



Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association

action news

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76 Years

2011

January 2011

Thursday, January 6, 2011, 8:00 pm

**Guest Speaker: Suzanne Isbell of Relay for Life,
American Cancer Society**

State Senator Tony Avella has been invited

At Holy Trinity Church Basement Corner Commonwealth Blvd and 87th Ave.

No February meeting—Next meeting March 3, 2011

The Gavel

Happy New Year. As we write this, the great holiday blizzard of 2010 is winding down and we are looking forward to the first plow coming down our street. Fortunately, we don't need to get anywhere, but it creates a good opportunity to do the newsletter. We hope everyone had a good holiday season. Let's hope the warming trend forecasted stays around for our January meeting. Please remember that we have NO meeting and no newsletter for February. See you March 3.

We want to thank so many members for promptly sending in their dues checks. We are deeply appreciative of the many additional donations and past dues as well as the occasional notes of appreciation, encouragement or ideas. Over 360 dues checks have been recorded and deposited so far. We are most gratified that more new members have sent in checks for the first time at an address and many members signed up for our email blasts. As time drags on and individual checks straggle in it may take a little longer to get a bunch together, get the equipment out to record and get a deposit, so please send your \$5 checks by March. Incidentally, we

will have to start talking about increasing dues as several neighboring civics have recently. The cost of stamps, envelopes, paper and printing is quickly increasing to a point that we barely cover operating costs.

Inside you will find a report of a meeting called by Community Board 13 and BCCA with residents of 253rd Street and the owners of the Halal Market in mid-December. In addition, we have received and report on the audit by Buildings' Department on the Halal Market.

All the local civic association leaders gathered together with outgoing State Senator Frank Padavan at Nancy's Restaurant in December to thank him for 38 years of exceptional representation. Jim Delaney and Rich Hellenbrecht participated for BCCA and wished Frank well. We hope to welcome new Senator Tony Avella this meeting if his calendar allows, or on March 3rd.

Our guest speaker this month will be Suzanne Isbell of the American Cancer Society. ACS is sponsoring Relay for Life this spring and summer in various Queens parks. In our area at Alley Pond Park on June 11 and 12, 2011. Please come and find out how to be involved in this important event. Senator Tony Avella has been invited and will come if he is not in Albany.

Snow City! Personal Comment by R. Hellenbrecht

Well, its now Tuesday and the snow stopped for over 24 hours but no plow has been down most Bellerose streets. Some primary roads, like Commonwealth Blvd., have been cleared but secondary and tertiary roads are untouched. In addition, New York City buses and subways and Long Island Rail Road are still having big problems getting back to even sporadic service. Its starting to sound like the famous snow storm that brought the mayoralty of John V. Lindsey down on February 6, 1969. A lot has changed in 41 years. We now have unprecedented weather forecasting ability, a mayor with self-acclaimed indispensable management skills and nine years at the helm, and a management team with extensive experience working together. Yet from the beginning we've seen clogged roads, ambulances and buses stuck all over the city, people stranded overnight on the A train and city buses. Its really disappointing right after the storm to watch city executives defensively explaining what was going on, but now after 24 hour coverage we still see no plows and amazingly the mayor is no where to be seen. Let's hope this is not an omen of things to come. The city is fighting a terrible economy and necessarily reducing workers and expenses, but we must not allow austerity budgets to eliminate vital services and responsiveness.

Halal Market

You will recall our November meeting was pretty well dominated by complaints and discussion of the recently opened Halal Market at Hillside Avenue and 253rd Street. It was reported that there were serious impacts on the quality of life of neighbors on 253rd Street, significant traffic problems and dangerous conditions caused by the on-site parking modification made by the new market. In addition, many buildings complaints were made due to enlargements of the building, awnings, parking reconfiguration, and noisy air conditioning equipment installations. As a result the BCCA held a rally on November 13, reported on last month. In addition, Community Board 13 and Councilman Mark Weprin coordinated a multi-agency inspection at the site on November 12; however, results were not known at the November 13th Rally.

On December 16, Community Board 13 Chair Bryan Block and BCCA held a meeting with neighbors on 253rd Street and representatives of the Halal Market. It was a good opportunity to "clear the air" on some of the issues that have been bothering the neighbors and for management to explain what they have done to address the problems.

Here are some of the problems brought up by neighbors: bright lighting 24 hours a day; trucks delivering at all hours of the day and night, sometimes on 253rd Street, often on Hillside Avenue, disrupting traffic and endangering pedestrians, and sometimes leaving blood trails or dropping carcasses on the street and sidewalk; garbage pickups overnight awakening neighbors and leaving droppings in the gutter; outdoors fruit bins further reducing parking; overly noisy air conditioning equipment; patrons parking on 253d Street often blocking private driveways and crosswalk, patrons exiting using the handicapped corner ramp and leaving shopping carts on lawns. Probably the most disturbing reports has to do with Halal employees harassing neighbors and patrons leaving rice and other food products on neighbors' cars. In addition, employee's attitude was identified as a major problem, with one reported to tell a 253rd Street neighbor "You might as well sell your house and move." Also, many people have objected to the Halal Cart in the parking area, which removes a much needed parking space, attracts more traffic and increases refuse.

In their defense, Halal reps stated that they have attempted to address the problems. They hired a parking director to control Hillside Avenue exits and to retrieve shopping carts; removed outside fruit bins (although the weather dictated the removal).

As a result of the meeting the representatives agreed to "look into" taking drivers licenses or other identification to ensure return of shopping carts, look into removing the Halal Cart, lower the wattage of lighting and turn off exterior lighting at 9pm, modify contracts for deliveries to restrict late or overnight deliveries and work with their waste management company to eliminate or reduce overnight pickups and remove outside vegetable bins. Their response was less than convincing, but we will watch. We suggested that they immediately coach employees to respect their neighbors and we asked management to install signs to remind patrons to keep noise and trash down, to exit the parking area carefully and respect the neighbors.

Finally, the Buildings Department has released their audit of plans filed for the store and found eight objections, or issues in which the plans or installations were in violation of existing building code. Examples of the problems include serious safety issues including absence of second means of egress, side yard violations, air conditioning problems, etc. A look at www.nyc.gov/bis for 253-06 Hillside Avenue still shows outstanding violations including unauthorized awnings, lights, removal of Stop Work Order notices from the site, etc.

SNAP—Services Now for Adult Persons, Inc.

SNAP has been in operation since 1980, providing supportive social services for older adults in eastern Queens communities. SNAP has been headquartered at Building 4, Creedmoor Campus for several years. Executive Director Linda Leest has written to express the agency's gratitude to the community for your generosity and support, which has allowed it to expand its services. Unfortunately, in this period of reduced state and local funds, the organizations financial support has been dramatically reduced, just at a time when need for their services is increasing with the advancing age of baby boomers. Community members aged 60 and above are now looking for educational and recreational activities and many support services offered by SNAP, but city and state budget cuts are affecting their budget.

Some statistics of services provided by SNAP are pretty mind-boggling, particularly if funds are not available to continue the services. For example, SNAP provides 67,000 congregate meals and 100,000 home delivered meals. Over 14,000 trips to doctors offices, hospitals and community resources are arranged each year. Loss of these services will seriously affect area senior who may have no alternatives.

SNAP is reaching out to all Bellerose residents for tax deductible contributions in any amount to general expenses, or specific programs as you wish. Please send donations to SNAP, 80-45 Winchester Blvd, Bldg. 4, CBU #29, Queens Village, NY 11427.

Letters with Dues Returns

Several notes have been returned with dues—I'll paraphrase and present some without comment. Please write to rch.brecht@verizon.net if you have any thoughts on these.

Trees—tree roots clog plumbing, costing homeowners to repair. City should remove curb trees.

Remodels and new construction—require these to be similar or compatible to surrounding buildings.

Two- and multi-family permits—require community approval of permits for new ones.

Stops Signs Needed—Recent accidents @ 254 St & 87 Ave demonstrate need for 4 way stop signs.

Shopping patrons in street—Employees of grocery on Hillside @ 251st, bring carts down middle of street causing dangerous situation.

Traffic light 251st Street & Hillside Avenue—Needed for pedestrians and bus patrons.

Shop & Celebrate New Years in Bellerose

We've recently heard that the Bellerose Hardware Store at 247-39 Jericho Turnpike may be closing. As we all know, these are tough times and a start up business is very difficult to get going and ride over the rough spots. I have been to the store many times and always walk out with something useful. Next time you think of driving miles to a big box store for some nuts and bolts, light bulbs, ice melt or shovel, etc. - save the gas and help a neighbor. If you need some lumber or sheetrock, try Marks Lumber at 248-15, grab a coffee at Bellerose Deli or get something stronger at Rollin' Greens—by the way, try dinner at Rollin's—great! Visit our advertisers!

We've just learned that Trattoria Lucia on Jericho Turnpike is hosting not one, but two New Years celebrations at the famous Bellerose site. Seats are available at \$75 each for the New Years Eve party on December 31, with four course dinner, six piece band, dancing, champagne toast, noise makers, etc. In addition, they are offering a New Years Day celebration at 6pm for \$40 with a three course meal, live DJ, hats and noise makers and full recreation of midnight. Sounds like great fun either way.

SHOP AND ENJOY BELLEROSE!!!!



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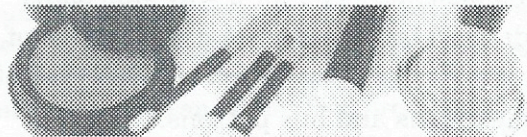
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