Jax Hgts PO to be rechristened
Congress approves bill to rename site after LGBT activists Jeanne, Jules Manford

BY BILL PARRY
The House of Representatives unanimously passed legislation Tuesday to rename the Jackson Heights Post Office in honor of Jeanne and Jules Manford, the late Flushing residents who fought for the advancement of equal rights for LGBT Americans.

U.S. Rep. Joe Crowley (D-Jackson Heights) sponsored the bill while U.S. Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Charles Schumer (D-NY) introduced companion legislation in the Senate earlier this month.

“Last week we faced a terrible and tragic attack on the LGBT community in Orlando,” Crowley said on the House floor prior to the vote. “Today, we stand in honor of two individuals who, when faced with a hateful act of violence themselves, were inspired to start a movement couched in acceptance and support. Jeanne and Jules were instrumental in the fight for equal rights, and their incredible legacy can be felt throughout Queens, New York, and the entire country. It is only fitting that we name the post office that sits along the route of the Queens Pride Parade in their honor.”

Jeanne Manford publicly denounced the beating of her gay son, Morty Manford, for protesting news coverage of the LGBT rights movement in 1972.

Later that year, Jeanne and her husband, Jules, founded the Parents’ Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, an organization that advocates on behalf of the LBGT community as well as their families and friends. The couple opened their Flushing
Continued on Page 8

Kanye concert questioned

BY BILL PARRY

The promoters of an October music festival at the Citi Field parking lot featuring hip-hopper artist Kanye West is drawing the wrath of City Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras-Copeland (D-East Elmhurst) for misrepresenting themselves.

Live Nation and Founders Entertainment are presenting the Meadows Festival Oct. 1-2 and they claimed to be partners with, and have the support of, the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Alliance.

But they did not.

“I believe in bringing cultural events that can spur economic growth to benefit our community,” Ferreras-Copeland said. “I met with Founders Entertainment to hear their proposals and tell them they
Continued on Page 10
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SLA shuts Traditions Pub for violations

Jamaica Hills bar, favorite haunt of St. John’s University students, had been in crosshairs of pols

BY MADINA TOURE

Traditions Pub, a Jamaica Hills bar that elected officials and community leaders contend has frequently violated liquor laws and been the site of underage drinking, has been shut down by the state Liquor Authority.

The SLA held a special full board meeting June 9 where it ordered an emergency suspension of the license of the bar, at 84-28 164th St., which is a popular watering spot for St. John’s University students.

New Traditions Inc. has an alcoholic beverage license originally issued May 3, 2012 that is scheduled to expire April 30, 2018, according to an SLA document. There are also pending charges against New Traditions.

An SLA spokesman said the bar is entitled to an expedited hearing before an administrative law judge.

In March, the NYPD closed the bar three times due to window obstructions, fire exit issues and overcrowding, and in the past year, the Health Department has shut it down twice, according to Councilman Rory Lancman (D-Hillcrest).

Lancman also cited incidents such as an 18-year-old found unconscious in the bar, an individual treated at Queens Hospital Center for intoxication, people visiting family at the Margaret Tietz Nursing & Rehabilitation Center across the street being harassed by bar patrons and one being robbed by people hanging out in front of the bar.

The councilman said he does not expect the bar to reopen, given that there are 24 allegations against the owners.

“It seems very unlikely that they would win an appeal,” Lancman said. “Their conduct was quite egregious.”

Lancman and state Assemblyman David Weprin (D-Fresh Meadows) each wrote separate letters to SLA Chairman Vincent Bradley and SLA Commissioner Kevin Kim in mid-April, asking them to revoke the bar’s license.

Weprin said the bar had a “tradition of problems” and that the SLA finally realized it.

“I think (the letters) led to the suspension eventually, but at that particular time, they did not take our advice of not renewing their license,” he said.

At a Community Board 8 liquor license committee meeting April 12 where members voted 13-0 against renewing the bar’s license along with one abstention, Michael Hannibal said the bar owner was supposed to work with the 107th Precinct and St. John’s University to ensure the safety of the students and customers and cited incidents such as public urination, choking, criminal mischief, marijuana smoking and sex abuse.

At the meeting, New Traditions’ Kirk Johnston, the bar’s co-owner and operator, said he thought too many issues were thrown at him at once and that he tried to work with St. John’s but that the school was not responsive, the meeting minutes said.

Johnston also said several NYPD undercover operations have come into the bar and tried to buy liquor, but all came back saying the bar did not sell to underage patrons.

But at the meeting, Carolann Foley, president of the precinct’s community council, said the bar had been caught selling to underage clients.

S. Ozone street co-named ‘Qadri’s Way’ for brave teen activist

BY MARK HALLUM

City Councilman Ruben Wills (D-Jamaica) held a street-renaming ceremony Tuesday to commemorate the life of a teen advocate whose life was cut short by two rare illnesses.

Qadri Skipper fought with pulmonary hypertension and hereditary telangiectasia for up to 12 years, and alongside his mother advocated for a Department of Education financed, advanced life-support ambulance to transport him to and from school. He died at the age of 17.

Now 110th Street between 107th Avenue and 109th Avenue in South Ozone Park is known as Qadri’s Way in honor of his 12-year battle, which ended in 2012.

“The story of Qadri Skipper is one that begs to be told and shared. It illustrates the remarkable courage with which this young man faced the prospect of death at only the age of 17, and persevered well beyond the two-year timeline his doctors estimated,” Wills said. “Qadri refused to let these disorders dictate the terms of his life, and he lived as completely as one saddled with such burdens possibly could.”

Skipper was a student at the Information Technology High School in Long Island City, according to Wills, and died during his last year of enrollment. He was posthumously awarded his diploma. There is now an annual scholarship in his name.

“I stand here today, I know where my blessings are,” Doreen Blair-Skipper, Qadri’s mother said, after explaining her son’s contribution to the lives of other people burdened with the two diseases. “And Qadri’s Way street signing is a testament of his character.”

Joann Schmidt, a pulmonary hypertension support group leader and patient who knew Skipper, spoke at the ceremony and told the story of her experience with the young man who faced these burdens uncomplainingly. Brooke Keith, another PH patient, said if it had not been for Skipper, who encouraged her to be vigilant about taking her medication, she would not be alive today.

Kenneth Pawlukiewicz, the 2013 Information Technology High School PTA president and founder of Qadri Skipper Memorial Scholarship, said he had not met Skipper but was so inspired by the story his mother told him about her son that he organized the annual scholarship in his name.

“From talking sports with his nurses and doctors to supporting others facing difficulty, Qadri never allowed his condition to hold him back. All of us can learn from his example,” said Councilman Eric Ulrich (R-Ozone Park), co-sponsor of the event. “This street naming allows us to honor Qadri’s memory and remember the joy he brought to everybody in his life.”
State legislative session ends with mixed reviews

BY BILL PARRY

Long Island City, and other areas of the city, have been saved from even taller and wider towers than the ones currently under construction. The de Blasio administration was thwarted in its attempt to lift the existing cap on building density as a chaotic legislative session came to a close in Albany early Saturday morning.

“We already have numerous very high buildings in Long Island City with more on the way,” Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan (D-Long Island City) said. “There are a number of towers planned that I have opposed, including one by selling MTA air rights. Many planned are of unprecedented heights. I cannot permit any loosening of this restriction with a firmer commitment of this restriction with one by selling MTA air rights. I cannot permit any loosening of this restriction with a firmer commitment of this restriction with one by selling MTA air rights.

The Department of City Planning pushed for the legislation that would remove the state law on the FAR, the floor area ratio, to allow for larger structures. I think this is a terrible way to do it. I claim it is unnecessary and would be unconscionable,” Nolan said.

The end of the session at 5 a.m. Saturday was a disappointment for fellow Assemblywoman Margaret Markey (D-Maspeth), a champion of the Child Victims Act for the last decade. That bill would have eliminated the statute of limitations for child sex abuse crimes but never made it to the floor for a vote.

“It was disappointing that, despite the best efforts of my colleagues in the Assembly and our leadership to put forward a very modest compromise bill that could become law this year, there was absolutely no way to move the building of affordable housing plan forward.

“Any more changes to allow for even larger buildings is unnecessary and would be unconscionable,” Nolan said.

The frenzied conclusion to the session garnered mixed reviews for the results and the process itself. For instance, state Sen. Joseph Addabbo, Jr. (D-Howard Beach) was pleased that action was taken to combat the heroin epidemic that affects many young people in his district, but none was taken to replace the 421-a tax abatement for developers, leaving the building of affordable housing stalled.

“It always seems to happen in the New York State Legislature that the last hours of a six-month legislative session were marked by the appearance of ‘The Big Ugly,’ which can best be described as the kitchen sink of state government, with a wide variety of unrelated issues all thrown into one big piece of legislation and then served up on a platter for approval,” Addabbo said. “I still think this is a terrible way to do the public’s business, making and passing deals in the middle of the night, when important issues could have and should have been openly and honestly debated in the light of day over the last six months.”

State Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Flushing) has seen it all since she first got elected to the Senate in 1999.

“It could have been a lot worse,” she said. “But I was not pleased that we didn’t do enough ethics reform, although we did take the first step with pension forfeiture, and I don’t know how the Republicans couldn’t advance the Child Victims Act. That’s outrageous.”

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JAMEL HORTON
Undecided

SOCOR

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Paul Vallone’s budget victory
Councilman brings in $14 million in funds for northeast Queens

BY MARK HALLUM

City Councilman Paul Vallone (D-Bayside) announced a budgetary victory for his district Monday after securing up to $14 million from the city budget, the Queens delegation and Borough President Melinda Katz. The record-setting funds will be used to enhance schools, parks, libraries, law enforcement and senior care, according to Vallone.

“This year’s budget is another clear victory for our communities and will go a long way to continue making our schools, parks, libraries and non-profits the best they can be. The last three years has clearly put northeast Queens back on the map, where it always should have been,” Vallone said.

His district covers Bayside, Whitestone, Auburndale, College Point, Little Neck, Douglaston, and Flushing.

With the help of allocations from Katz’s office, $2.8 million will go to schools, $1.4 million will go to libraries and $6.5 million will go to parks. Green spaces awaiting upgrades are College Point Sports Fields, Frank Golden Park and Bay Terrace Playground.

According to Vallone, 80 new officers will be added to the 109th Police Precinct.

In April, the winners of this year’s participatory budget were announced and Vallone’s district had the highest turnout in the city.

Vallone spoke about the success of participatory budgeting in an April news conference, saying “4,500 votes shows you when a community comes out and gets involved, spends their nights and their time, this process is very worth it.”

Over $2 million will go fund a new music education facility at Bayside High School; facility upgrades at JHS 194, PS 79 and PS 193; and multiple upgrades to Harvey Park.

Vallone was able to acquire $6.9 million in funding from the city Department for the Aging to expand on two initiatives to improve the quality of life for the elderly in this district. The Healthy Aging and Support Our Seniors initiatives are organizations which provide services such as transportation and will benefit from this funding, according to Vallone.

“I will always continue to be an advocate for our city’s seniors and I am proud to have fought for these additional funds to improve and increase the services available to our seniors,” Vallone said.

Queens was included in the executive budget for FY 2017 to receive $10 million for the first animal shelter in the borough. Residents are currently forced to go as far as Brooklyn, Manhattan or Staten Island to access a shelter. Vallone and NYCASS announced in May this addition will relieve stress on the three existing shelters and make adoption an easier option for those in Queens.

Vallone is calling the 2016 Independence Day celebration at Fort Totten June 29 a statement to the rest of the city of the success over the past three years.

Reach reporter Mark Hallum by e-mail at mhallum@cnglocal.com or by phone at (718) 260-4564.

Storm sewer upgrades coming to Glen Oaks

BY MARK HALLUM

Glen Oaks will soon receive an updated water and sewer infrastructure, thanks to a project on which city officials broke ground last week.

The $9.3 million upgrade announced by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Design and Construction is an attempt to manage chronic flooding as well as to replace outdated water mains which feed into homes and fire hydrants.

Work has officially begun to install nearly a mile of storm sewers and 58 catch basins designed to divert water from roads which are known to flood during severe rainstorms, a safety issue for many on the road.

According to state Sen. Tony Avella (D-Bayside), chronic flooding is a quality-of-life problem for the residents of Glen Oaks. State Assemblyman Edward Braunstein (D-Bayside) said upgrading sewer and water infrastructure is an issue inhabitants of the neighborhood have been concerned about for several years.

“The hills and valleys of the Glen Oaks neighborhood presented a rather unique engineering challenge and our team has developed a drainage plan that we are confident will help to better manage stormwater, reduce flooding and make the roadways safer for everyone,” DEP Acting Commissioner Steven Lawitts said. “We are excited that shovels are in the ground and look forward to working with our partners at DDC to bring some relief to area residents.”

DOT and DDC broke ground on a $9M project in Glen Oaks, which will enhance storm sewers along a one-mile stretch to combat flooding during heavy rains. Courtesy of DEP
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The Jackson Heights Post Office is closer to being renamed in honor of Jeanne and Jules Manford, two pioneers of the borough's gay rights movement. Photo by Bill Parry

After her death in 2013, President Obama posthumously awarded Jeanne Manford the Presidential Citizens Medal, one of the highest honors an American civilian can receive, for her advocacy work. Jules Manford died in 1982.

Morty Manford was a founding member of the Gay Activists Alliance, which he was heavily involved with until he died from AIDS in 1992.

“Jeanne and Jules Manford were not only loving, accepting parents to their openly-gay son, Morty, but they also served as loving, accepting parents to the entire LGBT community,” Schumer said. “It is a truly fitting tribute to the Manford’s legacy of work.”

Jeanne Manford was the original grand marshal of the Queens Pride, which passes in front of the Jackson Heights Post Office, located at 78-02 37th Ave.

City Councilman Daniel Dromm (D-Jackson Heights), who founded the march and festival, applauded the House vote.

“Jeanne and Jules Manford were the ‘parents’ of the gay rights movement. They allowed their home to be used as the cradle for gay liberation and were the first parents of an openly gay child to support that child in public,” Dromm said. “Jeanne and Jules blazed new trails for the LGBT community by standing up for their openly gay son Morty Manford. This renaming is a fitting tribute to the Manfords and all they believed.”

Reach reporter Bill Parry by e-mail at bparry@cnlocal.com or by phone at (718) 260–4538.

Noah Bell

**Charter**

Continued from Page 1

to meet the diverse needs of District 29 students and families, and also work closely with New Visions to ensure a smooth transition into a long-term site.”

City Councilman Barry Grodenchik (D-Oakland Gardens), state Sen. Leroy Comrie (D-Hollis) and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz all stood in opposition to the plan, and had expressed their concerns in a letter sent June 17 to the mayor’s office and the DOE. Katz and other elected officials released a statement Monday praising the DOE’s decision, stating that the city “has not given up on IS 109Q,” while a spokesman for New Visions said that the organization did not have a comment on the withdrawn proposal.

Grodenchik expressed appreciation that the DOE had listened to community opposition and said he disagreed with the DOE’s original assessment that IS 109Q was being underutilized.

“We didn’t believe the school was as empty as the DOE believed,” Grodenchik said. “We understand that the enrollment is going up, and it’ll be back over 1,000 students in the fall. Some good things are starting there.”

IS 109 enrolled about 972 students in its most recent school year, according to an Educational Impact Statement about the potential co-location drafted by the DOE. The charter would have added 420 to 460 high school students by the 2019-2020 school year.

Janice Berry, IS 109’s PTA president, expressed optimism that the school would raise its enrollment numbers in the next year and said she was grateful for the support of the elected officials and community members.

“I think our input into it, and the fact that we continued to fight for it, had a big impact on the decision that was made,” she said. “Needless to say, we’re ecstatic.”
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they must engage more stakeholders to build support for the festival. I was troubled to see them then claim the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Alliance as a partner when the alliance is not a partner and was never consulted about this event.”

Dan Wempa, New York Hall of Science vice president, is blasting the promoters for scheduling the Meadow Festival on the same weekend as World Maker Faire, which uses the Citi Field lots for over-the-counter services.Wempa said, “Worse, they were proceeding with a complete lack of transparency or community engagement about how they intend to assure that their event doesn’t negatively impact the park.

He added, “By bringing another 30,000 to 50,000 people per day into the neighborhood, this poorly planned mega-concert will undermine what we have done over the past seven years to address community concerns about traffic, safety, and parking. It also threatens to undo a lot of cooperation and engagement that has contributed to the success of the World Maker Faire.”

Neither promoter could be reached for comment.

“There are serious concerns about the impact of a music festival on our community, including how this would impact Maker Faire, an existing and popular event in the same park on the same days,” Ferreras-Copeland said. “Founders must engage around issues like traffic, safety and economic impact before it earns our community’s support.”


“Queens, and Flushing Meadows Corona Park in particular, continues to be an attractive destination for world-class events to be showcased, but it’s imperative that any large scale events being proposed involve our communities,” Crowley said. “That’s why I’m deeply troubled that organizers for the Meadow Festival chose to hold the event during the annual World Makers Faire without first considering the impact it can have on our neighbors, local businesses and stakeholders — they deserve better. It’s time we work together to alleviate these concerns for the Maker Faire and the rest of our community.”

Councilman Paul Vallone and the Local Development Coalition are hosting July 4 events in Bayside and Astoria.

Fireworks

Continued from Page 1

the second annual Independence Day Celebration at Fort Totten. The event will take place Wednesday, June 29, at 6 p.m. and will feature a fireworks show, musical entertainment and transportation to and from designated parking lots.

The Michelle Marie RockBand Camp, a Bay-

side used program which works with student to teach skills and discipline for musical performance, and Phil Costa & Something Special Band, a big band jazz ensemble playing music from the ’30s and ’40s, are both returning from last year.

Vending trucks will be on site to provide food or drink, however, the event is alcohol-free.

The main attraction will begin by 9:15 p.m., and will be organized by Guinness World Record-holding company Fireworks by Grucci which will launch from a barge in Little Neck Bay. Parking will be provided by the Bay Terrace Plaza and Clearview Golf Course. Shuttle service from these points to Fort Totten will be provided by Vallo Transportation.

“BHS at the Castle serves as a cultural destination within the Fort Totten Historic District and hosting an Independence Day celebration right outside our front door is a great way for the community to link the past with the present.” Paul DiBenedetto, president of the Bayside Historical Society said.

The Center for the Women of New York will be hosting a lawn party for the fireworks show at its future home within the fort.

Grucci will also perform the fireworks show for Astoria’s Independence Day celebration, organized by the Local Development Coalition and located at Astoria Park on Shore Boulevard. Festivities will take place Thursday, June 30, from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Reach reporter Mark Hallum by e-mail at mhal- lum@cnglocal.com or by phone at (718) 260–4564.
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