sound waves to stimulate the regeneration of collagen, which the body produces naturally.

Dr. White, who also works as an assistant professor at NYU, appeared on national television for the first time in November, explaining how the device works on Good Morning America.

"More and more studies have been coming out that help us better understand how the face ages, and it's not just the skin," Dr. White said. "What we're able to do is increase the critical support systems within the face, and that's what lifts and tightens the face and makes it appear more rejuvenated."

The Ulthera System tightens the SMAS layer by delivering energy into the tissue, which stimulates the fibroblasts to generate new collagen. Because it assists the body in regenerating a substance that it produces naturally, many patients have begun opting to undergo Ultherapy in place of Botox injections.

Dr. White spent three years working with a team of five other doctors to develop the

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Continued on page 20

Jewish Community Project to open in Tribeca

BY TEQUILA MINSKY

There were no shovels because there was no dirt. But the opening party for the Jewish Community Project's new Tribeca space was still billed as "groundbreaking."

"My six-year-old daughter Olivia is in the Hebrew after-school (Mechina) program," said Jamie Propp, hammer and nails in hand while affixing his name to a long plank, the symbolic New York City style groundbreaking.

The Jewish religion and cultural center based at 146 Duane Street is bursting at the seams with the population explosion of children and parents in Tribeca, many who are Jewish. Propp echoed the sentiments of some of his Tribeca neighbors who hail from Jewish communities elsewhere. "It's wonderful to have access and a source of Jewish life Downtown. It makes it feel more like home," said Propp, who hails from Westchester.

On December 15, Propp and his wife, Sang A Im-Propp, were among the more than 150 Tribecans and J.C.P. friends celebrating the "groundbreaking" at the site where J.C.P.'s facilities will expand, the east side of the second floor of the Carey Building on Chambers Street. Plans include classrooms, a gallery, a sacred space and a community hall with moveable walls for flexible configurations. The windows front Chambers, Church, and Reade Streets.

State Senator Daniel Squadron and other community members spoke at the event supporting J.C.P.'s growth. Celebrants also feted

Victoria Feder during the evening. She is one of the prime leaders of the J.C.P., inspired to have a Jewish cultural center and the need to inclusively connect as a community following the events of September 11.

It's wonderful to have access and a source of Jewish life Downtown.

— Jamie Propp

The J.C.P. began with Shabbat services in people's homes, added a pre-school, which is now in its sixth year, has Jewish cultural after-school classes and other programming. The target date for completion is Fall 2011 and the expansion will add classrooms to those on Duane Street. The Website lists classes, schedule of events — the next festive occasion is Purim, March 20 at P.S. 234 — and more.

The DJ for the evening was rabbinical intern and after-school instructor Joshua Beraha. After an evening of oldies and contemporary music, he seemed to know just when to instigate a hora. The room of celebrants spontaneously grasped hands and started dancing in the traditional and energetic expression of festivity.



Downtown Express photos by Tequila Minsky

Jamie Propp adds his presence to the wall of supporters at the J.C.P. s groundbreaking in Tribeca.



Following kudos the DJ put on some traditional music and a hora quickly manifested.

Fighting to make Lower Manhattan the greatest place to live, work, and raise a family.



Assemblyman Shelly Silver

If you need assistance, please contact my office at (212) 312-1420 or email silver@assembly.state.ny.us.

SPURA vote postponed; Plan is half market rate

BY LESLEY SUSSMAN

If the devil is, indeed, in the details, then a Community Board 3 committee that for nearly two years has been trying to draft a comprehensive plan for the future development of the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area along Delancey Street, seemed this week to be in dire need of an exorcist.

At its monthly meeting on December 13, at the Henry Street Settlement, members of C.B. 3's Land Use, Zoning, Public and Private Housing Committee spent nearly four hours painstakingly reviewing the details of the first draft guidelines that was presented to the committee last month, and arguing over many of these details.

Since last month's presentation, some changes to the guidelines had been made by panel facilitator John Shapiro, an urban planner and mediator who was hired by C.B. 3 to guide the committee toward a proposal that would be satisfactory to the various factions on the committee, as well as to various city agencies.

When all was said and done, the committee finally agreed on only one thing: to put off any vote on the guidelines until next month and, maybe, even later.

The development area, known as SPURA for short, consists of 10 sites that have been

vacant for nearly 43 years after the wholesale razing of blocks of residential buildings by the city for a never-completed urban renewal plan.

The empty swath of open-air parking lots on the south side of Delancey Street at the foot of the Williamsburg Bridge is the largest site of undeveloped city-owned land in Manhattan south of 96th Street.

At the marathon Monday night meeting, which was attended by about 100 local residents — who by 10 p.m. had dwindled down to just a handful — committee members listened to a lineup of community members who emotionally spoke out on how this city-owned wasteland should be developed.

Speakers' opinions ran the gamut, from Grand Street News editor Yori Yanover, who said he opposed any housing on the site whatsoever, and, instead, wanted to see a recreational area developed there, to representatives of Good Old Lower East Side, an activist group advocating for mostly low-income housing to be built there.

Adrienne Chevrestt, a member of St. Mary's Parish, told committee members that SPURA's proposed development was "The

Continued on **page 18**

Tiny skating rink is Downtown's only option

BY ALINE REYNOLDS

There will be an ice rink in Downtown this winter, thanks to a new feature at a lofty neighborhood hotel. But, according to area residents, it is far from an acceptable substitute for last year's rink at the Battery Park City ball fields.

On Saturday, around 70 people skated on the new outdoor ice-skating rink at the "W" New York-Downtown, which is available for community members and hotel guests alike. It is the latest addition to the hotel, which opened last August at the intersection of Washington and Albany Streets.

The rink offers the Downtown community a substitute to the B.P.C. rink, which the Battery Park City Authority chose not to reopen this year after contract disputes with the prior operator.

Sofia Vandaele, general manager of the "W," said the rink, which is located on the hotel's fifth floor public terrace, is just as much a facility for the Lower Manhattan community as it is for the guests of the hotel.

"I think we have more than [enough] opportunity now to reach out to our new community," she said. The rink, she added, "really is bringing the experience of the terrace to the community year-round."

The rink will be open Monday through Sunday, 2 to 10 p.m., until February 15, 2011.

"We hope someone will get engaged [on the ice] on Valentine's Day – fingers crossed!" said Daniella Weinberg, public relations manager at Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, parent company of the "W."

Vandaele said the "W" hopes to start up programming at the rink in collaboration with Hudson River Park Mother's Group and with financial and consultant companies in the area, though the specifics have yet to be ironed out.

Skating on the rink is free and, if users don't bring their own skates, they can rent a pair from the hotel for \$12.



Downtown Express photo by Aline Reynolds

Andy Borella and Erica Gianchetti (on the right) try out the W's new skating rink with some friends after work on Monday.

Though only 15-to-20 people can skate on it at one time, Vandaele said that the "W" doesn't anticipate the need for a wait list to use the rink.

"It operates on a first-come, first-serve basis," she said. "At the moment, we're comfortable that we can deal with the requests and interest we'll have."

The rink is an eco-friendly installation: its surface is composed of synthetic, recycled polymer, which unlike natural ice, doesn't require refrigeration or a generator to keep cool. A barricade surrounds it, and its surface is maintained with

friction-reduction liquid to keep skaters from slipping.

Skaters can relax during their breaks on the wrap-around terrace that directly faces Ground Zero. The outdoor "Ice Bar" offers an array of hot and cold cocktails, zesty names like "Get Your Rocks Off," "Hot Toddy" and "Kumquat Mule."

Not everyone, however, is content with the new rink. Tribeca residents Blake Haider and Phil Zrihen believe it to be a poor replacement of the B.P.C. rink, which the B.P.C. Authority did not reopen this winter. "It's too small – you can't skate on it," said Haider.

Comparing the two, he said, is like comparing a whirlpool with a swimming pool. Nevertheless, Haider plans on taking his five-year-old daughter ice-skating there soon, since there is no other rink in the near vicinity.

Zrihen, who also misses the B.P.C. rink, said he isn't going to bother bringing his eight- and six-year-olds to the "W" to skate. "I suspect that it's unlikely for us to be able to get on [the rink], given the limited number of people that can skate at one time," he said. It also isn't the sports-oriented rink the family enjoys, like the former B.P.C. rink or the Sky Rink at Chelsea Piers. "There's a big difference," he said, "between full-service and a touristy-type attraction."

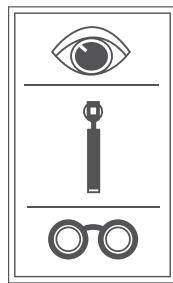
But the "touristy-type" tiny rink does have its appeal, even though that appeal is not so much about the skating.

Chelsea resident Erica Gianchetti visited the "W" on Monday with her friend, Andy Borella, to try out the new rink, which, she said, is more intimate than the one at Chelsea Piers. "You don't get the luxury of a bar while you ice skate – it's very New York," Gianchetti said, smiling.

Borella, who works at a public relations firm in the Flatiron District, said it's a perfect respite from a stressful day at work. "I came here to be with my friend, not to free-willy skate," he said.

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Health study could be done by early spring

BY LINCOLN ANDERSON

A community health needs assessment that could be used to make the case for a new hospital or healthcare facility to replace the former St. Vincent's Hospital could be completed by early spring.

Meanwhile, at a recent meeting on the needs assessment, members of the Coalition for a New Village Hospital continued to ask why the study was needed, saying there were sufficient studies already.

About 50 people gathered at the Robert Fulton Houses Senior Center earlier this month to hear members of the Community Health Assessment Steering Committee give an update on where the study stands and answer questions.

Hunter College School of Public Health and North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System are doing the assessment pro bono, under the guidance of healthcare professionals, the area's elected officials and community organizations represented on the 45-member steering committee.

The December 6 panel included steering committee members Brad Hoylman of Community Board 2; Jesse Smith

Campoamor of Community Board 4; Dr. Neal Cohen, a former commissioner of the New York City Department of Health now on the Hunter College faculty; and Jeffrey Kraut, senior vice president for strategy of North Shore-L.I.J. Health System. State Senator Tom Duane, also a steering committee member, sat in for the start of the meeting, but left after about half an hour, reportedly having to head back up to Albany.

Thus far, following the committee's first meeting in September, two reports were produced in October — "Defining the Service Area" and "The Origin of St. Vincent's Patients" — and have been posted on Community Board 2's Web site.

According to the steering committee, the primary service area for the former St. Vincent's Hospital stretches from W. 34th Street down to Soho and Hudson Square, east of Fifth Avenue and the Bowery. Based on patient exit records, about 45 percent of hospitalized residents in the 10011 and 10014 zip codes (Chelsea and Greenwich Village) were most dependent on St. Vincent's, while 55 percent sought

Continued on page 19

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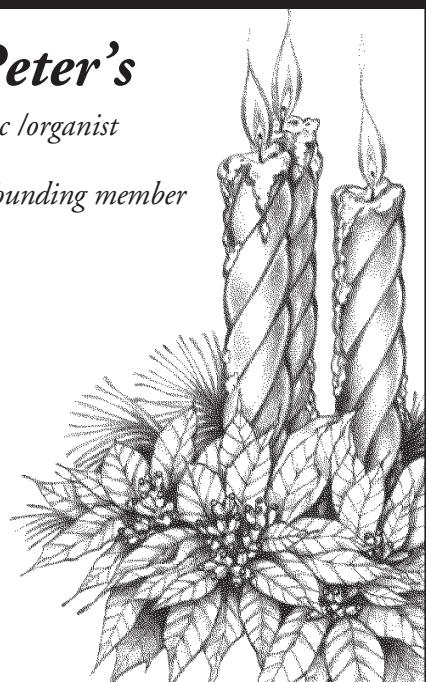
DECEMBER 25 Christmas Day

10:00 AM Sung Eucharist

DECEMBER 26

Sunday after Christmas

10:00 AM Sung Eucharist





Transit Sam The Answer man

Dear Transit Sam,

I just turned 65, and I was wondering how you can apply for a Senior Citizen Metrocard? Will I have to pay more when normal fares go up on Thursday, December 30th?

D.S., West Village

Dear D.S.,

You can request a reduced fare metrocard by mail or in person, whichever is more convenient. If you go in person to 3 Stone Street between Broadway and Broad Street, you'll need two forms of valid identification (i.e. passport, driver's license, birth certificate). If you decide to apply for one by mail, you'll need to fill out and print the following application (<http://www.mta.info/nyct/fare/pdf/seniors.pdf>), include a 2" by 2 1/2" photograph of yourself and a valid form of photo identification (a photocopy). You can then mail the form and other materials to MTA NYC Transit, Reduced Fare Program, 130 Livingston St., Brooklyn, NY 11201-9625. Give it a couple weeks to process before you receive the card.

To answer your second question, the

fare for a reduced pay-per-ride Metrocard will stay the same at \$1.10, but unlimited reduced fare Metrocards will rise in price to \$52 for a monthly and \$14.50 for a weekly. I strongly recommend you get the pay-per-ride Metrocard because the monthly and weekly Metrocards cannot be used during rush hour from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays under current federal guidelines. I would only get the monthly if I knew all my trips for the month would be off-peak.

Transit Sam

Dear Transit Sam,

I know the MTA is raising its fares on December 30th from \$89 to \$104 for a monthly unlimited Metrocard. Talk about a whopper of an increase! Can I stock up on monthly Metrocards on December 29th so that I'm saving a nice chunk of change?

Eva, Gold St.

Dear Eva,

It's a nice way to find some extra cash for

the 2011 holiday season, but unfortunately the answer is no. If you buy a monthly Metrocard before December 30th (no later than 11:59 p.m. on December 20th), you will need to activate the card no later than 11:59 p.m. on January 10th. Otherwise, the card won't work when you swipe in.

Transit Sam

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Have a question about a parking ticket, traffic rules, public transportation, ASP or more? Want to know how to get a copy of my 2011 Parking Calendar? If so, send me an e-mail at TransitSam@downtownexpress.com or write to Transit Sam, 611 Broadway, Suite 415, New York, NY 10012.

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR
John W. Sutter

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
John Bayles

ARTS EDITOR
Scott Stiffler

REPORTERS
Aline Reynolds
Albert Amateau
Lincoln Anderson

Sr. V.P. OF SALES AND MARKETING
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ADVERTISING SALES
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RETAIL AD MANAGER
Colin Gregory

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Troy Masters

ART DIRECTOR
Mark Hasselberger

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Jamie Paakkonen

CONTRIBUTORS
Terese Loeb Kreuzer • David Stanke • Jerry Tallmer

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Lorenzo Ciniglio • Milo Hess
Corky Lee • Elisabeth Robert
• Jefferson Siegel

INTERNS
Andrea Riquier

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EDITORIAL

Cleaning up Albany

Earlier this year, when former Mayor Ed Koch launched his New York Uprising effort to reform Albany, some people didn't appear to be taking him seriously.

Well, they are now.

At 86, Koch is spearheading a very real and very badly needed movement to fix Albany, and the momentum has been snowballing.

On Monday, at a City Hall press conference, Koch was joined by about a dozen state senators from New York City and nearby counties — including local Senator Daniel Squadron — who all stressed that passing a package of bills closely corresponding to the reforms in the Uprising pledge is their "Job No. 1" next month. In fact, Squadron and the others said, these reform initiatives should be passed on the first day of session.

We wholeheartedly agree.

It's great to see Koch returning to his reform roots in his later years, just as Eleanor Roosevelt did before him. And there couldn't be a better moment. Confidence in Albany has been at an all-time low. The hijacking of the state Senate in the summer of 2009 by Pedro Espada and his cronies was a sordid chapter, turning our state government into a pathetic joke.

Yet, Albany didn't have far to fall to reach that nadir. In 2004, the Brennan Center for Justice at N.Y.U. School of Law found New York State's Legislature to be America's worst and most anti-democratic; members didn't have to be present to vote, and most votes passed with 95 percent support, the study found. Then, of course, there are the regularly late state budgets, a perennial embarrassment.

Subsequently, thanks to reform measures by Scott Stringer when he was in the Assembly, significant strides were made — for one, members must at least now be physically present to vote.

Nevertheless, there remain serious, endemic problems that need to be addressed — and redistricting tops the list. It's natural that legislators would want to draw their own district lines, thereby helping ensure their re-election — but that's precisely why an independent, nonpartisan process is needed.

When we asked Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver about redistricting back in April, he shrugged off the idea of removing the process from lawmakers' hands, noting, "If you give it to a bunch of professors, the community could be harmed."

However, Koch — in addition to getting the majority of both Houses to sign the Uprising pledge — also got Governor-elect Cuomo to commit to it, and to avow that he'd veto any bill in which legislators are allowed to redraw their own lines. Kudos to Cuomo for that principled stand.

In addition to Assembly and Senate lines, Congressional districts are also due to be redrawn next year — and it's all done at the state level.

Silver on Tuesday issued a statement saying, "We will work in a collaborative way to come up with a redistricting process that protects the rights of minority voters, keeps public officials accountable to the people and provides strong representation for all New Yorkers." Disappointingly, the words "independent, nonpartisan committee" are noticeably absent.

The other two Uprising pledge items — ethics reform and a GAAP balanced budget — are also vitally important. On ethics reform, we agree that an independent oversight committee is needed to assure accountability, while stronger disclosure laws will improve standards of conduct. As for a GAAP balanced budget, it will "take the politics out of budgeting" and stop the state from spending beyond its means.

It's now up to legislators who signed the Uprising pledge to put their money where their pen is — and vote for these reforms first thing next month. New Yorkers deserve nothing less.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Crossing West Street

To the editor:

As a result of the death of pedestrian Marilyn Feng on February 13, 2009, our community was reminded of the unusually short time traffic light intervals to cross treacherous West Street.

In response, the Department of Transportation increased the timing so one could cross without running a sprint. Recently, again owing to community concerns, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation provided a \$1.2 million grant to station crossing guards at the intersections at Chambers Street and southward on weekdays during normal business hours only, and not inclusive of weekends.

Without notifying the community, the D.O.T. has once again restored the short time intervals to those in effect in February 2009. All you have to do is watch those hard-working guards urging people to walk faster as the lights quickly change.

Did anyone responsible for restoring the shorter intervals know that we do not have 24/7 guards? And why was this done without public notification and input? Let's hope that C.B. 1 and our local representatives take to task those responsible, and restore intervals that allow all to safely WALK across West Street.

John Brindisi
Battery Park City

Misinformation needs correcting

To the editor:

Re: "Downtown small biz sector gets boost from Camelot" (news article Dec. 7)

I want to correct misinformation in profiling publicist Christina Cozzi and Camelot. The article cites Cozzi's claims that some proceeds of her October event were given to the Hive at 55.

Unfortunately, despite Cozzi's publicity blitz avowing the event was rooted in philanthropic intentions, not a single dime was subsequently given to the Hive. We should point out: we never approached Cozzi to ask for the event or to be a recipient, and we appreciated her desire to help this worthy, non-profit operation. And, the Hive even purchased a ticket so its director could attend Cozzi's event for a speaking program that was then abruptly cancelled during the event. Cozzi's subsequent demands that the Alliance and the Hive divert their efforts to substantially promote her event were unrealistic and scattershot.

It's a shame. While we support entrepreneurial endeavors, the entire experience developed into a bait-and-switch. It's an unfortunate irony that she claims the event was a resounding success yet inevitably stiffed its publicized beneficiary.

Jeff Simmons
Vice President for Communications,
Alliance for Downtown New York



Downtown Express photo by Jefferson Siegel

Don't try this at home, or anywhere

Risking spine and neck injuries, a street performer entertained the crowd in the Washington Square Park fountain on Saturday afternoon.

TALKING POINT

A streetcar named Pearl Harbor: Getting onboard

BY JERRY TALLMER

On the last day of boyhood — not youth, but boyhood — their big guy, Endicott (“Chub”) Peabody of Massachusetts, unstoppable defensive lineman of the Harvard Crimson, had almost single-handedly taken apart the Big Green 11 captained by our big guy, center Charles Milton (“Stubby”) Pearson of Minnesota.

Now, on the other side of the river, the Boston side, an hour or so after the end of the game on this aching Saturday afternoon, I was steering my overcrowded black 1940 convertible Ford Schpitfeuer straight into the mouth of a Mass Avenue shortcut tunnel, only to discover that it wasn't a shortcut at all unless you were a streetcar of “the T,” Boston's equivalent of the M.T.A. One such monster, bell clanging furiously, was headed at that very moment straight toward the nose of the Schpitfeuer Ford, not to mention toward myself and the six or seven or eight other guys — buddies, classmates, defeated invaders — who were distributed elsewhere in or on the vehicle.

I was at the wheel because only a half-minute earlier, Al Goldman, the corpulent, go-getting business manager of The Dartmouth, who'd been serving as driver because he knew the terrain, suddenly, right there in the middle of downtown Boston traffic, had jammed on the brakes, looked around, jumped out, said: “I left my car somewhere around here,” and disappeared forever into the crowd. Leaving me, the editor in chief, to, so to speak, take back the reins.

What did I do? I backed us out slowly, very, very slowly, with the streetcar moving voraciously forward by way of encouragement, inch by inch.

Why do I call that 1940 Ford a Schpitfeuer? Well, because all that spring of 1941, we of The Dartmouth, the oldest college daily newspaper in America, went out every so often in a couple of cars to the Bema, a grassy place just off the campus, to play dogfight in the skies over Britain, in honor of those who were truly great. ... “Achtung, Schpitfeuer!” ... “I say, old boy, jolly good show!” ... as we hurtled and skidded our beer-drenched, overloaded autos this way and that way over the greensward. Babe and Craighead, DeSherb and Farb, Mitchbitch and Proc Page, even humorless old Joseph P., my second in command.

Newspapermen! A fraternity more binding than any traditional Greek-letter animal house.

Those Bema dogfight things were merely the letting-off of steam, of course — release of nervous tension — because 1941 was a very bad year indeed. During the course of it, Adolf Hitler continued to consume and destroy country after country, while we — in our faraway, isolated, protective little Hanover, New Hampshire, cocoon — were increasingly involved in several mini-wars of our own: the pacifist isolationists; subclass (a) radical or (b) reactionary, along with a sprinkling of America Firsters, versus the ever more heated and alarmed stop-Hitler interventionists. The latter meaning me, in that newspaper.

When the Germans, in April of that year, went from invading Yugoslavia to invading Greece, Charles Guy Bolté, the golden boy of the Class of 1941 — one year ahead of my Class of 1942 — brought me a manifesto he had just written in the form of an open letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. “Dear Mr. President,” it began, “Now we have waited long enough... .” It called on F.D.R. to quit stalling and at long last move against Hitler by force.

I ran it on the next morning's front page — and the whole campus damn near blew up. What had been a 1,000 percent pacifist college paper when yours truly (then also an ardent pacifist) ascended to the editor's desk was now all that and more of an interventionist college newspaper — the first such in this entire country, I have always believed. Listening to Edward R. Murrow broadcast the summer before from the rooftops of burning London had turned me

180 degrees around. That, and whatever new barbarism the Nazis were executing every day. I don't think I ever used the word “Jew” except between the lines.

The Japanese? Well, they had raped an entire city — China's Nanking — back in 1937, but we would have to get around to that someday in the distant future, when we had the time and the means to do it.

Newspapermen! A fraternity more binding than any traditional Greek-letter animal house.

In the fall of the year before, 1940, on the night of the famous “Fifth Down” football game against Cornell, coach Earl Blaik reminded us at a big emotional bonfire that Dartmouth men always exemplified the idea of “Rugged, see!”

O.K., I'm only a college boy, a citified college boy who can neither skate nor ski — nor, God save us, play football. But so long as I have this newspaper, I'll keep writing anti-Nazi, go-to-war editorials while Babe — associate editor and best friend Alex “Babe” Fanelli of Pelham Manor, New York — supplies the poetry.

In Boston, around midafternoon Sunday, the day after that disastrous Harvard-Dartmouth football game, I pointed the 1940 black Ford (a hand-me-down from my mother) north toward Hanover.

Several hours later, as I drew up and parked in front of Robinson Hall, the ancient and honorable edifice that housed the editorial and business offices of The Dartmouth, a kid came running out of — pouring out of — the building, I forget his name; it may have been Jessup. He was what was called a “heeler” — an underclassman bucking to become a full-time staffer of that newspaper.

“Jerry!” he was yelling. “Jerry, have you heard? The Japs have bombed Pearl Harbor!”

And like almost every other jerk in this country at that moment, I said: “Where's Pearl Harbor?”

Forty-eight hours and three or four extra editions of The Dartmouth later, Babe and I were sleeplessly downing harsh black coffee in the Hanover Inn. Babe looked at me, took a swallow, and said: “I guess we'd better go, don't you?”

IRA BLUTREICH



Once again, Bloomberg denies that he's eyeing the presidency.

And so we went, leaving the oldest college newspaper in America to the tender mercies of Joseph P. & Co.

Some six months later a postcard reached me at an anti-submarine airbase up the Demerara from Georgetown, British Guiana. It was from George Hanna, Class of 1941, a star on the Dartmouth basketball team and someone I'd never met. It had been mailed six months earlier. “So you went and did it,” it said. “Good for you.”

George Hanna, a distinguished New Hampshire lawyer, died only a couple of years ago. I never got to thank him for that postcard.

Charles Bolté left college, went to Canada, joined the King's Royal Rifles, got a leg blown off at El Alamein, was a Rhodes Scholar, married a beautiful girl named Mary Elwell, founded and ran the American Veterans Committee, had a decent career in publishing, was a physical and vocal duplicate of Orson Welles as Charles Foster Kane, and is now also gone.

Endicott Peabody won a Silver Star for gallant service on a U.S. Navy submarine in the Pacific theater of war. He served one two-year term (1963-65) as Democratic governor of Massachusetts (and ally of John F. Kennedy), but was too racially and economically liberal — he refused, among other things, to send any human being to the electric chair — to ever again get elected to anything. He left us in 2009.

And Stubby Pearson? Big, amiable, earnest, decent, rough-complexioned Charles Milton Pearson of Minnesota? I knew him fairly well, as it happens, because he, too, believe it or not, in our freshman year had been a heeler, alongside me, though in his case for the sports pages of The Dartmouth. But instead of writing it, he ended up playing it — football and basketball, all-star captains of both.

Stubby was also the Class of 1942 Phi Beta Kappa valedictorian, though by that time I was not on the scene. (The war, in fact, was to save me from flunking out.)

I imagine that Charles Milton Pearson would have gone on to become a Rhodes Scholar himself, a college president, a senator, governor, a United States president, anything. But in late March 1944, Stubby Pearson plunged his Navy dive bomber down toward a Japanese destroyer in the waters off Palau, and died in the attempt, taking his gunner, T.W. Watterston, with him.

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Jack Levine, 85, an artist who always kept it real

One of the most important American representational artists of the 20th century, longtime Villager Jack Levine died on Nov. 8 after a short illness.

Throughout his long career, Levine remained committed to figurative art, disregarding trends in the art world that did not suit his purposes. This was particularly true in the 1950's, when abstraction was in ascendancy and social content was deemed out of fashion by leading writers and critics.

Levine developed a unique modernist approach, an expressive mode of painting that he used to critique injustice and dishonesty in American society.

Born Jan. 3, 1915, the youngest of eight children of Lithuanian immigrant parents, Levine grew up in Boston's South End. From 1929, when he was 14 years old, until 1933, he studied painting with Denman Ross in Harvard University's art department. He was then employed intermittently by the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project from 1935 to 1940. Two of his W.P.A. paintings, "Card Game" (1933) and "Brain Trust" (1935), were included in an exhibition, "New Horizons in American Art," at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1936.

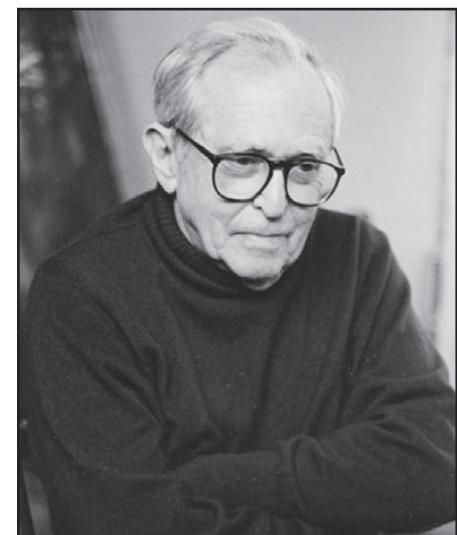
The following year, he achieved national recognition when his painting, "The Feast of Pure Reason" (1937), a scathing critique of political and police corruption, entered the collection of the Museum of Modern Art. Another of his paintings, "String Quartet" (1934-'37), was included in the Whitney Museum of American Art Annual for the first time that year. Confirming his rapid rise in the art world, he joined Edith Halpert's prestigious Downtown Gallery in 1939, at age 24.

Levine's burgeoning career was interrupted by three and a half years in the Army during World War II. Even so, he gained widespread public notice while serving in the South Atlantic in 1942 when "String Quartet" was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, after being included in its exhibition "Artists for Victory." The image was later reproduced and displayed in New York City subway cars.

After the war, Levine married artist Ruth Gikow and moved to New York. Gikow died in 1982.

Earlier in the 1940's, he had begun working on paintings with Old Testament themes, resulting in a series of "Hebrew Kings and Sages" that revealed his more contemplative nature.

At the same time, he continued creating controversy with paintings like "Welcome Home" (1946), a satirical take on a society banquet honoring a returning general, which was acquired by the Brooklyn Museum. Later shown in a State Department exhibition of American art that traveled to Moscow, this painting created an international controversy with its wry look at patriotism and the military hierar-



Jack Levine in a 1988 photo.

chy. Levine, along with several other artists, was subpoenaed to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee, though he ultimately did not appear since he was traveling in Spain with his family.

Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, Levine continued to create some of his finest works, including what is often regarded as his masterpiece, "Gangster Funeral" (1952-'53), which was acquired by the Whitney Museum. In the early 1960's, Levine also began creating prints.

In 1979, a comprehensive retrospective of his work that was organized by the Jewish Museum traveled around the country. Levine continued to work steadily through the 1980's and 1990's. In 1999, the Brooklyn Museum held a retrospective exhibition of his etchings and lithographs.

Levine received many awards and honors, including a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship in 1945 and a Fulbright grant to study in Italy in 1950. He became a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston, in 1955, and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, in 1973.

Levine once said of himself, "I am primarily concerned with the condition of man. The satirical direction I have chosen is an indication of my disappointment in man, which is the opposite way of saying that I have high expectations for the human race."

Art historian Milton Brown wrote of Levine, "He is a history painter for our peculiar times, ultimately concerned with the incongruous relationships, ludicrous events and ironies of existence that somehow define our political, social and cultural character."

Levine is survived by his daughter, Susanna Fisher; his son-in-law, Leonard Fisher; two grandchildren, Rachel and Ari Fisher; a nephew, Robert Fishman; and two nieces, Myra Fishman and Elaine Weiner. A memorial service will be announced at a later date.



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Downtown Express photos by Milo Hess

Santa Claus, dragons and acrobats, oh my!

The annual East Meets West Christmas-themed festival celebrated the cultures of Little Italy and Chinatown on December 18. The event was sprinkled with opera, acrobatics and dragon dancers. City Comptroller John Liu and travel expert Valarie D'Elia were co-grand marshals for the event. The parade began on Mulberry and Canal Streets and ended at Chatham Square.

An advertisement for downtown express. The background is a large red candle with a bright flame. The text "downtown express" is at the top in a white, stylized font. Below it, the tagline "Catch the Magic this Holiday Season." is written in a large, elegant white font. At the bottom, there is contact information: "To Advertise In This Section Call Francesco Regini 646-452-2496 or e-mail francescoregini@downtownexpress.com".

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An advertisement for Acappella restaurant. The background features a portrait of a man wearing a red cap and a red jacket. The text "Acappella" is at the top in a large, blue, stylized font. Below it, the text "Now accepting reservations for New Years Eve Dinner Friday 12/31! Book your holiday party now!" is written. The restaurant's operating hours are listed: "Open for Lunch & Dinner Mon. - Fri., Lunch: 12 - 3 PM Dinner: 5 - 10:30 PM, Sat: 5 - 10 PM Sunday: 5 - 10 PM". The address "1 Hudson St. • 212-240-0163" and the website "visit us at: www.acapella-restaurant.com" are at the bottom.

Ringing in the New Year on deck and on the water

BY TERESE LOEB KREUZER

On New Year's Eve, when one year segues into the next, there is no finer place to celebrate than on a boat threading its way among New York City's islands. The ever-changing tides and currents express transition like nothing else. The city's lights are even more brilliant reflected in the water. If it's a fair night, the moon and stars will hover in the sky above the ships' decks. Inside, revelers will find food, drink, music, dancing and warmth. At midnight, there will be fireworks and champagne.

There are harbor cruises for all ages and most pocketbooks. This year, for the first time, New York Water Taxi is offering a Family New Year's Eve Cruise with an open bar serving beer and wine for adults. For the kids, there will be mock cocktails, sparkling cider and soft drinks. Everyone can dig into the hors d'oeuvres, wraps, sandwiches and snacks. So the adults can have a few moments to themselves, the cruise director will entertain the children with Nintendo Wii competitions and dancing. At midnight, hearty souls can watch the South Street Seaport fireworks from an open deck. Others may prefer to see the Times Square ball drop on the boat's plasma TVs. New York Water Taxi will have two Family New Year's Eve Cruise boats this year. Each can accommodate 80 people. They will depart from Pier 17, South Street Seaport, with boarding at 9 p.m. and sailing from 9:15 p.m. to 12:45 a.m. The cost is \$90 for adults, \$45 for children, or a package price of \$250 for two adults and two children. For reservations go to www.nywatertaxi.com/HarborTours/famNYE/.

New York Water Taxi will be putting two more boats on the water on New Year's Eve for adults-only cruises. These are for anyone 21

years old or older, with a valid ID. The cruises will start with a "Welcome Aboard Cocktail" and include an open bar, serving beer and wine. In addition, there will be hors d'oeuvres, music and champagne at midnight. The boats will board at 10 a.m. and leave Pier 17 in the South Street Seaport at 10:15 p.m., returning at 1:15 a.m. The cost is \$120 per person. For reservations, go to www.nywatertaxi.com/HarborTours/newyearseve/.

Circle Line Downtown's luxury yacht Zephyr has room for 200 people who will enjoy an open bar, hors d'oeuvres, a live DJ and dancing amid festive decorations. Plasma TVs will show the Times Square ball drop to those who do not care to go out on deck for the fireworks at midnight. The Zephyr leaves Pier 16 in the South Street Seaport at 10 p.m. and returns at 1 a.m. The cost is \$209 per person. For reservations, go to <http://www.circlelinedowntown.com/se-new-years.asp>

Statue Cruises puts on a fine New Year's Eve party aboard its three-deck ferry, the "John Jay Audubon." The ticket price is \$195 per person and includes an open bar, champagne toast at midnight, live DJ, dancing and party favors. The ample menu features vegetable crudités, cheese, fruit, pasta, shrimp cocktails, mini hamburgers, chicken kebobs, sweets and more. The boat boards at Liberty Landing Marina in Jersey City, N.J. at 8:30 p.m. and at Manhattan's Battery Park at 9 p.m., returning at 1 a.m. For information, call 877-523-9849 or go to www.statuecruises.com.

The most intimate and luxurious New Year's Eve cruise is aboard Classic Harbor Line's beautiful little yacht, Manhattan. The boat has a glass observatory and open decks, and can accommodate 40 people on New



Downtown Express photo by Terese Loeb Kreuzer

Classic Harbor Line's luxury yacht, Manhattan, will cruise New York harbor on New Year's Eve. The yacht holds 40 passengers and has a glassed-in observatory where they will be able to sip champagne and listen to a live jazz trio as they watch the fireworks. On New Year's Day, the Manhattan will offer a brunch cruise that includes a circumnavigation of Manhattan.

Year's Eve. Passengers will be greeted with a short champagne/sparkling wine tasting class with wine expert Wendy Crispell. Throughout the evening, a live jazz trio will entertain the guests, who are invited to dress formally, if they wish. Food aboard the Manhattan is always superb and will include hors d'oeuvres and desserts. In addition, there will be an open bar serving beer, wine, soda and water, with Moet Champagne available for purchase. The yacht departs from Chelsea Piers at 22nd Street and the Hudson River at 9 p.m. and returns at 1 a.m. Tickets are \$350 per person. For reservations, go to <http://tinyurl.com/2gxcc7m>.

On New Year's Day, the Manhattan will go out again, this time for brunch as the boat circumnavigates Manhattan. The buffet will include freshly baked bagels and pastries, fresh fruit, glazed ham, salad, quiches, waffles, smoked salmon and turkey sausages. The trip is just under three hours and costs \$85 per person. The boat leaves at 10:30 a.m.

The brunch cruise will be repeated on Sunday, January 2, also at 10:30 a.m., followed by an afternoon tea cruise at 2:15 p.m. (\$75 per person), and that's it for the winter. The Manhattan will not be back in New York harbor until April.

Downtown Digest

Continued from page 3

published ahead of time without accommodations being made," said Merchant, who will appear before the tribunal in January to contest the initial inspection report, claiming it to be an unwarranted allegation against the restaurant. "As previously stated," he said, "all our past inspections [got us] an A."

C.B. 1 REQUESTS REMOVAL OF BIKE PATH

Community Board One is again voicing its opposition over the City Hall Park bike path, claiming that it is imperils pedestrians – particularly children – that traverse the park via the crosswalk that is shared with bikers.

The dismount signs recently installed in the park have proved futile, according to Paul Hovitz, chair of the Youth and Education Committee. "It's a recipe for catastrophe, having a bike path through a pedestrian area that is not large enough to support both [pedestrians and cyclists]," he said. "It's unacceptable that we simply assume that dismounting signs are enough without enforcement and without any other issues to address the problem."

In a resolution dated December 16, C.B. 1 urged the city Department of Transportation to remove the bike

route from the park and move it to another location that "will not pose a threat to the safety of children and pedestrians in City Hall Park."

The D.O.T. responded by saying they wouldn't consider the issue until the spring, since few cyclists use the bike path during the winter months, according to Hovitz. The D.O.T. did not respond for comment in press time.

The committee previously requested that speed bumps be added to the bike path, which didn't come to fruition.

BROADWAY/NASSAU A/C SUBWAY STATION RENAMED

The Metropolitan Transit Authority decided earlier this month to do away with "Broadway/Nassau" as the name of the A/C stop at Fulton Street. It will now be known simply as Fulton Street.

The new name is meant to facilitate transportation for subway riders, according to M.T.A. spokesperson Charles Seaton. "Now, you have the entire complex with one single name, rather than a complex with three names plus one," he said.

The renaming is part of a massive overhaul of the Fulton Street subway. One of the major aspects of the project, Seaton said, is facilitating transfers between trains, which the

new name for the A/C stop will do.

Signs listing the stops in the older subway trains have been updated with the new name of the A/C stop. The M.T.A. is still in the process of updating the signs in the newer trains, which, Seaton said, could take several weeks.

BLOOMBERG DEEMS KING'S 'RADICALIZATION' HEARINGS INAPPROPRIATE

In an opinion piece that appeared in Sunday's Newsday, U.S. Representative Peter King said he plans to organize a series of hearings on the radicalization of American-Muslims in an effort "break down the wall of political correctness."

King, the soon-to-be chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, was a vocal opponent of the Park51 community center earlier this year, and has been quoted as saying, "80 to 85 percent of mosques around the country are run by Islamic fundamentalists."

Mayor Michael Bloomberg denounced King's scheduled hearings on radical Islam, calling them inappropriate.

Ibrahim Hooper, a spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, told the Huffington Post that he worries that the hearings will turn into an "anti-Muslim witch hunt." Terrorist plots have recently been investigated, he said, since Muslim community members were allegedly uncooperative with law enforcement.



BY TERESE LOEB KREUZER

TIMEBANK TAI CHI: Tai Chi, a form of martial arts that has been practiced in China for more than four hundred years, is now being practiced on Sunday afternoons at the Terrace Club, 380 Rector Place. The classes are under the auspices of TimeBank, a program sponsored and run by the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. The tai chi classes are free — or sort of free. No money changes hands, but members of TimeBank give an hour of service to another member for each hour of service they receive. Services that members exchange with each other might include help with moving, tutoring, home repairs, computer lessons, sewing, pet care and more. For example, the tai chi instructor, **Mark Song**, a native of China, is coached on his English in exchange for his teaching.

It is not necessary to be a TimeBank member to attend a tai chi class, but Mashi Blech, the director of the TimeBank program, said that attendees would have to join TimeBank if they want to continue. Joining entails completing an application, providing references and participating in an orientation session.

Song, who works with computer systems, has been studying tai chi for more than 38

years and teaching it for 20 years. He said tai chi is good for one's health in that it reduces stress, improves concentration and restores balance. No special skills, clothing or equipment are needed to take his classes and they're open to all ages.

In the summer, Song has been teaching in the oval park next to the World Financial Center. However, winter classes were a problem. The class tried to use space on the second level of the Winter Garden, but there were interruptions and distractions. Then **Steve Rossi**, a vice president with Milford Management and a TimeBank member, helped make the Terrace Club available. Had he not done so, the winter classes would have had to be cancelled, said Blech. "This is the first time a for-profit entity has partnered with us to promote and help TimeBank in such a significant way," she said.

The next tai chi class will be on Sunday, January 2 at 12:30 p.m. Reservations are necessary. To reserve or for more information about TimeBank and how to join, call 212-609-7811 or e-mail timebank@vnsny.org.

SAILING IN THE CARIBBEAN: At the end of January, as Battery Park City wrestles with snow and winter winds, around 150



Downtown Express photos by Terese Loeb Kruezer

A tai chi class under the auspices of TimeBank met at the Terrace Club, on Sunday, Dec. 12. The class will be meeting there throughout the winter.

people, most of them members of North Cove Marina's Manhattan Sailing Club or graduates of Manhattan Sailing School, will be heading for the Caribbean. This is the 10th anniversary of the Caribbean regatta, said the marina's commodore, **Michael Fortenbaugh** — and this year a record number of boats will participate.

The Manhattan Sailing Club has chartered "around 20 boats" according to Fortenbaugh, ranging in size from 40 feet to 51 feet. Each boat can accommodate six to eight people, who will live and eat aboard as they sail among the British Virgin Islands.

"It's sort of glorified camping," Fortenbaugh explained. "Everyone pitches in on chores. It's a team-building experience."

Most of the skippers teach at the Manhattan Sailing Club. Their crews range from novices who have taken one sailing course to experienced sailors. Some people have sailed together before while others have not.

Around this time of year, what are known as "Christmas winds" begin to blow in the Virgin Islands, Fortenbaugh said, which makes for good sailing. Some days the boats race each other. At the Bitter End Yacht Club on Virgin Gorda, the sailors will rent dinghy sailboats and compete with each other. The winning team receives a bottle of rum.

Other days are more laid back. People can choose to swim, read or go sightseeing ashore.

The fee for the week varies from boat to boat, with the newer and larger boats commanding larger fees. The range for the week is \$1,390 to \$1,990 per person exclusive of airfare. A few slots are still open for this year. Call 212-786-0400 for more information or go to <http://www.myc.org/>

SOUTHWEST NY: A few weeks ago, an inspection from the New York City Department of Health hit SouthWest NY, located at 2 World Financial Center, like a bombshell. After a series of excellent ratings, an inspector declared that the restaurant merited a "70," which would have made it one of the grimiest eateries in the city. A subsequent inspection on December 15 restored SouthWest NY's "A" rating but not before several news reports had trumpeted the restaurant's black eye and some diners had opined that the place should close. Merchants Hospitality, the owner of SouthWest NY and of several other restaurants in and near Battery Park City (Steamers Landing, Merchants Café, Pound & Pence), has appealed the atypical report. A hearing will take place in January.

Meanwhile, Executive Chef **Wade Burch** is planning sumptuous dinners for Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. A three-course Christmas Day dinner will feature a choice of entrées (wild turkey enchiladas, prime rib or red snapper) appetizers and desserts for \$32.95. Those who opt to eat at SouthWest NY's community table on Christmas Day, with seating at 4 p.m., will have beverages included in the price of the meal. Call 212-945-0528 for reservations.



Photo courtesy of the Manhattan Sailing Club

The Manhattan Sailing Club in the Caribbean, February 2010.



Downtown Express photo by Jonathan Kuhn

Taking 'diagonal parking' a little too literally

The car that ended up on the sidewalk at West and Bethune Sts. in the West Village on Sunday afternoon Dec. 12 with its front end down against a tree and its rear end up 45 degrees against the Superior Ink luxury residential building got that way when a driver, identified in the New York Post as an off-duty police officer, swerved to avoid an accident. The driver sustained minor injuries.



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Vote put off on SPURA 50 percent market-rate plan

Continued from page 6

last hope for people who are poor and who want to live on the Lower East Side."

She was followed by Brett Leitmer, chairperson of the Sustainable Housing And Retail Expansion (SHARE) organization, which endorsed the current draft plan as a "fair and evenhanded compromise that is radically moderate in its approach."

Afterward, committee members got down to the lengthy process of re-examining their second draft plan section by section. While there had been some expectation that the committee, after six previous meetings, would vote this evening on a finalized draft that could be presented to the full community board and to the city before the end of the year, a vote failed to materialize.

Instead, exhausted committee members, under the advice of Shapiro, decided to delay any formal vote on the guidelines until next month, a move that infuriated committee chairperson Dave McWater. The chairperson said such continued delays could put the entire development project in jeopardy because the city might eventually lose interest in the project if there was no swift community consensus.

"I think it's insane to delay this any further," McWater, who has been pushing



Photo by Jefferson Siegel

At a housing rally at the SPURA site last November, Councilmember Margaret Chin, above, said, "Forty-two years... I think it's a moral question. Affordable housing has to be part of the equation. The opportunities are endless if we can come together and work together."

for a completed "statement of principles" by this month, asserted. "Right now, we have a deal with the city where we have no losers. If we keep delaying this and a

new administration comes in, we can lose everything."

McWater also urged an end to the bickering between committee factions representing various area stakeholders.

"To factionalize ourselves over this issue is to defeat our chances of building homes for people," he said. "It's just not worth factionalizing ourselves."

Shapiro, meanwhile, said that he was pleased with the progress being made, but wanted more time before a vote was taken.

"When we vote on this we need to be confident," he said. "I don't feel we have this confidence right now. One of the biggest stumbling blocks is still the income mix for the property. We have to have a full consensus before we vote on it."

The facilitator said he also wanted more time in order to engage in one-on-one meetings with various neighborhood stakeholders on the committee to make certain that there will be no "surprise ambushes" when the proposal is finally presented to city agencies for their consideration.

In one positive sign of consensus, the panel informally agreed on what percentages of types of housing should be built on the proposed development site. The new formula calls for 50 percent market-rate housing, 10 percent middle-income housing, 10 percent moderate-income housing, 20 percent low-income housing and 10 percent senior citizen housing.

Michael Tumminia and Linda Jones, committee members who represent the interests of Seward Park Co-op members — a group that, along with residents from the other Grand Street Co-ops and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, has generally opposed low-income housing on the site — said they found the new formula to be O.K.

"I think once we carefully explain the plan to our members, they'll also find it acceptable," Tumminia said.

Jones, meanwhile, said, "While the mayor would like to keep the parking lots there forever, we don't." She added that, at night, the poorly lit area around the sprawling parking lots is dangerous for residents of her development.

State Senator Daniel Squadron was also at the meeting and noted how far the debate had come.

"We're closer than we have ever come to reaching community consensus for this site. That's because of the work the Community Board 3 committee is doing," said Squadron.

Also giving tentative approval to the formula was committee member Damaris Reyes, executive director of GOLES. Reyes emphasized, however, that while she was not initially opposed to the new housing-mix formula, "There's still a long ways to go before I can vote for it."

'I think it's insane to delay this any further.'

David McWater

"Let's really iron this out and vote in February," Reyes said. "The holidays are coming up and this is a decision that after 45 years needs to be carefully hashed out. Let's discuss it next month and then come back in February."

The touchy subject of how much low-income housing should be developed on the site came up at several points during the meeting. Reyes said she was deeply upset by the remarks of some committee members that if the site was developed primarily for poor people, it would increase crime in the nearby Grand Street and Seward Park Co-ops.

"I don't want to hear this," she said. "I live across the street from these co-ops and I don't want to hear that they don't want more people like me living in this neighborhood."

Her sentiments were echoed by committee member Herman Hewitt, a real estate broker, who said, "I'm not sure what all this fear is about. People should stop this. It sounds racist. Public housing will not affect market-rate unit sales in the area."

Dominic Pisciotta, C.B. 3 chairperson, who earlier in the meeting said that he wanted to see a "balanced community" on the site, said afterward that he was not disappointed by the month-long delay and wasn't fearful that the entire deal with the city would fall apart if delays continued.

"I think there was progress," he said. "I wasn't expecting to vote tonight, so I guess we're not far from where we ought to be. I'm hopeful that we can potentially have a vote in January."

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Students unhappy with principal

Continued from page 1

nymity said that the principal is responsible for provoking the students by prohibiting the use of the bathrooms.

Zabala agreed. "There was no need to ban bathroom passes," he said. "That was going overboard."

Another student, Anthony French, said the principal took the wrong course of action. "She could have resolved the situation in a different way," he said.

The riot, some said, was the outgrowth of "deep-seated" resentment toward the school, according to John Elfrank-Dana, the school's United Federation of Teachers chapter leader.

The weekend after the riot, Elfrank-Dana wrote the M.B. faculty a letter explaining the students' dissatisfaction with the school as a whole. Lewis bathroom ban, he said, precipitated the riot, which "wouldn't have happened if it were not for a resentment brewing in the students." The students know they are receiving a "junk education," Elfrank-Dana added, caused by overcrowding and poor curriculum choices.

Others attribute students' outcry to Lewis, who began enforcing more stringent rules since taking charge this fall in an effort to improve student performance and thwart violence. "The students are not taking well to the principal's style," said Gregory Floyd, president of Teamsters Local 237, the union that represents school safety agents citywide. "They need to have a meeting with the students and hear their side of the story, and from there see what can be done to resolve this."

Last year, students would frequently congregate in Burger King and elsewhere along Fulton Street, becoming rowdy and even assaulting a Southbridge Towers resident on one occasion.

Another M.B. tenth grader, who requested anonymity, said that Lewis is taking the new rules a bit too far. "She'll throw out our breakfast when we come into school," he said, forcing him and his friends to eat at a diner in the mornings.

Zabala said he greatly preferred former principal, Barbara Esmilla, who Lewis replaced in September. "I felt welcome with open arms [by her]," he said.

He and others expected similar treatment when Lewis took

over. "We thought that it was going to be different than it is now," said Zabala.

SAFETY OFFICER IS ASSAULTED

On December 13, the Monday following the riots, school safety agent Jayquon Pickwood, 23, brought a female student who had been injured in a fight to the nurse's office, according to Tania Lamberg, assistant director of communications for Teamsters Local 237. Another female teen walked into

"They think, 'I don't want to be here, I want to party,'"

Tania Lamberg

the nurse's office with her 17-year-old boyfriend, who then waited for her to be evaluated, according to the account. Pickwood, who was accompanied by an N.Y.P.D. enforcement officer at the time, asked the boyfriend to leave the nurse's office. The boyfriend refused and said, "You have to put cuffs on me to leave."

After some back-and-forth, the male took a swing at the N.Y.P.D. officer, missed, and then threw a metal garbage can that hit Pickwood in the forehead. The N.Y.P.D. officer managed to subdue and cuff the perpetrator, who was charged with an assault misdemeanor.

Pickwood ended up with a bruise and minor swelling on his head. He resumed work a day or two later, according to Lamberg's account.

The school safety agents, Lamberg said, are often the ones in jeopardy when trying to break up fights between youths. "The danger is real, and it's daily, even for the teachers," she said.

The youths' restlessness around the holidays, she added, could have contributed to the riot the week before. "They

think, 'I don't want to be here, I want to party,'" Lamberg said. "In that context, the chances are higher that this kind of thing might happen."

Floyd acknowledged that violence in public schools citywide tends to escalate before winter break.

STUDENTS SUBJECT TO METAL DETECTORS

The N.Y.P.D. implemented metal detectors at the school on Monday, December 27 and the Monday before in order to vet students' belongings, according to students and various news reports.

Both times, the M.B. students said their cell phones were confiscated and stored in zip lock bags during the school day. A tenth grade male student who requested anonymity said he had to wait an hour-and-a-half to retrieve his phone from the school auditorium after class let out. "I was annoyed," he said. "I just wanted to go home and do my homework." He and his peers, he said, have been checked more frequently this year than last.

Feinberg said that it is standard procedure for mobile police units to periodically perform unannounced inspections at public schools citywide. She wouldn't comment on whether it was tied to the incidents of the week before, but she did state that the detectors are not permanent fixtures in the school.

As for improving the relationship between students and the administration, so far it appears as if nothing will change.

Principal Lewis did not return calls for comment in press time, but Feinberg said the school safety office "continues to monitor the situation and work with the principal."

Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, noted the difference between a student protest such as the December 9 riot at M.B. and gunfire. "Let's not confuse that with kids bringing weapons into the schools or other serious safety matters, she said.

She cautioned that the recent disturbances at M.B. shouldn't result in harsher disciplinary action by the school's administrators. "The kids who go to that school say that they feel safe," she said. "Let's keep it that way, without undermining their self-respect and dignity."

Healthy discussion about health survey

Continued from page 8

inpatient care elsewhere. However, when it came to emergency department use, the numbers were flipped, with 55 percent of residents in the primary service area seeking treatment at St. Vincent's.

In general, the "Defining the Service Area" report notes, "St. Vincent's was the most preferred hospital for these communities, where it was ranked #1 based upon inpatient and emergency treat-and-release visit utilization."

However, the committee's "Origin of St. Vincent's Patients" report notes that St. Vincent's market share of patients in the entire primary service area was slipping relative to other local hospitals, as residents sought treatment elsewhere: Only 17 percent of patients in the primary service area relied on St. Vincent's for their hospital care, while 71 percent sought care elsewhere.

At the December 6 meeting, Hunter College's Cohen explained that the assessment will also include sit-downs with focus groups and a survey with a "quantitative

analysis." He said the survey could be finished in the next three or four months.

L.I.J.'s Kraut said they will be looking at whether the key issue is "availability of a hospital or the not-close proximity of emergency care" and also, "Where did all the doctors go?" who were serving St. Vincent's.

Yetta Kurland of the Coalition for a New Village Hospital asked the panel if the assessment will conclude that a replacement hospital should be sited at the former St. Vincent's site at 12th St. and Seventh Ave., which is the position backed by the coalition.

"I don't think there's a secret in the resistance to this needs assessment," she stated. Referring to the report's map of the St. Vincent's primary service area and secondary service areas, she said, "As I look at the map with the different colors of green, we're not specifically hearing that the plan is to return health services to the site of St. Vincent's. ... We're not hearing what the goal of the study is. Do we want a full-service hospital in 10 years, or do we want a hospital immediately at the St. Vincent's site?"

Hoyleman responded, "We think you

need the data to make the case for a full-service hospital."

Do we want a full-service hospital in 10 years, or do we want a hospital immediately at the St. Vincent's site?

— Yetta Kurland

Added Campoamor of the former St. Vincent's campus, "We have no power over that site."

The St. Vincent's property is the former hospital's largest asset with which to pay off its \$1 billion debt, which forced it to close for good at the end of April. Last week St. Vincent's received permission from bankruptcy court to have CB Richard Ellis market the property.

According to one health insider, getting a new hospital anywhere in Downtown Manhattan would be a years-long process, and is a daunting prospect in the current fiscal economy.

"We all want a hospital," Campoamor responded to Kurland at the Fulton Houses meeting. "Who's going to fund it?"

Many see politics deeply embedded at the heart of the post-St. Vincent's healthcare debate. Kurland ran against Council Speaker Christine Quinn in the last Council election and came in a close second. The expectation is — with Quinn serving her final four years due to term limits — Kurland is readying for another run for the Council. Hoyleman is also a former Council candidate and is also expected to vie for the third district seat.

"Brad, you put in for the needs assessment," audience member Timothy Lunceford, a Kurland ally, said during his comments at the microphone. "You want to run for mayor in four years — what's up with that?"

Hoyleman, who up to this point has never been mentioned as a mayoral candidate, just shrugged off the accusation.

Feeling good is looking good

Continued from page 5

concept of the machine, which the FDA approved in September of 2009. At the time, Dr. White was still finishing his fellowship in facial plastics with NYU, and was unable to offer his Lower Manhattan patients Ultherapy until September of this year.

"After my fellowship was over, it then took me a while to convince the department to purchase the machine," Dr. White explained. "It's not cheap."

Most patients see an improvement immediately after undergoing treatment, but it takes three months for collagen to fully regenerate. Until then, says Dr. White, the results will gradually keep getting better. Since the device has only been on the market for a little over a year, he cannot say with certainty that the effects will last longer, but believes that results should last up to two years, at which time the patient can return for subsequent "booster" treatments.

Irena Ciccone, 64, a former plastic surgery nurse at Beth Israel, decided to have the procedure done after seeing Dr. White on television, and just hit the three-month mark.

"I saw a significant improvement just a few days later," said Ciccone of the areas that were treated. "Now, I see dramatic changes in the laxity I had around my mandible, my neck, and with my crow's feet."

Patients seem to like the subtlety of the results, which are less dramatic than those achieved with a facelift. Ciccone knows firsthand that nothing can truly take the place of an old-school cosmetic operation, but prefers the "natural-looking" results she walked away with.

"I wanted something subtle, and that's what I got," she explained. "I went right back to work on Monday, and nobody even knew I'd had a procedure done."

While the operation was underway, however, Ciccone was well-aware that she was being "operated on."

As Dr. White puts it, the procedure is not all rainbows and butterflies, and the beauty-is-pain philosophy is something his patients must still ascribe to. Though they leave his office virtually pain-free, most of Dr. White's patients experience moderate discomfort during the



Downtown Express photo by Helaina N. Hovitz

Dr. White shows off the Ulthera System in his NYU Medical Center Trinity Center offices.

actual procedure. He offers them medication to help ease the pain, which patients liken to a needle going in and out of their skin.

The doctor likes to assure his patients that their pain is not in vain, and always stops for a "halftime analysis" so they can see that the treatment has already begun working. Despite the discomfort, most of his patients have already expressed a willingness to return for subsequent "booster" treatments, including Ciccone, who currently works full time as a nurse manager at Beth Israel Medical Center.

"I may do something surgical someday, but I'll go back every couple of years for a while," Ciccone said. "I just don't have the time to take for a surgical procedure."

But a natural anti-aging treatment that works from the inside out does come at a substantial price.

While a face full of Botox will run patients about \$1,200, it is still less than any of the Ulthera treatments offered. Whether it's the full face or several problem areas that are targeted, the cost of Ultherapy ranges anywhere from \$1,500 to \$4,000. Dr. White estimates that even if patients return every two years for subsequent treatments, the cost will still pale in comparison to the average \$25,000 an Upper East Side surgeon rakes in for a traditional facelift.

The best candidates for the procedure are men and women ages 40 to 55 that have begun to see early signs of aging and want to look "refreshed."

"People who are either under 40 or who have more advanced aging aren't going to get the results they're looking for," said Dr. White. "If you have severe sagging or wrinkles, you'd do better with Botox or a surgical facelift."

Dr. White made an exception, however, for Ciccone, and while she is happy with her results, she can see why he is usually more selective.

"They say it's better to get on it right away, when the first signs of aging begin, and I didn't do that," said Ciccone. "I'm sure for somebody younger with more elasticity in their skin, the results would be different."

Dr. White said that the treatment is a great alternative for people who aren't quite ready to go under the knife, as well as those who are poor health candidates for undergoing surgery. The device has been the most popular, however, among female workers down on Wall Street.

"We're seeing more and more evidence of age bias in the workplace these days. Professional women who work on Wall Street have all these years of education under their belt, but they're worried about the younger people who are coming to work in their department," Dr. White

said. "People are starting to think, 'Maybe if I look more vibrant, I might be more marketable,' and a lot of studies have been coming out saying that is indeed the case."

While the Ulthera system may be a purely cosmetic device, Dr. White believes that well-being begins from the inside out. This new technology, he believes, will vastly improve the quality of life of anyone qualified to undergo treatment.

"I don't see patients that come in and say, 'I want to look like Angelina Jolie,'" explained Dr. White. "They come in saying, 'I work really hard, I have a family, and I just want to look refreshed.'"

Dr. White has personally treated over sixty patients, a third of which are men, since he began using the device in September of this year. He estimates that over 10,000 people worldwide have already been treated with the Ulthera system.

This is not the first innovative success for Dr. White, who also worked on the development of a device capable of imaging the skin without taking a surgical biopsy. He now uses the imaging system to plan and personalize each patient's Ulthera treatment.

Dr. White grew up in Ohio, where he later attended medical school. Born with a chest wall deformity that needed four corrective operations, Dr. White viewed his doctor as a mentor, and still speaks of his tireless dedication with the same level of admiration.

"I remember thinking, with all I've been through myself, can you imagine if somebody had a deformity in their face? It's how you meet and greet people, and it's your source of expressing emotion," he recalled. "That's what really drew me to facial plastics, and to working with people who'd been in accidents. I wanted to be able to help."

Hundreds of prospective patients have called the office asking for Ultherapy consultations this month, indicating that looking ten years younger — without looking waxy or over-pulled — is worth a few intense zaps to the face.

Only time will tell, but Dr. White could very well have begun to foster an entire generation of women that are proud to share their age with the world. For those who ascribe to his philosophy that the secret to feeling good is looking good, money may just be able to buy happiness after all.

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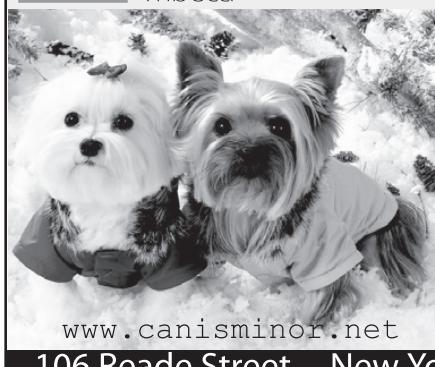
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Hope remains for Zadroga

Continued from page 1

Wednesday.

In an effort to garner G.O.P. support, Gillibrand and Schumer reduced the bill's price tag from \$7.4 billion to \$6.2 billion. The bill's advocates have been trying to secure its passage before January 5, when the makeup of Congress will shift and Republicans will assume the majority in the House.

Gillibrand and Schumer also devised a new way to fund the bill. Rather than relying on the House-approved revenue offsets, the Senate's bill would largely be financed by a two percent excise fee on select foreign companies that sell goods and services to the U.S. government. In addition to subsidizing the bill, the fee would raise roughly \$4.5 billion over the next decade, and create both long- and short-term savings for the U.S., according to Gillibrand's office.

"In the short term, savings will materialize from competitive foreign contracts... foreign countries will be incentivized to sign [the procurement contract] and the U.S. will be incentivized to look to domestic sources to fill procurement needs," Gillibrand said in a statement. She also noted that the new package does not tax American citizens or businesses. The new method of funding, she said, is expected



Downtown Express photo by Terese Loeb Kreuzer

First responders and families of ill and deceased responders at a press conference in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday urging passage of the Zadroga 9/11 Health bill.

to reduce the national deficit by \$57 million over the next decade.

A "Travel Promotion Fee," a fee on foreign travelers journeying to the U.S., would also help finance the revised bill. The fee would be extended from 2015 to 2021, and would supply \$1 billion to 9/11 health services over the next decade,

according to Gillibrand.

The amendments to the law, Gillibrand said, would likely suffice to gain enough Republican support to avoid a filibuster. "I believe we now have more than enough votes to pass this legislation," Gillibrand said in a statement on Sunday, saying she worked "extremely closely" with several

Republicans to amend the bill. Once it reaches the Senate floor for a traditional "up or down" vote, the bill would require 60 votes to pass.

It would then have to return to the House, which would have to vote again on the amended legislation. Gillibrand and Schumer said they were optimistic the House would be called back into session before January 4 if the bill gets through the Senate.

Tuesday's drama in Washington followed a press conference held by Mayor Bloomberg at City Hall on Monday. Bloomberg congratulated Gillibrand and Schumer for brokering changes to the bill, and said he would do whatever he can to secure its passage this week.

"The Senate has a full week ahead of it, and it should not adjourn until it passes this bill," he said. Joining him were New York Representatives Jerrold Nadler, Carolyn Maloney and Peter King, along with Joseph Zadroga, James Zadroga's father.

Responding to Republican opposition, Bloomberg said, "Caring for the men and women who rushed to our defense on that dark day, and in the days that followed, is nothing less than a national duty. America is too great a country to shirk this duty. We are too strong. Too proud. Too patriotic. And this is the week that we have to show it."

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YOUTH ACTIVITIES

SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST AND TUESDAY CHILDREN'S ART CLASSES

Asian American Arts Centre announces their sponsorship of a Children's Art Class program — to be held on Tuesdays after school, from 3pm to 6:30pm. The classes are designed to stimulate a child's creativity by exploring their own artistic originality and cultural background. Children are introduced to the language of visual forms as well as those of Asian art forms. The semester begins Jan. 11. The first class, from 3pm to 4:30pm, is for ages 6 to 9. The second class, from 4:40pm to 6:30pm, is for ages 9 to 14. To register, speak to Jennie Lau at 212-358-9922. Tuition is \$235, and includes all supplies. Classes are held at the Asian American Arts Centre (111 Norfolk St. near Delancey St.) For info, visit www.artspiral.org and www.artasiamerica.org.

POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE'S COPS & KIDS BASKETBALL SEASON

Registration for the Police Athletic League's (PAL) Cops & Kids Program is open through Jan. 10. Manhattan young people, ages 14 to 17, are encouraged to participate in the upcoming winter basketball season. Each year, 825 New York City Police Officers volunteer their time to coach and play basketball, volleyball, soccer, softball and flag football. One of PAL's signature programs, Cops & Kids will help you perfect your half-court shot. To sign up, call 212-477-9450, ext. 389. Visit www.palnyc.org.

KLEZ FOR KIDS Every year on Dec. 25, the Museum at Eldridge Street presents "Klez for Kids" — a high-concept family concert

where kids and families come together to sing, dance, learn Yiddish and re-enact a Shtetl wedding. Clarinetist Greg Wall and his band Klezmerfest lead the audience on a musical tour of Eastern European Jewish culture. The program ends with our sweetly sentimental and incredibly adorable audience-enacted Shtetl wedding, where children take on the roles of bride, groom and wedding guests. "Klez for Kids" is part of the "Lost & Found" music series, which highlights musical legacies that are at risk of disappearing. Sun., Dec. 26, 12:30 2:00pm, at the Eldridge Street Synagogue (12 Eldridge St. btw. Canal and Division Sts.). For tickets (12 for adults, \$8 for children, students, seniors), call 212-219-0888 or visit www.eldridgestreet.org.

MANHATTAN CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Imagination reigns supreme in the productions of this theater company's ninth season — which is dedicated to classic stories and characters (with a twist!). Through Jan. 2, it's the world premiere of Chris Alonzo's "Lula Belle in Search of Santa." Then, in 2011, the season continues with "Little Red Riding Hood," "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and "The Complete Works of the Brothers Grimm (Abridged)." Performances are every Sat. and Sun., 12pm and 2pm. At Manhattan Children's Theatre (52 White St., btw. Broadway & Church Sts. — 2 blocks south of Canal St.). For tickets (\$20 general, \$50 front row), call 212-352-3101 or visit www.theatermania.com. For school, group and birthday party rate info, call 212-226-4085. Visit www.mctny.org.

THE NEW YORK CITY POLICE MUSEUM

The "Junior Officers Discovery Zone" is an exhibit designed for ages 3-10. It's divided into four areas: the Police Academy; the Park and Precinct; the Emergency Services Unit; and a Multi-Purpose Area for programming. Each area has interactive and imaginary play experiences for children to understand the role of Police Officers in our community — by, among other things, driving and taking care of a Police car. For older children, there's a crime scene observation activity that will challenge them to remember relevant parts of city street scenes; a physical challenge similar to those at the Police

Academy; and a model Emergency Services Unit vehicle where children can climb in, use the steering wheel and lights, hear radio calls with Police codes and see some of the actual equipment carried by The Emergency Services Unit. At 100 Old Slip. For info, call 212-480-3100 or visit www.nycpm.org. Hours: Mon. through Sat., 10am to 5pm and Sun., 12pm to 5pm. Admission: \$8 (\$5 for students, seniors and children. Free for children under 2).

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF THE ART Explore painting, collage and sculpture through self-guided arts projects. Open art stations are ongoing throughout the afternoon — giving children the opportunity to experiment with materials such as paint, clay, fabric, paper and found objects. From Dec. 27-30, 10am-4pm, "Claymation with Joe Vena" gives students the opportunity to create their own short films, using stop-motion animation. Regular museum hours: Wed-Sun, 12-5pm; Thurs., 12-6pm (Pay as You Wish, from 4-6pm). Admission: \$10. At the Children's Museum of the Arts (182 Lafayette St. btw. Broome & Grand). Call 212-274-0986 or visit www.cmany.org.



Photo by Onno de Jong

Mark Twain and friends take a fun journey.

MARK TWAIN: A WONDERFULLY FLAT THING

Kids who may not be old enough to read Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" can get to know the quintessential American humorist — and discover the wonders of children's theater — all in one fun, creative experience. "A Wonderfully Flat Thing" is a modern twist on Twain's short story "A Fable." The adaptation finds Twain and his animal friends on a journey of self-discovery and magic. Puppets, dance, music and interactive video are the new tricks that help bring this old writer into the modern age. Manju Shandler, who previously created masks and puppetry for "The Lion King," designed the puppets. Recommended for Ages 3 and Up. Sat., Jan. 8 & 15 at 11:30am, 2:30pm & 5pm and Sun., Jan. 9, 16 at 11:30am & 2:30pm. At The 14th Street Y's newly renovated LABA Theatre (344 E. 14th St. btw. 1st & 2nd Aves.). For tickets (\$15), call 212-780-0800 or visit www.14StreetY.org/AWFT.



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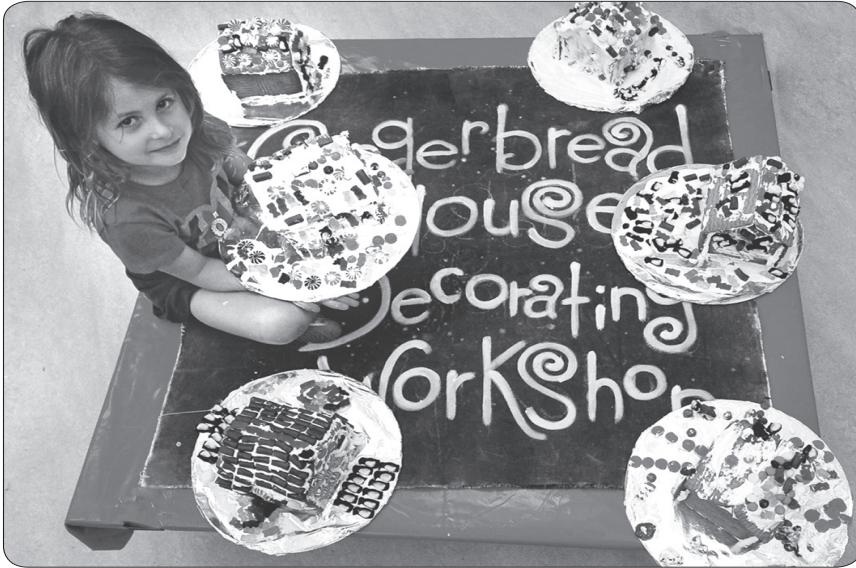
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Mystery writers Chang & Rozan mine Chinatown

Literary sleuths can't escape their past

COMPILED BY SCOTT STIFFLER

As last-minute holiday gifts go, the right book has a way of stuffing a stocking with care — and there's no better way to get that special someone's attention than by giving them something that will keep them guessing long after they've torn through the wrapping paper.

The folks at Partners & Crime Mystery Booksellers have a store full of items that will do just that. This independent bookstore is devoted entirely to mysteries. They feature a complete selection of new titles as well as classics and out-of-print books. Some of the genre's most popular authors visit the store for readings and signings — so keep checking the calendar section of their website for updates (www.crimepays.com).

Co-Owner Kizmin Reeves notes, "We often buy a lot of signed books for the holidays. If it's the newest book by your favorite author, a lot of people really enjoy those." Recently, the store hosted an event featuring three authors whose signed works are now available: James R. Benn, Stuart Neville and Henry Chang.

James R. Benn ("Rag and Bone") writes about a young Boston cop who does military investigations during World War II. Stuart Neville's "The Ghosts of Belfast" is a sequel to one the staff's favorite books ("Collusion"). It examines the lingering and dangerous effects of what Reeves calls "armed redemption...In each of the books, there's someone who's been so strongly affected by things that happened during the active times of the IRA, that they take up arts to settle some old scores."

The third author at that signing event was native son of Chinatown, Henry Chang. His most recent work, "Red Jade," is the third in the author's "Chinatown Trilogy." The first is "Chinatown Beat" and the second is "Year of the Dog." For more info, visit www.chinatowntrilogy.com.

Reeves says much of the trilogy's success has to do with Detective Jack Yu's efforts to balance the demands of work and family: "His protagonist grows up in Chinatown, becomes a cop and then gets sent back to Chinatown because he's got the cultural insights. Then he has to deal with his old neighborhood, his parents, and his family — who are on both sides of the law. As he progresses in his career, he always finds himself assigned to crimes that look like they

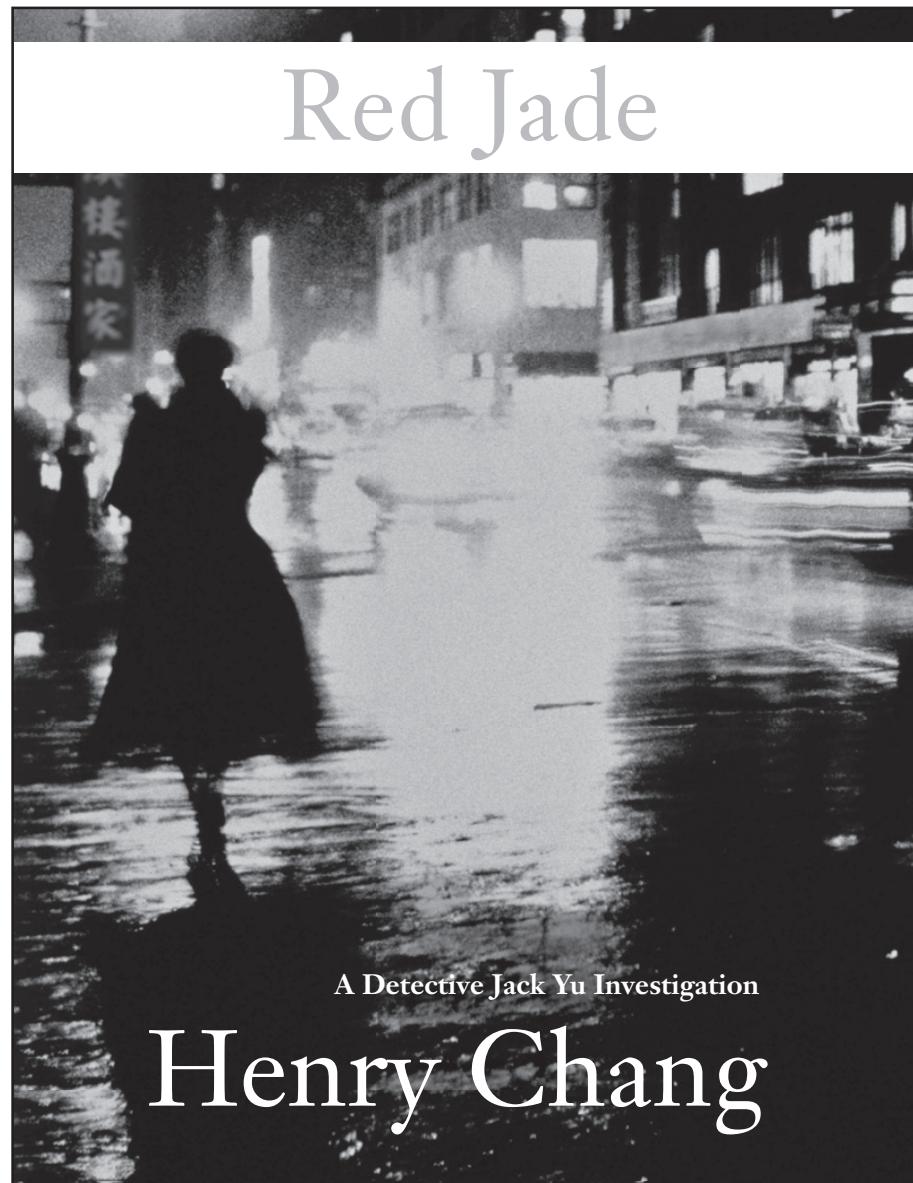


Image courtesy of Soho Crime

Henry Chang's "Red Jade" — When two bodies are discovered in Chinatown, Detective Jack Yu is once again confronted with organized, international Chinese crime.

have Chinese perpetrators. So wherever he's stationed, he catches the things that take him back to his roots."

That universal struggle to define one's self, only to find the answers at the very place you've been trying to escape from, is what gives the

trilogy its crossover appeal. For the hardcore mystery enthusiast, the depth of Detective Yu and those who cross his path are what makes the Chinatown Trilogy unique. Reeves: "There are a lot of genre detectives who remain fairly two-dimensional. But Chang's characters have more shadings, more nuances. You don't just see the mystery. You see how it came about, and how people found themselves in the situation — so you get a more sympathetic view."

If you want to shop local, in every sense of the word, S.J. Rozan's "On the Line" will also be of interest. The author, a Village resident, has a series based on a unique investigative partnership. Reeves: "Her Bill Smith-Lydia Chin mysteries are some of the top customer

That universal struggle to define one's self, only to find the answers at the very place you've been trying to escape from, is what gives the trilogy its crossover appeal.

favorites in the store. The books are told in alternating points of view per book, because the partnership is a young Chinese woman from Chinatown and a middle-aged tough guy from the Bronx." Part of the author's enduring appeal, Reeves says, comes from the fact that, well, you always learn new facts: "Not that's it's educational per se, but a lot of knowledge gets brought in — whether it's from S.J.'s own architecture and construction background or the history of an immigrant family. For more info, www.sjrozan.com.

Partners & Crime Mystery Booksellers is located at 44 Greenwich Ave. (btw. Sixth & Seventh Aves. at the foot of Charles St.). Visit www.crimepays.com or call 212-243-0440.

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The noted architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable writing of Federal houses in her book *Classic New York*, notes, "Their value is... a sudden sense of intimacy scale... evocative of another century and way of life."

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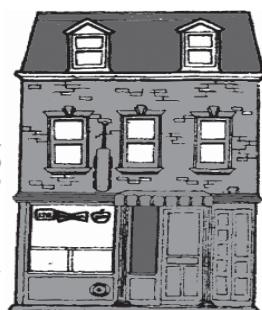
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Galleries on break, but still much to see

Museums offer 'a full spectrum of excellent exhibitions.'

BY STEPHANIE BUHMAN

With the holidays upon us, New York galleries are taking a brief break. While most commercial art venues will be closed for a two-week period surrounding New Year's Eve, the city's museums remain open — offering a full spectrum of excellent exhibitions.

Through January 2, The Morgan Library & Museum (www.themorgan.org, 225 Madison Ave., St.) will present **Roy Lichtenstein's black and white drawings from the 1960s**. While Lichtenstein's paintings (inspired by commercial illustrations and comic strips rendered in highly saturated hues) are most prominent, his preparatory drawings, sketches and collages remain little-known. Curated by Isabel Dervaux, this exhibition makes the latter group its sole focus and succeeds in tracing Lichtenstein's exploration of drawing as an expressive medium. Most of the 55 works on view were created during the early and mid-1960s.

By then, Lichtenstein was in his late thirties and had already exhibited regularly for a decade. He was a mid-career artist working within the context of Abstract Expressionism and Cubism, still searching for a unique voice to describe his own time. After encountering the works of Allan Kaprow and Claes Oldenburg (who incor-

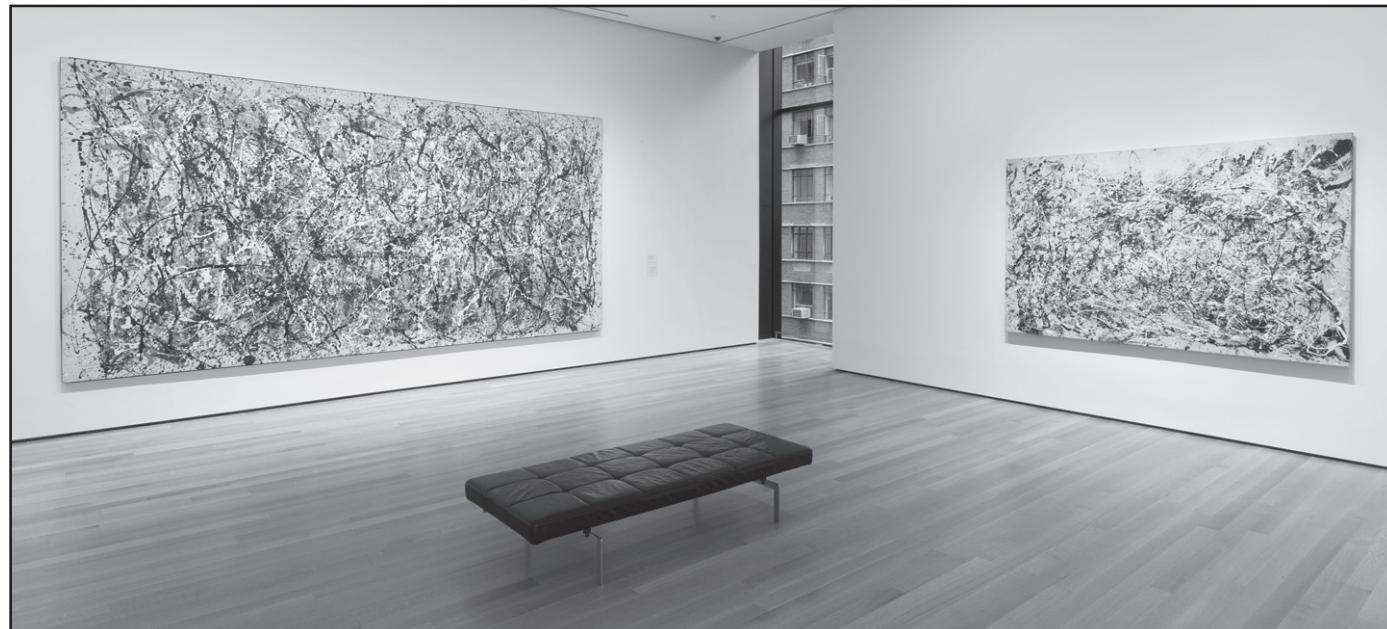


Photo by Jason Mandella, courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art, NY.

Installation view of "Abstract Expressionist New York: The Big Picture" — at MoMa.

porated everyday objects and cited popular culture in their works), Lichtenstein began to look in a similar direction — and soon developed an interest in advertisement campaigns and comic books. The composi-

tions on display reveal the concentrated editorial process as well as his focus on line. Contextualized with clippings from newspapers, magazines and telephone books, the black and white works reveal the extent

of Lichtenstein's self-imposed challenge to create what critic Lawrence Alloway once described as "an original artwork pretending

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Museums offer excellent exhibitions

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to be a copy."

The one art movement that carries this city's name is Abstract Expressionism — also known as The New York School. The institution that supported it early, and subsequently helped to make many of its members famous, is the Museum of Modern Art (11 W. 53rd St. btw. Fifth & Sixth Aves.). It seems appropriate that at the end of the first decade of the new millennium, MoMA (www.moma.org) pays homage to its heritage, hosting "Abstract Expressionist New York." On view through April 25, the exhibit draws exclusively from its own collection. Spanning various floors and involving the drawing, print and film departments, the exhibition's most significant display can be found on the fourth floor. Subtitled "The Big Picture," the installation is comprised of 100 paintings and about 60 sculptures, drawings and prints. Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman are represented here with multiple works. In addition, artists who have almost vanished into obscurity (such as Hedda Sterne) or who have only recently been rediscovered (such as Norman Lewis) are represented with one work each.

As it does not include outside loans from other institutions, this survey provides valuable insight into MoMA's collecting politics — revealing whose work the curators judged to be of greatest importance at the time and aimed to acquire in depth. Of course there are omissions (one of the more obvious being the talented Giorgio Cavallon).

The best aspect of this exhibition is that it provides a chance to study MoMA-owned works usually buried deep in storage, including several works by Richard Pousette-Dart, early work by Pollock, canvases by Lee Krasner, immense sculptures by David Smith, monumental compositions by Franz Kline, or an odd little drip painting by Hans Hofmann.

Organized by the independent curator Amy Wolf, "On Becoming an Artist: Isamu Noguchi and his Contemporaries, 1922-1960" provides valuable insight into the complexity of the acclaimed sculptor's oeuvre (The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum;



Image courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American

Inuit amauti or tuilli (woman's parka) — Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut, Canada (ca. 1890-1925). See "Infinity of Nations."

www.noguchi.org; 9-01 33rd Road at Vernon Boulevard, Long Island City).

On view through April 24, the exhibition (which happens to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the museum) investigates

Noguchi's most potent artistic relationships. These are as multi-faceted as Noguchi's oeuvre — which besides sculptures also entails garden, furniture, set and lighting designs, ceramics and architectural projects. In 1937,

he designed a Bakelite intercom for the Zenith Radio Corporation, for example — and his glass-topped table, produced by Herman Miller in 1947, is still being produced today. Among the illustrious group of artists, performers, choreographers, composers, designers and architects who shaped Noguchi's world, the most famous names include Arshile Gorky, Alexander Calder, Berenice Abbott, Frida Kahlo and Merce Cunningham. Noguchi's creative dialogue with others occasionally resulted in collaborations, including an unrealized project with the architect Louis Kahn.

The exhibition sheds light on Noguchi's formative years in 1920s Paris. That's when, and where, Noguchi worked for the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi — who had a profound impact on him. Inspired by Brancusi's reductive forms that exuded both a sense of purity and sensuality, Noguchi began to embrace a form of abstract modernism that allowed for emotional expressiveness and mystery. Informed by extensive travels throughout Europe, Asia and Latin America, Noguchi in later years applied this vocabulary to a wide range of materials. This show makes a point of featuring works made of stainless steel, marble, balsawood, bronze and ceramic.

For those interested in Native art from North, Central and South America, "Infinity of Nations" at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian offers the perfect opportunity (www.nmai.si.edu). At the George Gustav Heye Center, One Bowling Green). "Infinity" is a permanent exhibition which debuted this past October after much anticipation. It consists of no less than 700 works — all organized by geographic regions.

Five years in the making, the show opens with a rather dramatic display of strength by featuring a rare macaw-and-heron-feather ceremonial headdress. Other objects include an Apsáalooke (Crow) robe illustrated with warriors' exploits; a detailed Mayan limestone bas-relief depicting a ball player; and an elaborately beaded Inuit tuilli (a woman's inner parka) made for the mother of a newborn baby. The show manifests as a discourse in the vibrancy of Native American culture — and is further proof of how diverse New York's cultural resources truly are.

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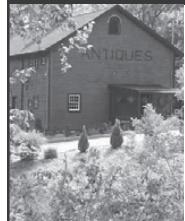
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FAYE LANE'S BEAUTY SHOP STORIES

Faye Lane's not just the gal who had the hottest, sweetest, funniest, award-winning show in this year's FringeNYC festival — she's also a 20-year resident of the Chelsea Hotel and has the secret to containing the common cold. The medicinal advice she gave during an interview following our recent viewing of her current show cut our usual sniffle/sneeze downtime in half. But that's not why she's at the top of this week's A&E picks. Lane's encore run of that FringeNYC hit ("Beauty Shop Stories") is a perfect early evening activity for those who want to show their out of town guests why Broadway regularly scopes, steals from and sometimes makes a star out of solo performers playing to intimate Off-Off Broadway houses.

As for what you get when the show starts: Lane takes you on a journey of discovery that starts on the porch of her mom's Texas beauty salon, makes an unexpected detour in Paris, and ends up right here in NYC — where she fulfills her sober childhood vow to become a stewardess by day and an entertainer by night. Finding out how the dreams of a chubby outcast were achieved by the charming dish you see on the stage is what gives this solo performance its angel wings. Plus, it's really funny — and cute bartender Byron makes a killer drink (the Moon Pie Martini) that's as sweet and easy to digest as Lane's life story. An added bonus: Cozy up to Faye after the show, and she'll tell you the name of that highly effective cold & flu medication.

Sundays at 5pm, through Jan. 9. At the Huron Club at the SoHo Playhouse (15 Vandam St. btw. Sixth Ave. & Varick St.). For tickets (\$25), visit www.ovationtix.com or call 866-811-4111. For all things Faye, visit www.beautyshopstories.com.

A SWINGING BIRDLAND CHRISTMAS

Our one complaint about the raucous Monday night Birdland jazz club destination event that is "Jim Caruso's Cast Party" — a little too much cast, and not enough Caruso. As emcee of the cabaret-themed open mic happening, Caruso shamelessly plugs the work of others while mugging between acts — but we're looking forward to "A Swinging Birdland Christmas" because it features a mere three others on the bill. And as "others" go, Caruso's trio of pals are no slouches (Hilary Kole, Billy Stritch and Aaron Weinstein). In the tradition of beloved seasonal specials, these four jazzy showstoppers will perform swinging arrangements of "Christmas Waltz," "I'll Be Home For Christmas," Kay Thompson's "The Holiday Season" and "Sleigh Ride" (among other favorites). With Paul Gill on bass and Tony Tedesco on drums. If you've not had your stocking's fill of Caruso, would it kill you to visit www.jim-caruso.com? By the way, the CD "Jim Caruso: Live and In Person" features Billy Stritch on piano and makes a nice alternative to that plate of cookies you



Photo by Bill Westmoreland

Ready to deck you in the halls: "A Swinging Birdland Christmas."



Photo by Jim Baldassare

Our solar system's days are numbered: "Baby Universe."



Faye Lane (be)dazzles in "Beauty Shop Stories."

think Santa is so fond of.

"A Swinging Birdland Christmas" is performed nightly through Dec. 25, 6pm, at Birdland (315 W. 44th St.). Cover: \$30, with \$10 food/drink minimum. Call 212-581-3080 or visit www.BirdlandJazz.com.

CHRISTMAS COMES TO OLD NEW YORK: MERCHANT'S HOUSE MUSEUM

Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear — and, along the way, find out how some of our most cherished Christmas traditions (trees, turkey dinners, caroling and Santa Claus) came to be. "Christmas Comes to Old New York" is a Merchant's House Museum exhibit documenting how certain events (as well as books and articles published during the first half of the 19th century) helped to popularize the Christmas customs we still observe.

See a table-top Christmas tree (the first trees were sold in NYC markets in 1851) decorated with handmade paper ornaments, berries, ribbons, and "real" candles; stroll through parlors and hallways hung with lush greenery, including poinsettias (introduced to American in the 1820s by Minister to Mexico Joel Poinsett); listen to Christmas songs and carols recorded on the Museum's original 1848 rosewood piano; and visit the kitchen, where preparations are under way for holiday entertaining.

This special exhibition is included with regular museum admission (10, \$5 for students & seniors. Free for children under 12 and Merchant's House Museum members). Through Jan. 10, 2011 — at the Merchant's House Museum (29 E. Fourth St. btw. Lafayette & Bowery). For dates, times and reservations, Call 212-777-1089 or visit www.merchantshouse.org.

BABY UNIVERSE

Here's a sober thought for all you sunny optimists among us: It may take a few billion years, but eventually the sun will do a number on the earth and the planets — and our solar system will be no more. It's no wonder, then, that our own looming destruction inspires humankind to spin tales of salvation in the face of hopelessness and desperation. "Baby Universe" explores the unavoidable repercussions of the way we live today — with the help of over 30 puppets ranging from 9 inches to 9 feet, masks, a Stephen Hawking-inspired robot, animated video projection and a space-age score. It may not help you sleep at night, but it'll at least give you something to think about.

Note: This production is appropriate for those 7 years of age and older, but it should also be noted that this is not a children's show — it's a theatre piece with puppets. At the Baruch Performing Arts Center (5 Lexington Ave. Enter on 25th St. just east of Lexington). Through Sun., Jan. 9. For specific performance times, and to purchase tickets (\$30, \$20 for students/seniors), call 212-352-3101 or visit www.theatermania.com.

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