



Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association

action news

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75 Years

2010

June 2010

Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association

Thursday June 3, 2010, 8:00 pm

Jon Klar, NYC Council on the Environment Block Captains Appreciation

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

The Gavel

We had a spectacular turn out for last months joint meeting with Queens Colony. The featured speaker, outreach coordinator-Rob Roman, was fantastic. The topic was the New York City Department of Finance. While it sounds hard to make this topic exciting, our speaker added a lot of information that affects most homeowners, veterans and others who pay New York City taxes or have other dealings with the City. Several questions came up and he was able to suggest a resolution right there. Unfortunately, due to space limitations we can not go into great detail about topics like STAR, Enhanced STAR, SCHE and other exemptions and abatements he covered in detail—"you had to be there!" More info is available at nyc.gov/finance. For June we would like to recognize our block captains for their assistance in delivering newsletters and all their other efforts on behalf of the BCCA. We thanks those block captains who will not be able to make it on June 3, those block captains and others who can come, I'm sure there will be a great cake and special refreshments and we'll raffle off an American Flag or two in celebration of Flag Day (June 14—please fly your flags then, Independence Day and Memorial Day).

Our June featured speaker is the Recycling Outreach Coordinator for the Council on the Environment for New York City. Mr. Klar will go into more depth on this subject than did Iggy Terranova in April. Mr. Klar will bring samples of items that may and may not be recycled and give more clarity to this complicated subject so we can all contribute even more to saving the city's environment and reducing trash and disposal costs. Think about your recycling. Bring questions.

The New York City Budget is due by July 1 and we are all waiting to see what New York State does, which could weigh heavily on the city budget. We are all very concerned that our school budgets remain intact and not cut 6,000 teachers or there be any further cuts to police, fire, parks or other city workers. We need all the education, crime and fire fighting and quality of life funds we can get to keep NYC and Bellerose beautiful.

Please see on page three an article by Richard Heltenbrecht with some basic information on the Charter Revision Commission, which will be meeting through the summer.

This is our last newsletter and meeting before the summer. Please have a safe, happy and fun summer. We look forward to seeing you in September.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church www.Holytrinitybellerose.org

Commonwealth Blvd & 87th Ave. Regular Sunday Services at 9:00am and 10:30am.

Regular Sunday services at 9:00 and 10:30 am.

Don't miss Holy Trinity's Huge Garage Sale - Saturday, June 12th at 10 am.

We will have both new and used items for sale. Have your own items to sell? - contact Carol Robinson to rent space! 718-470-1756

or carol.robinson@holytrinitybellerose.org

July 12th - starts 2 weeks of Vacation Bible School - registration has begun

Young at Heart meets the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 12:30 pm. Enjoy lunch and some social time.

Youth Club for Middle and High Schoolers meeting the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 7-9pm No charge - attendees decide on activities which include games, movies, talent events - chaperoned by Diane Gilroy. Questions? call the church or send an e-mail holytrinitybellerose@yahoo.com

Call: 718-347-0278 or visit www.Holytrinitybellerose.org

St. Gregory the Great Festival

St. Gregory the Great's 31st annual Gregorian Festival will be held on the school grounds from June 17th to June 27th. The Festival, a major fundraiser for St. Gregory's School, is a well-anticipated event in the Bellerose neighborhood. There are nightly celebrations highlighting various ethnic foods and entertainment. All of the mouth-watering food is prepared on the premises.

The Festival is a great opportunity for all of us to enjoy music, rides and games for adults and children, delicious food. Most importantly, the Festival is a great time to shake out the winter cob webs and get out and meet old friends and neighbors you haven't seen in a long time.

For the kids there are rides galore and several times during the week there are POP nights (Pay One Price). Adults, be sure to bring some spare change and enjoy the games of chance. There's also music and dancing for all ages and be sure to throw a few baseballs or swing the mallet to win your loved one an oversized doll.

Plan on attending the St. Gregory's Festival to support a worthy cause while enjoying all its festivities. The Festival runs every evening beginning June 17th to June 27th. Please pray for good weather.

Two notes, though: for folks coming in cars, please be careful parking and respect the neighbors' driveways. Often the driveways are not very visible, but they can be active; for all, if you leave the grounds with a cup or plate, please hold them until you get home or to a proper receptacle. Please be mindful of our beautiful town of Bellerose and keep it clean and peaceful.

Memorial Day



At the end of May each year since 1868 our nation has paused to honor the war dead in a holiday first called Decoration Day and more commonly called Memorial Day since the end of World War II. Since 1971, the former May 30 holiday has been commemorated on the last Monday of May each year. This year's Memorial Day is celebrated on May 31. Please reflect and remember the sacrifice of our fellow countrymen and women in all wars past and present and members of police and fire departments who have given their lives for us. One ceremony of note will be at Borough Hall on May 25 at noon, where Borough President Helen Marshall will officiate at the Veterans' Memorial Garden outside Borough Hall at 120-55 Queens Blvd. Please stop by.

New York City Charter Revision

By: Richard C. Hellenbrecht

The City Charter Revision Commission—The New York City equivalent of the Constitution is the City Charter. This most important document gives NYC its authority to operate and determines how revenues are handled, people hired or elected, contracts awarded and ethics issues resolved. Occasionally a mayor appoints a commission to review the Charter and possibly bring changes to voters by referendum on Election Day. Mayor Bloomberg has appointed a new commission which is in the process of taking public testimony in the five boroughs. Many of the actions that a commission can propose can affect the day-to-day lives of ordinary New Yorkers and can impact the quality of life for all of us. It is critical that we all monitor closely their deliberations. The last commission was convened by Mayor Bloomberg in 2003.

From the reports that have surfaced some of the key issues that may make it into our voting machines in November are: Term Limits, Voter Participation (i.e. Non-Partisan Elections), Balance of Power (i.e. revised responsibilities for Public Advocate, Borough Presidents and community boards vs the mayor), and the city's Land Use procedures. Each of these topics is the subject of a public meeting in each of the boroughs, culminating on June 24 in Flushing with a forum on Land Use issues.

Ultimately the commission will decide on which of these issues will appear on the ballot in November and what action will be proposed. We urge all Bellerose residents to monitor this process closely through the summer. Here are some concerns of the author, not necessarily of the BCCA:

- **Centralization**—Apparently one motivation of this initiative is to increase the level of authority in Manhattan. New York City is huge and each borough has different characteristics including population, demographics, housing style, proportion of school age children, mix of business and residences. These cause vastly different needs and the people most aware of these needs are closest to it, not in the central city. Included in centralization is the balance of power between the Mayor, the Public Advocate and the Borough Presidents.
- **Land Use Review**—Similarly, decisions about zoning and specific uses of land are best decided physically closest to the subject. The current land use procedure is somewhat cumbersome and time consuming, and it bothers some elected officials and especially developers who must wait and spend money when a project doesn't conform to local norms. Community boards and the respective borough president have a real role in the current planning process and generally work hard to advance beneficial proposals ahead of schedule. Developers might not be pleased, though, if the project is not appealing to the community and they have to deal with two public hearings and lots of questions, like recently in the failed Kingsbridge Armory proposal. In my experience, community input has usually produced a better project by using local knowledge of traffic circulation, congestion, pollution, etc.
- **Term Limits**—Nine years ago, in the dark days following 9/11, our then mayor argued that with his experience we was best able to lead the city and asked to waive the two-term limits imposed recently. Our now mayor argued against it. Last year, in a serious recession, our current mayor argued he could best lead the city out of the darkness, and he managed to get the largely term limited city council to vote to modify the previous referendum and add a third term. The commission reportedly has not decided among several options, which I would guess are something like this: total elimination of term limits, ratify the three terms imposed by the council, or return to two terms.
- **Voter Participation**—This is a proposal that has come before the electorate before and failed, but the mayor would like to hold city elections without the traditional Republican vs Democrat vs Independent process. I'm least familiar with this proposal, but I guess it would be much less costly if there were no primaries and other party procedures. Whether one agrees with a particular party or not, most people at least agree with the general philosophy of one party or the other and feel more comfortable in the voter booth to go down one party line or the other. That appears to be part of the "problem" the non-partisan elections would address. There would be less officials winning just because they appear under someone who is popular.
- **The Vote**—one or two or more of these proposals might be on the ballot. One problem civics and others are concerned about is having only a single vote on all charter proposals. A very harmful proposal may be included with a very attractive and popular one, but you have no choice but take both.

I repeat, these are not views adopted by BCCA. I offer them only as some background for those of you who have heard of this but don't know if or why it is important.



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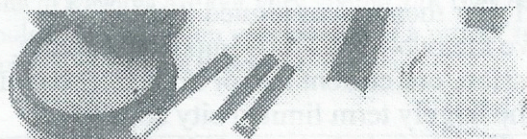


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