



Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association

action news

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Volume 39 Number 8

1935

78 Years

2013

November 2013

Thursday, November 7, 2013, 8:00 pm

Community Evening

Refreshments will be served, Raffles, 50-50 Drawing

Holy Trinity Church Basement, Corner 87th Avenue and Commonwealth Blvd.

Next Meeting: December 5, 2013 at 8:00pm

Raffles and 50/50 at BCCA Meetings

New Website Address: www.bccaqueens.org Try it.

The Gavel

Hello Bellerose,

We had an excellent turnout at our October meeting to hear from both of the Borough President nominees. Melinda Katz, democratic nominee presented first and spoke of her experience in twenty years in the State Assembly, City Council and as Deputy Borough President. Republican nominee Tony Arcabasio came to us directly from the Queens Village Republican Club dinner at which he was honored. Tony spoke of his years in technology management at LIJ hospital and his interest to represent the people of Queens. We had an unusual late night, ending after 10pm.

BCCA Dues

Please note that inside this Action News is a Self addressed envelope for returning your dues for 2014. For several years we have provided you with your dues history, but that convenience has proven too costly and in order to keep our dues at \$7 for the foreseeable future we have decided to use this procedure.

As you can imagine the cost of postage alone to 1,200 families is quite prohibitive, not to mention the cost of the outside and return envelopes and printing individual letters. We hope you will understand and cooperate with our new process. If you need to know your recent dues history please send an email to info@bccaqueens.org and we will return it to you.

We request that you return your dues between now

and March 2014 so we can close our roster in April. Thank you for your continued cooperation and participation in BCCA.

Toy Drive in Bellerose

We are having a Toy Drive this year to benefit children living in shelters.

We have donated toys in the past to the shelter in Far Rockaway. The toys will be collected at 87-05 253 Street, my house, since PS 133 already has a toy drive of their own. I will have a box in front. The toys should be unwrapped and should not exceed \$15. The kids ages range from newborn to 15 years old.

You can also bring toys to our December 5th meeting. If you want someone to pick up the toy at your home please call 646-752-1323 and it will be picked up. We will be collecting from November 11 to December 16th.

Happy Giving!

Thank you for your generosity!

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Water and Sewer Tax Exempt

BCCA members will recall that New York City's Department of Environmental Protection introduced a new program last winter to provide a protection program for homeowner's responsibilities if sewer or water connections should fail outside of your home. Some may not realize that repairs of water and sewer mains between the house and mid-street connections are your responsibility and can cost from \$5,000 to \$20,000 to repair.

Queens civic associations, including the BCCA, hailed the new protection program, with a monthly fee of up to \$14 (for both), but we immediately objected to the included sales tax in the fee. The program is basically an insurance program and insurance premiums normally do not incur taxes. In early October the State senate and assembly passed a bill to remove this unfair tax and it was signed by the governor, eliminating the tax. We have heard from several homeowners that they recently received their water bill including the sales tax.

BCCA has contacted the DEP to ask whether to pay the tax. DEP's legal department is currently researching the law to determine when it takes effect. DEP's best advice was to pay the tax as billed and get a refund later if applicable. BCCA will invite a representative of DEP to a future meeting to discuss the water/sewer protection plan and other DEP issues.

P-Tech at Martin Van Buren?

There is a battle going on whether Martin Van Buren should remain as an independent NYC public high school or become co-located with a Pathways To Technology, or P-Tech school. Last week President Obama visited a P-Tech school in Brooklyn, so most people now know what it is. The P-Tech at MVB would be sponsored by international technology firm, SAP and result in secondary school graduation plus an associates degree.

A while ago BCCA and other civics requested neighbors to protest a planned co-location because a co-location would reduce MVB's student body and thus the financial resources destined for MVB. We reported that principal Sam Sochet had done a lot of work bringing discipline, better education and vocational opportunities to the school and we were concerned a co-location would create contention for funds and use of common facilities in the school. It would offset many of the physical and educational improvements Mr. Sochet was trying to implement at the school.

The P-Tech announcement brought mixed reactions from the local civics. Civic leaders now think the best possibility to make Martin Van Buren an attractive and successful school for our neighborhoods' teenagers is to bring in the P-Tech. Senator Avella and Councilman Mark Weprin heeded our call to oppose the P-Tech months ago and now are committed to opposing it. Time will tell where this will end up, but we'd love to hear your input on November 7.

BELLEROSE LIBRARY TO CLOSE FOR RENOVATION

Thomas Galante, C.E.O. of the Queens Library system, has advised us that the renovation of the Bellerose Branch will begin around October 28th. This will necessitate the closing of the library for six months or more.

Your civic has been asking for improvements at the library for several years. At a meeting set up with BCCA reps at Senator Tony Avella's office about two years ago, Mr. Galante acknowledged that three of the library's four exterior walls had structural damage and he agreed work was needed on the library.

Earlier flooding due to a leaky roof had been repaired, but the library, built in the early 1970s, has long been in need of renovation. Queens Library often depends on funding from legislators for construction projects. Galante promised to add money from the Library budget on a renovation of our library.

Many of the Queens Library's branches, such as Glen Oaks (now 17,000 sq. ft.; cost- \$18 million), have been replaced with beautiful, modern facilities. Bellerose Branch, with funding from Senator Avella, Councilman Mark Weprin, Assembly Member Barbara Clark, and from the Queens Library, will be renovated, with more public computers, fast RFID self-check out and 24/7 self-check in. The refurbishing of the 7,500 sq. ft. Bellerose Library, which will cost over \$1 million, but will not increase its size.

Some of our members may recall demonstrating outside the library in the 1970s. The new building lay vacant and its opening was delayed for years because of funding problems. With pressure from Bellerose civic associations, the library finally opened on February 27, 1978.

A mobile library will be at the same location each Thursday from 8:30am to 5pm during renovations.

BCCA Officers:

Lourdes Villanueva Hartrick, President
Manzoor Patoli, Vice President
Ruth Mezistrano, Recording Secretary
Richard Hellenbrecht, Corr. Sec'y /
Treasurer

Directors:

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Michael Weisbord	George Wolf

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

BCCA Introduces Social Media! - New Web Address

Social Media Comes To The BCCA!

Social media has become an integral part of society. It started in some form or another in the nineteen seventies and today just about everyone uses social media. From individuals to big corporations. From the young to the older. From the Pope to the President of the United States! Social media is everywhere. There are BLOGS, there is TWITTER where people can "TWEET." Yes you read that right, "TWEET" (send a message) and of course FACEBOOK. Everyone stays connected through social media these days. It is a vehicle to get information out to a large amount of people almost instantly and therefore keeping them connected and aware. Therefore, the natural progression of our civic should be do join in with this connectivity of people, and we have.

We are happy to announce that in addition to our monthly newsletter and email blasts that Richard Hellenbrecht kindly sends out, the Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association has now joined this social media revolution! At our June meeting we announced that our Civic had a new website found at www.bccaqueens.org. We are now announcing that the website also has a BLOG which anyone can subscribe to and get daily email alerts of any information posted on the blog. We are also happy to announce that the BCCA is now on Facebook and Twitter. Our Facebook page can be found at www.facebook.com/BCCAQueens and our Twitter page can be found at www.twitter.com/bccanyc. Both of these sites can be accessed through our website as well.

We hope that all BCCA members and indeed all members of our community are able to link into the BCCA through the social media of their choice. Through these forms of media you can post your comments on ideas put out by our civic and hopefully get dialogue happening on issues that affect our community. These issues can be discussed by all. Members will also be updated of any news or events before the monthly meetings. It is to be hoped that this will help to make our meetings even more successful and productive going forward.

If you are looking to join the social media scene and be a part of this great information sharing within our community but are new to it, just let us know we will be happy to assist you with joining either Facebook or Twitter and showing you how to subscribe to our blog . The process is easy and once you learn a few basics, you too will be a part of the Social Media Revolution. See you on TWITTER!

[ED Note—Our sincere thanks go out to Juan Zubizarreta who designed our new website and conceived and executed this social networking program for BCCA.]

ICCC Zoning Battle

We've discussed many times the proposed Indian Cultural and Community Center towers complex at Creedmoor campus. The lot, near Union Turnpike is zoned for commercial development, which precludes residential construction. Nonetheless ICCC has applied the New York City's Board of Standards and Appeals for a variance to build two nine story residential towers immediately behind one family homes.

Local civics are very concerned about the intrusion on the privacy of numerous homes nearby, but also about the precedent that could be set for the remainder of the huge Creedmoor campus if this development is allowed. There is a chance that the ICCC could prevail at BSA, which would have devastating consequences on safety at the site as well as traffic congestion and loss of our vista. Local civics have gotten together to address this project and protect our quality of life. We have retained an attorney to help fight the project at the BSA. The lawyer is appalled at the size and scope of the project and the potential impact on the community if implemented.

The BCCA Board will be asking the general membership for approval to contribute \$1,000 to the legal fund. This is the same amount contributed by four other surrounding civics and we feel it is most important to fight this fight. We currently have over \$2,000 in the treasury and are beginning our annual membership drive/dues collection. As mentioned elsewhere we are expected to save in excess of this amount by our new dues process.

Please support our effort to preserve the quality of life we have bought into and deserve.

Beautification Day in Bellerose!

November 9th we will be planting the Daffodils given to us by the Parks Dept. The Daffodils have been donated to NYC from a Dutch bulber in remembrance of September 11, 2011. They need to be planted in public spaces. We will gather at the front of Trinity Church at 9:00 am on November 9. Please bring gloves and any other tool you may have for planting. Hope to see you there!

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