MLS weighed secret soccer plan

Flushing Mdws. stadium may sit on berm but will not be taller than Unisphere

BY JOE ANUTA

A confidential proposal made by Major League Soccer last year provides insight into the sports group’s closely guarded vision of what a stadium in Flushing Meadows Corona Park might look like, documents showed.

The internal plans, which appear to be a proposal from September 2012, were provided to the TimesLedger on condition that the source not be identified. In several renderings, the plans show that the stadium does not sit at ground level, but will rather be perched on top of a mound of earth that the league calls a “publicly accessible berm.”

Opponents of the park believe this berm is needed to build the foundation of the stadium, since the water table is so high in the park. Flushing Meadows sits in a flood plane, which would make it costly to dig downward.

The league said the proposal from last year does not necessarily reflect its current plans, which may or may not include the berm, since its vision is constantly evolving. A league spokeswoman reiterated that the stadium would not be taller than the Unisphere, even with the mound.

MLS is staying mum about many details of the project, which is what makes groups like the Fairness Coalition believe there are too many unanswered questions associated with the proposal to make it viable — such as who the owner would be and if the team will even make money, hardly a guarantee for an MLS franchise, according to Will Sweeney, who is involved with the coalition.

Sweeney described the group of civic organizations as pro-park.

Continued on Page 8

Balmy Dip in the Bay

Dozens of people race into Jamaica Bay in Breezy Point during Rockaway Plunge, an event held to raise money for hurricane relief efforts.

State Sen. Malcolm Smith (D-Hollis) told a standing-room-only crowd last week that he joined the Senate’s new coalition government in order to get results for his community and he said the move has already paid off.

In early December, five weeks after Superstorm Sandy hit and a month after Democrats appeared to have taken control of the Senate in the November elections, Smith announced he would join the four rogue lawmakers of the Independent Democratic Conference in a power-sharing agreement with Republicans.

Even with two undecided races that would eventually go to the Democrats, the breakup of the four original members of the IDC was enough to deny...

Continued on Page 9

Flour babies in Bayside tackle teen pregnancy

BY PHIL CORSO

A sociology teacher at Bayside’s Benjamin N. Cardozo High School got a rise out of her students when she chose to fight teenage pregnancy with sacks of flour.

In most traditional middle and high school...

Smith defends new Albany hat

BY RICH BOCKMANN

State Sen. Malcolm Smith presents Donna Hood with a pen commemorating the signing of the Senate’s firearms reform act.

Continued on Page 9
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New Council districts spur outrage in boro

BY JOE ANUTA

Groups in northeast Queens blasted the final draft of new City Council lines that were approved Wednesday night.

The New York City Districting Commission, an appointed, 15-member body of non-sitting politicians, is required to redraw the city’s political boundaries every decade in response to population changes identified in the U.S. census. The process is typically controversial, and this time around was no exception.

The commission voted to approve the lines, which now move to the City Council for consideration. If the Council does not object, the lines move on to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Queens activists and civic associations were upset and dumbfounded about two specific areas Tuesday when the commission released its final draft of the new lines ahead of the vote.

Just north of downtown Flushing lies the border between areas represented by Councilmen Peter Koo (D-Flushing) and Dan Halloran (R-Whitestone). The Northeast Flushing Civic Association, the Broadway-Flushing Homeowners Association and the Queens Civic Congress, along with the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund said the Asian American Civic Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy contend that Bayside should be united in [Halloran’s district],” said the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. “The portion of Bayside that was removed from [Halloran’s district] and added to [Weprin’s district] contains a substantial number of Asian-American voters.”

The coalition formed in response to a draft map released by the commission that put some high density co-ops into Halloran’s district and a section of single-family homes into Koo’s. The ensuing outrage was so great that the executive director of the commission made a motion to correct what he called a mistake, and stuck the co-ops back in Koo’s district.

But the final maps did not follow the coalition’s recommendations and drew a significant chunk of low-density blocks in north Flushing into Koo’s district, a move that had not been reflected in any of the commission’s previous drafts.

Halloran called the lines a compromise, noting that Broadway, Flushing and Auburndale were largely kept together in his district.

But Paul Graziano, an urban planner who lives in north Flushing, used software on the commission’s website to show the lines could have easily followed the lawmakers’ suggestion while making sure the districts had the correct populations.

Another hotspot in the districting debate was Bayside Hills and Oakland Gardens. Activist groups representing Asian Americans in Bayside and the two neighborhoods in question meant that they should have been kept together as a community of interest.
Queens remembers Ed Koch

BY JOE ANUTA

Thousands of mourners attended the funeral of late Mayor Ed Koch last week as the outspoken and charismatic lawmaker was remembered in Queens with both fondness and sadness following his death at age 88.

Koch, who served as mayor from 1978-89, died from congestive heart failure at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Reuters reported.

Many borough lawmakers had close dealings with Koch, who took office during a tumultuous time in the city's fiscal history, and many recalled his unique way of engaging the public.

U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-Astoria) described campaigning with the venerable lawmaker decades ago when they were bombarded by egg throwers in Manhattan. She apologized to Koch, but he was unfazed.

“He just smiled and turned to me and said, ‘Not to worry, in my mind they’re all cheers!’”

The late mayor has been credited with pulling the city out of fiscal turmoil in the late 1970s and imbuing the population with a sense of hope.

But it was also during Koch's tenure that former Borough President Donald Manes was accused of overseeing graft and kickbacks that flowed in and out of Borough Hall. He later committed suicide. Cataloged in the nonfiction book, “City for Sale,” the city’s Parking Violations Bureau served as a main venue for the dishonesty that plagued the borough’s government.

But that was not Koch’s enduring legacy in Queens, where he was remembered with great affection last week.

Many recited some of Koch’s famous acerbic wit.

Former City Council Speaker Peter Vallone Sr., who served during part of Koch’s tenure, remembered the mayor saying: “If you agree with me nine out of 12 times, vote for me. If you agree with me 12 out of 12 times, see a psychiatrist.”

(Clockwise from top l.) Ed Koch (l.) says hello to City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, Sr. as Queens Borough President Claire Shulman looks on in 1987; Koch listens during the 9th annual National Action Network convention; Queens Borough President Donald Manes (l.) and City Councilman Archie Spigner join Koch at LaGuardia Airport in 1979; Koch visits the Alley Pond Environmental Center in Douglaston; U.S. Rep. Bob Turner (c.) thanks Koch (l.) for his support; Aurora Gareiss (l.) and Virginia Dent join Koch; Mayor Michael Bloomberg is joined by Koch in Forest Hills; Koch (c.) views planned improvements at the Flushing Library in 1985 with Myra Baird Herce and Linda Shostal; Koch sits down with the Vallone family for dinner; on a tour near Bowne House, Koch receives a framed aerial view of the area from Shostal; Koch endorses state Sen. Joseph Addabbo in 2012; and Koch enjoys a laugh with Emily Scheuer and her husband, Rep. James Scheuer, at the latter’s 70th birthday in 1990.

Photos by Walter Karling, Frank Nocerito, Christina Santucci, courtesy Peter Vallone Jr. and AP Photo/Frank Franklin II
Ireland sends its lads to peninsula to restore damaged parish center

By Steve Mosco

Battered and burned by Hurricane Sandy, the bungalow community of Breezy Point received a helping hand from the luck and brawn of the Irish.

Residents of the tight-knit neighborhood packed into the newly renovated Monsignor Connelly Parish Center next to St. Thomas More Church, at 204-25 Rockaway Point Blvd., Sunday to smell the fresh paint and thank those who came all the way from Ireland to help with the rebuilding.

In the days following the superstorm, the Irish government allocated $320,000 to assist Irish-American communities in New York and New Jersey — including $50,000 to Breezy Point, where more than 100 homes burned down during the late October storm — and the community joined with members of the Gaelic Players Association to dedicate the rebuilt facility.

“Sometimes it is in adversity that we see the very best of people, and the response of the community to support the recovery efforts in the areas most impacted by Sandy, has been hugely successful,” said Brian Hayes, the minister of state at the Irish Department of Finance. “The presence of the Gaelic Players Association work teams has boosted morale in Breezy Point as well as been a practical help in refurbishing community projects that were badly damaged.”

Led by their chairman, Donal Og Cusack, 20 members of the Gaelic Players — Tipperary hurling players, tradesman and engineers — flew into Breezy Point last month and quickly went to work gutting the storm-ravaged youth space as well as tackling other projects, including the volunteer fire house. Working with the Breezy Point Relief Fund, Habitat for Humanity, the Emerald Guild and the Catholic Youth Organization, the GPA laid floors and replaced sheetrock and also instilled a sense of optimism in the neighborhood.

Cusack thanked Aer Lingus for providing flights for the volunteers and said the community repaid the players in spades, with unmatched gratitude and hospitality.

“We received so much warmth from the community,” he said. “We learned there are proud people here and it made us equally proud to help the residents of Breezy Point.”

Residents marveled at the bright walls and painted walls and remarked that the sight of the rebuilt facility raised the hopes of the entire community.

“Even having this one building up and running again is a huge relief,” said Debra Byers, a resident. “It’s amazing that this all came together.”

According to Tim Devlin, a contractor and former Breezy Point resident now living in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, two-thirds of the community’s residents are Irish and Irish American. His claim is backed up by the 2010 federal census, which noted Breezy Point is 60 percent Irish American.

Devlin presented the volunteers with plaques in recognition of their work, but said the most profound gift is the sight of Breezy Point children running around on the glossy new floors.

“This is the fruit of their labor,” he said. “A truly blessed gift.”
Police hunt for suspect wanted in Queensbridge bodega slay

BY STEVE MOSCO

Police released surveillance video of the gun-toting thug who shot and killed an Upper West Side man in front of a Queensbridge bodega Saturday night.

Francisco Leal, 27, was found with a gunshot wound in his chest on the corner of 21st Street and 41st Avenue at about 9:30 p.m., according to the NYPD. The video released by the NYPD shows the gunman raising his hand in a firing motion, then turning and fleeing with an accomplice.

Leal was taken to Mount Sinai Queens in Astoria, where he was pronounced dead, police said.

No arrests had been made as of Wednesday night, according to a statement from the NYPD, which said the investigation is ongoing.

Outside the bodega, a cardboard box had been set up as a makeshift memorial for Leal by Sunday afternoon. Seven lit candles had been placed inside the box, which was inscribed with messages.

One was addressed “To my baby brother.”

Police said Leal had an arrest record that included burglary, possession of a controlled substance, grand larceny and witness intimidation. He had been on parole since November.

Reach reporter Steve Mosco by e-mail at smosco@cnglocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4546.

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Boat clubs in Facebook spat

LIC paddlers’ Brooklyn affiliate suing founder over fan page

BY REBECCA HENELY

A lawsuit over a Facebook Web page is putting the current leaders of the Long Island City Community Boathouse at odds with its founder.

The Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club, a non-profit based in Brooklyn that is affiliated with the boathouse, levied a suit in Brooklyn federal court in 2011 against Erik Baard, who founded the boathouse in 2004. The boathouse, at 46-01 5th St., offers recreational and educational paddling programs along the East River.

The dispute emerged after Baard created a Facebook fan page for the boathouse in 2009 after he stepped down from the boathouse’s leadership in 2008. Jerry Dunne, an attorney for the Dredgers, said, in an e-mail that the fan page is copyright infringement.

“Erik has no longer any affiliation with the LIC Community Boathouse,” Dunne said. “He is a disgruntled former head and founder.”

Baard said that while he stepped down he and the original artist hold the intellectual property rights to the boathouse’s name and logo. He also said the social media giant was asked to remove Baard’s page and did not find it infringing.

Erik Baard, founder of the LIC Community Boathouse, said he believes he has intellectual property rights to the boathouse’s name and logo.

“They really should be suing Facebook if they’re so upset,” Baard said.

But Baard said the Dredgers were supposed to act solely as a fiscal conduit for the boathouse for insurance reasons and the partnership could be terminated on either side at any time.

“We never, never turned over our ownership to them,” he said.

A new FX television series brought Bayside into the spotlight when it set up shop along Bell Boulevard to shoot an upcoming episode.

Trailers with makeshift dressing rooms and storage sheds lined the streets in the area surrounding the Bayside train station last week to make way for the new drama series “The Americans.”

The Dredgers and the current and past chairs of the boathouse have also clashed with Baard over the use of funds, which Baard said were earmarked for certain projects and which Dunne said Baard tried to extract for his own purposes, as well as the ownership of the boathouse’s equipment.

Baard said he wants the court to acknowledge that he retains the property rights and that the boathouse is self-governing and not a subsidiary of the Dredgers.

“As current and past board members, we cannot give an imprimatur to any lawsuit brought by Erik,” Dunne said.

“Erik apparently doesn’t play well with authority; and eventually the board of The Gowanus Dredgers had enough of his inappropriate behavior,” Dunne said.

The Dredgers and the current and past chairs of the boathouse have also clashed with Baard over the use of funds, which Baard said were earmarked for certain projects and which Dunne said Baard tried to extract for his own purposes, as well as the ownership of the boathouse’s equipment.

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“We never, never turned over our ownership to them,” he said.

But Baard said the Dredgers were supposed to act solely as a fiscal conduit for the boathouse for insurance reasons and the partnership could be terminated on either side at any time.

“We had an affiliation with them, but I never signed any contract with them giving them my intellectual property or handing over my ownership,” Baard said.

Baard said he stepped down in 2008 to allow the community to take ownership of the boathouse, although he stayed on as a part of the Dredgers’ board for another year.

Dunne said Baard was terminated from the board and that severed any of Baard’s claims to the boathouse.

“Erik apparently doesn’t play well with authority; and eventually the board of The Gowanus Dredgers had enough of his inappropriate behavior,” Dunne said.

The Dredgers and the current and past chairs of the boathouse have also clashed with Baard over the use of funds, which Baard said were earmarked for certain projects and which Dunne said Baard tried to extract for his own purposes, as well as the ownership of the boathouse’s equipment.

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“We never, never turned over our ownership to them,” he said.

New FX spy thriller filmed on Bell Blvd.

BY PHIL CORSO

A new FX television series brought Bayside into the spotlight when it set up shop along Bell Boulevard to shoot an upcoming episode.

Trailers with makeshift dressing rooms and storage sheds lined the streets in the area surrounding the Bayside train station last week to make way for the new drama series “The Americans.”

Crews were buzzing with activity in different locations along Bell Boulevard from 10 a.m. Jan. 30 through the following night to film parts of the 1980s Cold War drama, featuring two KGB spies who pose as Americans soon after President Ronald Reagan is elected.

“The Americans” debuted with its 70-minute pilot Jan. 30 on the FX network, starring Keri Russell from the popular series “Felicity” and Matthew Rhys of “Brothers and Sisters.”

The show’s producer, Joe Weisberg, was once an officer with the Central Intelligence Agency before becoming a television writer.

Throughout the shoot, commuters coming out of the Bayside train station were greeted by film crews asking them to halt and watch when the cameras were rolling. In front of the station house, old-fashioned cars with Virginia license plates rolled down the streets as part of the scene.

Next to the station, television crews used C.J. Sullivan’s bar and grill as a base for much of its shooting operations.

Street parking in Bayside was temporarily suspended along Bell Boulevard from 39th to 42nd avenues and in select spots on 39th, 40th and 41st avenues, but the short-term break in business brought a boost of attention to the area.

“TV and movie shoots like ‘The Americans’ create a buzz along Bell Boulevard,” said Lyle Sclair, executive director of the Bayside Village Business Improvement District.

“The Bayside Village BID will be working with the NYC Mayor’s Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting to create opportunities for our local merchants to create year-round opportunities so local businesses may take advantage of this growing NYC industry, even when there is no shooting in Bay-side.”

But for some of the businesses along Bell Boulevard, the parking ban made for a temporary hulk for the cash registers. Steve Wiesmann, of Press 195, said business was noticeably slower by the end of lunchtime last Thursday as trucks and television crew trailers lined the street in front of the restaurant.
Stop/frisk rates high in Jax Hts., Jamaica

By Rebecca Henely

An NYPD report released Monday revealed that the controversial stop-and-frisk tactic was used on Hispanics in the 115th Precinct in the Jackson Heights area and blacks in the 103rd Precinct in Jamaica at rates that outpaced their demographics in 2011.

The New York Civil Liberties Union had spotlighted both precincts in a report released last year about 2011. The 115th Precinct — which includes East Elmhurst, Jackson Heights and the north half of Corona — had the third-highest rate of stop-and-frisk in the city. The 103rd Precinct, which includes Jamaica and Hollis, was ranked eighth-highest.

State Sen. Jose Peralta (D-East Elmhurst) said if the numbers in the new report reflect the current use of stop-and-frisk, they would be troubling, although he had assurances and was told the situation had improved in the 115th Precinct since the NYCLU’s report came out.

“I really don’t believe that racism is involved,” he said. “We can’t sort of paint all police officers with one brush.”

The report said 18,156 people were stopped and frisked in the 115th Precinct in 2011. Of these, about 84 percent were Hispanic, even though they make up about 65 percent of the population. The number of black people stopped in the 115th also outpaced the demographics, making up about 9 percent of stops in a district about 6 percent black.

White people, who comprise about 12 percent of the population, and Asian/Pacific Islanders, who account for about 16 percent of the population, each made up about 4 percent of those stopped in the precinct.

In the 103rd Precinct, 17,152 people were stopped in 2011. Black individuals made up about 74 percent of the stops but constitute only about 48 percent of the population. Hispanic, white and Asian/Pacific Islander individuals were all stopped at a rate lower than their population in the precinct.

The NYPD report, however, said about 74 percent of known crime suspects and 79 percent of known violent crime suspects in the 115th Precinct are Hispanic. In the 103rd, about 70 percent of known crime suspects and about 74 percent of known violent crime suspects are black.

Peralta said he was in support of stop-and-frisk as a tool, but after the NYCLU released its report last year, he wrote a long letter to Police Commissioner Ray Kelly and had a long discussion with him about his concerns. One of the most pressing issues was the NYCLU ranking the precinct third in the number of times force was used during a stop-and-frisk. Of all stop-and-frisks in the 115th Precinct, force was used 41 percent of the time, the NYCLU said.

The senator said Kelly was retraining officers working in the 115th Precinct and other impact zones, or places marked as high-crime areas. He had also heard that stop-and-frisk incidents had gone down 50 percent in the 115th Precinct in the last year.

“I hope they have because if they haven’t, that would be a very serious concern,” Peralta said.

Reach Rebecca Henely by e-mail at rhenely@cnglocal.com or by phone at 718-260-4564.

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MLS
Continued from Page 1
but not necessarily anti-
development.

He also questioned
MLS’s assessment of the
number of jobs that will
come along with the sta-
dium. The league pegs the
number at more than 2,000,
yet a similarly sized soccer
stadium that was recently
proposed in Long Island
would provide only 500
jobs.

MLS has said it counts
the number of jobs created
both on and off the job site,
a methodology Sweeney
called “absurd.”

The league has said
repeatedly that its games
would not coincide with
games at the New York
Mets’ Citi Field, yet the Sep-
tember proposal calls for a
plan to mitigate concurrent
events at each stadium.

In recent weeks, an-
other group has emerged
that is opposed to any com-
mercial activity in the bor-
ough’s largest greenspace.

Save Flushing Mea-
dows Corona Park, like
the Fairness Coalition,
has been endorsed by the
Queens Civic Congress.

This group, led by
members of the community,
including Al Centola, of the
Malba Gardens Civic Asso-
ciation, and Geoffrey Croft,
of New York City Park
Advocates, contends that
parkland is sacred, pro-
tected by law, and should
be free from development
by corporations.

They released a video
detailing their stance and
called on Queens residents
to urge their elected offi-
cials to oppose the com-
mercialization of Flushing
Meadows.

The soccer stadium is
just one of three projects
proposed for the park.

Developers at Willets
Point hope to put a 1.4 mil-
lion-square-foot mall on the
site of a Citi Field parking
lot — technically parkland
— and the United States
Tennis Association is look-
ing to expand its footprint
by less than an acre, but
also continue to park cars
on grassy areas of the park
and build a diesel power
generator outside the area
it leases from the city, ac-
cording to an environmen-
tal impact statement.

DA convictions
Continued from Page 1
will look into it,” the script
read. “This will be the
only opportunity you will
have to talk to me prior to
your arraignment on these
charges.”

A four-judge panel in
Brooklyn’s Second Circuit
Appellate Court last week
ruled the language in the
script to be unconstitutio-
 nal and ordered retrials in
three cases.

“When the clear and
unequivocal warnings de-
vised in Miranda are com-
bined with the information
and suggestion contained in
the preamble, the mes-
sage conveyed to suspects
is muddled and ambiguous.
Correspondingly, when the
warnings are combined
with the preamble, it can-
not be said with assurance
that the suspects clearly
understood their rights,”
the decision read.

“Why is the preamble
read before giving the
Miranda warnings and ob-
taining a waiver of rights,
instead of after the warn-
ings are read and a waiv-
er obtained?” the judges
asked. “If the answer is
that suspects are more
likely to waive their rights
after having heard the
preamble, that lends sup-
port to the conclusion that
... the warnings have been
rendered ineffective by the
preamble.”

Brown said the pro-
gram was designed to pre-
vent wrongful conditions
and was responsible for
dismissing charges against
more than 100 people. He
said the script was revised
three years ago and once
again following last week’s
decision.

“Today’s decision,
which is based almost en-
tirely on the Second De-
partment’s interpretation of
federal constitutional
law, takes issue not with
the program itself but rath-
er with our introductory
remarks — remarks which
were modified more than
two years ago,” he said.

“Our current introductory
remarks include virtually
none of the statements with
which the Court has found
fault and, importantly, no
defendant has ever been
questioned without having
first been read their Miran-
da rights.”

The DA’s office said
more than 12,000 inter-
views have been conducted
since 2007.

Queens Law Associa-
tes is one of two nonprofits
with Queens public defend-
ent contracts.

Attorney-in-Charge
Tim Rountree said those
who were convicted or
pleaded guilty after being
read the script now have
new grounds to appeal
their cases.

“It’s not an automatic
thing. You’d have to scru-
tinize exactly what was
said in those statements
and how that occurred,” he
said. “It won’t be a whole-
sale type of reversals, but
rather it will be on a case-
by-case basis.”

New York Civil Libe-
ties Union Senior Attorney
Taylor Pendergrass said
the bigger issue left un-
resolved by the court’s
ruling was the constitu-
tionality of interviewing
unrepresented suspects
prior to arraignments.

“There are big ques-
tions still with the revised
script, pretty serious
ethical issues the opinion
doesn’t answer,” he said.

“The Supreme Court in
New York is quite clear that
you can’t delay a suspect
more than 24 hours before
a prompt arraignment. A
program that systemati-
cally delays arraignments
has some pretty serious
problems.”

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Baby
Continued from Page 1
programs, students would receive an egg to care for and prove their durability as potential parents by returning it without a crack. But in Robin Sita’s class, the 22 young teenagers from 10th- to 12th-grades were tasked with dressing and looking after a less messy, different kind of delicacy: hefty 5-pound bags of flour.

Sita said she launched the new approach to understanding teenage pregnancy so students could see and feel the responsibilities of raising an infant first-hand.

“There are a lot of shows on television today that sort of sensationalize pregnancy,” Sita said. “In reality, it is very time-consuming and expensive.”

At the beginning of the course, Sita said her students had to make their babies out of sacks of flour to be either shared with a peer or cared for solo. The kids used pantyhose, typically matching the color of their skin, and duct tape to fasten a makeshift baby with arms, legs and a head of its own. Students also crafted their own birth certificates for the powdery rug rats and had different teachers throughout the day sign off that they were being taken care of.

Every day, the toddlers had to be accounted for, Sita said. Students were provided with weekly budgets to account for car seats, strollers and more, and could not let their flour babies out of sight unless they were left with a baby-sitter.

“They were shocked,” Sita said of her class’ reaction by the course’s end. “The students didn’t know where they would get all the money they needed while in school. I think by the end the kids had a whole new outlook.”

In 2011, the United States reached a record low for teenage births with 329,977 — about 8 percent lower than the year before, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While the exact reasons as to why the numbers have dropped were not clear, the CDC said sexually active teens seemed to be using birth control more than in previous years.

Beyond the hands-on caretaking aspect of the course, Sita said her students got a close look at how society views them if they are young and with child. For most students, the 11-year sociology teacher said flour babies joined them on their school bus commutes to and from school and drew some harsh criticism from their peers.

Since she initially launched the course late last year, Sita said interest in her sociology class has seen a drastic increase in enrollment because of her project-based learning technique. And for the ultimate payoff, Sita said the first students to go through the program used their flour to bake cookies for the class when their temporary parenthoods were put to a grade.

“Today, I think kids are looking for a sense of responsibility,” Sita said. “This may have been a non-conventional way of learning, but this gave them some sort of direction and hands-on experience.”

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Smith
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the Dems an outright voting majority before Smith decided to join the coalition.

“The fact of the matter is the coalition was formed already. The train was out of the station. Gone,” he told a crowd of about 200 at the Alpha Phi Alpha senior center in Cambria Heights.

“The decision was, do I not act and said he would be at the Senate Task Force on Sandy Recovery, vice chairman of the Finance Committee and chairman of the Social Services Committee. He also co-authored the state’s firearms reform act and said he would be at the table when many important decisions affecting the community are made.