



# action news

Volume 27, Issue 2

February, 2001

## Next Meeting

No February Meeting

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March 1 Meeting is on Buying and Using a Computer for First Timers

We meet the first Thursday of each month at the House of Hope Church, corner 248th Street and 85th Avenue at 8:00 PM

There will be no February Meeting.  
Next meeting March 1

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Happy New Year

## January Meeting—Barbara Clark

We would like to acknowledge Assemblyperson Barbara Clark for her attendance at last month's induction of officers. After a long trip down from Albany and another local appearance, the assemblywoman spent the whole evening with BCCA members discussing local issues and her recent activities in the Assembly.

I was deeply disappointed at the turnout for this meeting. It was quite embarrassing to see only a few members join our officers. It was also very embarrassing to have spent many hours

judging homes for the decorations contest and preparing individualized, photographic certificates and none of the "winners" came to the meeting.

I most certainly hope that BCCA members decide to participate more in the organization. We work very hard to find important topics and speakers to bring our neighborhood together, raise issues and to be prepared to face problems in the community when they arise.

Please try to send a family member to our meetings as often as possible.

## Buying PCs

Well, maybe we'll try something totally different this month.

Has anyone ever thought about buying a PC for the first time - but you didn't know what you would do with it, what it costs, what to look for? The hardware, software cables and various parts—as well as the investment—can be most intimidating for a new user, but it is possible to reduce the whole thing to some simple concepts and instructions. We hope to do that in the March meeting. I will bring computer equipment ranging from

(Continued on page #2)

## Snow removal by George Wolf

- 1 Last week I walked to the bus and many of the sidewalks were not cleared. Corners didn't
- 2 have a path cut for people to walk across to the street. As we all
- 3 know, the law requires you to clear your walks
- 4 of snow in 4 hours during daylight or the following morning if snow falls at night. Hydrants in front of homes should also be cleared for emergency use—you never know when a fire could make access crucial.

In cases where an elderly person lives alone it would be nice for neighbors to shovel a path to their doors.

You are responsible for your walk. Should someone fall and be injured you can be sued.



## Don't Call me—Ever Become a “Mr. Fixit” for Elderplan

The “Do not call” Registry law will go into effect on April 1. People who do not want to receive telemarketing sales calls should register with the Consumer Protection Board. Telemarketing companies are barred from calling persons who are registered with the Board.

For more information and to register now, write to the Consumer Protection Board, 5 Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 or go to the Internet at [www.consumer.state.ny.us](http://www.consumer.state.ny.us). Be sure to list all phone numbers including fax numbers.

Do your friends call you Mr. Or Mrs. Fixit? Are you handy with a hammer or screwdriver? If so, you can become a volunteer helping seniors who need minor home repairs.

Elderplan is seeking skilled men and women who can provide minor home repairs to Elderplan members. Plumbing, carpentry and minor electrical skills are most needed.

Volunteers are needed to help seniors throughout Queens. For more information on joining the Member to Member team, contact Diana Horowitz at (718) 921-7909.

*Thanks to the Kew Gardens Hills Homeowners Civic Association for these stories.*

## Challenge Your Assessment

Homeowners who wish to challenge the assessed value of their property may do so after February 1. Annual real estate taxes are based on the assessed value of the property, so reducing the assessment of the property will result in lower taxes.

For information and to obtain an application, call the Queens Civic Corporation at 261-8015

## First-time PC Buyers

*(Continued from page 1)*

palmtop to laptop and desktop. I will demonstrate software—at least a word processor and if time permits a spreadsheet and “personal information managers”. We will discuss basics of the internet and email. If this is a success I will go into greater detail in any of these concepts in future meetings.

Please bear in mind that this presentation will be directed toward new and potential users. I will not be discussing intermediate or advanced computer concepts. Anyone interested in advanced topics, please fill out and mail the feedback form with specifics—if I can handle the discussion I will try; if you want to volunteer to lead a discussion, please let me know. Computers have become affordable and easy enough to use by most people. The time is here to check one out.

## BCCA Feedback Form

February 2001

To the B.C.C.A.:

I suggest the following article for action news, issue to pursue or general comment: \_\_\_\_\_

I suggest the following speaker topic: \_\_\_\_\_

I suggest the following newsletter topic: \_\_\_\_\_

B.C.C.A. requests that you leave your \_\_\_\_\_  
name and address \_\_\_\_\_

Address articles/items to: Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 260225  
Bellerose, NY 11426

*action news*

Richard C. Hellenbrecht, Editor

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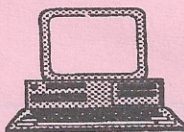
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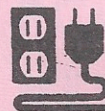
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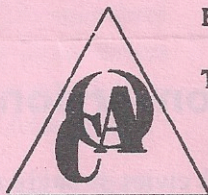
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E-Mail: [editor@bcca-ny.com](mailto:editor@bcca-ny.com)

## Queens Civics Fight Illegal Conversions

I would like to commend two neighbor civic associations: the Creedmoor Civic Association and Rocky Hill Civic Association for their efforts to stop local real estate brokers from illegally selling houses on the basis of potential second income.

Recently Rick Duskewitz and Bernard Aquilino visited an open house to see what brokers were telling prospective buyers about the houses they were selling. In one visit a broker, knowing about the one-family zoning, told Rick and Barney that renting out a basement apartment could offset the monthly mortgage expense. When they asked if the cellar apartment was legal, the agent replied that "the apartment was not legal, but that people in the area don't care."

All of the local civics strongly oppose illegal apartments and ask that homeowners report any suspicious construction, multiple doorbells, extraordinary amounts of garbage, frequent comings and goings, etc. Any apartments in most Bellerose houses are not only illegal, but they also impact the quality of life for the surrounding neighbors and create unsafe living conditions for everyone living in the house. I can not over emphasize the importance of this blight on our area. Nearly every month we write or make calls to seek investigation of some local house. Don't let brokers or buyers think we don't care.

Building Department Central Complaint Center:

**(212) 227-7000**

**[www.bcca-ny.com](http://www.bcca-ny.com)**

Please revisit our website sometime soon. We have made several changes and added a few pages to keep the site up to date and to provide as much useful information as possible to our members and others who might like to visit.

As I've mentioned before, we have had college reports written based on our site and we have received calls from people interested in moving to Bellerose—because of the web site.

See the new site also to get a copy of the New York State cease and desist forms to avoid unwanted real estate solicitations. You will also find photographs of our winning homes decorated for the holidays. There are also some great links to other relevant sites.