



Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association

# action news

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**Thursday, January 7, 2016, 8:00 pm**

## *Community Meeting*

**Next Meeting: March 3, 2016 at 8:00pm**

*Refreshments will be served*

### **The Gavel - Juan Zubizarreta, Pres.**

Hello Bellerose.

Another year has come to a close and we welcome 2016. The BCCA has made some strides in the past year. We celebrated our eightieth anniversary and had a great luncheon with members and residents to honor the occasion. Imagine, our civic has been serving our neighborhood for more years than most of us have been alive! It is truly an honor to represent our wonderful Bellerose. The BCCA has active board members that combined have decades of civic experience and bring that knowledge to help our neighborhood. We are grateful to have them participate. If you have not had a chance to visit our website, [www.bccaqueens.org](http://www.bccaqueens.org), please do so. We have some two-hundred and fifty BCCA Action Newsletters dating back to the 1970's as well as our latest newsletter!

Not to mention many vintage news articles and pictures of Bellerose. Our website has a blog, news, pictures, information, alerts and history of Bellerose. We post issues and information timely so that our members can stay informed. This past year our civic joined with neighboring civics to fight two important battles. One was against the ICCC building large buildings on the Creedmoor property and the other was against the building of a juvenile jail on Jamaica Avenue in Queens Village that was literally right next door to private homes. The fight against the juvenile jail was gratefully won and the state declined on moving forward with its plans of building it. The ICCC battle while not totally won we were able to scale back the size and scope of the proposed project. That fight is on-going. As always we will stay on top of the issues that effect our area and take action when necessary while keeping you informed. We hope to have many more residents join our civic and attend our meetings. The more persons get involved the better our neighborhood will be. Please join us at our next meeting and bring a neighbor or two with you!

On behalf of the Officers and Directors of the BCCA, we hope that 2016 will be a happy, healthy and successful year for all our members and neighbors!

Thanks,

Juan Zubizarreta, President

### **Bellerose Playground**

As you know, BCCA began pushing over the past two years to get the playground at PS133 a major upgrade. We've had some success getting funding for a reading garden on the 249th Street side and there is additional funding for the ball field area. At a meeting last month with principal Sheridan and the Parks Department, we learned that drainage pipes under the yard are completely deteriorated. The funding in place is not nearly enough to excavate and replace the pipes and do anything to improve the playground. In addition, it seems any improvement will likely involve relocation the high fences within the playground, at great additional expense.

Councilman Barry Grodenchik came to BCCA's 80th Anniversary Luncheon and vowed to help the community address this "sad looking park." He promised to follow this very closely and keep us posted. We have support from various leaders but we need a lot of budget to get this done.

BCCA will be looking for funding with PS133 from various city and state programs. We are also reaching out for assistance developing a good "needs statement" to make sure we get a modern, useful, optimal park.

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## News from Community Board 13Q & 105th Precinct

**105th Precinct**—After a recommendation by members of Community Board 13, parts of 222nd Street in front of the 105th Precinct in Queens Village were recently co-named for Detective Brian Moore. Det. Moore was killed in the line of duty about seven months ago. Police, city officials and community leaders lined 222nd street as Brian was remembered by his father and police officials.

The 105 sent out a reminder to car owners that there have been several cases of wheels and rims being stolen right off cars, all four wheels, and even in driveways. Cars are usually late model cars, particularly Acuras and Accords. One person had all four wheels stolen overnight from a brand new Mercedes Benz right from her driveway.

**Community Board 13**—At its December meeting, CB13 heard a presentation by the NYC Department of Environmental Protection urging people to not put household greases and cooking oils down their home drains. Over the decades there has been a buildup of greases in city sewer systems that causes backups into homes and requires expensive repairs and mitigation. This damage can also affect your household drains and requiring expensive repairs. DEP will be going to city schools and local organizations to distribute information and urge people not to dump the grease. DEP suggested using some container you are throwing out for your cooking grease and put it in regular garbage.

**TWA Flight Center Hotel**—Community Board 13 voted on a new hotel on JFK Airport. While there is nothing new about hotels near an airport, this one will be completely unique. The new hotel will be centered in the historic Eero Saarinen TWA terminal near the new JetBlue terminal (Terminal 5). The building has been vacant for over a decade, but is a gorgeous, flowing concrete structure. The building will be restored to exactly how it looked in 1962 and will be flanked by two new five story hotel buildings with 250 rooms each, one with a roof top observation deck. The Saarinen building will house the original lounges, bars, great restaurants and feature restored original countdown boards and add a huge catering hall. Construction will start by next summer and be complete by summer 2018. Hiring will be local. The hotel will be marketed to locals for a great night out or an early flight.

## Girl Scouting Update and Recruiting

Local Girl Scouts working on their bronze award completed a very successful coat drive in conjunction with P.S. 133. Several huge boxes of coats of all sizes were delivered to New York Cares for distribution to homeless and needy individuals. The troops also completed a toy drive to go to a Queens homeless shelter.

Bellerose has at least twelve troops meeting at various days of the week after school, in either Holy Trinity or in Our Lady of Snows. Ages are from kindergarten through senior year of high school. After graduation some girls come back as assistant leaders to help out and continue their learning.

The girls' activities usually include community service, STEM programs, badge work, leadership qualities, diversity, scholarship, career preparation and trips. Leadership skills and social interaction are critical components. Advanced scouts can participate in bronze, silver and gold awards. The award requirements increase in complexity and intensity up to the gold award and they prepare young ladies for college and careers. The awards are looked favorably upon in college application.

Applications are being accepted now. For information call Mary Ann at 917-865-9268 or email [girlscout9103@gmail.com](mailto:girlscout9103@gmail.com)

*Girl Scout Toy Drive—Troops  
9103, 4383 and 4675*



## Governor's Plan For Homeless Shelter in Creedmoor

*The following was adapted and updated from an email blast sent Dec. 22.*

You may have read in the Post and the Daily News or a local Queens paper recently that Governor Cuomo is preparing a plan to use the Creedmoor Psychiatric Center Campus to house homeless people to help resolve the City's increasing homelessness problem.

Your civic association became aware of the Post article and immediately reached out to our elected officials to find out what's going on and to register our extreme opposition to homeless shelters on Creedmoor due to our significant history at the facility. Our neighboring civics have also been reaching out. The civics are working together to make sure our area remains peaceful and safe and our quality of life is intact.

Our new Councilman Barry Grodenchik contacted the governor's office and was told it was 99% NOT going to happen. Former Councilman Mark Weprin, who now works for the governor, was told it was a totally false rumor. Community Board Chair Bryan Block also contacted the governor's office over the weekend and was told it was not true. I contacted the deputy borough president and they are working on plans for re-use of underutilized parts of the campus and nothing like a homeless shelter is under discussion. In the last week, our State Senator, Tony Avella, has reported his discussions with the governor's office and the shelter idea is "completely dead."

We know the Bellerose community empathizes with the growing population of homeless men, women and children around the city who have no place to go. But our community has dealt with Creedmoor Psychiatric Center for all these decades and we will not allow our area to be dumped on. We think the swift response by our elected officials has sent a strong message to the governor and Empire State Development that only community-friendly development will be accepted on the Creedmoor campus.

By way of history, the Creedmoor population was reduced in the 1970's from 7,000 to about 600 residents now. Most of the remaining population is seriously mentally ill and are secured in the tall building (Building 40) opposite Alley Pond park. On Thanksgiving Eve around 1984 Mayor Koch decided to send busloads of homeless men to create a homeless shelter in Creedmoor. Problems started immediately with people roaming the area day and night, causing crime and fear. Community members objected about the situation to Senator Padavan. Padavan scheduled a meeting with Governor Cuomo and invited some civic leaders. As a result the shelter was closed and replaced with a controlled 169 bed, long-term residence for mentally ill homeless men and women. It was initially called Rose House, operated by Catholic Charities, and later called Milestone House, operated by Institute for Community Living. Community leaders were closely involved with the operation of both centers and served on their advisory boards. Community residents were invited to annual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremonies and summer picnics with rides and entertainment. ICL closed about two years ago due to the deteriorating building condition and it remains vacant. The state has been studying ways to reuse nearly 50 acres on Hillside Avenue and we expect a plan, not including homeless shelters to be unveiled soon. We will keep Bellerose residents posted.

**BCCA Officers:**

Juan Zubizarreta, President  
 Lourdes Villanueva Hartrick, Vice Pres.  
 Ruth Mezistrano, Recording Secretary  
 Richard Hellenbrecht, Corr. Sec'y /  
 Treasurer

**Directors:**

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Elect Dec. 2017</u> | <u>Elect Dec. 2016</u> |
| Lorraine Anzalone      | James Delaney          |
| John Reh               | Gulen Zubizarreta      |
| Bill Turis             | Van DaSilva            |
| George Wolf            | Michael Weisbord       |
| Ron DeMaria            |                        |

Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Assn.  
 P.O. Box 260225  
 Bellerose, NY 11426

### Bellerose Briefs

**Snow Removal—**

With the mild winter so far, it might seem like we will not have snow this winter, but we all know its coming. We would like to remind all our neighbors that it is critical to clean up the snow on your sidewalks no later than four hours after the snowfall ends, or if it ends overnight, between 9PM and 7am, no later than 11am the following morning.

Last year we had several very heavy storms and snow on the ground seemed to last forever. If you don't remove an accumulation of snow soon. If left, snow will get trampled and become even more slippery and harder to remove. Be sure to cut a path at least wide enough for people to pass one another.